

KAN

KENT
ACADEMIES
NETWORK

SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

April 2022 Report





“

KAN has made me more confident and encouraged me to not give up. The best things about the programme are meeting new people, hearing about different experiences and getting to know what university might be like.

KAN student

”

Contents

Foreword	4
Overview	6
Our students	8
Our mentors	10
Review of events	12
Student work	15
Reflections	16

Foreword

Being online for all of 2021–2022 taught us so much and created new opportunities, such as the virtual mentoring sessions which led to the development of our Aspire programme. However, being able to go to each of the KAN schools in person and being able to host the students at Sevenoaks has been brilliant. Spending time together, for example at the meet-up days, has inevitably solidified and strengthened the peer-to-peer and mentor-mentee bonds.



One of my personal highlights from the last year was certainly the graduation event for the 2016 and 2017 cohorts. It was so joyful to celebrate their experience of the programme and to look forward to their exciting futures, studying courses such as Marine Biology at Portsmouth, Economics and Geography at Leeds and Human Sciences at UCL. We are very excited to now have a total of eight KAN alumni now working as mentors.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Isla Phillips-Ewen'.

Isla Phillips-Ewen
KAN Director



Over this last year, not only has KAN weathered the storm, but it has come out stronger and shinier than ever before. It has a valued presence in many Kent secondary schools, an enormous impact on its students, and it is now also developing a significant community of alumni, donors, teachers and supporters. This year we have already enjoyed a meet-up in November and February, and are bouncing with excitement about the prospect of 'in real life' residential in Easter and Summer 2022.

As is always the case, the work behind the scenes to deliver KAN is substantial, and requires many individual mentions to all those who play a part in its success. Thanks must go to the following people who all contribute in so many ways: the wonderful donors who have enabled this excellent programme to flourish; external speakers who generously gave their time to share their ideas and stories; mentors who work tirelessly with their mentees, keeping dreams alive and spirits up in dark times; teachers who volunteer their time to teach on residential; and the incredible staff from the KAN network of schools, without whom KAN students would not be identified and supported.

My final and most important thanks goes to Isla Phillips-Ewen, Director of KAN, for her never-ending determination and drive to make the KAN programme prosper. Isla cares deeply about each and every student, mentor and alumni, and this is how she makes the programme so successful, and ensures that its impact is as great as possible.

We are committed to developing and growing KAN to continue to remove barriers to higher education. Together we are making a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sally Walmsley'.

Sally Walmsley
Deputy Head Co-curriculum
Sevenoaks School



“

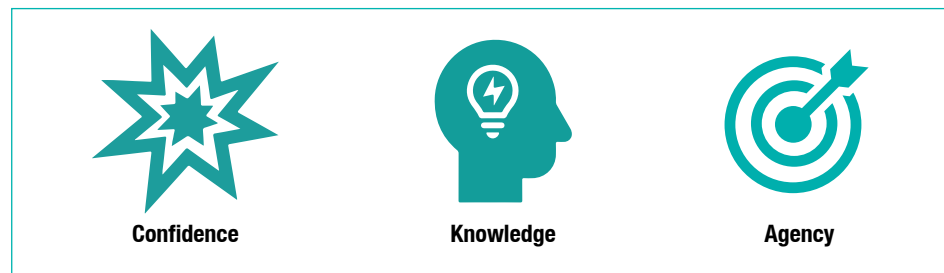
KAN has made me more comfortable about the idea of university; it's shown me how accessible it actually is and doesn't make it seem like such a far-away goal.

KAN student

”

Overview

KAN aims to remove barriers to Higher Education by improving student:



Our Core university access programme has been running since 2013 and we began our Aspire programme in 2021. These are unique four-year programmes, beginning in Year 9 and ending in Year 13 for students at five academies across Kent. The current Kent Academies Network includes: Knole Academy, The Skinners' Kent Academy, Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey, The Marsh Academy and John Wallis Church of England Academy. Each year, the schoolteachers identify Year 9 students to begin the application and interview process. In total 15 students are selected for our Core cohort and up to 15 for the Aspire cohort. Students meet eligibility criteria, such as whether they would be the first in their family to go to university, their household income and whether they are a carer or are in care themselves.

Every academic year the programmes entail:

- Termly online mentoring sessions
- Two meet-up days at Sevenoaks School
- The spring residential weekend at Sevenoaks School (Core cohorts only)
- An alumni and mentor networking dinner at Sevenoaks School (new in 2022)
- The summer residential week at Tonbridge School and either Fitzwilliam College or Queens' College (Core cohorts only)
- A summer research project
- The graduation event for the Year 13 students

Undergraduate mentors guide the students through the programme. The mentoring relationships and the peer-to-peer support network, fostered by the small size of the cohorts, are hugely important to KAN's success. Other tools that we provide to all the KAN students include:

- Access to the online mentoring platform
- A Unifrog account
- A place on the Brilliant Club's Scholars Programme in Year 12
- Access to the Buffini-Chao Discretionary Fund to cover the cost of university visits
- The opportunity to apply for a free place on the Sevenoaks School Summer Programme.

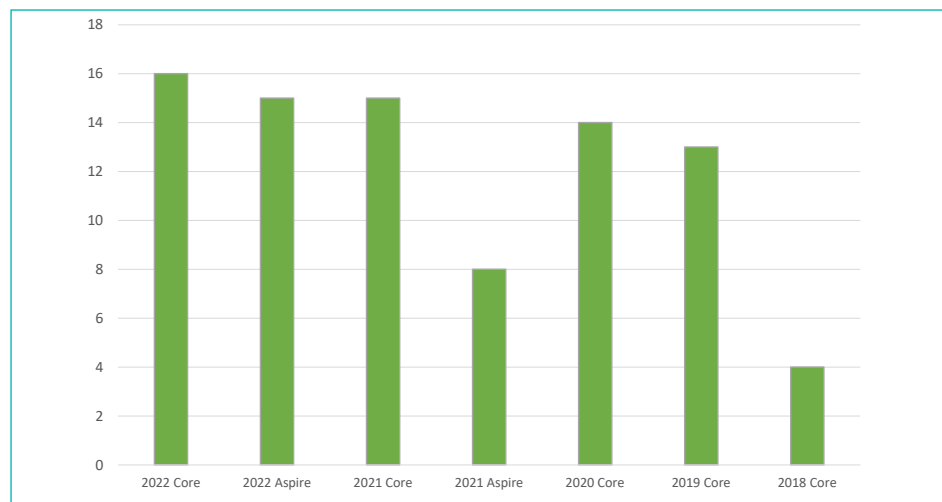
You can read more about all our events on the [website](#) and find up to date news from KAN via [Twitter](#).



Our students

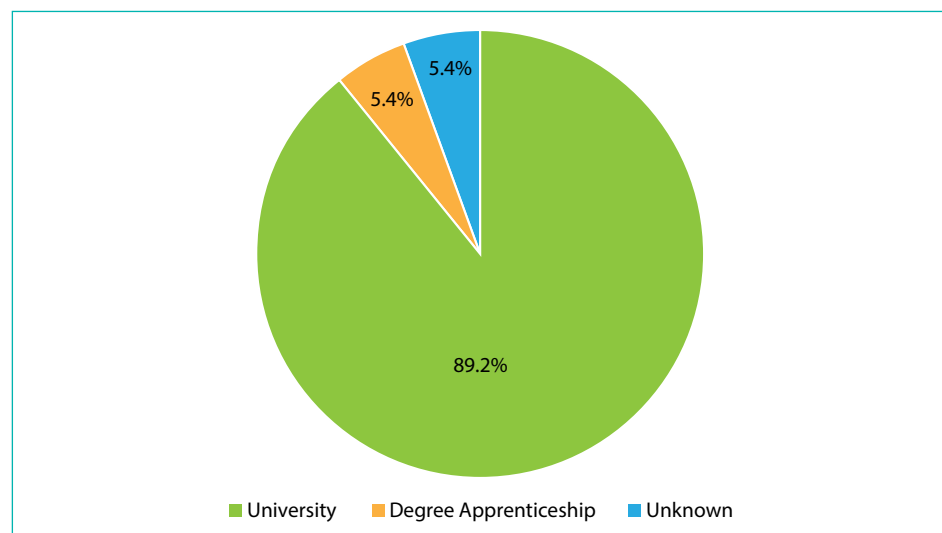
We have 85 students in the cohorts from 2018 to 2022, of whom 76 per cent are first generation university students.

Numbers of students in current cohorts



Across five cohorts (2013–2017), 49 students have so far completed the KAN university access programme and 71 per cent of these were first generation university students.

2013–2017 cohort destinations



In the 2018 cohort, James, who is going to study Medicine, holds offers from Southampton and Brighton (first choice) and Callum, who is going to study Forensic Psychology, holds offers from Lancashire (first choice). Finally, Kylan who is seeking out work and degree apprenticeships has interviews with Vodafone, BT, IBM, Deloitte, Three and the Cabinet Office. All three of them will be applying to work as KAN mentors next year.

In 2021 we introduced the Aspire programme with the aims to:

- Impact more students**
- Be cost effective**
- Scale up using technology**
- Increase ownership in the KAN schools**

The number of students in the Aspire cohort is based on the application numbers at each KAN school, and we are proud to have a full cohort of 15 for 2022, which demonstrates and further improves ownership of the programme in the KAN schools. So far, we have had two movements within the 2021 cohort between Aspire and Core, based on student commitment. This improves cost effectiveness of our Core programme and fulfils the aim of Aspire.



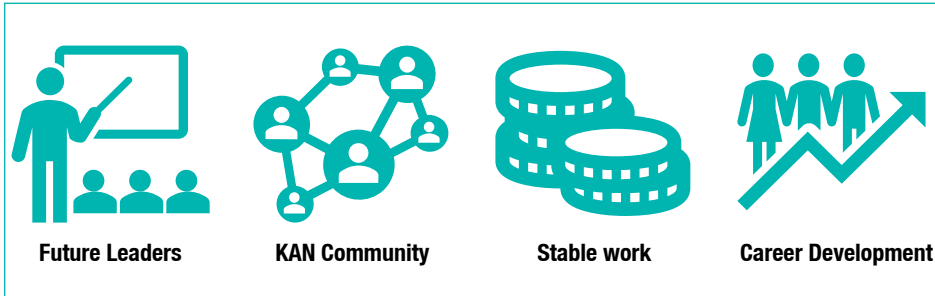
KAN has high aspirations for all of its students. Both Core and Aspire students are invited to meet-ups where they participate in useful, engaging workshops and meet likeminded peers from other schools. When Core students attend residential events, they experience a taste of university life. The programme helps them grow in confidence and friends of the KAN students at Skinners are influenced by the horizons that their friends are now exposed to.

KAN teacher lead, Skinners' Kent Academy



Our mentors

KAN aims to develop future leaders in education and social impact who feel part of a wider community and have increased opportunities, thanks to the experiences and skills they develop through their commitment to the role.



- 50% of our 36 mentor alumni are now working in education or social impact
- All of our current mentors agree that KAN improves their confidence
- 90% of our current mentors believe that KAN provides them with opportunities to develop professionally
- 90% of our current mentors believe that KAN equips them with leadership skills

Training and career development for the mentors includes: annual training prior to the spring residential weekend; access to professional development opportunities via the Institute of Teaching and Learning and the Institute of Service and Partnerships at Sevenoaks School; opportunities to teach and be observed at KAN events; and access to the Buffini Chao Discretionary Fund to pursue leadership courses.

The list of the current mentors can be found on the [website](#).



I am now a KAN mentor with three mentees from different schools. I have the advantage of completing the programme myself and can foresee what they might like to know. Through Learnium, the online platform, I can upload interesting articles for my mentees, set targets for activities and have discussions – most recently on the topic of ‘Who would you vaccinate first?’

Alumni and current mentor



Review of events

Residential events and Graduation

Due to the pandemic our July residential week took place online. It featured a mentor-led session on 'The Role of Oil in Global Politics' and a talk on 'Sentencing: Law, Theory and Practice' by Professor Nicky Padfield, University of Cambridge. There were talks by Baroness Sally Morgan and Lord Jonathan Evans, wellbeing workshops and lots of Higher Education sessions led by staff from Sevenoaks Higher Education, Pathway CTM and Cambridge, Kent and Medway Medical Schools.



It offers a great opportunity to explore different fields of study and discover the options that are accessible to students during and after finishing secondary education. The support, guidance and mentoring given is super valuable and the environment created by the people who work on the programme is really encouraging.

KAN student



Fortunately, the graduation event for the 2016 and 2017 cohorts was able to take place in person at Tonbridge School in July. We will host the graduation for the 2018 and 2017 cohorts together in July 2023.



Our spring residential weekend, at Sevenoaks School, included highlights such as: a cohort curation challenge designed and led by the National Gallery, afternoon activities like rock climbing, a talk by Shaa Wasmund MBE, and a huge variety of lessons. It was an immense pleasure to see the bonds developing and strengthening between all the cohorts and mentors, at the first in-person residential event since spring 2019.



Meet-up days

At our meet-up days this year students have participated in fantastic workshops from 2-3 Degrees as well as subject taster lessons, study skills, wellbeing workshops and higher education sessions.



Student work

Alumni and mentor dinner

Our inaugural alumni networking dinner was fantastic. It was magical to have so many alumni, from every cohort, in the room. We also hosted many of the KAN teachers and heads, alongside Sevenoaks School Governors and other stakeholders in the programme. We are looking forward to next year's iteration, which will also be a celebration of KAN's tenth anniversary.



It's such a genuine programme – everyone who is here loves the work, and the students are genuinely brilliant and talented individuals. I feel honoured to be part of the process of boosting their confidence and further pushing their academic abilities.

KAN Mentor



For reviews and impact reports about specific events please visit our [website](#).

Over the summer many students completed a research project or an essay with the Brilliant Club Scholars' Programme. As a result of their work with the Brilliant Club, three students received contextual offers from the University of Bath. The following students were commended for their first-class work.

Pupil Name	Cohort	Title
Luca	2021	Who was Alfred Russel Wallace and how did he contribute to the development of the Theory of Evolution?
Ariel	2021	What does it mean to be a villain?
Frederick	2021	Shonen anime and its cultural effects on America
Xavier	2021	What makes accountancy such a good career?
Fikunmi	2021	What are the benefits of music therapy?
Grace	2021	Why is music important in pop culture?
Mille	2021	Feminism: are the feminist issues embedded within Julia Quinn's Bridgerton series applicable to the modern-day reader?
Luca	2020	How are we confronting the current climate crisis in the world's least developed countries?
Demi-Leigh	2020	How an understanding of sociology helps create a better workplace environment
Francis	2020	Credit through time: a short insight of credit distribution throughout time
Jamie	2020	Why are there behavioural changes within different groups and environments?
Henry	2019	How has psychological research influenced education in the classroom?



I have found it valuable having a lot of support and reassurance of the options that I have after Year 13. The inspirational speakers always provide a source of motivation and this spring's academic options were interesting and engaging.

KAN student



Reflections

Sophie Rayment was part of the Sevenoaks School KAN service group 2020–2021 and will be starting her role as a KAN mentor in July 2022. One of her projects was to review feedback surveys from 2013 to 2018 and produce a report on her findings. Below is an adapted version of this feedback review and the full version is available on our website.

The programme has broadened my knowledge and experience both academically and culturally.

lessons and demonstrated student engagement with new subjects, and the mindset of exploring new areas with confidence.

In addition to the transformative academic support, the programme infrastructure of small cohorts supports long-lasting friendships. Students connect over shared experiences regarding school and their attitudes towards their futures. This is an important instance of the way that KAN fosters personal confidence, simply through assembling like-minded students. Confidence to speak up and engage with classes and lectures enhances the academic enrichment, allowing students to focus on the content of the lesson and their thoughts on the topic, rather than worrying about the opinions of their classmates.

At the centre of the KAN programme lies a system of academic enrichment centred on the widening of intellectual horizons. During KAN residentials, students undertake a variety of different lessons, whether this be subjects familiar to them, or brand new. These lessons are taught by a variety of teachers, exposing students to not only new subjects, but also new teaching styles, experiences and perspectives. Feedback from the residential events cited inspiration from the

KAN also helped in a social way as well, as it helped me to not feel isolated about being intelligent.



“

The most important things I learnt were: to be independent, not be scared to show the real you and make friends. Academically, I learned to show what you're good at and to overcome weaknesses. Confidence!

”



After reading through all the student feedback from years of KAN residentials, one standout takeaway the students have from the programme is the confidence that they have gained as a result. This confidence is built up in a variety of ways; academic extension that stretches students to their full potential, being surrounded by a group of like-minded individuals whom students are not afraid to discuss academic matters with, support from teachers and mentor, and the independence that accompanies staying away from home.

One of the fundamental aspects of KAN that contribute to both the academic and personal development of its students in the infrastructure of mentoring relationships. Having a dedicated mentor who is only a few years older than themselves provides a further point of contact with whom students can raise concerns, and also build a relationship. As mentors are current students at a diverse variety of the UK universities, they provide valuable first-hand guidance regarding the application process and life at university, as well as help with revision and schoolwork.

KAN may be a programme that aims to improve aspiration regarding university, but responses from its students have demonstrated that KAN's impact reaches far beyond academic measurement. KAN graduates leave having secured both university places and new-found confidence and drive.

“

The mentors on this scheme have been outstanding and have provided great support throughout my GCSEs and now A-levels. Without KAN it is my belief that the UCAS process would have been much more stressful. The continuous support through September and October was very helpful when writing my Personal Statement.

”



Key Dates 2022–2023

09 May	Online Mentoring
08 June	Online Induction for new cohorts
10 June	Online Induction for new mentors
4–10 July	Summer residential weeks, Tonbridge School and Fitzwilliam College
01 September	Deadline for Year 10 and Year 11 Summer Research Project
26 September	Online Mentoring
07 November	Meet–up day, Sevenoaks School
30 January	Online Mentoring
27 February	Meet–up day, Sevenoaks School
24–27 March	Residential weekend, Sevenoaks School
27 March	Alumni and Mentor Networking Dinner

For more information about KAN, visit our website

<https://outreach.sevenoaksschool.org/kentacademiesnetwork>

Follow us on Twitter

[@KAN_UAP](https://twitter.com/KAN_UAP)

Photography © Jutta Klee

©Sevenoaks School. A Company Limited by Guarantee (4908949). Registered in England and Wales.

Registered Charity Number 1101358

www.sevenoaksschool.org