



Lower School Curriculum Policy

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THE KING ALFRED SCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICY – LOWER SCHOOL

“Do we wish, in the shortest possible time, to fill our children's heads with a passable amount of the second hand knowledge that happens to be fashionable, to fit them all up with the everyday minimum of manual and mental dexterities, and drill them all into the everyday minimum of moral habits, or do we wish with Montaigne 'to forge rather than furnish their souls', to help them grow, that is, chiefly through their own efforts, and more or less at their own temperamental pace, into their own image - not the image of their parents, or of their teachers, or any other transient heroes, but into the full and perfect fruition of the seeds of capacity and goodness they bring with them into the world?”

John Russell, KAS Head 1902-1920

“We are genuinely committed to understanding the individual, and providing the environment and support so that every child can flourish and succeed. This underpins our approach to learning inside and outside the classroom, to pastoral care and personal development, and the way we structure the school and the curriculum.”

Robert Lobatto, Head

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The King Alfred School Accessibility Plan
- The King Alfred School Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Act 2011

1. **SCOPE**

This policy describes the philosophy, principles and practices of the educational programme at King Alfred School. It is supported by individual subject schemes of work and curriculum guidelines.

2. **AIMS**

The aims of the KAS Curriculum are to prepare effectively the children for the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of their next stage of education and in the future; *to thrive at school and beyond.*

In order to maximise wellbeing, the following six elements provide the foundation for the KAS Curriculum:

- TRUST: *Building empathetic, nurturing trusting relationships with peers and adults.*
- HOLISTIC SUCCESS: *Developing knowledge, skills and qualifications and feeling proud of their accomplishments.*
- RESPONSIBILITY: *Contributing to their communities and having a sense of purpose beyond oneself*
- IMMERSION: *Cultivating interests and passions which captivate and engage.*
- VITALITY: *Nurturing well-being in body, mind or spirit.*
- ESTEEM: *Understanding oneself, growing confidence and developing positive thinking.*

3. CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES

The KAS Curriculum has been designed to provide an education which:

- **Embraces a broad definition of success** – academic success is a proven consequence of our approach but our truest measure of success is the fact that our students leave KAS as adults who are well-rounded, socially adept, emotionally resilient, inquisitive life-long learners, who are self-motivated, independent thinkers.
- **Brings out the best in each child and enables them to work at their own pace** – intelligence, understanding and capabilities will show themselves in many different ways and therefore we aim to educate in a way which will both challenge and support each individual.

The curriculum helps our children to:

- **Become knowledgeable about the world and its diversity:** our curriculum aims to help students to make meaning of the world around them and to free the imagination to face the challenges of the future; An awareness of spirituality and morality; an understanding of the importance and the limitations of inherited knowledge, culture and values are important components of that meaning.
- **Be committed to social responsibility and have a strong moral compass:** *through the KAS Curriculum we help children develop a sense of social responsibility, to have the courage to speak out when their beliefs or values are challenged and to recognise that they have the power to make a difference to the world around them.*

The KAS Curriculum:

- seeks to minimise unnecessary pressure.
- is creative, active and challenging.
- nurtures intrinsic motivation, helping our students to enjoy achievement and keep competition in perspective, valuing the intrinsic worth of actions and learning rather than the pursuit of prizes.
- promotes learner agency and metacognitive practices.
- promotes high expectations.
- values high-level thinking.
- is informed rather than constrained by the National Curriculum, taking full advantage of our independence and our rational, progressive traditions.
- offers a broad range of subjects.
- considers all subjects to have creative and academic aspects and possibilities.
- We regard our curriculum as a dynamic rather than a static entity. The process of curriculum review and development is informed by current educational research and our own internal self reflection processes.

4. OBJECTIVES

In order to fulfil our aims we:

- give all pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.
- provide a broad balanced curriculum together with a rich extra-curricular programme.
- develop the children's spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical growth.
- promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs so that they are effectively prepared for life in British society.
- provide full time supervised education for pupils.
- give all pupils the opportunity to learn and make good progress.
- provide subject matter and learning experiences appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of all pupils including:
 - pupils on our SEN Register including those with Statements or Education, Health and Care Plans.
 - pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).
 - our highest attainers.

5. BREADTH AND BALANCE

The timetable ensures that there is a balance between the curriculum areas to allow pupils to acquire skills in:

- Speaking and Listening
- Literacy
- Mathematics and numeracy
- Science
- Humanities
- Design Technology
- Computing
- Music
- Art
- French
- Drama
- Physical Education and Games
- Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

6. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage forms the first stage of our whole school curriculum. The curriculum is planned in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012. The school provides a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning, which is appropriate to each child's educational needs, and relates to the seven areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication and language
- physical development
- literacy
- mathematics

- understanding of the world
- expressive art and design

7. PRACTICE

We aim to foster a life-long love of learning, through adopting a cross-curricular, topic led approach. Discrete, tailor made schemes of work have been developed in English, Maths, Science, French, Design Technology, Music, PE and Games. These are managed by subject coordinators and are used by teachers to plan and teach a creative curriculum that provides support and challenge in a purposeful and meaningful context.

There is a high degree of flexibility for teachers to exercise their own discretion and creative flair, responding to either current events or children's interests. Class teachers produce topic summaries, which act as medium term plans to outline the proposed work in each curriculum area. However, we recognise the importance of following children's interests in order to maximise engagement and therefore these summaries act as a guide and are subject to change as the learning needs or interests of the class change through the term. The Humanities Coordinator oversees the topics covered to maintain a balanced and varied spread over a child's time in the Lower School. They also ensure care is given to the continuity of skills and knowledge in the humanities areas of the curriculum.

In addition, a variety of academic, creative and sports clubs are offered at King Alfred School. This broadens the curriculum further and provides opportunities for children to extend and enrich their learning in a variety of engaging activities.

Teaching and learning involves a range of approaches, such as enquiry, practical, experiential, constructive and, most of all, active engagement by the student.

8. HOMEWORK (INDEPENDENT LEARNING)

We have a 'no homework' policy at King Alfred until Year 5. We have based this decision on current research that suggests that homework has very little benefit to younger children and can create a negative approach towards learning, as well as compromise positive relationships at home. However, we strongly encourage children to read at home from Reception onwards and to explore and practise basic literacy and numeracy skills. Children who receive support from the Learning Support team may be given focussed activities to complete at home to help consolidate learning.

The main aim of Independent Learning in Year 5 and 6 is to develop independence and self-reliance. It also helps prepare children for the demands of Upper School. Independent Learning is set fortnightly by class teachers and includes a range of options and choices in order to cater for different interests. The expected time allocation for Independent Learning is 2 hours per week. Work is shared, enjoyed and discussed in class, giving each child an opportunity to shine. Feedback is given either in verbal or written form.

Parents' support at home at this early stage in the process is encouraged and appreciated. Parents prompt, suggest and help organise, to facilitate success. If children cannot manage the Independent Learning tasks, even with parental guidance, parents are encouraged to notify the class teacher, so the difficulty can be overcome or greater clarification and differentiation provided.

9. DIFFERENTIATION

We are a mixed attainment school and endeavour to meet the needs of all students so that they have the opportunity to learn and make good progress. Differentiation is key to achieving this.

Class teachers work closely together so formative information on the particular strengths and talents of each child is acknowledged, identified and shared, to ensure differentiated planning meets every pupil's needs. The Lower School instructional coaches support the planning process.

Children with specific learning difficulties are carefully monitored through our robust SEND procedures, which provides a graduated approach to ensure children's needs are met and appropriate support is provided (see SEND Policy for more details).

We are aware that it is best to define differentiation in a number of ways and to allow teachers flexibility of interpretation and implementation:

- by task (different pupils or groups working on different tasks according to their current attainment level or aptitude).
- by outcome (all pupils having equal access to a task but with planned extension activities and support mechanisms).
- by text or resources (providing different materials or written texts for different pupils, or allowing more time to complete a task).
- by support (all pupils may be doing the same task but some will receive extra support from the teacher or another adult either inside the classroom or outside at a different time).
- by attainment level (learners are grouped accordingly).

10. ACCESS

All pupils have the opportunity to learn, make progress and access the experiences, people and resources necessary to realise their potential in education. Pupils on our SEND and EAL Registers will be provided with support in order to meet their needs. Pupils with a Statement or Education Health and Care Plan will be provided with an education, which fulfils their stated requirements. Pupils who have other particular needs, such as being a young carer, will also receive appropriate additional support.

11. LEARNING SUPPORT

The SENCo organises a variety of interventions and targeted levels of support so that each student can achieve their potential. Where appropriate, additional interventions outside of the classroom are available, and tailored to individual need.

Where a pupil has a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the SENCo will arrange provision in accordance with the stated needs of these pupils and in line with the number of hours of support provided for by the Statement/EHC plan. This provision may involve a mixture of in class support and one to one support, depending on the needs of the child. This may be provided by an existing member of the Learning Support Team or by one or more Learning Support Assistants. On admission, an Individual Education Plan [IEP] will be prepared for each child with a Statement or EHC Plan and this will be updated on a termly basis. The status of each Statement or EHC Plan is reviewed on an annual basis during which process the SENCo and their team will liaise closely with the representative from the appropriate Borough.

12. OTHER SUPPORT

Pupils who have particular needs affecting their academic progress but who are outside the SEN register also receive appropriate additional support. This may include students who are going through a difficult time emotionally, for example following a family breakdown or bereavement. It may also include students who have challenges in their home circumstances, such as being a young carer. This support is overseen through the pastoral system, and may include support from the SLT or the school counselling service.

13. MONITORING THE CURRICULUM

The responsibility for a subject area lies with the relevant Subject Coordinators. This includes the production of subject guidelines which contain a scheme of work. The subject coordinators are also responsible for the monitoring of the teaching of their subject in a variety of ways including lesson observations, 'book looks' and interviews with teachers and pupils. Monitoring of the teaching is also the responsibility of the Lower School members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Topic summaries outlining the content to be covered each term for each year group and are maintained by class teachers and subject coordinators.

The SLT oversees the delivery of the curriculum. They are responsible for monitoring and supporting the subject coordinators.

14. MONITORING OF PROGRESS

The achievements of all children are carefully monitored so that we can ensure all are making good progress. This includes, by definition, students of all aptitudes and abilities, including those with a Statement of SEN or an EHCP, other students on the SEN register, EAL students and the highest attainers. This monitoring takes place on a day-to-day basis by the class teacher and any concerns are quickly identified and appropriate strategies to support progress are then put in place.

The termly 'learning conversations' about each child further reinforce this process and enable the class teacher, Literacy Coordinator, Numeracy Coordinator, SENCO and Deputy Head (LS) to stand back and ensure each child is fulfilling their potential. This is an evidence-based process and supported by a range of resources.

15. PSHE

Personal, social, health and economic education is an important part of the curriculum at KAS. The school's Scheme of Work sets out a pathway from Reception to Year 6 and the themes are simultaneously threaded through the broader learning experience. The PSHE programme encourages respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. KAS does not promote a particular lifestyle, but encourages respect for other people, even if they choose to follow a lifestyle that one would not choose to follow oneself. We address these aims in PSHE lessons and collovers as well as through other curriculum areas. Relevant policies and procedures also educate students about the values and morals we seek to nurture. Our programme takes the approach of a 'spiral curriculum' – with key topics being visited and revisited as students move up through Lower School from Reception - Year 6 in an age appropriate manner.

16. Initiatives in progress

6-8

The 6-8 curriculum is currently in development. A Director of 6-8 started in September 2020 and is using this preparatory year to build the curriculum and his team. The launch will be in September 2021 for this innovative and creative initiative which aims to think in new ways about everyday learning – integrating knowledge from different subject areas, shifting more ownership of learning to students and unleashing creativity for students and staff.

Curriculum audit – diversity

This academic year sees a timely audit of the curriculum which runs alongside the working groups examining various aspects of diversity at KAS. The aim is to produce a review of diversity within the curriculum and put into action the findings for academic year 2021-22.

KASConnected

KASConnected is our online learning programme which is launched when we are forced into a physical closure for a cohort or the entire school. The curriculum in KASConnected is based on the normal school day.

KASConnected is a blend of interactive (or synchronous) learning with non-interactive (asynchronous) activities.

KASConnected adapts the pastoral support programme to ensure that all students have regular contact with their class teacher. Additional support from SLT or the school counselling service is also available.