



# 6-8

## CURRICULUM

Education  
re-designed  
A handbook  
for parents



“The mark of a KAS student is that they are resilient, compassionate, and filled with an appetite for the possibilities of life.”

**Robert Lobatto,  
Head**



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome

I am proud to introduce you to our new curriculum for Years 6 to 8. In our outdated English education system, these Years are often overlooked. Pupils are ready for greater specialist input by the time they reach year 6. Schools often put the needs of students in exam years before those are the start of their secondary career.

Our new curriculum, in contrast, is 'Education re-designed'. It prioritises this critical time in early adolescence to provide a richer, more balanced learning experience alongside powerful opportunities for personal growth.

What we have created is rooted in the best traditions of KAS from over the last 125 years. We have always sought to give maximum ownership of learning to students and now this is taken to the next level. We have always focused on developing the whole child, and our new model enables us to connect the intellectual, social and emotional aspects in fresh and dynamic ways.

Our 6 to 8 curriculum is inspired by best international practice. Enlightened schools from across the world have pioneered ways of working which make learning more creative and challenging by empowering teachers and learners to lift the lid of what was previously thought possible. We will be incorporating the finest of these ideas here at KAS.

Our ambition is for our students to thrive at school and to be well equipped to thrive when they pass through our gates into the adult world. Many years in the making, our curriculum will provide them both with a brilliant and rewarding experience and invaluable foundations as they transition through secondary school and beyond.

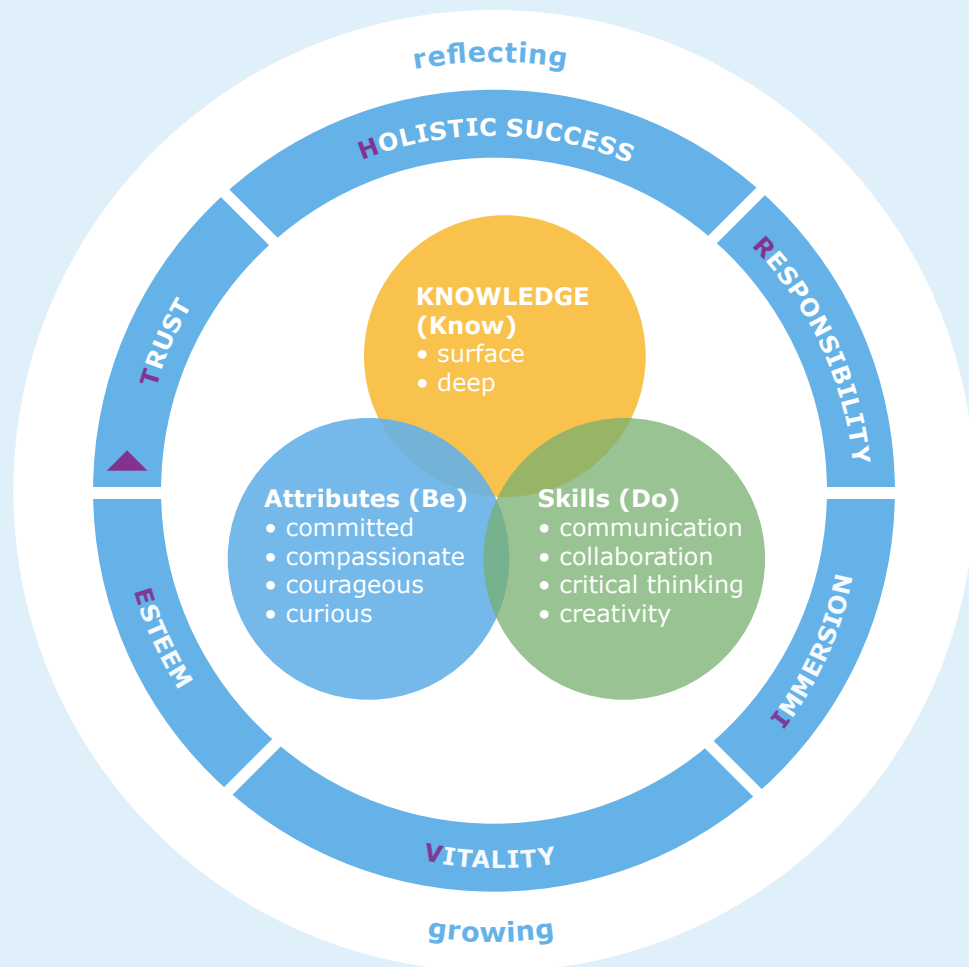
I very much look forward to accompanying you and your child as they embark on this transformational next phase of their journey at KAS.

*Robert*

## KAS EDUCATION

KAS has a deep-rooted sense of responsibility towards its students which extends beyond the classroom. Our aim is help students thrive, both during their time at school and when they go out into the adult world.

In order to do this, we have developed an approach which combines three powerful elements: broad educational success, a grounded sense of wellbeing, and ongoing personal and intellectual growth, as shown in the diagram below:



### The Model

The centre of our model is our vision of a broad education which can be summarised as 'Know, Be, Do'.

The 'Know' is knowledge. The development of broad base of facts combined with a deep sense of understanding and the ability to make connections.

The 'Be' is attributes. Commitment, courage, curiosity and compassion. The development of strong ethical core underpins our concept of a broad education.

The 'Do' is skills. We enable our children to communicate effectively, collaborate, think critically, and be creative in approaching problems and solutions – all critical skills for school, work and life.

### T-H-R-I-V-E

The middle ring of our model develops wellbeing. We believe strongly that, to be successful, any approach to wellbeing needs to be consistent with a school's culture, rather than 'bolted on' as an extra.

**Trust:** Empathetic and nurturing relationships have been at the core of the KAS experience since its foundation.

**Holistic success:** Achieving goals is fundamental to a sense of wellbeing and positive self-image; hence our emphasis on what children can, rather than cannot, do.

**Responsibility:** An evolving a sense of purpose beyond yourself. Social action and individual responsibility are woven through the KAS experience.

**Immersion:** Cultivating interests and passions both inside and outside the curriculum.

**Vitality:** Looking after physical as well as mental health. We have a strong emphasis on exercise, nutrition and mindful practices from the age of four upwards.

**Esteem:** By supporting the growth of an optimistic outlook, we enable students to recognise positive emotions and to develop the resilience to deal with the harder moments which are an inevitable part of life.

The outer ring of our model focuses on ongoing development. Our aim is to help students to build the confidence to develop their own reflections and listen to the constructive comments of others. This will be vital as they negotiate the challenges and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.



## THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE CURRICULUM

The programme has three core elements: interdisciplinary learning, rich subject-based lessons and co-curricular activities.

A strong pastoral ethos embodied in 'Crew' runs through the programme, connecting the year groups and providing support from staff and peers.

Interdisciplinary Enquiries (IEs)

Rich subject-based learning

Co-curricular

CREW



Inspirational new learning space for inter-disciplinary enquiries







## ELEMENT 1: INTER-DISCIPLINARY ENQUIRY

Inter-disciplinary Enquiry (IE) has two elements. First, using an enquiry approach to learning; second, putting subjects together in combinations to create a richer learning experience.

### Why enquiry?

“Learning means being a skilled researcher, a courageous explorer, a curious thinker, a meticulous detective, and a critical consumer of information and opinion”.

**Claxton, in Murdoch, 2015**

Enquiry-based learning has a long and distinguished history and is used in many of the most forward-thinking international education systems and schools.

Students work on investigations, driven by compelling questions or real-life problems. Teachers ask questions, impart knowledge and design tasks to help pupils ask questions, make predictions, gather and analyse information, and reflect on their learning. Where possible students will present their work to an audience of fellow pupils, parents, visiting ‘experts’ or members of the public.

Enquiry is a significant step beyond ‘topic’ learning. Students become leaders of their own learning, supported by highly structured planning. Knowledge is vital in every investigation, and the deeper learning happens when students are challenged to process this knowledge in order to complete more creative and demanding tasks. The ‘magic’ happens when a fire is lit within the students so that they want to find out more and lead their own learning.

### Why inter-disciplinary?

“In inter-disciplinary learning, pupils acquire knowledge and skills in two or more academic disciplines (subjects) and integrate them to explain a phenomenon, solve a problem, create a product or raise new questions in ways that would have been unlikely through a single discipline”

**Boix Mansilla, 2010**

Our inter-disciplinary approach is inspired by education in Finland, Singapore and globally through the International Baccalaureate. These systems have recognised that there are significant advantages to putting subjects together. This approach motivates students by explicitly connecting what they are learning to the real world.

Alongside this, it leads to deeper learning. It requires pupils to apply skills and knowledge learnt in one

discipline to the context of another, which is the hallmark of a more sophisticated cognitive level.

Each interdisciplinary enquiry is planned and taught by a team of subject specialists to ensure that the knowledge base is at least as strong as it would be in a single subject approach. This methodology is also able to go much deeper than ‘topic work’ familiar from primary schools, which relies on one primary teacher covering all the knowledge areas.

We have two combinations of subjects. Science, Design and Maths (sometimes known as STEM) and Humanities, English and Art.

We have allocated additional resources into the IEs, which means every pupil will receive additional and individual attention.



## HOW ARE IES STRUCTURED AT KAS?

The structure follows four stages:



### Connect

- Students connect with a 'compelling question' which drives the enquiry.
- Students connect with the theme through a 'hook' experience – a visit, a performance etc.
- Students connect to the knowledge that they already possess about the theme.
- Students connect to new knowledge which challenges their thinking.
- Students connect to the final 'exhibition task'.



### Construct

- Students and teachers co-construct further questions to guide the next steps in learning.
- Students construct new understandings through learning activities.



### Contribute

- Students undertake the 'exhibition task'.
- Students redraft after self-assessment and feedback from teachers and peers.
- Students contribute their best work to an exhibition.



### Re-connect

- Students reflect on their learning and progress throughout the IE.
- Students and teachers reconnect with the original 'compelling question' and discuss how it relates to different contexts in their own life and to future learning opportunities.

An example IE:



### Connect

- The 'compelling question' - *Whose story becomes history?*
- A 'hook' - students find out about the controversy surrounding the toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol.
- Another 'hook' - students visit the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool.
- Students acquire foundation knowledge about slavery, needed to delve deeper in the next stage.
- Introduction of the 'exhibition task' - You are an artist bidding for a commission from the Bristol Council to replace the Edward Colston statue with a new public memorial to commemorate the abolition of the Slave Trade. You need to present a design and a written justification of how it communicates history from different perspectives.



### Construct

- Students and teachers co-construct further questions - factual (e.g. Which goods were traded as part of the triangular trade?), conceptual (e.g. How can artefacts teach us about the slave trade through different perspectives?) and debatable (e.g. Did Britain abolish the slave trade for moral or economic reasons?)
- History activities explore various perspectives and sources to develop critical thinking.
- Art activities explore how artefacts can convey power relationships and narratives.
- English activities explore various literary works about slavery and how language reflects power and perspective.



### Contribute

- Students complete and redraft the 'exhibition task' - individually in this case.
- In the 'exhibition' they present their beautiful work to a simulated Bristol Council – some older students, some teachers, some parents.



### Re-connect

- Students reflect on their progress.
- Students return to the question *Whose story becomes history?*, and discuss other parts of history that they might understand from a singular perspective.
- Students learn about how the choices that they make in daily life can exacerbate or help to solve the issue of modern slavery.

## ELEMENT 2: RICH SUBJECT-BASED LEARNING

This element is similar to a more traditional secondary school programme. During the week, students attend 50-minute lessons in discrete subjects with specialist subject teachers.

### English

As well as being part of the inter-disciplinary learning, English is also taught as a discrete subject. This core subject at GCSE therefore has more curriculum time. Students build specific disciplinary language skills and study a broad range of literature and genres.

### Science

Like English, Science is central to the inter-disciplinary learning as well as being taught as a discrete subject from Year 7. Core skills and knowledge are covered in Science specific lessons which provide a strong grounding in Scientific literacy.

### Maths

As with Science and English, Maths is a core GCSE subject and therefore sits in both disciplinary and inter-disciplinary elements of the curriculum. The more applied Maths skills (e.g. data handling) are developed mainly as part of the IEs, whilst the pure Maths skills (e.g. trigonometry) are developed mainly in discrete Maths lessons.

### French

This subject is taught as a discrete discipline. The curriculum builds on the Lower School French programme by developing further the formal grammatical elements of the language.

### Spanish

Like French, this is taught as a discrete discipline. This is introduced at beginner level in Year 6 and combines communicative, cultural and grammatical approaches.

### Music

Music is taught as a discrete discipline once a week to enable the core skills of musicianship to be systematically developed over time.

### Drama

Drama is taught as a discrete discipline once a week. The curriculum covers basic skills and concepts and will on occasion relate to themes from the IEs.

### PE/Games

Pupils have PE lessons and Games lessons each week. This part of the curriculum may relate to the IEs (for example during an enquiry about science, health and fitness) and at other times it will be self-contained.

## ELEMENT 3: CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING

Co-curricular learning is very important part of these years. It enables students to become fully immersed in the community of the school and develop strong personal bonds with others.

They learn skills that they might not normally try and have the chance to find new passions.

We use the term 'co-curricular' rather than 'extra-curricular' as we see these activities running alongside the other elements of the curriculum, rather than as an addition. For example, in Crew sessions and we ask students to reflect on their co-curricular learning and gather evidence of their skills development in their learning portfolios (see Assessment and Reporting, on page 18).

### Special weeks

Throughout Years 6-8, the regular timetable is suspended for one week per term.

**The Village Project** is a seminal experience which happens towards the end of Year 8. It is very much a rite of passage at the end of the 6-8 experience and is integrated into the curriculum as an IE in its own right. Students apply the skills and attributes they have developed to create a unique self-governing and self-sustaining community, living in self-built huts in a secluded corner of the school grounds.

Each year there is a camp, providing students with the experience of living in a community away from home. These camps are not all under canvas, though students are mostly responsible for their own cooking and cleaning. They engage with a wide range of activities.

Once a year there is a **Creativity Week**. Students can choose from a range of creative projects (e.g. Art, Drama, Music, Literature, Design, Technology) and work in a sustained way towards an informal exhibition at the end of the week.

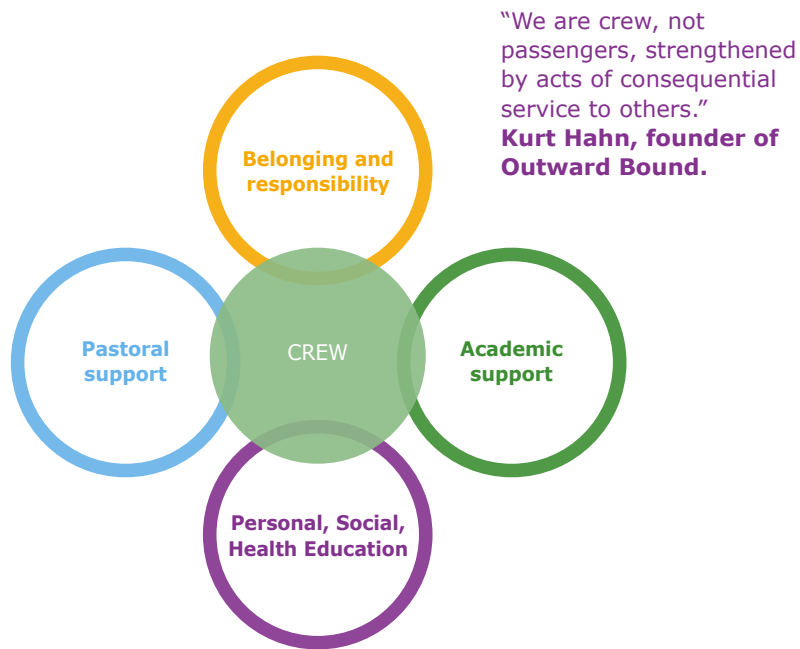
In challenge weeks, students are supported to work in teams to complete projects, many of which reflect the UN sustainable development goals. Students learn to collaborate, organise time and resources, apply thinking and communication skills and reflect on their successes and difficulties. The outcomes may be physical products, presentations or reflections upon a community service experience.

### Choice

One afternoon per week, the Year 6-8 students join with other Upper School students in a Choice programme that offers a wide range of activities. These include, for example, photography, the forge, sailing, film studies, cooking, football, hockey, song and dance, costume, art projects or helping in KAS Lower School. We encourage them to challenge themselves to try something new, and to select a combination of physically active choices, creative choices and activities that include an element of community service.

### Clubs and activities

KAS offers a wide range of sports, arts activities and curriculum enrichment. Whilst these are not compulsory, we strongly encourage all Year 6-8 students to take part in order to be a fully participating and thriving member of the KAS community.



Crew is an essential element of the 6 to 8 curriculum - it is both a culture and a part of the timetable structure. It ensures that our students have a sense of belonging to a close-knit team, it is the central hub which joins all their learning experiences together, and it gives them a safe place to reflect on their own development and that of their crewmates.

Every student is part of a crew, a team of 8-9 students. They meet at the start of every school day and for a further 50-minute session on most other days. Each crew has a crew leader, a teacher. This crew becomes the student's 'family' at school, which supports, guides and challenges them to become the very best version of themselves.

### Pastoral support:

In morning welcome meetings, Crew members greet each other and check in with their Crew leader to make sure that everything is going well. They reflect on what they have been doing in and out of school, and set themselves up for the learning experiences for the day.

### Personal, Social and Health Education:

In PSHE sessions crews work on themes such as identity, inclusion, puberty, health and relationships.

In discussion sessions, Crews tackle global issues as well as matters that affect their own communities at school and beyond.

### Belonging and responsibility:

In team-building sessions, students undertake activities which forge stronger relationships and require them to reflect on their personal growth.

In callover meetings, Crews come together to listen to a student or teacher speak about an issue important to the school or wider community.

### Academic support:

In learning conversations, groups of 2-3 students meet with their Crew leader to discuss the work they have been doing. They give feedback to help each other overcome difficulties and redraft work to make it their best. They also celebrate their successes.

In skill sessions Crews receive coaching on particular academic and personal skills. For example, they may work on specific literacy or numeracy skills.

In portfolio building sessions, students update their learning portfolio (see below) and learn to reflect purposefully on their progress in and out of the classroom.





## HOW THE FOUR ELEMENTS CONNECT

The four elements are broadly balanced like this:



### YEAR 6-7

■ Subject based 
 ■ Inter-disciplinary  
■ Crew 
 ■ Co-curricular



### YEAR 8

■ Subject based 
 ■ Inter-disciplinary  
■ Crew 
 ■ Co-curricular

In Years 6-7 the balance between subject-based and inter-disciplinary learning allows a smooth transition from the Lower School experience as much of the learning is with the Crew leader and a small team of IE teachers. In Year 8 there is more subject-based learning, allowing for a smooth transition into Year 9, in which all academic subjects are taught within disciplines.

## A typical Year 7 timetable:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-9.25am	Crew	Crew	Crew	Crew	Crew
P1	English	IE: Art, Humanities English	French	English	IE: Art, Humanities English
P2	IE: Science, Maths, Design		Science	Maths	
P3			Drama	Crew	
P4	IE: Science, Maths, Design	Crew	Maths	PE	Science
P5		French	Games	Choice	IE: Science, Maths, Design
P6	Maths				

Each period lasts 50 minutes, with breaks after period 2 and 4. The week above shows two French and one Spanish lessons. This is reversed the following week.

## ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Good assessment is essential to successful learning and its purpose is to help the students to progress. Rather than do assessment to the students, we do it with them. They need not be frightened of it!

Students develop the confidence to succeed by actively participating in the process. They are sometimes involved in designing assessment tasks or their success criteria. They are often involved with self-assessment and peer-assessment. They are continually celebrating their progress and identifying areas for further improvement.

### What do we assess in the KAS 6-8 curriculum?

'A picture can be informative; however no single picture can provide a complete portrayal of a situation... What we need is a collection of multiple measures, appropriately aligned to different kinds of learning outcomes that matter.'

**McTighe, 2018**

Our curriculum is planned around three types of clear learning outcome, and we therefore assess all three:

- What students know (knowledge)
- What students can do (skills)
- How students approach their learning (attributes)

In a more traditional curriculum, only knowledge and discipline-specific skills are assessed. In the holistic 6-8 curriculum we value all three types of learning outcome by assessing them to produce specific, meaningful feedback to maximise progress.

### Knowledge (Know)

- surface
- deep

### Skills (Do)

- communication
- collaboration
- critical thinking
- creativity

### Attributes (Be)

- committed
- compassionate
- courageous
- curious

### When do we assess?

As assessment is inherent to learning, we assess all the time. At the start of a series of activities, we assess informally to understand what students already know and what they can already do. During the learning process we assess informally to identify next steps, and to see who needs some more support and who needs more challenge. Towards the end of the learning process detailed and specific feedback helps students to improve their work and produce the most beautiful work possible in response to a task. When this work is finished it is a time to reflect on progress made and celebrate success.

### How do we assess?

#### Knowledge (Know)

**Surface:** traditional tests give evidence of how much is retained. For example, a Spanish vocabulary test may contain gap-filling, translation and matching questions.

**Deep:** students present their thoughts through texts, diagrams, images, presentations and artefacts. For example, a student may design a diagram to show the relative size of the planets in the solar system. We use rubrics (simple 4-level written descriptors) to assess which level has been reached and what needs to be done to develop the work further.

**Skills (Do):** in the 6-8 Curriculum, students will develop many discipline-specific skills (for example the ability to use grid references on a map). However, there are also more general inter-disciplinary skills, and these are set out in the green circle on this page. Students gather evidence of progress for each, to show how well and how independently these skills are being developed and applied.

**Attributes (Be):** these describe how students approach their learning in all four elements of the curriculum, how they make decisions about their actions and how they develop positive habits of mind. Students gather evidence of their own development and self-assess against rubrics describing how consistently and how independently they apply these attributes to their learning.

### How do we report progress?

Reporting is an important way of sharing information. In the 6-8 curriculum, reporting is a continual 'learning conversation' between student, parent and teacher. Our 6-8 students build a learning portfolio, available at all times to parents.

- Students add evidence of progress, successes and difficulties (written work, images, video recordings, audio recordings)
- Students and teachers add reflections and feedback.

The learning portfolio is essential to students' development as 'leaders of their own learning'. We encourage parents and students to discuss it regularly. It is a focal point for parent meetings and student-led conferences.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How does this prepare pupils for future exam success?

The 6-8 curriculum prepares students for success in future qualifications such as GCSEs and A-levels. The content of disciplinary lessons and inter-disciplinary IEs ensures that students have covered the foundation knowledge and disciplinary skills need to progress to the GCSE course of each subject. In addition, the valuable time spent developing and assessing inter-disciplinary academic skills gives students the tools and confidence to cope with the demands of preparing for public exams. Most importantly, the attributes students develop help them approach their exam courses as curious, reflective, confident, self-reliant and responsible learners.

### How big are the learning groups?

For most lessons and IE work, students work in groups of 18. They often work in smaller groups during their IEs to allow us to tailor activities to support and challenge students more effectively. At times during IEs there are short 'academic callovers' for larger groups to share information.

### Do students learn in mixed age groups?

No. Students learn in age-specific classes. However, Choice and some aspects of Crew (e.g. callovers) mix year groups. This is important socially and provides opportunities for leadership within a safe context.



### How are the Crews decided?

As with Lower School classes and Upper School tutor groups, we take many social and academic aspects into consideration to ensure the greatest balance and harmony. If there are social issues between crewmates, we try to overcome them together as this is an important learning experience. However, we are flexible and can reconfigure if there is an ongoing or particularly delicate situation.

### How does technology support the learning?

All students are equipped with a laptop. It is very important that they learn how to be discerning, responsible and creative users of technology in a global, digital world. When students are leaders of their own learning they must know how to locate, gather and critique information from a range of sources. ICT helps students connect to the outside world for authentic learning experiences. Creative use of technology is essential in many professions. However, an important part of students' learning is to understand when it is better not to use computers. We are very careful to monitor screen time.











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