

KAN KENT
ACADEMIES
NETWORK

SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

December 2020 report



About KAN

The Kent Academies Network (KAN) currently comprises Knole Academy, The Skinners' Kent Academy, Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey, John Wallis Church of England Academy, The Marsh Academy and their educational sponsors.

KAN has been running a university access programme since 2013 for bright students who meet the Free School Meals 'Ever 6' qualification and/or would be first-generation university students.

Every year, the academies identify Year 9 students to begin the interview process, and two or three are selected for the cohort from each school – making a total of around 15 students in a cohort. The students then begin the four year programme at the end of Year 9 with a summer residential week. Following from this, each academic year there are two meet-up days and two residential events, in the spring and summer. Students are introduced to subjects they may never have come across, super curricular lessons, inspirational speakers, cultural–capital–raising activities, and, of course, information and encouragement around university.

Throughout all of this, the KAN students are guided by an undergraduate mentor, who they can contact via the online platform Learnium, and who is with them at all of the events. Additionally, students are given a Unifrog account, which is an online HE tool and also an opportunity to take place in the Brilliant Club's scholars programme.

Front cover image: Artwork by Year 10 KAN student

Foreword

It's been invigorating getting to grips with KAN this term. In September and October, we charted new waters by interviewing our new 2020 cohort and mentors via Zoom. We then ventured further into the unknown with our new online mentoring sessions, where students have forty five minutes on Zoom in their mentoring groups. This will continue to take place at the start and end of each term. Overall, the highlight was the virtual November meet-up, where fantastic communal spirit, ethos of the programme and value of the mentors really shone through.

In the academic year 2019–20, the KAN students have had to deal with a lot, not least the lockdown that affected their schooling and the cancelling of their exams. Due to the pandemic their spring residential week didn't go ahead, meaning that the 2020 cohort weren't able to be interviewed, and the summer residential week was converted to a virtual event. Despite these interruptions I am extremely proud that we've been able to pick up the momentum of the programme this term. I'm delighted to say that all our students have had at least forty five minutes on Zoom with their mentor. 24 students have attended all three KAN events and 21 have attended two out of three. This has been important for all cohorts, the new Year 10s needed to meet their mentors, the Year 11s have only ever had one full residential week with KAN, the Year 12s have dealt with exam cancellations in the summer and starting their Sixth Form courses in strange times, and the Year 13s are at a crucial point with university applications.

Moving our events online and creating new opportunities has been exciting but also challenging. The network has been extremely gracious in helping facilitate these steps forward and I would like to give particular thanks to Jonathon, Katie, Kim, Paul and Sally for providing their time this term. The mentors, too, deserve a huge round of applause for being brilliantly communicative, adapting to working with the students virtually, and being eager to go the extra mile.

Finally, I must also thank the organisations who continue to generously support KAN: The Accelerate and Access Foundation, the Buffini Chao Foundation, Sevenoaks Foundation and those that wish to remain anonymous.

Isla Phillips
Director of KAN

To find out more about KAN and what our university programme entails, please visit our website: <https://outreach.sevenoaksschool.org/kentacademiesnetwork/>

Student Overview

In total we have 52 students across four cohorts (2017–2020). 50 students attended one or both online mentoring sessions and 88% of students attended the virtual November meet–up. The November percentage excludes students from Oasis Academy, who were all excused for an event at their school.

We have 10 students in the 2017 cohort (Year 13).

- Nine attended the October online mentoring, only three were excused from the November meet–up (due to workload) and seven attended the December online mentoring.
- At the November meet–up the Year 13s received a tailored session about academic reading in preparation for university next year.
- Four students have utilised their mentors in the process of editing personal statements and two have received help from Sevenoaks staff. In addition, two other students took up the offer of extra tutoring and had a brilliant Chemistry session after December mentoring.
- So far, four students have completed their UCAS application and have offers from Leeds, Birmingham, York, Oxford Brookes, QMUL, Surrey and Exter. One student has an interview offer from Cambridge and they received a practice interview with a Sevenoaks teacher after December mentoring.
- Over the last term, we have ascertained that two of the 12 who completed the programme in 2019–2020 are no longer engaged.

We have 12 students in the 2018 cohort (Year 12).

- Five students attended October online mentoring, six attended the November meet–up and six the December online mentoring. Reasons for being excused have been exclusively due to stress about work and not wanting to miss school or give up their study time.
- At the November meet–up the Year 12s received a session on personal statement writing delivered by the SLO team from Queens’ College, University of Cambridge.

We have 17 students in the 2019 cohort (Year 11).

- Only three students in this cohort were unable to attend October online mentoring and, again, only three at the December online mentoring. Except the three from Oasis Academy, only one student was excused from the November meet–up due to an upcoming internal assessments.
- This cohort was arguably the most affected by the pandemic as they attended their first residential in July 2019 and then had no face to face contact with their mentors until July 2020’s online event, which 9 of them attended. Therefore, their fantastic engagement this term is particularly encouraging.

- Over the last term, two of the 19 who completed the programme in 2019–2020 decided to leave the programme after deciding that they did not feel able to commit to KAN while focusing on their GCSEs and one further student is still considering if they are able to remain committed.

We have 15 students in the 2020 cohort (Year 10)

- All students attended October online mentoring, the November meet–up (except the two from Oasis Academy who were excused) and only three missed December online mentoring. This is fantastic engagement considering that they have started the programme totally virtually.
- Due to the interruption and restrictions of the pandemic these students were interviewed for 10 minutes on Zoom. This is radically different from the normal interview process which involves two panel interviews at Sevenoaks School during Easter. Originally, we gave places to 17 students, however, two students have decided not to take up their places after considering the commitment.



November meet-up 2020

Overall, we had 88% attendance at our virtual meet up. This percentage excludes the five students from Oasis Academy who were all excused for an event at their school. The total numbers were 38 out of 52 students. The other nine students were unable to attend due to their workloads and missing school lessons.

Overall, 88% attendance is a dramatic improvement on the 43% attendance at the July virtual event.

All 23 of the students who attended gave feedback and rated the sessions as useful and enjoyable, with many giving a 4/5 or 5/5 ratings.

"I really enjoyed today's session on Anxiety and Stress as I found it interesting and useful. I also enjoyed our mentoring sessions as it's always useful to get advice from our mentors."

"It was really good to hear about Medicine applications from Dr Parsons and also what Oxbridge really expect when looking at personal statements"

"I learnt about how to apply to universities based on GCSE subjects"

You can read in more detail about the sessions on the website, under [Past KAN Events](#), and see the schedule overview below:

- Dealing with Stress and Anxiety delivered by West Kent Mind
- Mentoring
- Either Game Theory: Maths and Morality (by Dr Rhatigan, Sevenoaks Teacher), or Social History and Fine Art (by Rebekah, new mentor and KAN alumnus), or US Election debate (by Harry, new mentor), or an applying for medicine focus group (by Dr Parsons, Sevenoaks Teacher).
- Cohort Reflection Time
- A super-curricular ideas workshop for Year 10 and 11 (by SLO team at Queens college Cambridge), a personal statement workshop for Year 12 (by SLO team at Queens college Cambridge) and an academic reading session for Year 13 (by experienced mentor Tom).

New Online Mentoring

The new initiative of providing students with a 45 minute mentoring session at the start and end of each term is so far a great success.

On 8 October we had 42 students attend (81%) and on 7 December we had 39 students attend (75%).

"I found it useful to get back into the swing of things and to learn new ways of revising."

"The session was very helpful."

"I thought that the mentoring session was very inclusive and interesting. My mentor was very kind and I can't wait to speak to them again"

Outside of KAN events students stay in touch with their mentors via the secure online platform, Learnium.



Developments

- With the generosity of the Buffini Chao foundation we are also now able to offer discretionary grants to current students to cover expenses for university visits and to mentors for leadership courses. Details of how to apply for the Buffini Chao Discretionary Fund are available on the [KAN website](#).
- We have secured 3 full bursary places on the Sevenoaks School Summer Programme in 2021. Applications for these places will open in the new year. Motivated students will be given the opportunity to write a personal statement and must commit to attending both the KAN July residential and the 2 week summer programme.
- 2 Year 13 students requested additional subject support with Chemistry, and we were able to run an online session with a Sevenoaks School teacher after the December mentoring.
- Sevenoaks teachers have also supported Year 13 university applications. For example, by commenting on their draft personal statements and conducting a practice interview.
- All KAN students have access to the Unifrog online tool which helps students compare post-school opportunities like universities, apprenticeships and careers. Engagement with the platform is good, and we mentors are making use of the resources well. Unifrog also contributed a session to our mentor training, which took place in October.
- For Years 10 and 12 we will be incorporating the Brilliant Club's Scholars Programme into our event schedule between February and June. In these tutorials students will study in small groups with a world expert PhD and produce an essay, giving them experience of what it is like to work at undergraduate level.
- KAN schools will continue to have access to our higher education days. We also hope to work closely with the academies to offer further sessions and support around higher education for the students at the KAN academies who aren't on our university access programme.
- We are working on strengthening the mentor and past student alumni network in order for current students and mentors to access the network for career and/or HE advice.

Impact on KAN Students

37 students have completed the full four years of the KAN university access programme. These students comprise the pilot cohorts 2013 – 2016. Out of the 34 known destinations, 94% achieved places to study for degrees or alternative apprenticeship and training pathways. Please see the [September 2020 Report](#) for further detail about KAN alumni destinations (available on the website).

In addition to the quantitative measure of university destinations, KAN has a very significant qualitative impact for all students:

- Raising aspirations.
- Widening subject knowledge and providing supercurricular opportunities.
- Improving cultural capital.
- Increasing self-confidence and soft skills. In partnership with ImpactEd we hope to measure Motivation, Self-efficacy, Openness and Extraversion as these have been identified as key areas that KAN benefits.

We are working closely with ImpactEd to begin to measure the qualitative impact of KAN. Below are quotes from the 2016 cohort, who graduated in 2020:

"I would never have considered Cambridge School of Art if I had not been on KAN as we had a look around during one of the summer residentials. And due to the residentials being in Cambridge I feel very safe already as I know where most things are. Thank you so much for being part of this program. It really boosted my confidence and did so much for me!"

"I am looking forward to university and am glad that I managed to make it despite the issues I faced. I would like to continue to hear from KAN and maybe even get involved and give back, as KAN helped me get through some difficult times and inspired me to keep pushing forward."

"KAN played such a big role in my university application using all the notes I'd collected from all the residential trips, as well as all the knowledge I'd gathered along the way about university and support in my academic life so really thankful to the programme."

Mentor Overview

The commitment of the mentors to KAN is outstanding. This term, praise should go to Tom, Harry and Rebekah for designing and delivering brilliant sessions as part of the November meet-up. Equally, it should be mentioned that Josephine and Gabrielle are continuing their mentor role in order to see the Year 13s through, despite starting full-time work. Equally, Sophie, Laura, Tom and Sam all graduated last year and are continuing with KAN whilst working on further courses (law training, MAs and PhDs).

In October we held virtual training which involved Safeguarding, KAN orientation, an introduction to coaching, Unifrog induction and a session by Advancing Access.

In total we have 20 mentors currently working for KAN

Year 13 Mentors	Degree and University	KAN dates
Tom	BA natural sciences (Cambridge), PhD Medicinal Chemistry (Oxford)	2016-2021
Gabrielle	BSc Politics, Philosophy and Economics (KCL and North Carolina), Account Executive (Four Communications)	2017-2021
Harriet	BSc Psychology with American Studies (Sussex and California)	2017-2021
Josephine	BS Chemical Engineering (Cambridge), Graduate Process Engineer (Atkins)	2017-2021

Year 12 Mentors	Degree and University	KAN dates
Sam	BA Law (Cambridge), PhD Law (Durham)	2016 –2021
Laura	BA Theology (Cambridge), MSc Global Governance and Ethics (UCL)	2018–2021
Vee	BA Human Social and Political Sciences (Cambridge)	2020 – 2022
Alex	BA History (Cambridge)	2020 –2022
Hamish	BA English (Kent)	2020 –2022

Year 11 Mentors	Degree and University	KAN dates
Astrid	BA Human Sciences (Oxford)	2018 – 2021
Sophie	BA Geography (Cambridge), Post Graduate Diploma in Law (BPP)	2018 –2021
James	Medicine (Southampton)	2019–2021
Vruti	BA Biomedical Engineering (QMUL) and Graduate Medicine (Keele)	2019 –2023
Tami	BA Politics and International Relations (Cambridge)	2020 –2023
Rosie	BA Classics (Cambridge)	2020 – 2021

Year 10 Mentors	Degree and University	KAN dates
Rebekah	KAN alumnus, BSc Sociology (LSE)	2020–2022
Hannah	KAN alumnus, BSc Psychology with Clinical Approaches (Sussex)	2020–2023
Harry	BA Political Science and Government (York)	2020–2021
Matilda	BSc Computer Science (Cambridge)	2020–2023
Rishika	BA Politics and International Relations (SOAS)	2020–2023

New Mentors for 2021	Degree and University	KAN dates
Lottie	Medicine (St Andrews)	2021 – 2025
Hetty	KAN alumnus, BA English Literature and Politics (Glasgow)	2021 –2024
Francesca	BA English (Cambridge)	2021 – 2022
Kian	KAN alumnus, BSc Physics (Kent)	2021 –2023
Chloe	KAN alumnus, BA English (Sussex)	2021 –2023
Etta	BA History (Cambridge)	2021–2023
Sophie	Kan alumnus, BA Geography (Newcastle)	2021 –2023

Impact on KAN Mentors

- We hire undergraduate students who are interested in education and social impact and provide high quality CPD and career support. The expertise and interest of the mentors benefits KAN students, while the experience of being a mentor nurtures future teachers and leaders in the field of social impact. Out of the 21 alumni that we are in contact with 12 are working in education or social impact.
- Further, KAN supports university students by providing a stable, supportive and fulfilling job.
- We are starting to see a full circle with KAN student alumni becoming mentors, so far from the 2016 and 2015 cohorts.

“Working as a mentor for KAN has been one of the most valuable experiences of my life. I love connecting with the students and I’ve also gained lots of important skills myself.”

Up-coming Events

Our up-coming events are as follows:

- 20 January – Online mentoring, 15:30 – 16:15
- Between February & June – Brilliant Club Scholars Programme Years 10 and 12, tutorials.
- 8 February – Virtual Meet-up, time tbc
- 3 March – Online Mentoring, 15:30 – 16:15
- 26 – 29 March – 2021 spring residential weekend (Sevenoaks School or Virtual)
- May mentoring, tbc
- 4 – 10 July– summer residential (Tonbridge School or Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge)

Supporters

KAN’s success would not be possible without the generosity and commitment of many individuals and organisations. Friends of the programme, alumni, and staff and teachers from the academies and Sevenoaks all volunteer their time and expertise. The Accelerate and Access Foundation, The Buffini Chao Foundation, Queens’ College Cambridge, Fitzwilliam College Cambridge, Tonbridge School, and those that wish to remain anonymous, support the funding of the KAN university access programme.



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For more information about KAN, visit our website

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

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