



# Information for Applicants

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## Welcome

Thank you for your interest in this post. The Kings of Wessex is an exceptional Academy with a strong commitment to excellence. There are currently nearly 1,100 students on roll aged 13 to 18, including a flourishing Sixth Form of over 280.

Kings is an exciting and rewarding place to work and the Academy prides itself on its academic success and wide range of achievements, enjoying an excellent reputation in the community and beyond. As a result, demand for places is high.

## History of the Academy

The Kings of Wessex was opened in 1976, although the origins of the Academy in fact date back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century when Hannah More founded the first school in Cheddar. The remains of an important Anglo Saxon Palace were discovered on the site, hence the name of *'The Kings of Wessex'*. The outline of the site of the Palace and also the ruins of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Chapel of St Columbanus today enhance the setting of the Academy.

Kings has Church of England Voluntary Controlled Status, which is reflected in both the composition of the Trustees of The Kings of Wessex Academy Trust and the ethos of the Academy and Kings enjoys close links with St Andrew's Church.

On 1 September 2006 Kings became a Foundation School and on 1 June 2011 became an Academy under the Government's fast-track scheme for Outstanding Schools.

Kings is situated in the thriving village of Cheddar, at the foot of the picturesque Mendip Hills. Cheddar is, of course, famous for its Gorge and cheese and is within easy commuting distance of Bristol, Bath, Wells and Weston-Super-Mare. The Academy serves a predominantly rural area and receives students from Cheddar and the surrounding villages.

## Academy Aims

The Academy's mission is: ***'Believe and Succeed'***, and students follow the Top Ten:

1	<b>I am a resilient learner – I always try my hardest and learn to the best of my ability</b>
2	<b>I am here to learn: I do as I am asked, the first time I am asked</b>
3	<b>I am always in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing</b>
4	<b>I use appropriate language, I do not shout and I am polite, saying 'please' and 'thank you' when I know I should. I keep inappropriate comments to myself</b>
5	<b>I always have the 'Super Six' for lessons (pen, pencil, ruler, calculator, reading book and timetable)</b>
6	<b>I always look smart and I am ready to learn (correct uniform, no chewing gum, no swinging on chairs, no mobile phones, headphones or iPods)</b>
7	<b>I respect other people and consider the effect of my actions on those around me, including my use of social media</b>
8	<b>I take pride in my work, including presentation</b>
9	<b>I am responsible for my learning and complete my homework on time. I do not disturb or distract others when they are learning</b>
10	<b>I know and understand what my 'Next Steps' are, to be successful in my future life</b>

## Examination Results 2018

In 2018, our students achieved excellent examination results at both GCSE and A Level.

At GCSE, 76% of students achieved a grade 4 or higher in both English and Maths with 52% of students achieving a grade 5+ in both subjects. The attainment 8 (average grade) was 5.30 and Progress 8 continued to be strong at around +0.5. 86% of students passed Maths at grade 4+ and 81% of students passed English at grade 4+. BTEC Performing Arts and Business Studies were among the highest performing subjects in Key Stage 4.

At A Level, the pass rate remained at an impressive 98% and almost half of all grades were at A\*-B.

## Ofsted Inspections 2015 and 2017

Kings was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2015 when the overall judgment was good with outstanding for the Sixth Form.

Kings is an exceptional Academy and we continue to be proud of our achievements. It was particularly pleasing that our Sixth Form and the safeguarding of our young people were both judged to be outstanding. We are working hard to focus on the areas noted for improvement in the report.

The SIAMS inspection in March 2015 judged Kings to be Outstanding Church of England Academy.

Recently in October 2017, the Academy had a Section 8 Ofsted Inspection looking specifically at Safeguarding in which it was found to be effective.

## Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is composed of the Executive Headteacher, two Deputy Heads, two Assistant Heads and the Business Manager with the following responsibilities:

- Executive Headteacher - Strategic Leadership and Curriculum
- Deputy Headteacher (Welfare and Inclusion) - Student Welfare and Guidance, Intervention and Child Protection
- Deputy Headteacher (Progress and Performance) - Examinations and Assessment and e-Learning
- Assistant Headteacher - Teaching and Learning/Continuing Professional Learning
- Assistant Headteacher - Sixth Form
- Business Manager – Finance, Premises, HR, Operations

In addition, the SLT has a number of shared responsibilities that include policy formulation and evaluating the work of the Academy. SLT are linked with Heads of House and Subject Leaders for the purpose of communication and accountability and monitor the work of the Academy through performance data, subject reviews, lesson observations and the scrutiny of students' work.

## Academy Improvement Planning

The Academy has an annual development planning cycle.

An opportunity is provided for all staff, students and parents to contribute to the Academy Improvement Plan. Priorities are also informed by the outcomes of inspection, performance data, and academy self-evaluation. All Subject Teams are required to prepare an Action Plan that reflects the Academy Improvement Plan priorities and is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. A termly report is submitted to the Governing Body on the implementation of the Academy Improvement Plan.

## Teaching and Learning

Effective Teaching and Learning is central to the work of Kings. Teachers make an enormous difference to the success, or otherwise, of students, and it is for this reason that we are constantly striving to improve.

The Academy has a dynamic and exciting programme of Teaching and Learning, including a Teaching Framework to which all staff are expected to adhere, setting out the minimum expectations in terms of pedagogy and classroom management.

Teachers deploy various strategies to make lessons exciting and enlightening, and there is an emphasis on active learning in lessons rather than passive. A team of Learning Coaches work closely with colleagues to support them and enhance good practice and staff are equipped with a Teaching and Learning Toolkit.

Good planning is central to good teaching and all teaching staff plan their work on a daily basis on their laptop identifying learning objectives, teaching and learning activities and homework.

Sharing good practice is important and staff are encouraged to work together with colleagues to share aspects of their teaching that they feel went particularly well. There are also opportunities for staff to observe lessons of colleagues across the Academy.

## Curriculum

All students benefit from a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum up to the age of 16. Our young people are entering a world marked by rapid technological, globalisation and social change, and in their adult lives even greater demands will be made on them needing to be IT /literate, adaptable, self-reliant, confident and this is where our high standards of education are so important.

The curriculum is organised within Subject Teams with support provided by Learning Support. There are currently five 60-minute lessons in the academy day, and in addition a 20-minute assembly/tutor period.

All students in Year 9 study Core Science, and approximately 60% will move on to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate Sciences whilst the remainder will take Combined Science.

Students who are capable of progressing to University are currently advised to take a Humanities Subject (History or Geography) and a Language (French or German) to be able to achieve the English Baccalaureate

All students follow a three-year Key Stage 4 curriculum commencing in Year 9 and study the following core subjects:

- English Language and Literature
- Maths
- Science
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

To be eligible for the EBacc students must choose a Humanities option (either Geography or History) and a Languages option (French or German). But they can also select to study **both** Geography and History and both French and German.

The EBacc combination can also include two Learning Support courses, including English and Maths basics and EBacc booster, which is the equivalent of one day a week in Learning Support to cover basic literacy and numeracy, with additional work and life skills.

Students are able to choose two additional Enrichment Options from the following GCSE/BTEC subjects:

- Art, Craft and Design (GCSE)
- Business Studies (GCSE and BTEC)
- Certificate in Digital Applications (ICT)
- Computer Science (GCSE)
- Design and Technology (GCSE)
- Food Preparation and Nutrition (GCSE)
- French (GCSE)
- German (GCSE)
- History (GCSE)
- Music (GCSE)
- Performing Arts (BTEC)
- Physical Education (GCSE)
- Sports Science (OCR Cambridge Nationals)
- Textiles (GCSE)

All students study non-examined courses in PSHE/Citizenship, Physical Education and Careers Education in Years 9 to 11.

## Sixth Form

Students in the Sixth Form at Kings can currently study the following A Level courses:

- Art
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Design & Technology (Product Design)
- English Language
- English Literature
- Film Studies
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Modern Foreign Languages (French and/or German)
- Music
- Philosophy & Ethics
- Photography
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Textiles

Students can also choose to study the following BTEC Level 3 Diplomas:

- Applied Science
- Business Studies
- Performing Arts
- Sport and Fitness Services

And also, the following:

- Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma IT in Digital Media
- Level 2 BTEC Work Skills
- Extended Project AS Level
- GCSE English Language and Mathematics

Year 12 students have the opportunity to complete the Extended Project Qualification as an extra A Level qualification to gain extra UCAS points. Each student is assigned a Staff Supervisor and completes a 5,000-word dissertation over the summer holidays. Whilst the Extended Project is entirely optional for the students, they are actively encouraged to undertake the important independent study project. Supervisors meet with the students, but are not required to mark the dissertation. It is the students' responsibility to organise the meetings and to complete their dissertation.

The Sixth Form have their own Common Room for use at free time. In addition to the Sixth Form Study Room, students also make use of our Learning Resources Centre for private study. A large number of Year 11 students chose to continue their education in the Sixth Form and a growing number of students are opting to transfer into the Sixth Form from other local Schools and Academies.

The students play an important role in the Academy, organising the student council, charity events and attending academy events. The Head Boy, Head Girl and Senior Student Team are selected every year from the Sixth Form following a testing selection process.

## Assessment and Reporting

All students are assessed at regular intervals by their teachers and the assessment pattern is dominated largely by public examinations. GCSE and A Level examinations take place in June and there are also internal examinations for Years 9, 10 and 11.

Students in all year groups are made aware of their target grades at the beginning of the year and receive regular assessment feedback from their teachers in the form of predicted grades.

All teachers record assessment data electronically using SIMS Assessment Manager. This “electronic mark book” is also used to distribute prior attainment data and to support the monitoring of students’ progress against their targets.

## Celebrating Achievement

Celebrating our students’ achievements is important at Kings. Throughout the academic year, students receive merits for their work and contribution to Kings leading to Special Achievement Awards: Bronze (15 merits); Silver (30), Gold (50), Double Gold (75), Platinum (100), Double Platinum (150) and Titanium (250). Students are presented with Special Achievement badges, certificates and from Double Gold to Titanium, students also receive vouchers.

Praise Post cards are also sent home to parents to celebrate students’ work and end of term presentation assemblies are held to celebrate students for their achievement and contribution in academic and enrichment subjects, colours, 100% attendance and other awards. Students are also celebrated as “Stars of the Term” for each Department in special display boards around the Academy.

A special highlight on the academic calendar is the annual Awards Evening in September, when we welcome parents, Governors and friends of the Academy to celebrate our students’ success, which is attended by all staff.

## Setting Arrangements

In Years 9 – 11, students are set according to their ability in Maths, Science and, to a more limited extent, in English and Languages.

The rest of the Year 9 curriculum is taught in mixed ability groups. In Years 10 and 11 students are taught in groups that are determined by their option choices.

## Staffing

Kings’ greatest asset is, of course, its staff and we are committed to supporting fully both teachers and non-teachers. The Academy currently has nearly 75 teachers organised in Subject Teams and Year Groups and over 50 support staff across the Academy.

Staff enjoy positive and supportive relationships, and a teamwork ethos. An induction programme is provided for all new staff, and there is a strong commitment to professional development. All teaching staff are provided with a laptop computer.

Job descriptions are issued to all staff and are reviewed as appropriate. All teaching staff are involved in appraisals with an annual meeting to review and set targets. Meetings are held regularly with a weekly briefing for all teaching staff, half termly Subject Leader meetings, followed by team meetings and Year Leader meetings.

All staff appointed to The Kings of Wessex are expected to support the aims of the Academy and uphold high our professional standards. The Academy has a staff dress policy and is a non-smoking environment.

## Continuing Professional Learning

We are committed to the professional development of all staff and provide training, which supports colleagues at all levels of the organisation in their work. Staff who are new to the Academy are supported by an Induction Programme and are assigned an individual mentor.

A wide range of Continuing Professional Learning sessions is on offer to support staff in improving their teaching, assessment and leadership skills. These include external training, in-house training, visits to other Schools and Academies and time off timetable to work with colleagues. A Continuing Professional Learning programme by teachers for teachers runs throughout the year in twilight sessions.

The Academy has a strong commitment to leadership training through programmes, and also includes supporting staff on the NPQH programme.

Kings works in partnership with other Somerset Academies to provide joint training and professional development opportunities.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The work of the Academy is evaluated by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Subject Leaders Team.

Performance data is monitored on an on-going basis. All teaching staff receive data that shows the Value-Added progress made by students in their teaching groups. SLT undertake reviews involving lesson observations, scrutiny of students work, and discussion with students. This helps to inform priorities for future work, and also helps to monitor the implementation and impact of new initiatives.

Subject Leaders complete individual Team Evaluations, including undertaking lesson observations, student voice and scrutiny of work. This information is then discussed with their SLT Link and contributes towards the evaluation of the Academy.

## Welfare and Guidance

To ensure students develop their full potential, it is vital that they are given the support and guidance that enables them to get the best out of their learning and to be happy in school.

On entry to the Academy, the students are placed in mixed ability tutor groups, in which they generally remain throughout the Academy. This academic year, there are currently ten forms of entry in Years 9 and 11 and nine in Year 10, each with a Tutor who looks after day-to-day matters and monitors the progress of students.

As part of the pastoral system Kings operates a House system in the Lower School with the four Houses: Avalon, Camelot, Lyonesse and Tintagel. Each Head of House has overall responsibility for their House (with Years 9 – 11 vertical tutor groups) the Assistant Headteacher is responsible for the Sixth Form.

The House system is designed to foster a sense of belonging within the “smaller school” so that every young person can be noticed and flourish. The House system also drives competition, student leadership, and fosters the importance of being a team player, and each House has its own outdoor social space.

The dedicated Welfare Centre is led by the Deputy Headteacher (Welfare and Inclusion) to care and support for students’ well-being and to encourage resilience and the Team includes the following posts:

- Student Welfare Officer
- Parents and Families Support Adviser
- Internal Exclusion Supervisor
- Christian Leader
- Also working closely with the Attendance Officer

Students consider A Thought for the Week in tutor time with time to reflect on weekly themes of interest and instruction and attend assemblies for collective worship. During the year, they attend church services at St Andrew’s Church in Cheddar village for Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter and Years 9 and 13 attend the special Ascension Day service.

Focus Days during the term and extended tutor time on Fridays provides more time for students to focus on life skills, world events, topical issues and learning how to learn.

The Academy works closely with The Space, a community programme in Cheddar to provide extra support for young people in what can be pressured modern times. The Space is a drop-in centre at the Cheddar Methodist Hall where young people can have access to qualified counsellors, and opportunities to take part in activities and raising awareness to all regarding young people’s mental health.

From September 2018, there is a mobile phone ban for the Lower School, which means students can have their phone with them during the school day, but it must be switched off and out of sight. This is to encourage young people to talk to each other in person, and to reduce the sometimes stress of anti-social media.

All students follow a programme of PSHE/Citizenship (Personal, Social and Health Education) to help them cope with the demands of life in and out of the Academy. The course includes areas such as Health Education, Sex Education, Study Skills and Careers Education and Guidance.

## Mentoring

The Mentoring Plus programme supports all Year 11 students and Mentors meet with students six times on a one-to-one basis during the academic year to review progress and set new learning targets. The Mentor liaises directly with subject staff to ensure students are kept on track and that any missing work is caught up. Any student falling behind, or needing additional support attends compulsory extra sessions at lunchtime and after school.



## ICT

The Network Manager and team of ICT Technicians, and Web Developer oversee the network, which provides access for administration and curriculum use.

The Virtual Learning Environment Firefly, provides teachers and students with anytime, anywhere browser access to online educational resources and services. Through Firefly, people can share their ideas and knowledge, and communicate and collaborate more easily.

Teachers set homework and add resources to Firefly, which students access from home and they also save their work onto Firefly whilst in the Academy to access from home.

All subject areas have access to ICT provision with computer suites serving most subjects. The majority of classrooms are equipped with data projectors and Kings has over 500 PCs. Extensive use is made of ICT for both teaching and learning across all subjects.

All teaching staff have a laptop computer linked to a wireless network, used for lesson planning, registering attendance, recording assessment data and communication by email.

## Careers Education and Guidance

Careers is part of the Employability agenda and focuses on the skills and attributes young people will need for the changing world of employment in the globally competitive world.

Our Careers Adviser works with our young people to provide careers information, advice and guidance. The emphasis in Year 9 is on helping young people to make decisions and explore career opportunities. Year 10 students undertake a period of work experience in the Summer Term and work in the Academy focuses on helping students to prepare, including participation in a Key Skills day.

Throughout Year 11 students receive guidance and support in helping them to make decisions about Post-16 options and they meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team for a dedicated one-to-one career meeting.

In the Sixth Form the emphasis is on helping young people through the application process for Higher Education or in entering the workplace.

Careers education also forms part of our PSHE/Citizenship Programme and young people receive individual support and guidance in response to their specific needs.

## Facilities

The Academy is sited on an attractive campus close to the centre of the village of Cheddar, with views across the Mendip Hills and Somerset Levels; and is within driving distance of Bristol and Bath.

Each Subject Team has its own suite of rooms with a teacher planning room, and there are specialist facilities in Design Technology, Science, Languages, Art, Music, and ICT and Computer Science.

The Academy has a state-of-art Kings Theatre and Learning Resource Centre, which houses the library and is equipped with a suite of computers and study area.

In recent years, many of the buildings have been re-clad and new windows fitted to create a lovely, warm and safe learning environment for our young people.

Also on the campus is the large sports centre 'Kings Fitness and Leisure,' a separate company to the Academy. The Centre is very popular and enjoys a large membership with the community, and provides a wide range of classes and access to a Sports Hall, studios, squash courts, swimming pool and Fitness Suite and smart changing rooms. All academy employees who work more than 0.4 FTE (20 hours) per week are entitled to a Complimentary Silver Membership to Kings Fitness and Leisure, which entitles staff to full and unlimited access to the gym facilities, swimming pool and racquet sports.

Students can buy appetising and healthy food and drink in the Kings Café, which has a large dining space for students and is a popular space on the Kings campus.

Community champions Cheddar Arts@Kings Theatre run a lively programme of theatre, film, music and live events from our Kings Theatre, run by a team of committed and enthusiastic volunteers.

## Finance

The Academy manages its own annual budget with funding for capitation devolved to Subject Teams on a formula basis and Subject Leaders are responsible for its effective management.

The Academy has been successful in attracting significant additional funding over recent years.

## Parent Partnership

The Academy works very closely with parents and is committed to an effective partnership for the benefit of our students and is grateful to parents for their support and encouragement at home.

Parents are welcomed into the Academy by appointment and we are in regular contact with home to report on progress and broader academy issues. Tutors phone home to parents at the start of term to inform of tutees' progress and keep in close contact during the year.

Throughout the year, parents can read about news at Kings and on the Headteacher Blog on the academy website and on Facebook and Twitter.

The Parent Teacher Association is very active at Kings, and provides valuable support and an important link between the Academy and the Parent Body. The PTA gives generously to Subject Teams and raises money from providing refreshments and raffles at academy events, as well as donations by parents to the Enrichment Fund.

## Learning Support

Our Learning Support Department provides personalised support for our young people to ensure that they are able to access learning in the classroom, engage with personal and social development activities and be fully integrated into all aspects of life at Kings. The learning support team is based in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) where there is a dedicated staff work room, quiet student space and there is also separate therapy room with facilities for delivering physiotherapy programmes.

Students identified as requiring support may have access to the following, depending on their need:

- In-class support from a Learning Support Assistant who will work to ensure students can access learning but also promote independence.
- Intervention sessions to work on identified areas of need such as literacy skills, social skills or emotional literacy skills

- Paired Reading programme, which is well supported by our Sixth Form students and community volunteers.
- Individual learning programmes which may include Life and Living Skills or entry level qualifications
- Mentoring

Where required, a diagnostic assessment, using a wide range of standardised tests, may be undertaken to inform teaching and plan a support package.

There is opportunity for students to attend lunchtime study support sessions in the LRC, or use the quiet room space for some time out.

## Enrichment Activities

The Participation Drive at Kings encourages all students to get involved in an activity to provide wider personal development and there is a wonderful tradition of providing students with an exciting programme of enrichment activities. Clubs and opportunities range from music and sports, “Platform” Creative Arts/Writing magazine, Photography, Engage (Christian Union), the Kings and Queens News Team and many more. There are termly musical concerts and annual productions involving a large cast of students and last year, Year 11 Performing Arts students gave a moving performance of **“Blood Brothers.”** This year, students will be performing “Legally Blonde” – which is awaited with much anticipation. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is also very popular with students and provides opportunity for them to challenge themselves.

In the Autumn Term, Year 9 are introduced to the enrichment programme at the Freshers’ Fayre and are encouraged to take part and learn something new.

Trips and visits are an integral part of life at Kings. Students sometimes journey further afield and international visits have included trips to France, Germany, New York, Poland, San Francisco, and in the summer holidays, Operation Wallacea students travelled to Dominica.

It is expected that all staff will assist in providing enrichment opportunities for our students.

The Sports Academy launched this school year gives students opportunity to sign-up to an annual membership and benefit from the excellent facilities at Kings Fitness and Leisure, with opportunities to play in team sports and access external coaches with a focus on promoting healthy lifestyles.

## Wessex Learning Trust

The Cheddar Valley operates as a tier education system: nine First Schools (aged 4-9 years) and two Middle Schools (ages 9-13) that all feed into The Kings of Wessex Academy.

From 1 November 2016 Kings joined together with seven partner schools (Axbridge, Lympsham, East Brent, Mark, Weare, Wedmore First School Academies and Hugh Sexey Middle School) to form a Multi Academy Trust named the “Wessex Learning Trust.”

The Headteachers meet regularly to plan provision and strategy and operate together as an effective team. Subject co-ordination is strong, with teachers involved in an established programme of cross-phase curriculum planning. The Trust Schools come together for joint training days and opportunities are also provided to involve students in shared activities. This joined up thinking ensure children in the area benefit from continuity in their education from five to 18.

The Academy also works closely with a wider group of schools, notably Cheddar, Draycott & Rodney Stoke and Shipham First Schools and Fairlands Middle School who all together form the Cheddar Valley Learning Partnership.

