



Brief for the position of
Head



■ ODGERS BERNDTSON



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Background

The King Alfred School (KAS) adopts a progressive approach to education through its innovative curriculum, focussing on the whole child's academic and personal success. Located on the fringes of Hampstead, in two green and leafy wooded settings, it is informal, relational, co-educational, mixed ability and non-denominational. Since its foundation in 1898, KAS has been committed to education reform and is a leading voice in current educational change through its co-founding role in **Rethinking Assessment**.



Philosophy and Aims

KAS was founded in 1898 by a group of parents who sought to create **an excellent education** focussing on the whole child, and who wanted the school to make a **positive impact on the world**.

Today, KAS remains true to these two principles, and is a school that stands out from the prevailing educational landscape. Based on a deep understanding of child development and educational research, the School has developed its own approach to excellent education, which enables all students to **'thrive at school, and beyond'**.

An Excellent Education

At KAS, enjoyment of school is a fundamental. Children and teenagers do not need to feel unnecessary pressure, stress or fear. Rather, school should be a place which emphasises creative and active learning and the value of play. It should be a place where teachers go beyond the syllabus to engender a passion for their subjects. And it should be a place where every individual enjoys their learning, and takes that enjoyment with them into their adult lives.

It is expected that all students strive for academic success, so they can be proud of their achievements, and so they open the door to the next stage of their education. In this context,

KAS celebrates diversity and acknowledges academic success for one child may look different to another. The School allows children to develop at their own pace, and focus on the progress each child makes from their individual starting point. The excellent GCSE and A level results at KAS are testament to the success of this approach.

Well-being has always been at the heart of KAS. The School supports students to become relaxed, confident, tolerant and articulate young people who are able to take responsibility for themselves. Key to this is the staff, who provide a compassionate and supportive environment and develop strong relationships with students based on mutual respect and trust.



An Impact on the World

KAS believes its pupils should feel empowered to make a difference in the world. The School support students from an early age to articulate their views and learn how to have an impact. Fundamental to the KAS experience is finding your own path, having the courage to follow it, and being equipped with the knowledge and skills to make a difference.

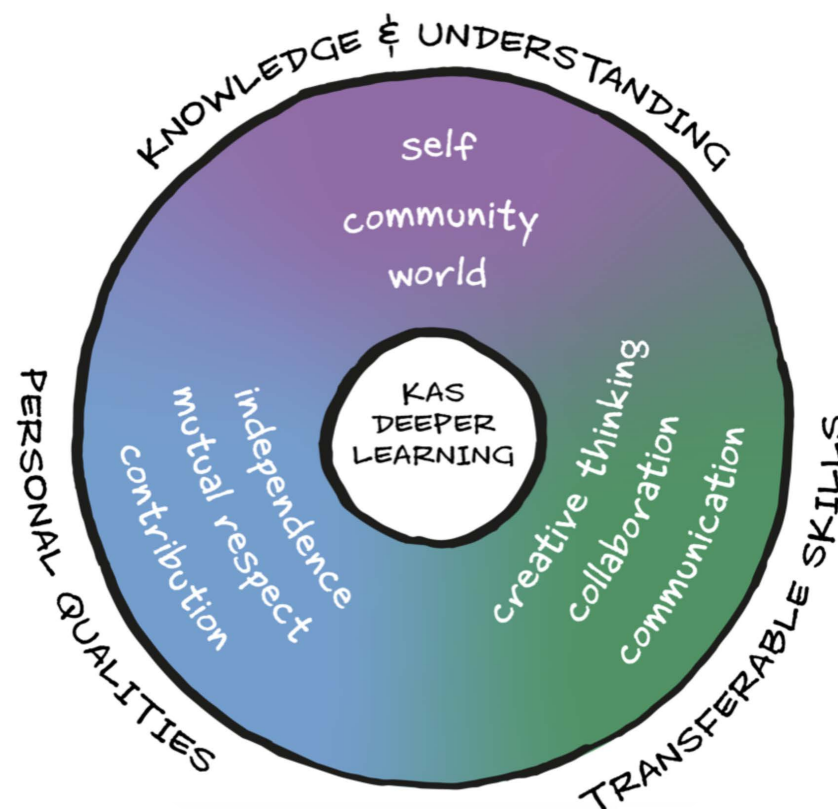
As a school, KAS also seeks to make a difference in the world. All at the School believe passionately in its vision of education and want to inspire and influence other educators.

The current model of schooling in this country has become unbalanced. It lacks academic and creative ambition, and results in unnecessary and sometimes damaging pressures for young people. By placing the child rather than the system at the heart of education, KAS aims to improve the model. The School is developing its own innovative approaches and collaborating via partnerships with both state and independent schools to enhance the experience for young people everywhere. The School is also leading members of several groups which advocate for change, including Rethinking Assessment.

The KAS Deeper Learning Wheel

The KAS Deeper Learning articulates the School's vision for a holistic education in line with the School's

two aims: to provide an excellent education and to have an impact on the world.



Guiding Principles

At the early stages of the School's development, the founders of KAS asked themselves what would most benefit children and thus established the five principles that remain at the heart of a KAS education today:

- Mutual respect
- Individuality and self-reliance
- Social responsibility
- Freedom, play and the enjoyment of education
- A broad definition of success

The School

There are currently 700 students from ages 4-18 in the School. Well located in North London, it is well served by public transport. The site covers two woodlands: Manor Wood, which houses most of the School, and Ivy Wood, which houses the Reception and Year 1 classes, the design and technology centre, and the Phoenix Theatre.

A high teacher/pupil ratio enables a rich variety of activities both inside and outside the classroom. There is a strong tradition of camps and excursions all of which seek to build self-knowledge, resilience and community spirit.

Whilst KAS takes a different approach to preparing students for public exams, the results are strong. Both GCSE and A level results compare very well to other non-selective independent schools, and indeed selective independent schools. This is because of the approach to learning, rather than in spite of it. KAS teaching aims to inspire and instil a passion for subjects rather than focus on exam preparation, and sees exam success as a by-product of learning rather than its aim. The vast majority of pupils

go on to the university of their choice including regular Oxbridge entrances.

At the same time, the School celebrates with equal measure the achievements of those who choose a different path. Ultimately, KAS judges the success of its philosophy by the independence and acknowledged maturity of its students when they go beyond its gates.

A key element of KAS is its strong community feel. Whilst there is a Lower and an Upper School structure, age groups are encouraged to mix and the school operates as an integrated whole. Some of the annual school trips are open to a wide range of ages and families.; for example, the School's three sailing boats were designed and built by a combination of staff, pupils and parents and are used for school holiday trips abroad by all of those groups together. Children are encouraged to engage in social action and charitable activities from an early age. As family life is believed to be a vital aspect of education, parental partnership is actively promoted.





Active involvement of staff in all aspects of the School is also expected. The mutually respectful pupil/teacher relationships, which are so key to the KAS approach, are fostered as much on regular camps and trips as they are in the classroom. The School is owned and operated by The King Alfred School Society which is a charity, and members of which are parents, ex-parents and members of staff. The Society runs regular conferences and puts aside funds for educational research. Recently, for example, it commissioned an external study of the School's Village Project, an annual event where Year 8 students build and live in a self-organising community in the school grounds.

The elected governing body, known as Council, is composed of parents and ex-parents with a wide variety of backgrounds and they are joined by two external educational specialists. KAS has no trust funds or endowments and is financed solely by school fees and additional fundraising. Council maintains a long-term development and investment plan for both education and facilities which looks 5 to 15 years ahead for the site plan. Recent investments have included the purchase and development of the

Ivy Wood site, at a cost of £4 million, the redevelopment of the five courts into a new IT, Art, library and Staff Room facility for the Lower School at a cost of £2.5 million, and the building of a new Sixth Form block at a cost of £2 million which was opened in 2021. The proactively developed site 'Masterplan' identifies a range of future projects which will help KAS to achieve its ambitious goals for transforming the School and the educational landscape.

Further information on The King Alfred School can be found via the website: www.kingalfred.org.uk



The Role

This is a unique opportunity for an inspirational leader with the vision and independence of thought to take this exceptional school forward. Commitment to and passion for the KAS approach is essential, as is a natural affinity with and respect for children. The new Head will be happy to work collaboratively and informally with all members of the school community, and capable of leading by inspiring others rather than solely relying on authority.

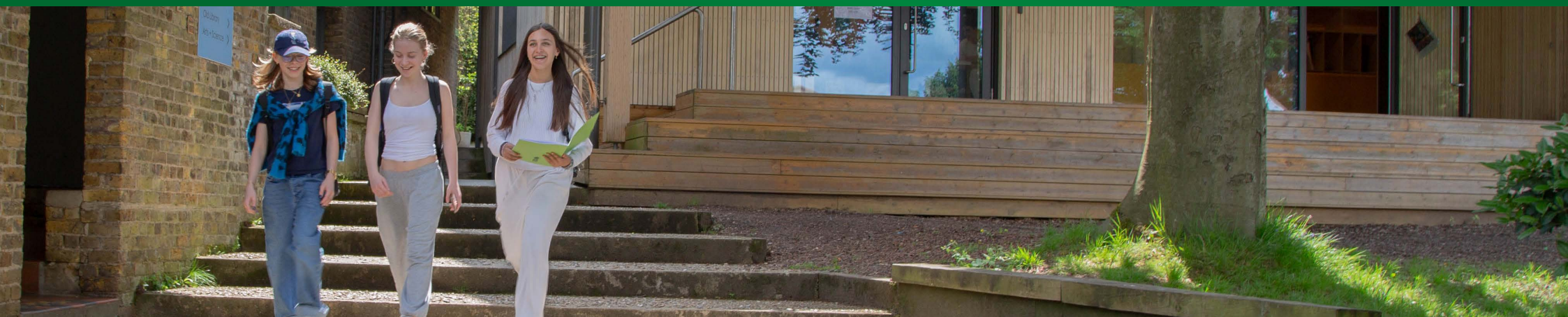
The post-holder will ensure the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers, and guide them in relation to the ethos to ensure they instil in pupils an ongoing excitement for learning, in addition to enabling them to achieve their full potential in exams. The successful candidate will be a strong,

natural communicator who can ensure parental confidence in the KAS approach, and be an ambassador for the School and its philosophy externally.

The Head is accountable to Council for the successful leadership and management of the School and is responsible for the School's performance.

The Head is supported by Council in mutually-agreed strategic planning for the development of the School in accordance with its ethos. The post-holder will be expected to contribute to the Society's remit of reflection and research on the educational process.





The Head's specific responsibilities are:

Strategic Leadership

- Working openly and co-operatively with Council, informing, advising and ensuring it is fully briefed on all relevant matters.
- Enhancing and managing the School Development Plan, ensuring that priorities are set, agreed with Council, and implemented.
- Inspiring and securing the commitment of key stakeholders to the strategic vision and overall direction of the School, including staff, students, parents, alumni, and the wider community.
- Ensuring that the ethos and values of the School are sustained and that excellent relationships with staff, pupils and parents are an ongoing priority.
- Working with Council to build relationships with the wider community.

- Being aware of, and responding to, the local and wider external environment of the School and sector in the UK, being proactive in seizing opportunities for the School and adapting plans and strategies in response as necessary.

Educational Leadership

- Ensuring the establishment, appraisal and maintenance of high educational standards in accordance with the KAS ethos to ensure that pupils develop to their individual potential.
- Ensuring that the School adheres to the highest possible standards of safeguarding and pastoral care, and that the physical and mental health and well-being of students and colleagues remain at the heart of the School's mission and day-to-day activities.

- Reflecting on and developing practice in accordance with the latest understanding of child development and learning, and communicating findings to Council.
- Appointing, retaining and developing high-calibre teaching staff who strongly identify with the ethos of the School.
- Inspiring teachers to work to their full potential.
- Promoting self-discipline and mutual respect in pupils.
- Fostering relationships between pupils and teachers based on trust and respect rather than authority and discipline.
- Ensuring there is a coherent pedagogy which respects the different phases of the pupils' educational journey from the Lower School through to the Sixth Form.
- Encouraging educational research projects by staff within and outside the School.

- Ensuring that all required arrangements are in place to facilitate inspections and provide guidance and leadership through the inspection process.
- Supporting and continuing to develop the comprehensive programme of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging across the School as an integral part of its ethos.
- Championing the continued development of SEND inclusive educational approaches that ensures all students receive an education that is of the highest quality and tailored to their individual needs.
- Ensuring that emerging technologies and AI are explored for their potential to complement the learning environment for students and teachers.

Business and Commercial Leadership

- Working in collaboration with the Director of Finance and Operations, Treasurer and Finance Committee of Council regarding the overall financial stability of the School.
- Overseeing the School's operation with the annual budget determined by Council.
- Being responsible, with the Director of Finance and Operations, for the strategic planning and action regarding the financial stability of the School.
- In consultation with the Director of Finance and Operations and Council, prioritising and planning capital expenditure linked to the School's strategic aims and overall vision.
- Identifying new opportunities for the School to increase its non-fee income by fostering an environment of innovation in order to exploit the opportunities afforded by the School's assets.

Marketing and External Engagement

- Promoting and maintaining good relationships and communication between the School and parents of current and potential pupils.
- Disseminating the theory and practice of the KAS approach within the school community, and ensuring it is understood and respected by all.
- Developing marketing strategies to ensure the continued growth of the School and achieve optimum enrolment numbers.
- Personally promoting the interests, reputation and philosophy of KAS, nationally and in the local community.
- Representing the school at public events.
- Reporting to the AGM of the KAS Society.
- Maximising the opportunities offered by the Society's remit to gain a voice in the wider educational community.
- Play a leading role in the School's fundraising, engaging persuasively and authentically with existing and potential donors.



The Person

The Head of The King Alfred School will be a highly visible, inspirational and innovative leader who can secure the full engagement of staff, students, parents and Council in the delivery of the School's strategic aims.



The successful candidate will possess most or all of the following qualifications and experience, skills and knowledge, and personal attributes:

Qualifications and Experience

- Experience of senior level leadership in a school, most likely gained as a Head.
- Educated to degree level with any postgraduate or leadership qualification an advantage.
- Outstanding teaching track record, with relevant pastoral involvement.
- Experience of working collaboratively with a board or group of other senior leaders on strategic planning, demonstrating the ability to translate strategy into a clear plan.
- Evidence of overseeing specific areas of educational practice.
- Experience as an excellent communicator to staff, parents and pupils in a way that inspires confidence and respect.
- Demonstration within own professional practice of an understanding and appreciation of the School's progressive approach.
- Demonstrable experience of engaging and building relationships with key internal and external parties.
- Experience of the full range of staff management processes, from recruitment, development, retention and performance management to dismissal.



Skills, Knowledge and Personal Attributes

- Ability to lead and inspire with minimum reliance on authority.
- Ability to communicate with children and young people across the age span.
- Excellent communication and ambassadorial skills and sensitivity to the external environment within which the School operates.
- A natural affinity and respect for children and young people.
- Ability to work collaboratively and informally with all members of the school community.
- An understanding of KAS's educational philosophy and practice, and an ability to articulate it.
- Ability to be receptive to and enable ideas and projects from staff, students and parents.
- Provision of examples within own practice that fit areas of the progressive approach.
- The desire and ability to develop and promote educational practice drawing on current thinking and research.
- Skills in line management of staff and teams that combine adherence to effective process and policy with a high level of emotional intelligence and good judgment.
- A warm, open and approachable style in relation to all.
- Skills in working collaboratively with parents in relation to challenging and complex concerns.
- High-level analytical skills with regards to processing complex information.
- An understanding of relevant legislation.
- Integrity.
- Understanding and knowledge of the value of outdoor education.
- Understanding and knowledge of the value of play in education.
- Knowledge, not necessarily gained through deep experience, of fundraising and alumni engagement.
- Evidence of providing leadership that strengthens Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging.
- Demonstrable understanding of effective teaching and learning strategies for pupils with SEND.
- Technology literate and with an interest in the role of emerging technologies and AI for the future of education and work.

How to Apply

The King Alfred School has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson to assist with the recruitment of the next Head.

The closing date for applications is 09.00 BST Tuesday 27 May.

Letters of application, CVs and completed application forms should be submitted online (preferred) at: www.odgers.com/92452.

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation.

Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. This can be found at the end of the application process. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

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Initial interviews with Odgers Berndtson will take place **w/c 9 June**. Shortlist interviews with the Selection Panel will take place on **Wednesday 25 June**. Candidates invited to the final stage will have a briefing visit to the School on one of the following dates: **27 June, 30 June, 1 July or 2 July**. Following this there will be a final interview which will take place on **Thursday 3 or Monday 7 July**.

The King Alfred School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure check by the Disclosure and Barring Service.



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