

For a school at the top of the academic super-league, KEHS offers a remarkably chilled life. No streaming, sets, head girl, prefects or houses - each girl is treated as an individual and helped to develop what the school calls 'intellectual curiosity and excitement'. Alongside their A-levels, pupils can opt to take the AQA Bacc, which gives credit for 'enrichment activities' such as work experience, drama or D of E, as well as a university-style dissertation. Head Sarah Evans wants her pupils to understand that they don't have to be aggressively competitive to succeed in life. "Do maths because you really love it, not because you are better than your neighbour", she advises. Three cheers for her sensible PE policy too - she doesn't see the point of forcing girls to do sport. That said, this is still a splendidly sporty school: KEHS hockey and netball teams are regional winners, and a Year 7 girl is the British Youth Champion in the under- 12 sabre-fencing category. There's no chapel - thrice-weekly assemblies end with 'quite time' rather than prayers, to give everyone space for their own thoughts.