

# Surrey Maths School

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Type of provider:</b>	16 to 19 free school
<b>Address:</b>	Kings College Guildford GU2 8DU

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of education programmes for young people within the further education and skills sector. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Surrey Maths School is in Guildford, Surrey. It is a specialist school for 16- to 19-year-olds, aiming to prepare students for higher-level study leading to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) specialisms. It is part of the Learning Partners Academy Trust. It is currently co-located at one of the Trust's schools before moving into its permanent premises in the next academic year.

The first cohort of students started in September 2024. Alongside A levels in mathematics and further mathematics, students study one or two additional A levels in chemistry, computer science, economics or physics. There are currently 83 students studying at Surrey Maths School, of whom 33 are studying three A levels and 50 are studying four A levels.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant education programmes that have a clearly defined purpose? Significant progress**

Leaders offer a highly specialist study programme to young people with a particular aptitude and enthusiasm for STEM. Leaders are committed to inclusivity and helping to inspire future cohorts of young people. They have a thoughtful and well-considered outreach work programme to encourage students from a range of backgrounds to consider this specialism.

Staff readily promote their passion for STEM, and they enthuse their learners to have pride and passion in what they study. Students thrive in the highly supportive environment where they refer to feeling 'at home' with other students who are also inspired by the specialist curriculum. Students appreciate the support they receive to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Leaders work highly effectively with a range of internal and external partners to enrich the life of the school. For example, staff have benefited from links with the national network of mathematics specialist schools to review teaching approaches and to share best practice ideas. Leaders have worked closely with their partner

university, the University of Surrey, to support the understanding and development of students' academic and research skills.

Leaders monitor the quality of education and student experience rigorously. Through this, leaders have a very strong understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. They visit lessons frequently and use the outcomes of this to inform staff training. For example, teachers developed students' independent note-making skills following helpful feedback on their practice.

Leaders know their students exceptionally well and provide appropriate and prompt support for those who need it. They pay close attention to the progress that students make, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable. They identify and implement appropriate actions to address any concerns, including for those not working at their target grade.

Governors are skilled, highly committed and passionate about their school. They use their governor visit initiative to help them understand the staff and student experience. For example, recent visits have deepened governors' understanding of progress checks throughout the year and how leaders use these checks to inform staff training and meet student support needs.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality education programmes for young people that prepare them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals?      Significant progress**

Leaders use their detailed knowledge about their students, including an initial assessment to establish students' starting points, to design their curriculums effectively. This helps students settle in quickly. Teachers work closely together to plan and teach relevant mathematical thinking and skills across all subjects. They place significant emphasis on independent study, which students embrace and respond to willingly through homework tasks and problem-solving sessions. As a result, students rapidly become passionate and inquisitive about their subjects. They are keen to deepen their mathematical knowledge and expertise.

Teachers use their extensive subject expertise very successfully to help students acquire confidence and fluency with their subject knowledge very successfully. They review key concepts frequently and only progress to new learning when students have developed a secure understanding. Teachers enable students to develop and apply substantial new knowledge and skills swiftly and very successfully. For example, in physics, students articulate with accuracy how to find the Young's modulus of a wire through skilful use of a micrometre gauge to make accurate measurements. Students are then able to explain clearly how Young's modulus might apply within the engineering sector.

Teachers plan and teach highly stimulating lessons that students respond to positively. They promote a focus on the importance of mathematical thinking and problem-solving as just as important as the focus on answers. This helps to promote higher-level thinking skills and prepares students well for their imminent end-of-year examinations and next steps.

Staff make sure that students develop relevant wider skills through a range of experiences. For example, many students are proud to be school counsellors and mental health support workers for their peers. Students value the 'future pathways' programme, where they can develop their knowledge of the workplace, possible careers and potential next steps. They work effectively with industry mentors who support them to complete independent projects. Students develop a range of academic and research skills such as referencing and presentation skills.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress**

Leaders have established a positive and safe learning environment. Students feel very well cared for at school and have confidence in the staff team to take any concerns seriously. Students benefit from opportunities to explore topics relevant to their lives. For example, they recently attended workshops on healthy relationships and consent. They are very respectful of each other's opinions and views.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the wider staff team are appropriately trained to carry out their roles. The DSL and their team put in place appropriate interventions that are timely and rigorously monitored. They work with external agencies to ensure that students are safe and well supported. They are further developing their links so that students are also aware of the risks relevant to where they live and study.

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