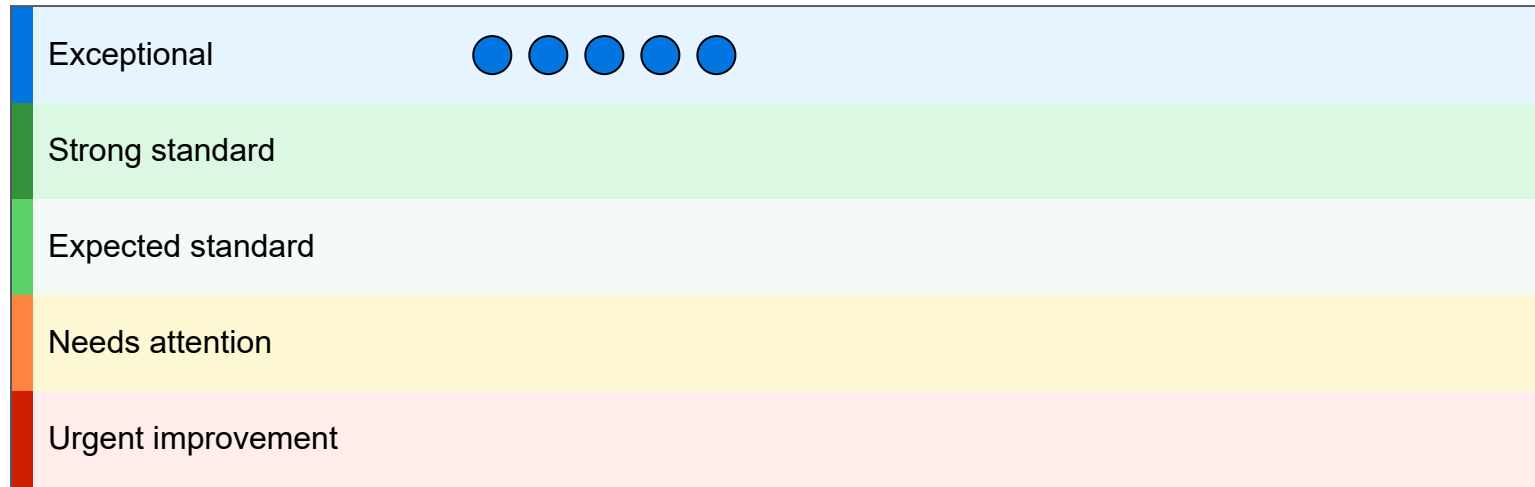


Cambridge Maths School

Address: 119 Mill Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 2AZ

Unique reference number (URN): 149596

Inspection report: 20 April 2026



Safeguarding standards met

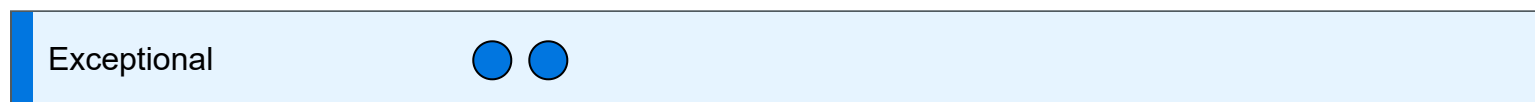
The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance



Exceptional ●

Inclusion

Exceptional ●

Leaders and staff have nurtured a deeply inclusive culture in which students feel welcome, valued and able to participate fully. Leaders' continual focus on communication, confidence and respectful interaction is evident across the school.

Trust leaders apply a highly systematic and expert-led model of oversight. They draw on an extensive range of specialist expertise at the academy trust to support and challenge school leaders. Leaders rigorously use their pupil passports, weekly target reviews and frequent support reviews to monitor students' performance and well-being. This meticulous oversight results in support for students that is highly responsive and consistently effective.

Leaders apply a well-established and highly effective approach to support. Leaders identify students' needs with a high degree of accuracy. Teachers monitor students' progress closely and escalate concerns promptly. Leaders respond quickly by adapting mentoring, adjusting targets or increasing support. Frequent visits from trust specialists ensure that interventions remain sharply focused and effective. Leaders continually refine their graduated approach to support. This ensures that the approach continues to meet students' needs exceptionally well.

Leadership and governance

Exceptional ●

Leaders' and teachers' outreach and partnership work extends their influence far beyond their own academy trust. Staff play an important role in promoting excellence in mathematics across the region. They lead specialist teaching groups, share their experiences at conferences and support mathematics teachers in schools. Leaders' long-standing collaboration with the university, and staff's extensive professional networks, provides students with special opportunities that enhance their learning.

Leaders and governors have a comprehensive and precise understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Leaders ensure that they use deep analysis, rigorous evaluation and a relentless focus on equity to shape their strategic decisions and priorities. To keep them informed they use a wide range of highly effective quality assurance processes.

Governors and trustees provide rigorous, well-informed challenge to the school's leaders. They bring significant expertise in mathematics education, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), higher education and school leadership. They use this expertise to scrutinise leaders' decisions with confidence. They probe staffing decisions and review safeguarding and support for those students with SEND. They challenge leaders on curriculum quality, inclusivity and recruitment. This balanced support and challenge enable leaders to maintain a clear vision.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders ensure that staff feel valued. Leaders look after the wellbeing of staff and work closely with them to reduce their workload.

2. Education programmes for young people

Exceptional



Exceptional ●

Achievement

Exceptional ●

Students perform exceptionally well in their A-level examinations, with the average grade achieved being A+. Average A-level point scores for students with both middle and high prior attainment are extremely high. Students with barriers to learning, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve highly.

Students make excellent and sustained progress from their starting points. Progress scores for the school are exceptionally high. Students develop considerable new mathematical knowledge on topics such as matrices that extends well beyond the A-level specifications. Students develop their curiosity and become highly skilled at problem-solving. They apply these new skills fluently across the subjects they study.

The high level of academic rigour and challenge students experience at the school prepares them exceptionally well for higher-level study. After leaving the school, very high proportions of students secure places at prestigious universities to study mathematics and science-related subjects.

Curriculum and teaching

Exceptional ●

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious academically rigorous curriculum offer. Teachers carefully design their A-level courses so that they include additional higher-level content throughout. Teachers from different subjects work closely together to ensure that the mathematics concepts they teach across the curriculum are exceptionally well sequenced. In mathematics lessons, teachers cover mechanics to an advanced level early on. As students then understand these concepts, physics teachers can swiftly move on to more advanced physics content. In computer science, students draw on their new mathematics knowledge to consider how approaches to using algorithmic techniques differ in computer science. This collaborative approach deepens students' understanding across the full range of subjects.

The standard of teaching is extremely high. Teachers skilfully use a range of interactive approaches to develop students' curiosity and interest. Teachers expertly support students to consider their approaches to problem-solving. In mathematics, teachers continually set students advanced mathematical problems and challenges to consider. They use mathematical games to encourage students to challenge each other. This ensures that students think deeply about their subjects and become highly skilled at problem-solving.

Teachers' use of assessment is excellent. Teachers are highly skilled at using a range of targeted activities to constantly check students have mastered new concepts. Where students struggle to understand, teachers skilfully use questioning to develop students' understanding further. They guide students to find their own solutions. Teachers provide impactful interventions for students who face temporary barriers to learning or who thrive on challenge. This ensures that students receive the support they need to master new concepts and fulfil their potential.

Participation and development

Exceptional 

Leaders have worked closely with their local partners to co-design inspiring and challenging personal development opportunities for students. Students work collaboratively to complete interesting and challenging research projects on topics such as cosmology. Students are supported by mentors from Cambridge University and local businesses. They undertake research, present their findings and produce academic posters. Students talk passionately about the considerable impact these projects have had on them academically and socially.

Leaders have designed an exceptionally high-quality personal development offer. Staff closely tailor this programme to meet the needs of their students. Their current focus is the development of students' oracy skills through using their oracy wheel. Staff helpfully stress the importance of a positive presence in discussions and sharing the spotlight. This makes the expectations for discussions clear for all students.

Through their excellent embedded careers programme, staff thoroughly prepare students for their next steps. Students attend lectures at the university on topics such as how national leaders use mathematics to shape pandemic responses. As well as extending students' mathematical knowledge these lectures help students explore what it will be like to study at university. Students learn how to manage their own finances effectively. Students highly value the practice interviews and support they receive for university entrance.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Students are highly motivated and passionate about mathematics. They are proud of being students at Cambridge Maths School. They rarely miss school. They appreciate highly the academic challenge staff and students at the school provide. Students enjoy the constant debate and discussion in lessons. Students make excellent progress and achieve very highly in examinations.

Students relish the extensive wider opportunities available to them at the school. They enjoy new challenges and pushing themselves both academically and socially. Students run a wide range of clubs and social activities. Students' participation in the extensive range of external competitions across all subjects is extremely high, with students participating in mathematics challenges and subject olympiads.

Students undertake valuable activities in their local community. Students are keen to be involved in the school and the university's outreach work. Students provide mathematics

tutoring for children in local schools. They support science sessions run with Cambridge University outreach teams. Through these activities, students develop a keen understanding of social responsibility.

Staff ensure that students look after their health and well-being. Students take part in sporting activities. Leaders carefully consider the sports they offer to meet the individual needs of their students, such as lawn games and walking. Students build friendships and develop a love of new sports such as squash and ultimate frisbee.

Leaders celebrate diversity and ensure that students understand the importance of protected characteristics. Leaders organise for guest speakers to discuss inclusive language. They learn about topics such as the impact of bystanders when considering discrimination and how to challenge unfair behaviour.

Students value the supportive community feel of the school, where everyone knows each other. Students have not experienced bullying or harassment. Staff nurture this culture through their collaborative teaching approach, team building activities and challenges which students complete.

About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with leaders, students, teachers, governors, parents and stakeholders during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the provider:

Cambridge Maths School is a 16 to 19 academy in Cambridge. It is part of the Eastern Learning Alliance. Leaders work in partnership with the University of Cambridge. The school offers specialist mathematics education to students from across the east of England. Staff select students based on their aptitude and interest in studying mathematics. Students study mathematics and further mathematics A-levels. They also study one or two A-levels in biology, chemistry, physics or computer science. At the time of the inspection there were 60 students studying in Year 12 and 39 students studying in Year 13. Fewer than 5 students were in receipt of high needs funding.

Head of School: Clare Hargraves

Lead inspector:

Georgina Ager, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Catherine Richards, Ofsted Inspector

Nikki Brady, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 April 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

99

Education programmes for young people

99

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright