



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

6th February 2026

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Introduction

Dear Students, Parents, Carers and Colleagues,

February, it seems, is going to be as wet and grey as January. As a community, I think we might all be a little tired of these grey, wet days! A few of us, myself included, may have been a little more grumpy or weary than is normally the case. I hope Spring will come soon to lift any tiredness or malaise!

In grey weeks, or disappointing situations, in grief or frustration, I think we each need two things.

We need resolve, and we need rays of sunshine.

I can't provide resolve (we each have to find that for ourselves I suspect), but I can provide a ray of sunshine:

I am delighted to report that Reading School has been ranked as the fifth best state school in the UK for Sport. The national authority on school sport is *School Sport* magazine and it has ranked us 25th in the country amongst all schools. This places us ahead of neighbours such as Wellington (with their incredible Equestrian facilities) and miles ahead of any other schools in Berkshire.

The School's academic track record is truly remarkable – but this achievement is even more spectacular. How can a school with an empty swimming pool, with waterlogged fields, no sports hall, and with the lowest per capita funding of any state school in Reading, achieve this?!

The answer is that collaboration, commitment, tenacity and determination always trump resources. This ranking isn't achieved because we have the most wins, the best kit, or the finest facilities, but because of the collective effort of our students, staff, coaches and families. Together, somehow, under Mr Allen's unwavering determination to provide as much opportunity for as many young people as possible, we have fostered a sporting culture rooted in commitment, character and participation. We have thrown ourselves into more fixtures than any other school we know. We've taken our focus on character and applied it in matches. We've taken the raw ingredients we've been given - intelligence and determination, and achieved above and beyond that which could have been expected.

This national school sport ranking reveals a commitment to collaboration, and shows the sort of character that means there's nothing we can't do together if we put our minds to it.

So:

Here's to our new sports hall. It'll happen if we work together.

Here's to our first Nobel Prize winner. It'll happen, we just don't know for whom!

Here's to our next Prime Minister. To our next Oscar winner. To our next England Rugby player.

Here's to our orchestras, our Ethics Cup teams, our Year 9 B teams, our 1st XI.

Here's to those Year 13s setting themselves goals and getting on with the silent, steady, dogged work of revising broadly and deeply.

Here's to our Year 11s pulling together to complete their courses.

When you work hard in the rain, and fulfil your potential, you become a ray of hope for those who love and admire you the most.

Yes, things may have felt hard and grey for some - but look what we can do together. Our circumstances do not define us. Our character does. Keep going. Spring will come.

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All Years

Locker Rental

Parents and students are reminded that lockers are available to rent for the remainder of this academic year through our locker provider, Secure Locker Rental Ltd. Lockers provide a simple and secure way for students to store books and equipment during the school day.

Details on how to rent a locker, including online access via the provider's website or QR code, are included in this link, which has also been displayed on locker end panels.

We encourage families who feel a locker would be beneficial to review the information and make arrangements directly with the provider.

Reading School Vacancies

Head of House - we are looking for an energetic, compassionate Head of House to work with our dedicated pastoral team and lead the allocated House to flourish in all aspects of school life. You can find out more about the role by [clicking here](#).

Exam Invigilators - We are seeking to appoint Exam Invigilators to be part of our team to assist in the smooth running of internal and external examinations. This role would work very well for someone looking for employment that doesn't require a big commitment of time. To find out more, [click here](#).

Chef de Partie - Working as part of a dedicated and friendly team, under the direction of the Catering Manager, we have an exciting opportunity for a Chef de Partie to join our Catering Team. You will input into menus, order food supplies and will be keen to develop your knowledge and cooking techniques in a busy, thriving environment. To find out more, [click here](#).

School Community News

Where competitive success and inclusive participation go hand in hand

Reading School has been ranked fifth nationally among state schools in *School Sport* magazine's prestigious Top 200 Schools for Sport, placing 25th overall among all UK schools.

The ranking recognises schools across both the state and independent sectors for excellence in sporting performance and breadth of participation, celebrating those that place sport at the heart of school life.

This achievement reflects the collective effort of Reading School's students, staff, coaches and families in fostering a sporting culture rooted in commitment, character and opportunity, alongside competitive success.

Steve Allen, Head of Sport and PE at Reading School, said:

"Being ranked fifth nationally among state schools is something we are extremely proud of. It reflects a huge team effort to make sport such a central part of our culture.

We do not have extensive sporting facilities, but we do have outstanding staff, committed students and incredibly supportive parents, and that is what makes the difference. We compete in everything we can, give our best every time, and approach both success and setbacks with the same humility and desire to learn.

From national success in badminton and table tennis to mass participation through competitions such as the Football Nations Cups for our B teams, sport at Reading School is about effort, character and developing superb young men."



Each year, *School Sport* assesses performance across a wide range of sports, taking into account both competitive results and levels of participation. Inclusion in the Top 200 is widely seen as a mark of a school's long-term commitment to a broad and successful sporting programme.

This national recognition reinforces Reading School's belief that sport plays a vital role in education in developing resilience, teamwork and confidence, and that sustained excellence is driven not by facilities alone, but by people, purpose and shared values.

County Champion, National Ambitions



Following on the heels of Reading School being ranked 5th (as a state school) in *School Sport* magazine's prestigious Top 200 Schools for Sport, sport at Reading School is about far more than medals and results. We suggest that it is also about discipline, resilience and the determination to keep improving. This week, we share news of an outstanding Year 7 student, Taksh C (7W) who recently competed in the Berks & South Bucks ASA County Speed Swimming Championships which saw him secure 16 gold medals, a silver, and the prestigious Lambert Shield for the county's top male swimmer.

Through his reflections on preparation, setbacks and ambition, his interview offers a powerful insight into the mindset required to perform at the highest level, and into the values that underpin excellence at Reading School.

Q: Tell us more about the Berks & South Bucks ASA (BSBASA) County Speed Swimming Championships 2026.

The championships are held in Wycombe over two weekends in January and is for club swimmers who have qualified for specific races. There were 600 swimmers from across the county who competed at the event. I secured 14 gold medals and 1 silver across my individual events and also 2 gold medals in my team relay events for my club. I also set a County Record for the 100m Breaststroke in the 12yr age group.

Q: You were also awarded the 'Lambert Shield' which is for the best male swimmer in the county – how did this make you feel?

I felt really proud, and it made me want to win this trophy again next year, which means I will need to work harder and train more.

Q: You sound as if you've got a really competitive nature - have you always had that?

Probably not. When I first started swimming lessons at my local leisure centre, I was just learning how to swim and having fun. Later, one of the teachers noticed I was doing really well and moved me up through the stages quickly. After that, I joined a swimming club, where the coaches helped me improve my strokes, endurance and speed.

Q: The competition involved two weekends and multiple races. How did you prepare, physically and mentally?

I knew I needed to be really careful because it's easy to get disqualified in swimming, which means getting no points. Mentally, I prepared by thinking about what I would do if I did get disqualified, learning from it, moving on and focusing on the next race.

Physically, I trained with my coach, who set sessions focused on my strongest stroke, butterfly. Along with that I also worked on my other strokes like backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle to make sure I was ready for every race.

Q: What does a typical week of training look like for you, especially in the lead up to competitions?

I normally train 11.5 hours each week with sessions mostly in the evenings, but also in the morning on Mondays and Wednesdays. In the lead-up to a competition, on Fridays, I generally rest, eat well and recover.

Q: Was there a race or a moment during the competition that you found particularly challenging?

During the 200-metre breaststroke, a competitor beat me, and I've been disqualified from this race few times before. It was one of the races that made me think, "I really need to work on this."

Q: What lessons about yourself has swimming taught you?

I think you can grow from failures like getting disqualified, not hitting your personal best, or trying something new. It's better to learn from these experiences instead of getting frustrated. My parents usually take a video of my races, so I watch it, see what went wrong, and then work on fixing it in training.

Q: Looking ahead, what goals are you working on next?

I want to qualify for the Nationals next year. I'd have to be in the top 20 across England to make it, so that's my next big goal.

Q: What advice would you give to other students who may want to pursue sport at a high level?

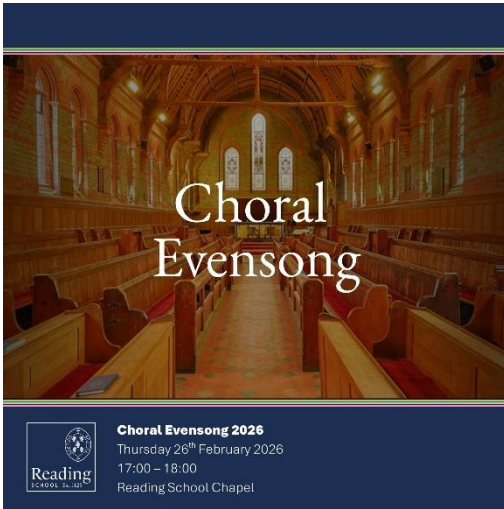
You've got to have discipline if you want to be the best. You need to train like the best and stay motivated. You have to think, "I want to be the best," and work as hard as you can every day to keep improving.

Q: It sounds like you've found your passion – what could Reading School do to support you in your journey?

Definitely. If the school could bring back the swimming pool, it would be really helpful. On days that I don't have morning training with my club, I would be able to come to school earlier, practice and then start school.

Reading School Events

Choral Evensong 2026 – Thursday 26 February 2026



The Music Department is delighted to invite you to a traditional Choral Evensong in the School Chapel on Thursday 26 February 2026.

This event is free and open to all. Register via the link below to reserve your seat and enjoy a serene break from your day in our tranquil chapel, accompanied by the beautiful music of the Reading School Chapel Choir.

Book now - <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/events/view/choral-evensong-2026>

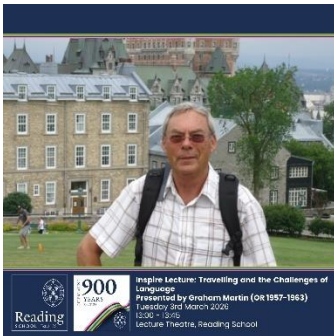
Location: Chapel, Reading School, Erleigh Road, Reading
Time: 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Programme:

- Introit: *Drop Drop Slow Tears* – O. Gibbons
- Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis: Walmisley in D minor
- Psalm 150: Stanford
- Anthem: *Set Me as a Seal upon Thine Heart* – W. Walton

We look forward to welcoming you to this special musical occasion.

Inspire Lecture - Travelling & the Challenges of Language



We are delighted to welcome back Old Redingensian Graham Martin (1957–1963) for an engaging Inspire Lecture exploring the realities of travelling, working abroad, and the challenges of language in international settings.

Graham studied Accounts and Economics at A Level at Reading School before completing an HNC in Civil Engineering and qualifying as an Incorporated Engineer (I.Eng). His career has taken him around the world, giving him first-hand experience of international work beyond the classroom.

During the lecture, Graham will also reflect on his time as a pupil at Reading School, offering an insight into how school life has changed over the decades. The talk will be followed by 10–15 minutes of audience questions.

This lecture will be particularly relevant for students interested in engineering, economics, international careers, or global travel.

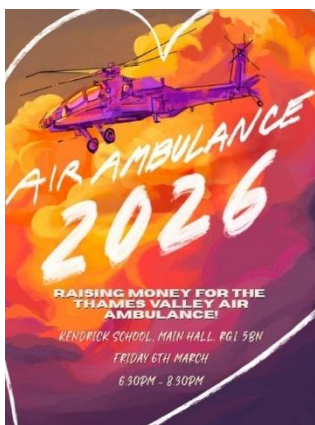
Date: Tuesday 3 March 2026

Time: 13:00-13:45

Venue: Lecture Theatre, Reading School, RG1 5LW

RSVP here: [Inspire Lecture: Travelling and The Challenges of Language | Events | The Redingensians](#)

Student-Led Charity Concert in Support of Thames Valley Air Ambulance



Parents and carers are warmly invited to a student-led charity concert hosted by Reading School and Kendrick School, raising funds for the Thames Valley Air Ambulance (TVAA).

Enjoy a wonderful evening of music from soloists and ensembles, featuring everything from Bruno Mars to beautiful choral classics such as O Nata Lux (Tallis).

The concert has supported TVAA for over a decade, inspired by the rescue of a Reading School student following a cycling accident. All proceeds help fund TVAA's vital lifesaving work across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Date: Friday 6 March

Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Venue: Kendrick School, Main Hall, RG1 5BN

Book now: [Air Ambulance Charity Concert 2026 Tickets, Kendrick School Main Hall, Reading | TryBooking United Kingdom](#)

Faith and Reason Lecture – Thursday 26 March 2026



Hosted by the Reading School Chaplaincy, we are inviting students to the upcoming Faith and Reason Lecture on **Thursday 26 March 2026, 3:30 – 4:30 PM, Reading School, RG1 5LW.**

Lecture: *What Does It Mean to Be Human in an Age of AI?*

Speaker: Jeremy Peckham, Commissioner at the AI, Faith and Civil Society Commission

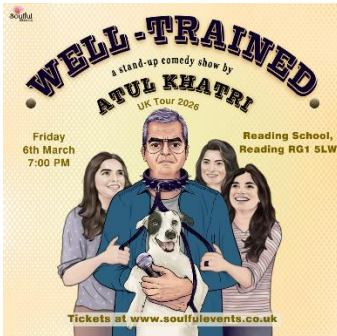
In this engaging talk, the speaker will explore how artificial intelligence is shaping our understanding of humanity, ethics, and society, and the opportunities and challenges this presents for individuals and communities.

The lecture is part of Reading School's Faith and Reason series, which explores the interplay between religion and science. The event has been promoted to students and we encourage parents to support them in attending. Parents are also warmly welcomed to join; however, space will be allocated to students as a priority.

Please register by clicking this link: [Faith & Reason Lecture](#)

External Events

Stand-up Comedy Night



Following the successful stand-up comedy event brought to you by [Soulful Events](#) on Saturday 31 January, the second event will feature [Atul Khatri](#), ex-CEO turned comedian, who quit his job in 2016 and now makes a living making people laugh.

Featured on Netflix's 'Comedians of the World', Atul brings his 55+ year old perspective on attending the 'Wedding of the Century', emigration, the USA, children, grandchildren and 30+ years of marriage in his new stand-up comedy show, 'Well Trained'.

Date: Friday 6 March

Doors open: 6.30pm (show starts 7.00pm)

Age guidance: 16+

Language: The show is mainly in English

Tickets: [Book Now](#)

Soulful Events would like to thank all those who attended their first event at Reading School on Saturday 31 January.

The Abbey Careers Fair

Following our Reading School Careers Convention on Thursday 5 February, don't miss The Abbey Careers Fair by The Abbey School, Reading.

Hosted on Thursday 19 March from 5:30pm to 8pm, this event features industry professionals, universities and a keynote from Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE. Open to Year 9+ students and parents.

Register [by clicking here](#).

Summer Coding Club

FunTech is a summer coding club for children that has been hosted by Reading School since 2024 and they will be returning to School again this summer 2026. FunTech has been teaching Tech & Coding for 30 years and will again be offering a range of courses, including Game Development, Python, Roblox, Minecraft, Cybersecurity, and AI.

FunTech's annual Flash Sale offers the best rates of the year and will go live on **Monday 2nd February at 10:00**. All summer camps will be £200 off for the first 200 bookings. FunTech also offers a camp swap option, meaning families can book now and change the camp date, location, or course, up to two weeks before the camp start date.

[Preview the Flash Sale schedule and see further information ahead of Monday 2nd at 10:00 by clicking this link.](#)

External Events Disclaimer: Events listed under "External Events" are organised by third parties and are not Reading School events.

RSPA

The Team

Over the next few weeks, RSPA will introduce the committee members who represent and support our community, starting with our Chair.

Introducing the RSPA Chair-Kerry Kingston (chief cake maker)



I became the RSPA Chair following the October '25 Annual General Meeting and as a year 13 parent (and in my last year) wanted to give it my all! I do love a challenge. Several months on, I'm loving it, being part of a team, spending time with parents from different year groups and sharing school experiences is what it's all about! As the Chair, my responsibility lies solely with the Reading School parents and to work alongside my fellow committee members, all with the same goal, to achieve the best outcome for the RSPA and ultimately the boys!

It's been a real insight seeing how much work the committee does, from routine tasks, to legal requirements, speaking and updating fellow committee members regularly, sharing information with parents & carers, organising and running events, liaising with school and so on...there is never a dull moment. And we do have some fun on the way!

We each have our own roles but we all have one common aim, to raise lots of money, which is far from easy. The RSPA has raised thousands of pounds from which the boys and the School and have benefited enormously.

How did I get involved in the RSPA? Starting in 2019, I was sewing hundreds of face masks for the boys in house colours! Who would have thought it would be such an unforgettable first year. I then got involved in the School's Ukrainian appeal which was a monumental challenge I absolutely had to get stuck into. It was then that I met some of the RSPA committee whilst boxing up hundreds of cans of spam, sardines and baked beans in the Chapel! I never looked back. After a while, when committee members realised, they couldn't get rid of me, they asked me to join, so it was made official and it's never been the same since. Not sure my son was impressed with the thought of me spending more time in "his" school!

The next project was the year 10 photo project, which many of you will have been part of. Now in its 4th year, it's raised several thousand pounds and with the School's continued help and assistance continue to be popular. About to embark on a year 13 photo project!

So, as you see, joining the RSPA (as it was for most of my fellow members) was the natural next step from helping out at the odd event and getting to know other parents and then you find you are hooked! I would encourage anyone to get involved, there is a role for everyone, just come and have a chat....see where it leads. You can then have a say in where some of the money raised gets allocated!

Happy boys, happy parents, happy school means a happy community and a very happy RSPA. Who wouldn't want to be part of that!

Highlights: Lent Term Week 5

To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow, be part of, and stay connected with the Reading School community.



Williams F1 Experience

From the classroom to the pit lane

Our Year 7 pupils visited the Williams Racing F1 Experience Centre yesterday, exploring the science, engineering and teamwork behind one of the world's most iconic motorsport teams.

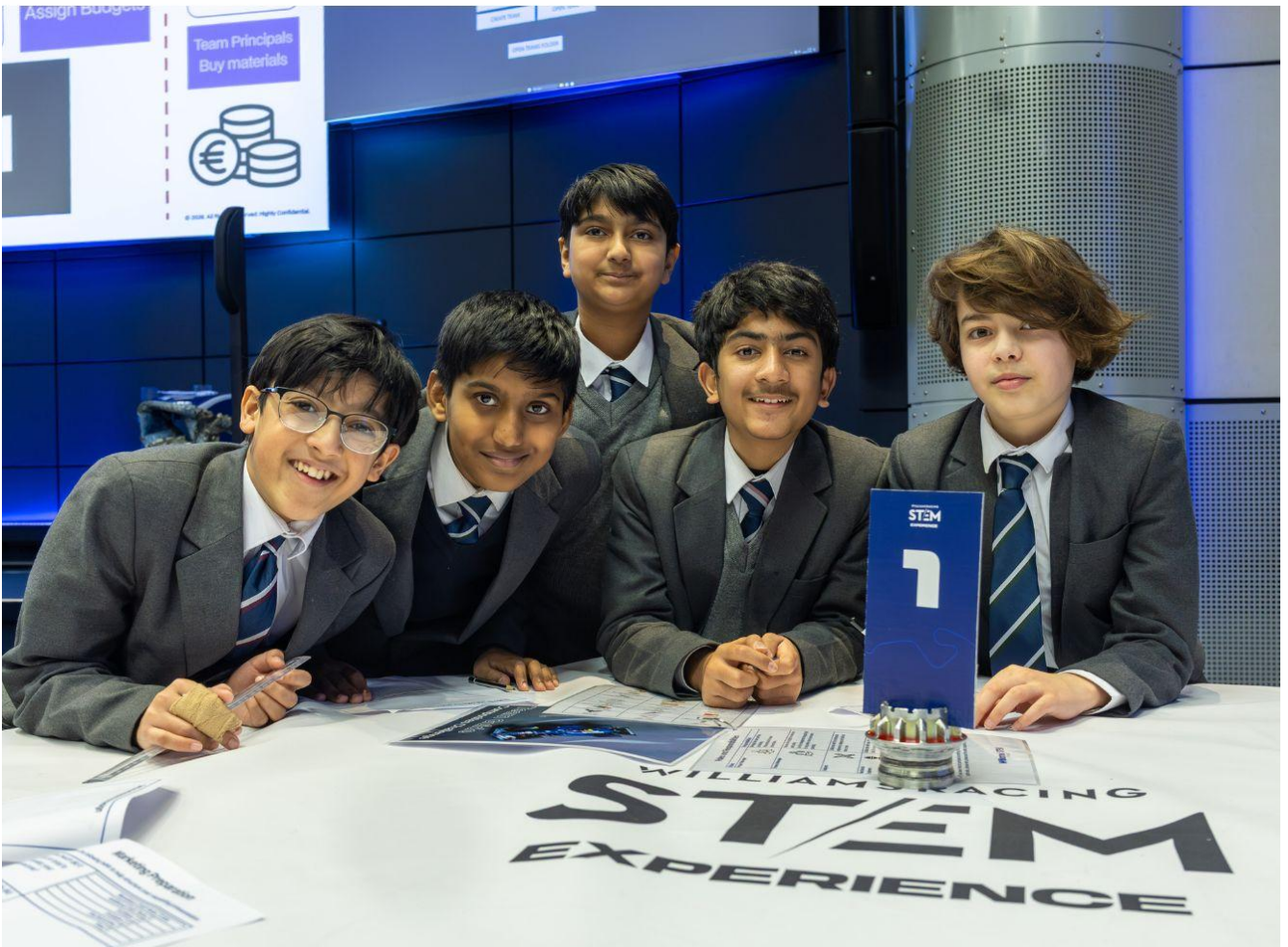
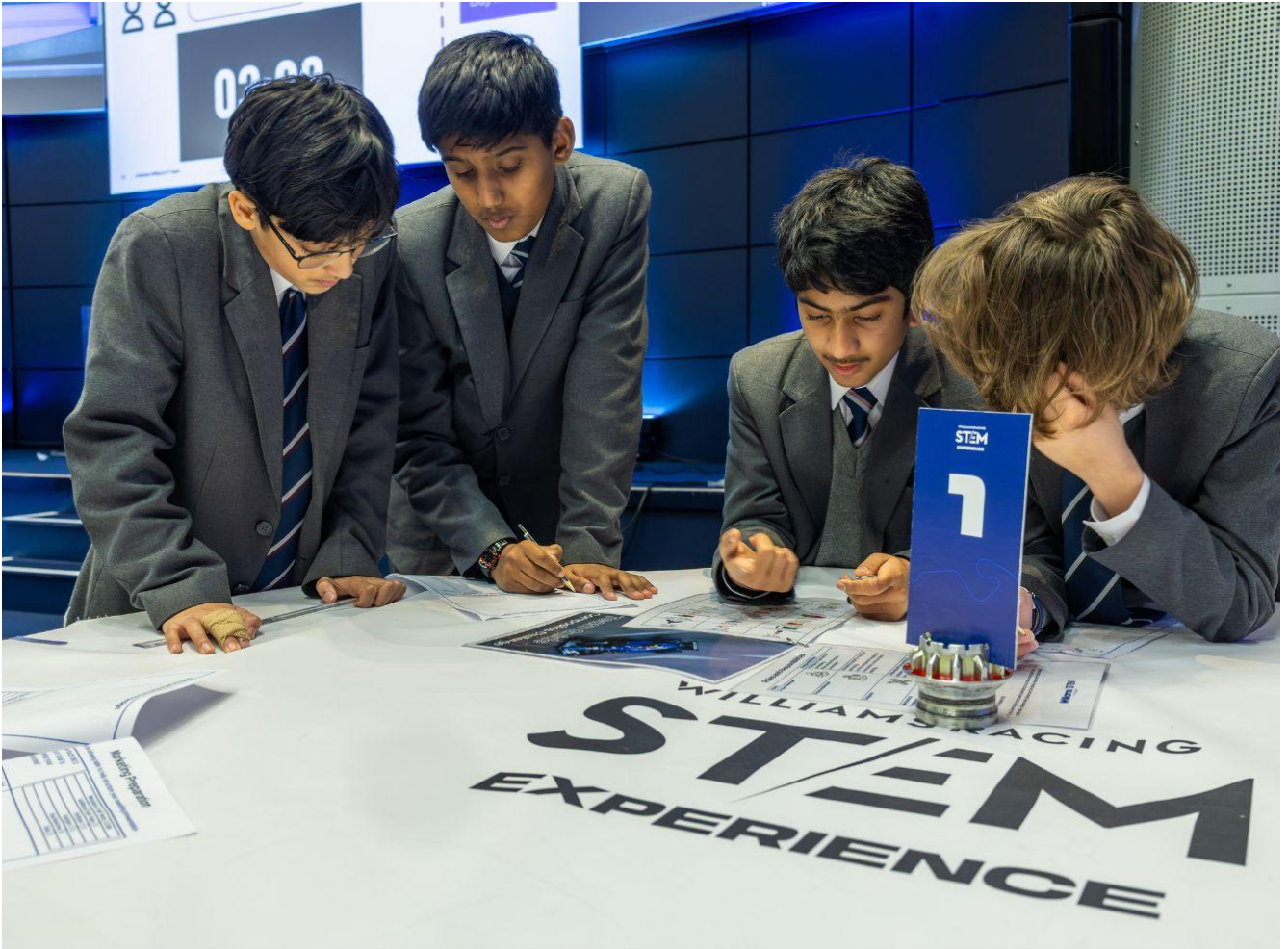


From aerodynamics and design to problem-solving under pressure, it was a brilliant opportunity to see classroom learning brought to life, and to glimpse the many pathways into STEM careers.

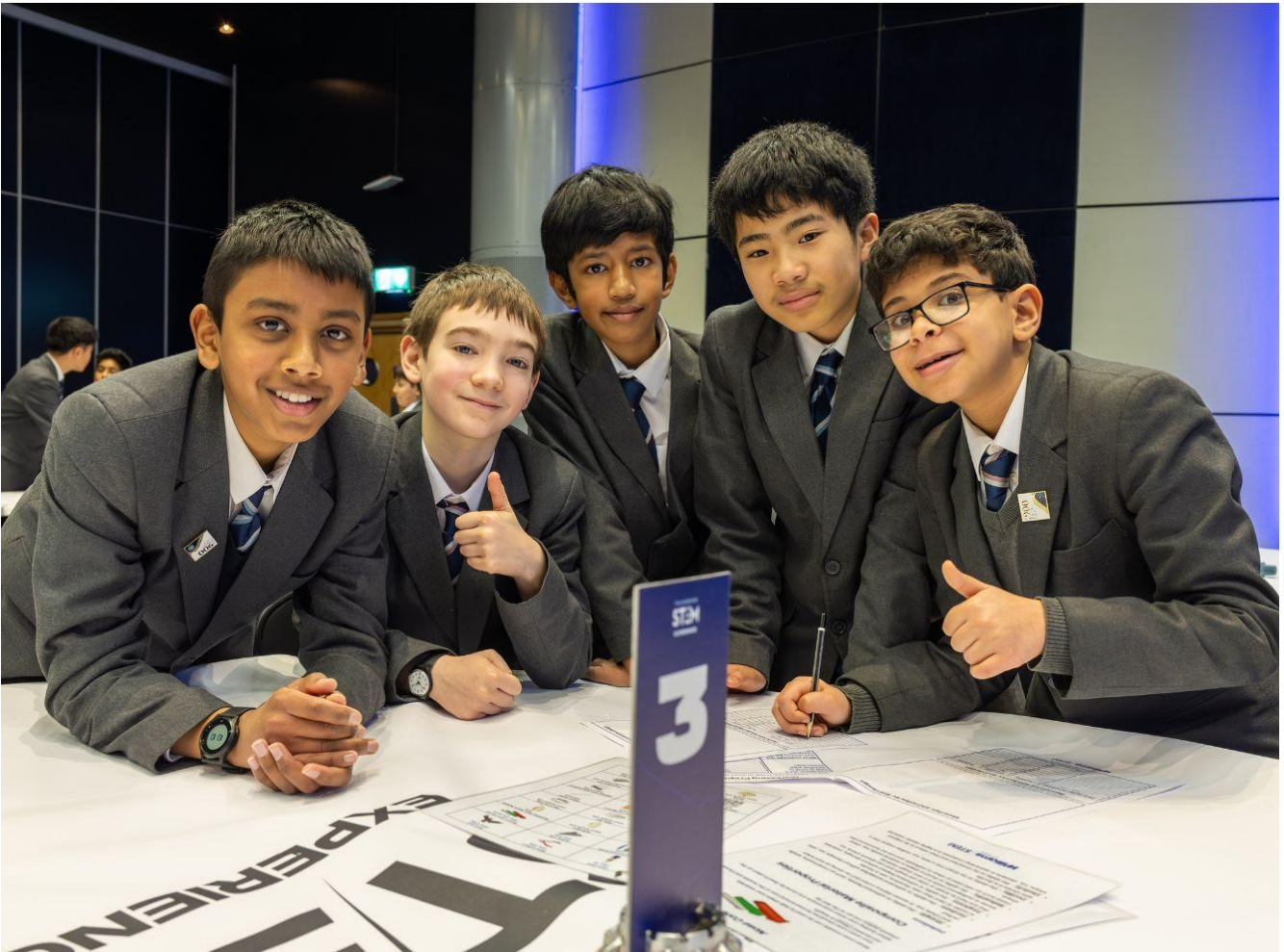
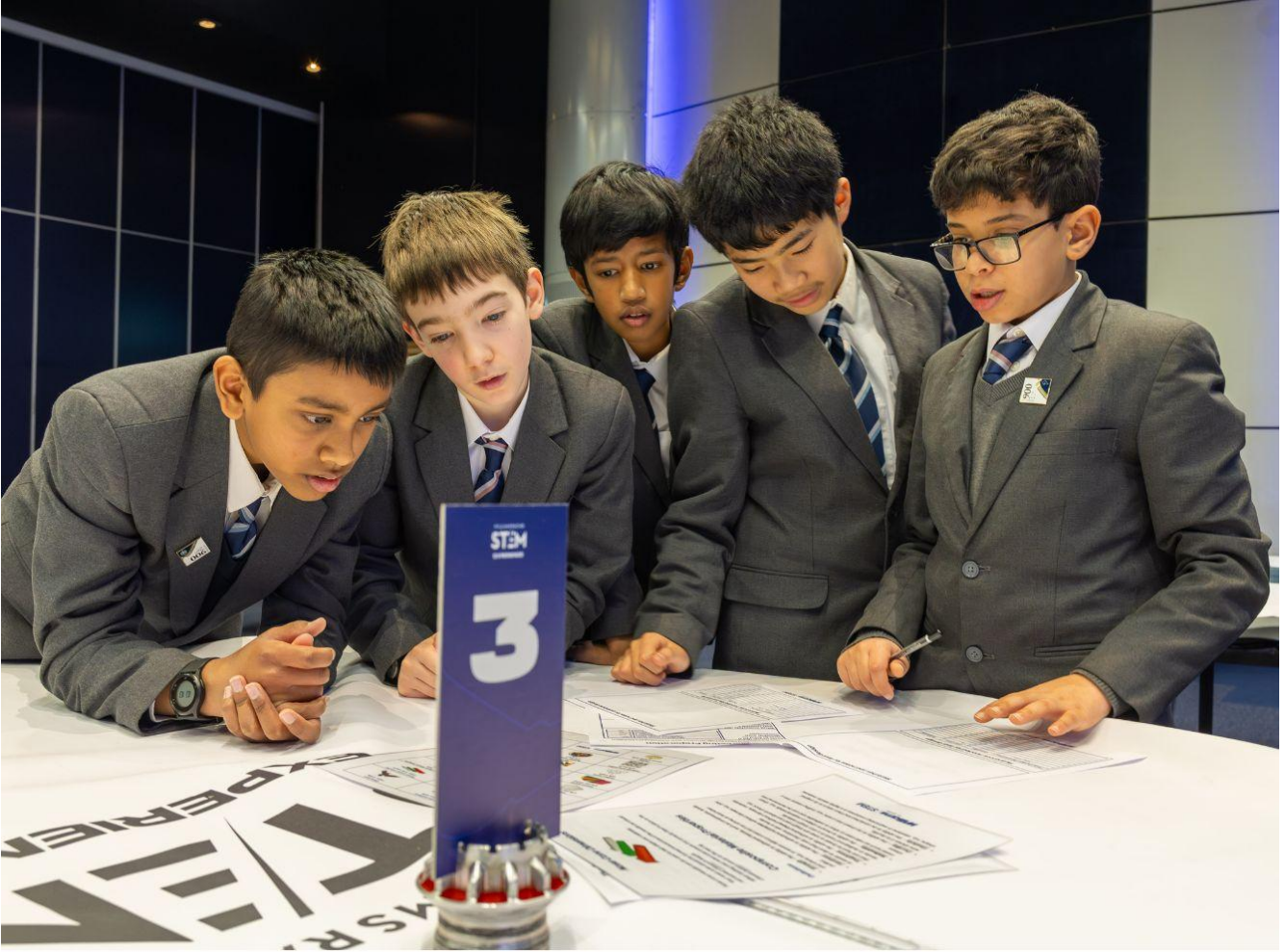


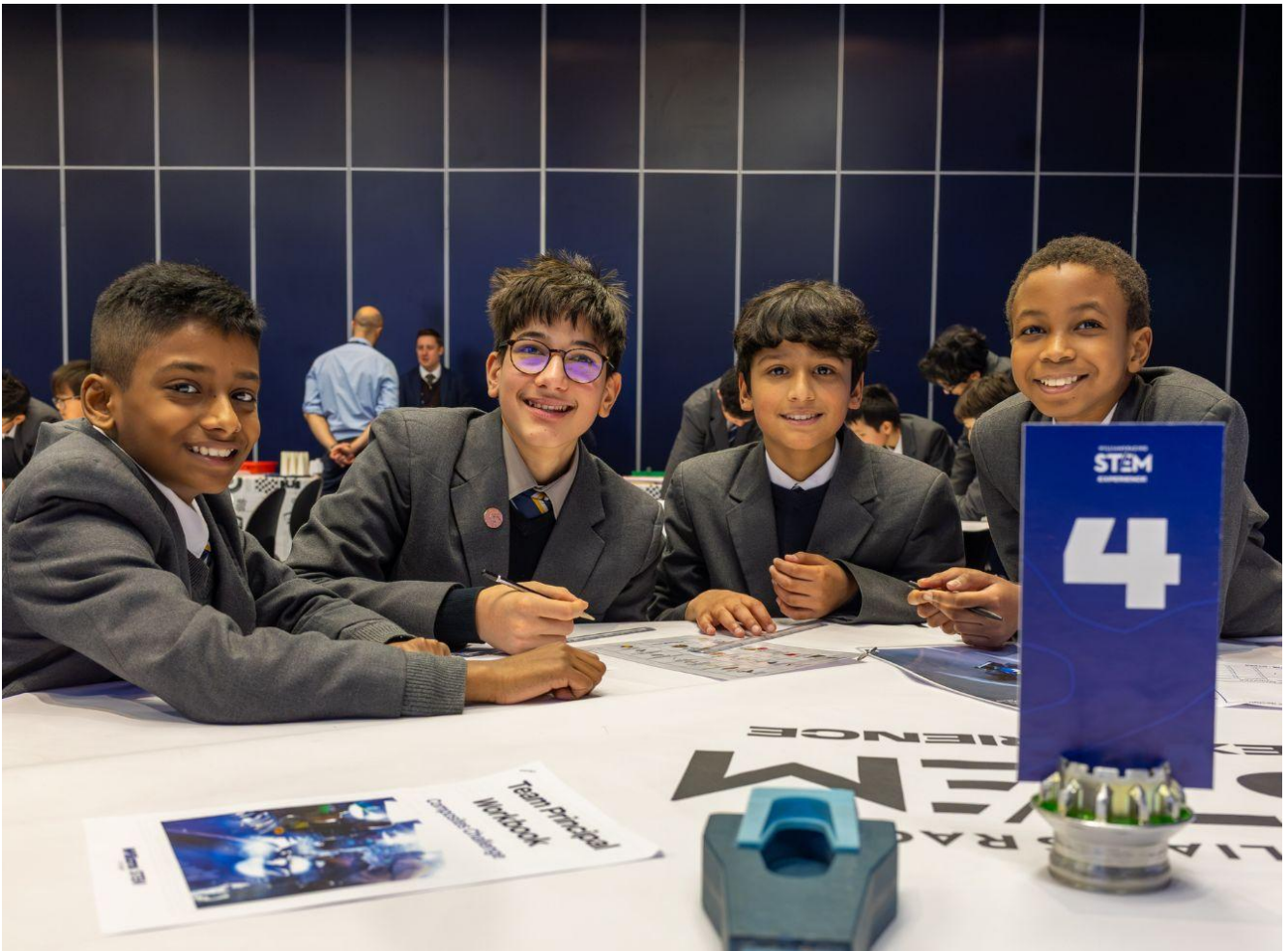


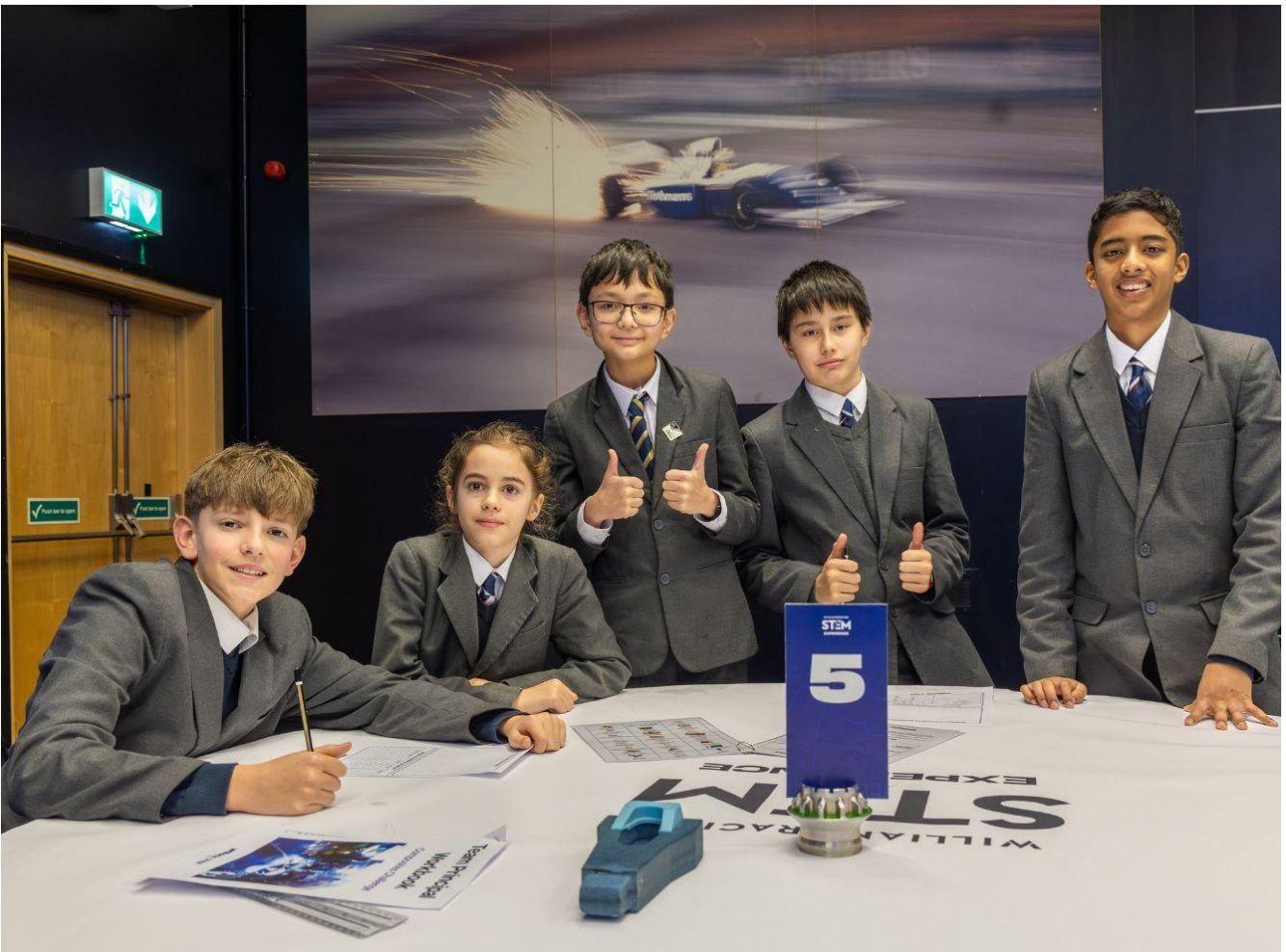


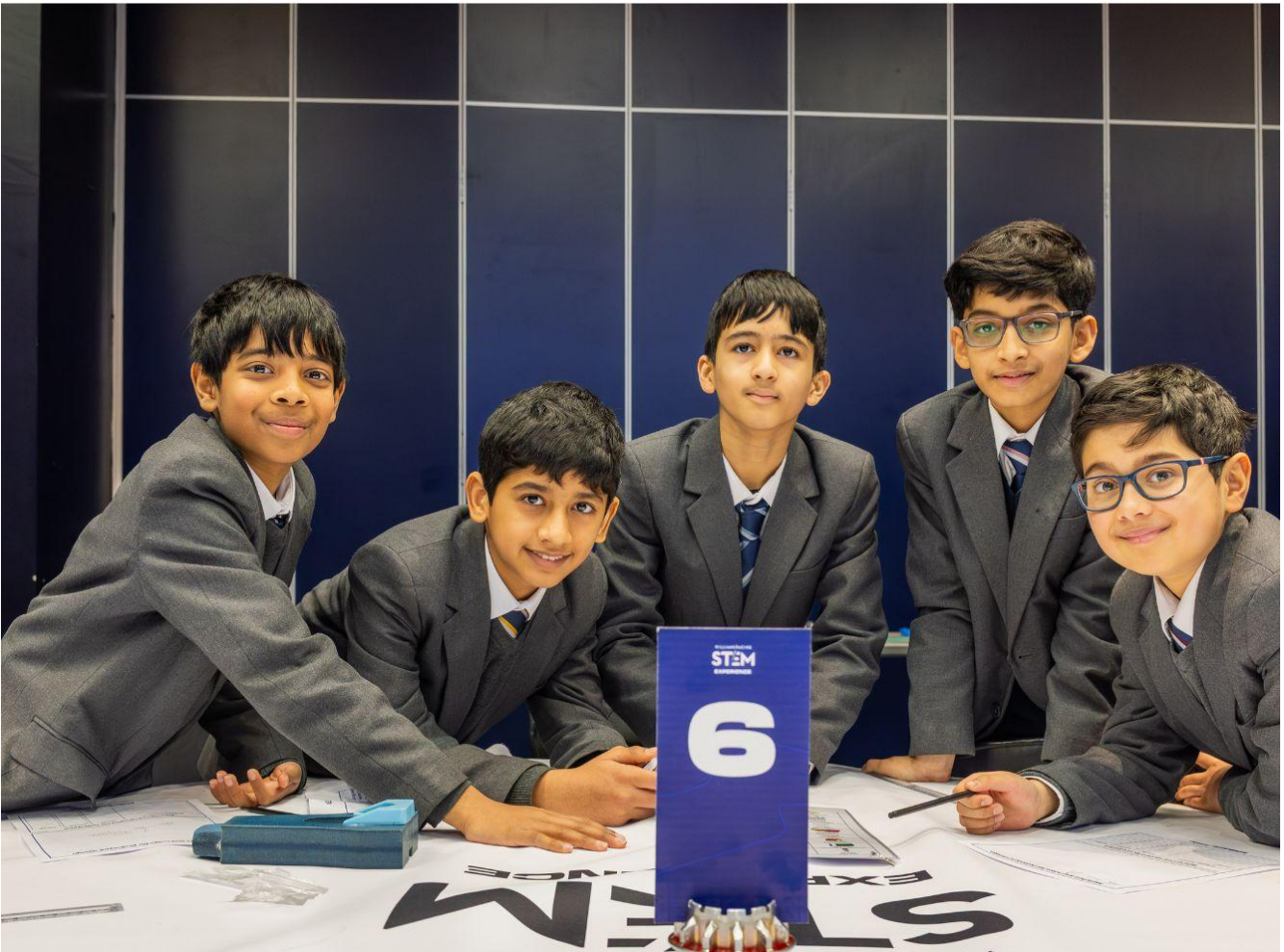


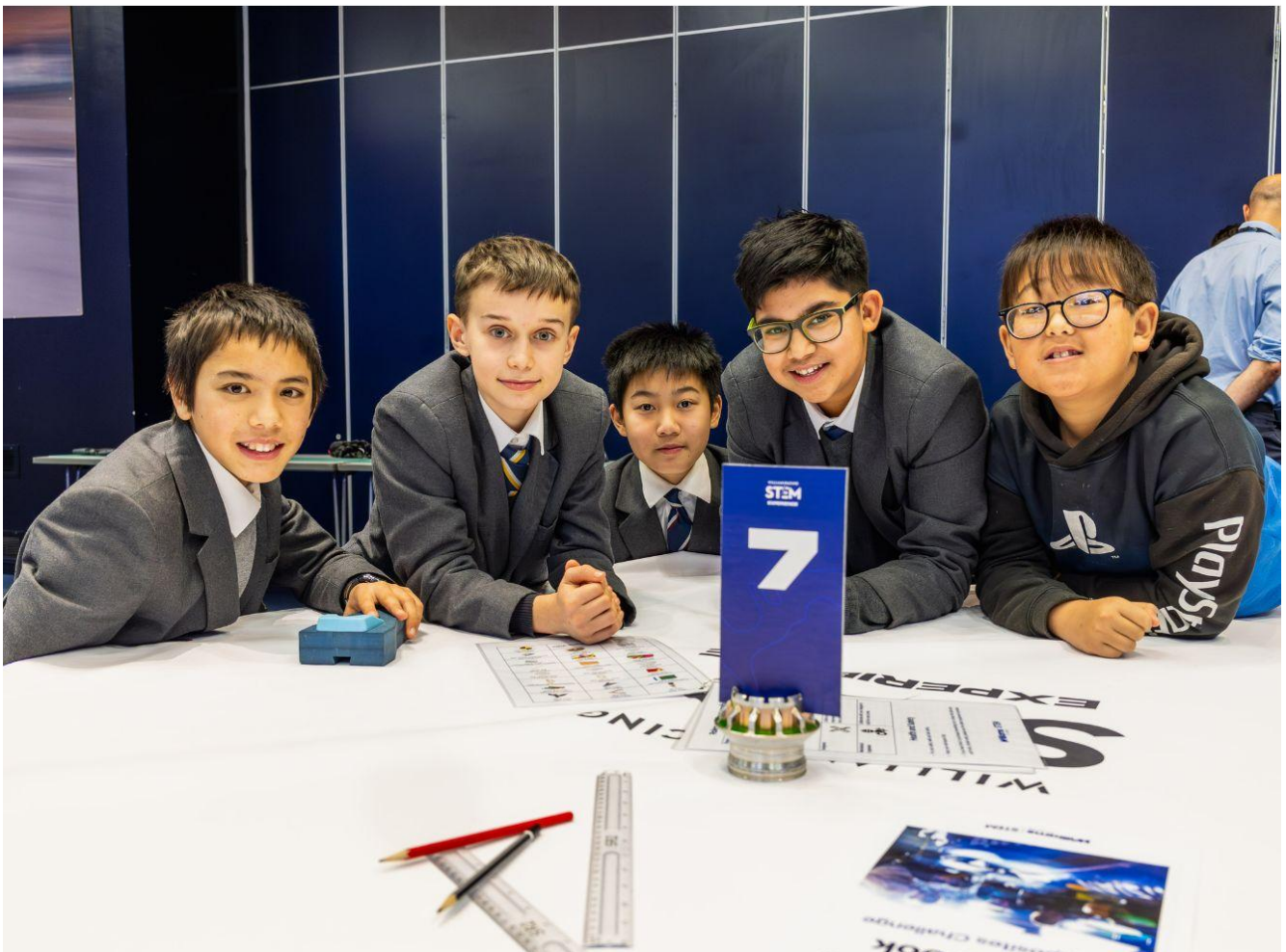
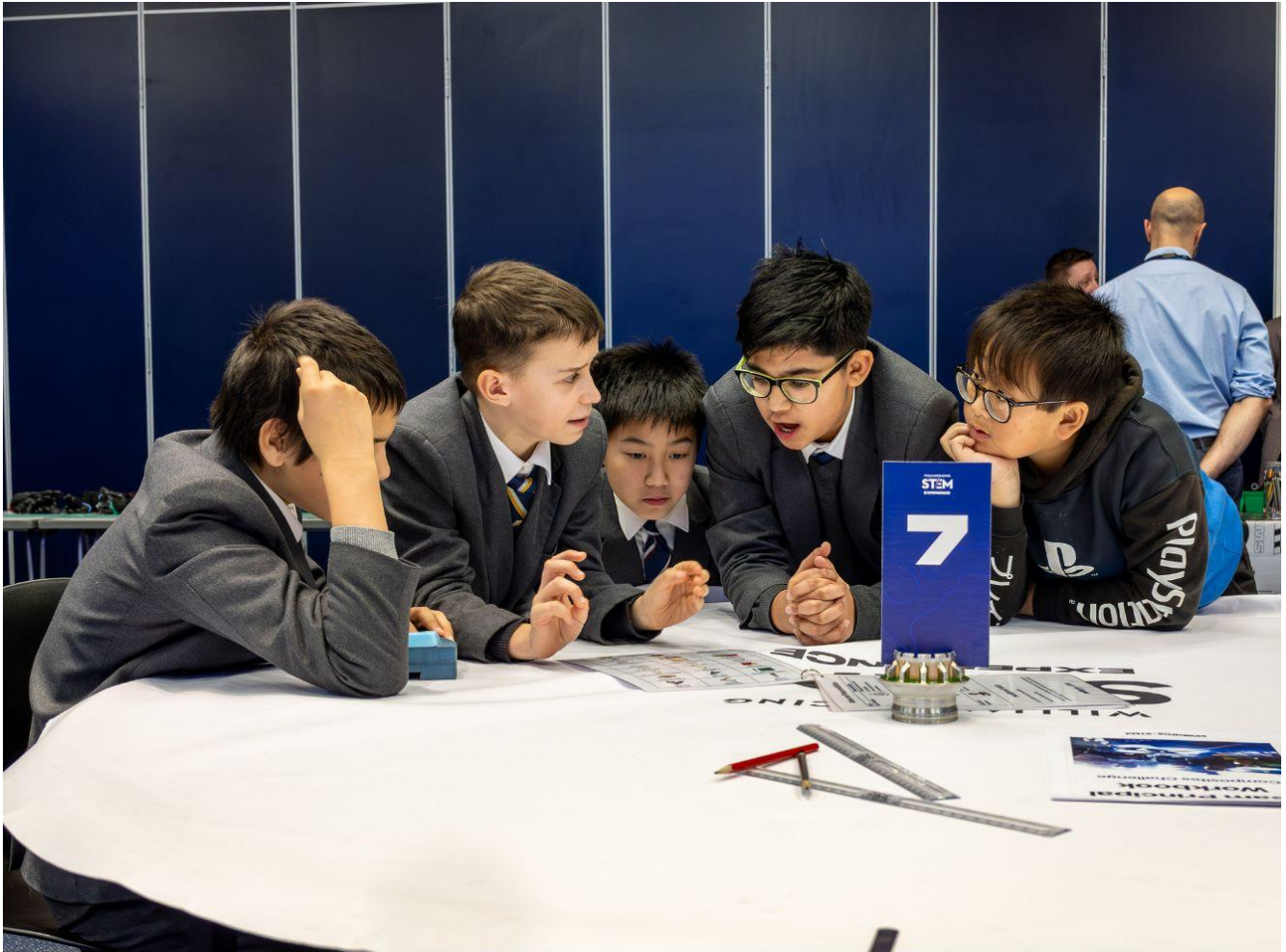


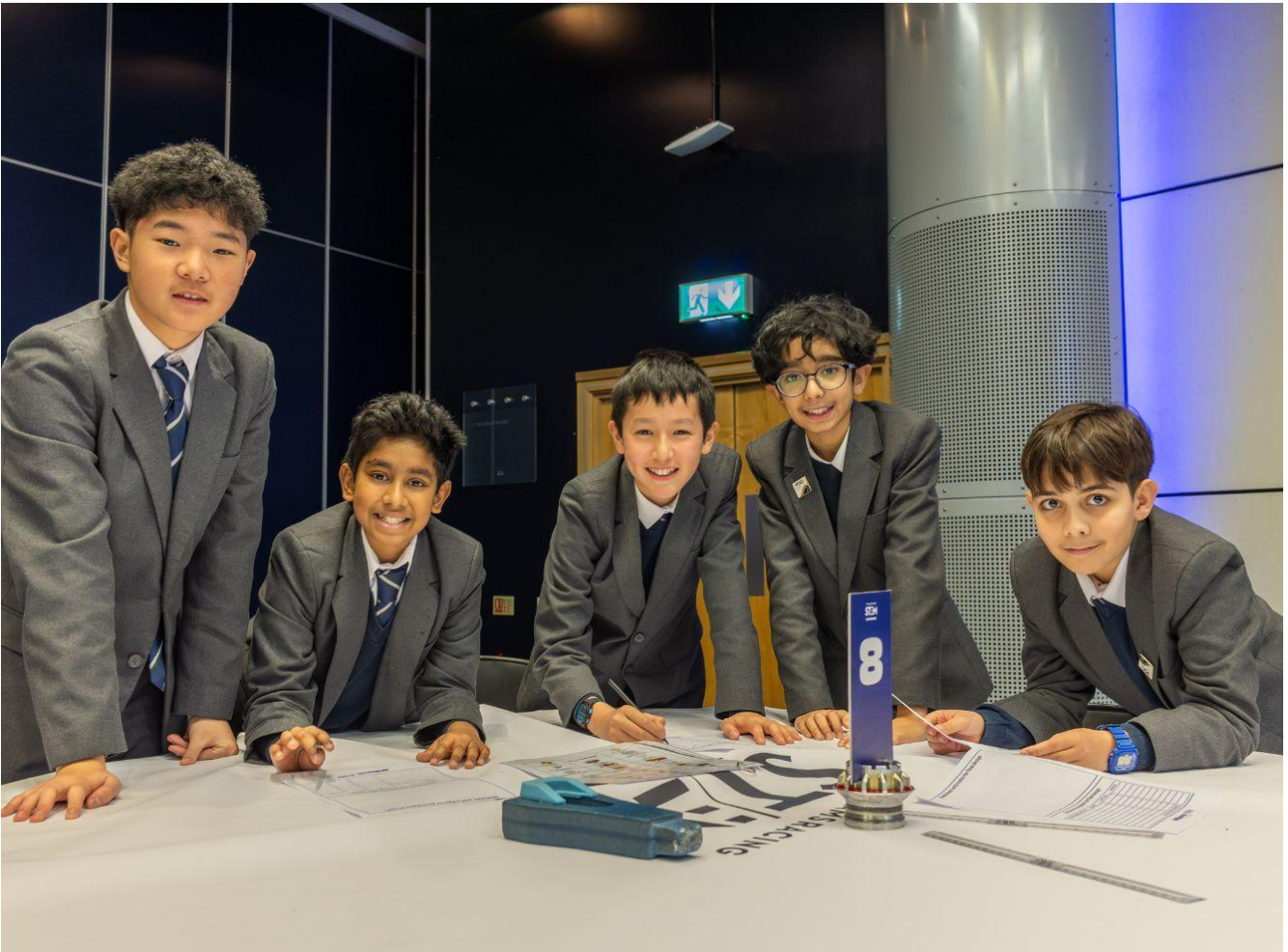
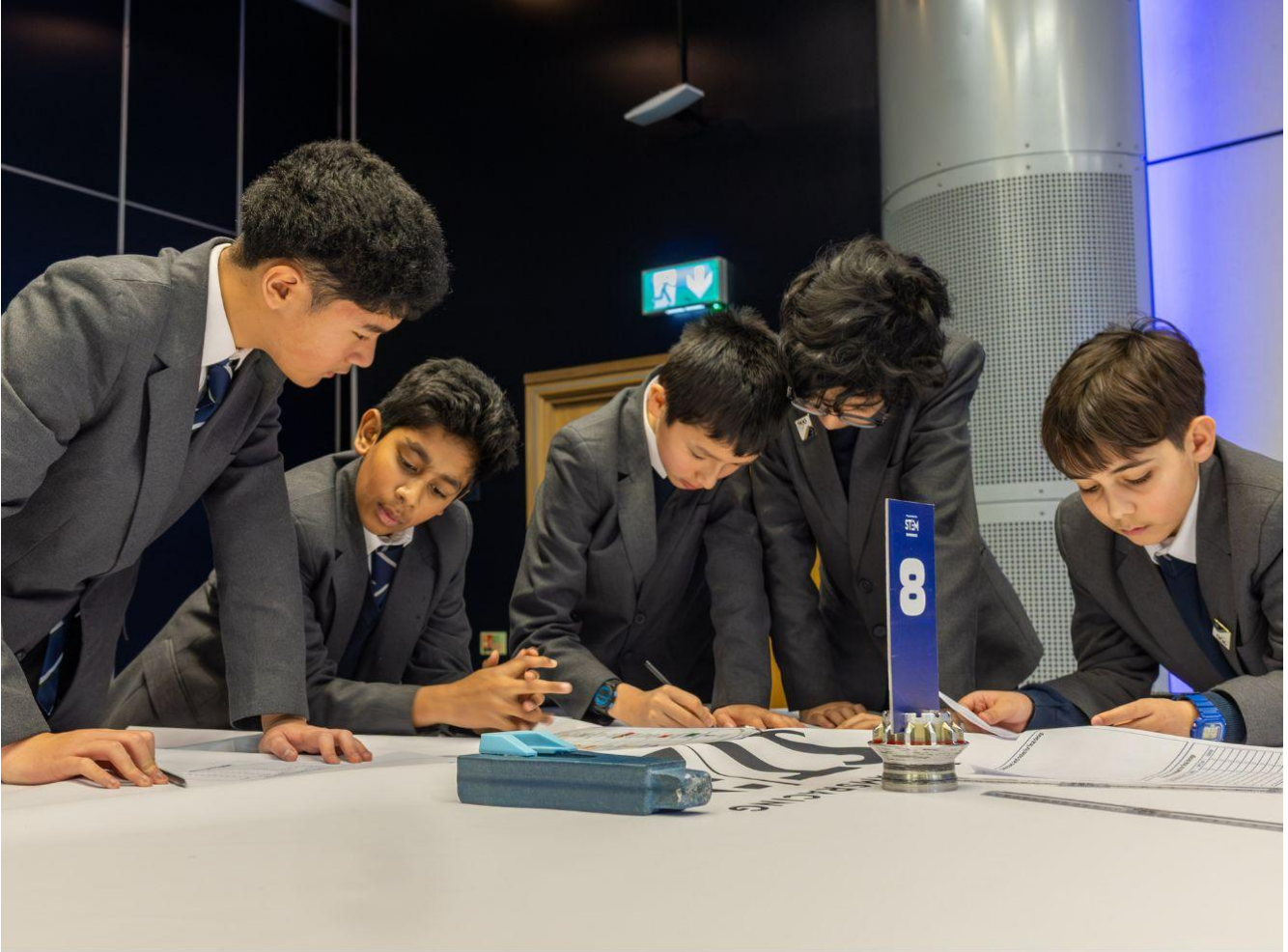




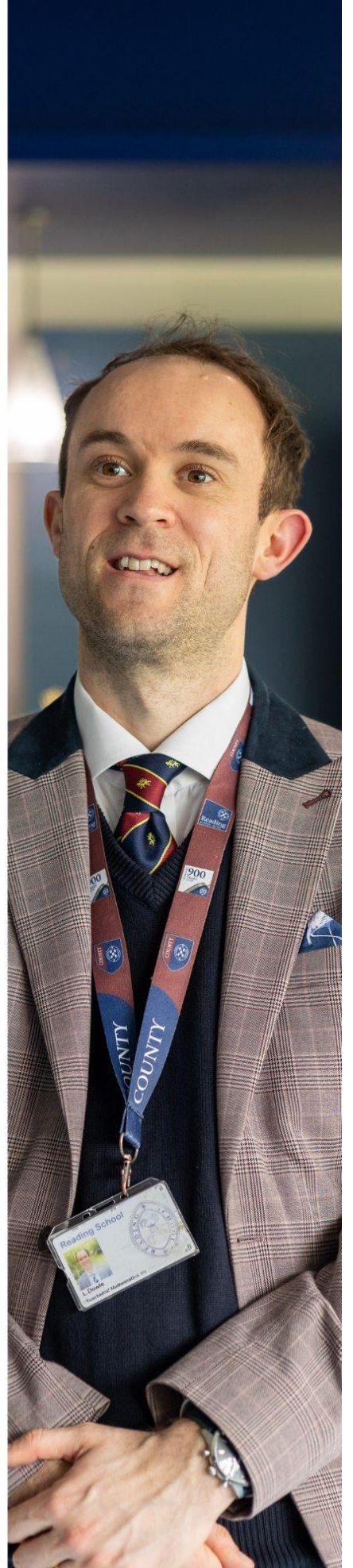


















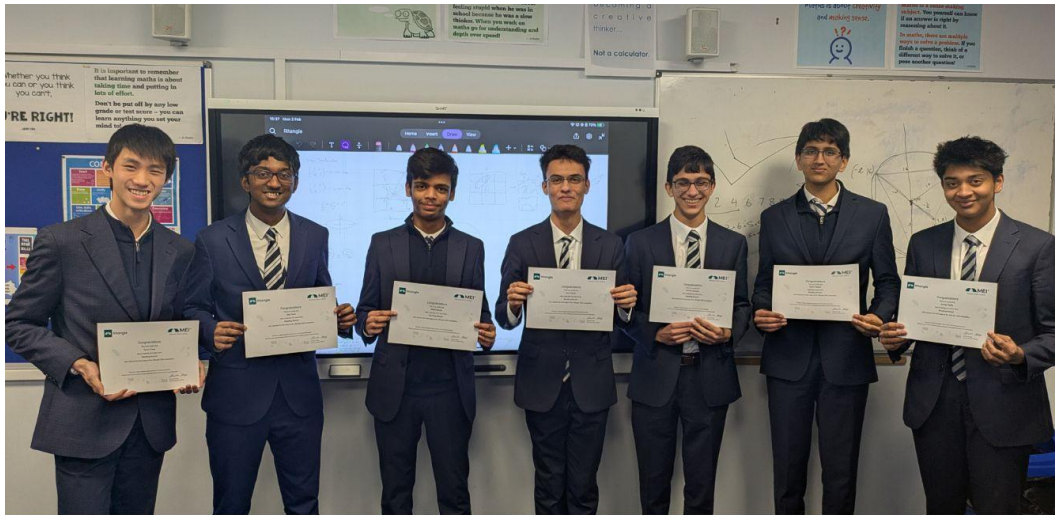




The Ultimate Team Maths Challenge

During the Michaelmas term, several teams from Reading School took part in the MEI Ritangle - an annual maths competition where A level students get to test their problem-solving skills and tackle unique mathematical puzzles.

The competition involved writing and using computer programs to answer a progressively more difficult set of 28 mathematical problems. Three teams reached the final of the competition, and their performance earned the school a 'commendable schools' rating from the organisers, placing them just outside the winning positions.





Feedback is important to us and if you have any positive news, comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk