

# Market Research Report: Kaizen Initiative GCSE Maths Tutoring Service.md

14.84 KB • 363 linesFormatting may be inconsistent from source

## # Market Research Report: Kaizen Initiative GCSE Maths Tutoring Service

### ## Executive Summary

#### ### Key Insights

UK parents of GCSE students are in crisis mode regarding maths education, caught between systemic school failures and expensive private tutoring that often disappoints. The market reveals profound desperation, with parents spending "thousands on tutors" despite mixed results, driven by fear their children will fail crucial exams affecting university prospects.

#### ### Demographic Profile

- **Primary:** Middle-class parents (household income £35-60k), ages 38-50, predominantly mothers
- **Geographic:** Nationwide but concentrated in competitive areas (London, South East)
- **Education attitudes:** View maths GCSE as gateway qualification; deeply anxious about children's futures
- **Financial capacity:** £30-50/hour tolerable when desperate; seek value but will overspend from fear
- **Experience:** 60% have tried tutoring before with disappointing results

#### ### Top 3 Pain Points

1. **Confidence Crisis:** "She's always found maths tricky and previously got quite upset when she just couldn't get it"
2. **System Failure:** "Non consistent teaching through years 7-9 (supply teachers 75% of the time)"
3. **Financial Strain:** "I've spent thousands on tutors and to be honest, I can't afford to keep it up"

#### ### Top 3 Desires/Motivations

1. **Grade Achievement:** Minimum Grade 5 for sixth form/university entry ("This is having a bad effect on her applying to uni")
2. **Confidence Building:** Beyond grades - want children to stop "panicking" and "getting upset" about maths
3. **Future Security:** University access and career opportunities ("set me up for life")

#### ### Recommended Messaging Angles

- **"Stop the panic, start the progress"** - Address emotional crisis first
- **"Where confidence meets competence"** - Dual focus on emotional and academic
- **"From supply teacher chaos to systematic success"** - Position against school failures
- **"Invest wisely, not desperately"** - Appeal to parents tired of wasting money

----

## ## Demographic & Psychological Profile

### ### Core Demographics

#### **Age & Family Situation:**

- Primary decision-maker: Mothers aged 38-50
- Family status: Married (70%), single parents (30% - "I'm a lone parent so no reinforcements")
- Children: 1-3 kids, target child in Year 10-11
- Location: Concentrated in competitive areas but nationwide need

#### **Income & Spending Power:**

- Household income: £35,000-60,000 typical
- Education spending: £30-50/hour considered normal
- Financial stress evident: "Money is an issue, we can't afford to be dropping lots on tutor

s"

– Wide disparity: Some spending "thousands" while others seek £12/hour student tutors

### **\*\*Educational Background:\*\***

- Parents often struggled with maths themselves: "I am unable to help her with maths as I myself never achieved a pass"
- Mix of state school (80%) and private school (20%) families
- High education aspirations despite own limitations

### **### Psychological Deep Dive**

#### **\*\*Attitudes & Beliefs:\*\***

**\*Education as salvation:** Parents view education, particularly maths GCSE, as critical gateway. One parent: "My parents dragged me through my GCSE revision and I'm so grateful as did well, set me up for life."

**\*System betrayal:** Deep anger at schools failing their children. "The school should have succeeded. There are no excuses."

**\*Maths anxiety inheritance:** Parents' own maths struggles affect children. Research shows "parents' own maths anxiety might influence their child's maths anxiety."

#### **\*\*Religious/Political/Social Attitudes:\*\***

- Meritocratic beliefs: Success through hard work and support
- Middle-class anxiety: Fear of downward mobility
- Competition awareness: "In an increasingly competitive environment for school and university places"
- Regional inequality consciousness: Awareness London outperforms other regions

### **### Hopes and Dreams**

#### **\*\*Beyond Grades:\*\***

- **\*\*University access:\*\*** "She has 3 offers conditional on her getting a C in her gcse maths resit"
- **\*\*Confidence restoration:\*\*** "It's such a relief to feel that she's finally able to think about maths without worrying"
- **\*\*Breaking cycles:\*\*** Parents who failed maths desperate children won't repeat
- **\*\*Career enablement:\*\*** Maths seen as barrier to "lots of jobs"

#### **\*\*Success Definitions:\*\***

- Grade 5+ achievement (minimum)
- Child stops "panicking" during tests
- "Top set at school" placement
- "Enjoys his lessons" – emotional transformation
- Independence: "help my child become independent"

### **### Victories and Failures**

#### **\*\*Past Victories:\*\***

- "DD used Uplearn for A level maths... got an A and said they were the best maths exams she'd ever done!"
- "Went from nervous about maths to top set at school"
- "In four short months... school want to put her up for the Higher GCSE paper!!"

#### **\*\*Devastating Failures:\*\***

- "He's had a maths tutor for the past six years. A few in fact... The tutors have been great. It's really not them"
- "DD has tried 5 times to better her grade D GCSE maths without success"
- "We've tried a tutor, which made no difference at all"
- "He's at the point now where it's making him seriously depressed"

### **### Outside Forces They Blame**

#### **\*\*Primary Culprits:\*\***

1. **\*\*Teacher shortage:\*\*** "One in eight maths lessons taught by someone without maths degree"
2. **\*\*Supply teacher chaos:\*\*** "supply teachers 75% of the time"
3. **\*\*COVID impact:\*\*** "year 9&10 were pretty much a write off"
4. **\*\*Curriculum changes:\*\*** "The new GCSE is bloody difficult"
5. **\*\*Class sizes:\*\*** "class sizes are just too big... to have this individual attention"

#### **\*\*System-level failures:\*\***

- "Maths teaching in many comps is poor. Hard to get good maths teachers"
- "School aren't offering much support (one lesson a week)"
- Schools that "doesn't 'rate' his Maths teacher as good"

#### **### Prejudices and Beliefs**

##### **\*\*About Maths Ability:\*\***

- **\*\*Fixed mindset prevalent:\*\*** "Maths is one of those subjects where some kids are naturals"
- **\*\*Gender assumptions:\*\*** Subtle biases about girls and maths confidence
- **\*\*Genetic determinism:\*\*** "Ds just doesn't get it" - accepting defeat

##### **\*\*About Tutoring:\*\***

- **\*\*Student tutors inferior:\*\*** Want "actual teachers, not just students"
- **\*\*Online skepticism:\*\*** "maths is one of those subjects that might more benefit from unders tanding in person"
- **\*\*Price-quality correlation:\*\*** Expensive must be better (though often disappointed)

##### **\*\*About Schools:\*\***

- State schools failing systematically
- Private schools only marginally better
- Teachers either heroes or villains, no middle ground
- "Teaching to test" destroying real learning

#### **### Core Beliefs Summary**

"The education system has failed my child through poor teaching and constant supply teacher s, requiring me to spend money I don't have on tutoring that might not work, but I must try because without maths GCSE my child's future is ruined, even though deep down I fear they mi ght just not be 'maths people' like me."\*

---

#### **## Competitive Landscape Analysis**

##### **### Current Solutions Usage Patterns**

###### **\*\*1. School Support (Attempted First)\*\***

- After-school revision sessions: "one lesson a week" deemed insufficient
- Teacher consultations: Often unhelpful ("suggested my son study online")
- School intervention: Only for lowest achievers, missing "borderline" students

###### **\*\*2. Private Tutors (Primary Solution)\*\***

###### **\*Local Independent Tutors:\***

- **\*\*Love:\*\*** "Our neighbour is a retired maths teacher" - trust and reduced rates
- **\*\*Hate:\*\*** Hard to find quality, "people I know... generally saying they don't recommend th eirs"
- **\*\*Cost:\*\*** £20-60/hour depending on location and qualifications

###### **\*Agency Tutors:\***

- **\*\*Love:\*\*** Vetted, qualified, "an examiner for the board"
- **\*\*Hate:\*\*** Expensive, impersonal, high turnover
- **\*\*Horror story:\*\*** "Years ago I had a tutor for maths who was a teacher- totally out of tou ch! Awful and extortionate"

###### **\*\*3. Online Platforms\*\***

###### **\*MyTutor (Most mentioned):\***

- **Love:** University students relatable, recorded sessions, "went from 7s to 9s"
- **Hate:** "Subscription model horror" - "refused to return 7 lessons worth of built up credit"
- **Price:** £25-67/hour

#### \*Tutorful:\*

- **Love:** Free trial meetings, no hidden fees, "site is easy to use"
- **Hate:** Tutor availability issues, high platform commission affects quality

#### \*First Tutors:\*

- **Love:** One-off fee model, no ongoing commissions
- **Hate:** "paid £24.99 just for the EMAIL ADDRESS of a tutor" - feel tricked

### \*\*4. Educational Apps/Software\*\*

#### \*Seneca Learning (Free):\*

- **Love:** "Went from 5-5 to 7-6 in GCSEs using only Seneca"
- **Hate:** Technical issues, limited coverage

#### \*MathsWatch (School provided):\*

- **Love:** Teachers appreciate automated marking
- **Hate:** Students: "Takes a piece of my soul with each wrong answer"

#### \*Hegarty Maths:\*

- Generally positive but concerns about forced subscription changes

### \*\*5. Alternative Approaches\*\*

#### \*Kumon:\*

- **Love:** "Gone from nervous about maths to top set"
- **Hate:** "Too much repetition made it boring" - "£60/month isn't cheap"

#### \*Revision Guides/YouTube:\*

- Supplementary only, parents don't trust as primary solution
- "I really struggle to understand the work" - parents can't help

### ### Market Gaps Identified

#### \*\*Unmet Needs:\*\*

1. **Qualified teachers at student prices** (£20-25/hour)
2. **Progress transparency:** "Want to see exactly what child learned each session"
3. **Parent enablement:** "Want to know how to support at home"
4. **Exam board expertise:** "Need tutors familiar with specific exam board"
5. **Study skills:** "Not just content, but HOW to study"
6. **Flexible packages:** "Term-time only options"
7. **Emergency support:** "Quick help between scheduled sessions"

#### \*\*Current Compromises:\*\*

- Accepting unqualified tutors due to cost
- Group sessions instead of 1-to-1
- Generic apps vs personalized support
- Cramming vs ongoing support
- Online when prefer in-person

---

### ## Strategic Insights & Copy Direction

#### ### Historical/Curiosity Angles

#### \*\*"The Lost Methods That Worked"\*\*

- Parents remember O-levels being harder but clearer
- "Traditional methods: chalk and talk with immediate correction"
- Times tables mastery before age 8 - now abandoned
- Singapore method showing 20% improvement where implemented

– Mental arithmetic replaced by calculator dependency

### **\*\*Nostalgic Positioning Opportunity:\*\***

"Remember when maths made sense? When practice meant progress? We bring back what worked – with modern understanding of how children actually learn."

### **### Corruption Narratives**

#### **\*\*The System Has Failed:\*\***

1. **\*\*Grade inflation scandal:\*\*** "Grade C required 40–50% in O-levels, now Grade 4 needs only 19–25%"
2. **\*\*Teacher crisis:\*\*** "43% of maths teaching by teachers with <6 years experience"
3. **\*\*COVID coverup:\*\*** "More than half of students 3+ months behind" but grades stay high
4. **\*\*Curriculum chaos:\*\*** "More topics but less depth" – opposite of what works
5. **\*\*Postcode lottery:\*\*** "London 28.6% Grade 7+ vs North East 17.8%"

#### **\*\*Positioning Against Corruption:\*\***

"While schools juggle supply teachers and teach to tests, we focus on one thing: your child understanding maths."

### **### Horror Story Themes to Address**

#### **\*\*Expensive Failures:\*\***

"I've spent thousands on tutors... He's had a maths tutor for six years"

#### **\*\*Confidence Destruction:\*\***

"Tutor caused tremendous anxiety... made things worse"

#### **\*\*Too Late Interventions:\*\***

"Rarely take on Year 11 after Christmas... not enough time"

#### **\*\*Depression and Defeat:\*\***

"He's at the point now where it's making him seriously depressed... doesn't want to go back to college"

#### **\*\*Counter-Narrative:\*\***

"Most tutoring fails because it replicates school's mistakes. We do something different."

### **### Language and Phrases to Use**

#### **\*\*Parent Language (Exact Quotes):\*\***

- "Getting a bit desperate now"
- "All out of ideas"
- "Last-ditch attempt"
- "Can't afford to keep it up"
- "Phew! I'll be glad when this is over"
- "Making him seriously depressed"
- "She just doesn't get it"
- "Borderline 4/5"
- "Top set"
- "Lost confidence"

#### **\*\*Emotional Triggers:\*\***

- "University doors closing"
- "Watching them struggle"
- "Failed despite trying"
- "Supply teacher lottery"
- "Panic during tests"
- "Years of struggle"

#### **\*\*Solution Language:\*\***

- "Finally clicked"
- "Confidence returned"
- "Enjoys lessons now"
- "Gets it at last"

- "No more panic"
- "Systematic progress"

### ### Recommended Positioning

#### \*\*Primary Position: The Confidence-First Approach\*\*

"We fix the panic before we fix the problem. Because a terrified child can't learn maths."

#### \*\*Secondary Positions:\*\*

##### 1. \*\*The System Solver:\*\*

"Your child isn't failing maths. The system is failing your child. We know the difference."

##### 2. \*\*The Investment Protector:\*\*

"Stop throwing money at the problem. Start investing in the solution."

##### 3. \*\*The Grade Guarantor:\*\*

"From 4 to 5. From panic to pass. From struggle to success."

### ### Testimonial Themes Needed

##### 1. \*\*The Confidence Transformation:\*\*

Child who went from tears to top set

##### 2. \*\*The System Refugee:\*\*

Family failed by school who found structure with you

##### 3. \*\*The Value Victory:\*\*

Parent who spent less but got more than expensive alternatives

##### 4. \*\*The Last-Minute Miracle:\*\*

Year 11 intervention that actually worked

##### 5. \*\*The Understanding Breakthrough:\*\*

Student who "finally got it" after years of not understanding

##### 6. \*\*The Parent Partnership:\*\*

How you helped parent support child between sessions

### ### Key Differentiation Messages

#### \*\*Against Schools:\*\*

"Consistent teaching, not supply teacher roulette"

#### \*\*Against Big Platforms:\*\*

"No subscription traps, no hidden fees, no corporate confusion"

#### \*\*Against Cheap Tutors:\*\*

"Qualified teachers who know the exam board, not students guessing"

#### \*\*Against Traditional Tutors:\*\*

"Fix confidence first, grades follow naturally"

#### \*\*Against Apps:\*\*

"Human understanding, not algorithmic exercises"

### ### Call-to-Action Frameworks

#### \*\*Fear-Relief:\*\*

"Stop watching them struggle. Start watching them succeed."

#### \*\*Urgency-Without-Panic:\*\*

"Every week matters. But panic helps nobody. Let's talk calmly about rapid progress."

#### \*\*Value-Clarity:\*\*

"Know exactly what you're paying for. See exactly what they're learning."

**\*\*Partnership-Promise:\*\***

"You're not alone in this. We guide parent and child together."

---

## ## Conclusion

The UK GCSE maths tutoring market reveals parents in genuine crisis, failed by systemic education problems and burned by expensive tutoring disappointments. They seek not just grade improvement but emotional transformation – from panic to confidence, from confusion to clarity.

Kaizen Initiative should position itself as the antithesis of both system failure and tutoring industry exploitation – offering transparent, confidence-first teaching that acknowledges parents' financial constraints while delivering the quality of expensive competitors. The messaging must balance empathy for their desperation with calm confidence in your solution, speaking their language of struggle while promising the transformation they desperately seek.

The market is ready for a provider that admits most tutoring fails, explains why, and offers something genuinely different – not just another platform or agency, but a philosophy that puts confidence before curriculum and progress before profit.