**Stephen’s Academic Journey at St Paul’s Catholic School in Milton Keynes, 2016-2022.**

* [***July 2016***: Arrived in UK, from Italy, at age 13, (Year 9) with little to no English Spoken.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***June 2019***: Sat the 11 GCSE examinations, achieving mostly 5's. This outcome was a result of a restricted English vocabulary and a lack of interest in academics.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***August 2019***: With aspirations to pursue a career in Engineering, I had intended to choose Maths, Physics, and Engineering as my A-level subjects. Unfortunately, my application for Maths and Physics was denied, as I did not meet the required grades - 6s in Maths and Combined Sciences. As an alternative, I opted for A-levels in Italian, Design Engineering and a BTEC Diploma in Applied Sciences, equivalent to two A-levels.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***September 2020***: After devoting an academic year to studying these subjects, I came to the realization that I was not fulfilling my potential. I became dissatisfied with my chosen subjects, knowing that they would likely present an obstacle in my pursuit of higher education in Engineering. Recognizing the importance of studying Physics to increase my chances of pursuing my desired career path, I made a dedicated commitment to independently study A-level Physics in my spare time. As I delved into the subject, my passion for Physics grew exponentially, leading me to shift my goals from pursuing an Engineering degree to aiming for a degree in Physics instead. This change in direction reflected my newfound enthusiasm and determination to fully explore and excel in the field of Physics.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***October 2020***: Despite facing significant opposition due to my lower GCSE grades, I remained determined to pursue A-level Physics and include it in my timetable. However, this path was not without its challenges. To address the concerns surrounding my GCSE Maths grade, I was advised to retake the exam and achieve a 6 or above. Fuelled by my determination, I embarked on a rigorous journey of independent study for GCSE Maths, devoting myself entirely to the subject for one month. During this intensive period, I committed to understanding the material thoroughly and honing my mathematical skills to meet the required standard.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***November 2020***: After completing the GCSE Maths resit exam, I discovered that my passion for mathematics had grown even more. Fuelled by this newfound enthusiasm, I took the initiative to independently study A-level Maths alongside my other subjects, including Italian, Design Engineering, and the BTEC Diploma in Applied Sciences. Balancing these commitments, I also continued my independent study of A-level Physics.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***January 2021***: On results day, I was thrilled to discover that I had achieved a grade 8 in the GCSE Maths resits. However, my journey to pursue A-level Physics did not end there. I was informed that in order to secure a place, I needed to sit an entrance test in Physics in February 2021, and if I could attain a C grade (or above) in that test, I would be admitted into the course. However, as Physics A-level typically spans two years, joining the course meant I would have to stay an extra year in education. Initially, I felt hesitant about this extended commitment, but my passion for Physics ultimately overpowered my concerns. I decided to follow my vision and pursue Physics wholeheartedly. Recognizing the level of dedication required, I made a difficult decision to drop from the BTEC Diploma (which consisted of two qualifications) to the BTEC Extended Certificate (a single qualification) to create more time and focus for my Physics studies. My dedication paid off, as I completed the BTEC Extended Certificate program much earlier than intended, finishing in January 2021. This meant that in a remarkable feat, I had effectively completed an equivalent A-level qualification in just five academic months, spanning from September 2020 to January 2021.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***February 2021***: After sitting the Physics test, I performed exceptionally well and achieved a B5, passing with flying colours. As a result, I was granted admission to the 2022 class for A-level Physics. However, my journey didn't end there. Due to my commendable performance in the GCSE Maths resit, I was advised to consider adding A-level Maths to my curriculum. Recognizing the importance of Maths in the field of Physics, I took on the challenge and was given a conditional offer for A-level Maths, with a requirement to sit an admissions test in March.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***March 2021***: Having covered the AS level maths syllabus at that point in under 4 months, which aligned with the material covered by the 2022 A-level maths class from September to March, I felt well-prepared for the test and passed with outstanding results. My passion for knowledge drove me to pursue Further Maths independently. I then made a request to include the subject in my curriculum. However, despite my eagerness, I encountered significant opposition, and unfortunately, I was denied entry. The reason cited was that the 2022 class was already significantly ahead in the curriculum. Consequently, I had to temporarily abandon my self-studying efforts in Further Maths, as the workload from my other subjects demanded my full attention.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***June 2021***: My academic mentor came to my aid, persuading the Maths department to offer me an opportunity due to recognizing my abilities and acknowledging the advantage it would bring to my Cambridge application to have Further Maths. Consequently, I received the news that I would be required to sit an admissions test in September, which meant I had to dedicate my summer of 2021 to revising the entire AS Further Maths content. This intense preparation period was necessary to ensure I could showcase my proficiency for the subject.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***August 2021***: On results day, I was delighted to discover that I had achieved outstanding grades, earning A\*s in both Italian and Design Engineering, in addition to a Distinction in the BTEC Extended Certificate in Applied Sciences.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***September 2021***: Despite not being able to cover the entire Further Maths syllabus during the summer, I took the Further Maths test, feeling uncertain about my preparation. Surprisingly, I managed to pass the test, granting me admission to the Further Maths class. This accomplishment was a testament to my determination and ability to excel even under challenging circumstances. Alongside this, I had already submitted my UCAS application, and I began preparing for the NSAA (Cambridge Natural Sciences Admissions Assessment). However, I must admit that my preparation for the NSAA was not as thorough as I would have liked. Balancing my other A-levels and trying to catch up on the Further Maths content took precedence, leaving limited time and focus for NSAA revision. As a result, my NSAA preparation was somewhat mediocre at best. I didn't allocate enough time for revision, and I couldn't dedicate as much effort as I would have preferred. Nevertheless, I remained determined to give it my best shot, knowing that my overall academic achievements and passion for the subjects could still make a positive impact on my Cambridge application.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***November 2021***: Sat the NSAA and as had my Cambridge interview.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***January 2022***: After receiving feedback from Cambridge, I learned that I was rejected post-interview. The interview process was divided into two parts, and my performance had varying outcomes. Unfortunately, I struggled during the first part due to the pressure, anxiety, and a lack of preparation in specific Physics topics, including Simple Harmonic Motion, which hadn't been covered in my Physics class yet. On a more positive note, the second part of the interview went quite well for me. The questions were centred around maths, an area where I've always been stronger, and I was able to excel in this aspect of the assessment. However, the feedback also revealed that my performance on the NSAA didn't meet the expected standard, which, combined with the interview results, led to my rejection. It was a disheartening experience, and I felt quite gutted and disappointed in myself. Despite the emotional challenges, I found the strength to push through this setback.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* **March 2022**: [Following the setback and the lack of motivation it brought, my performance in the final mock exams was impacted. I managed to achieve A\*BB grades in Maths, Physics, and Further Maths. However, I was still struggling to catch up in Further Maths, which reflected in my grades. Given my grades and the advice of my teachers, they suggested that I put Durham as my firm choice in UCAS. The reasoning was that I needed to improve my Physics grade to an A to meet Durham's requirements, which seemed more achievable. On the other hand, they deemed Imperial to be riskier due to the significant improvement required. To meet Imperial's requirements, I needed to achieve an A\* in Physics and an A in Further Maths. Despite their suggestion, I decided to go against their advice and made Imperial my firm choice. I had the belief in my abilities and was determined to achieve those grades. Although my teachers warned that nobody in our school had achieved an A\* in A-Level Physics since 2011, I remained confident in my potential and was not willing to settle for less.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***April & May 2022***: During the phase of lacking motivation, my teachers played a pivotal role in supporting and encouraging me. With their guidance, I found the strength to overcome the hurdles and started studying with greater determination than ever before.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***June 2022***: I sat my final three A-level exams, and during the Physics exams, I experienced high levels of anxiety and sleep deprivation. The pressure was intense as my admission to Imperial hinged on achieving an A\* in Physics.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)
* [***August 2022***: On results day, I received my A-level results: A\*AA grades in Maths, Physics, and Further Maths. While I was thrilled with my exceptional performance in Maths and Further Maths, I felt disappointed that I hadn't achieved the A\* in Physics that I had hoped for. I was also aware that no one in our class had managed to secure the A\* in Physics, validating the teacher’s belief of the difficulty in achieving the A\* in A-level Physics with OCR A. However, despite not attaining the A\* grade, I received the fantastic news that I had been accepted at Imperial College. I couldn't help but feel incredibly grateful for this opportunity, knowing how competitive and challenging the admission process can be.](http://127.0.0.1:5500/Tuition/about.html)