



Swiss visit gives students chance to see Physics in action

To get their A2 course off to an exciting start, 21 Physics students made a visit to CERN – the European Organisation for Nuclear Research – in Geneva, Switzerland.

After flying out from Gatwick Airport, the students spent an evening sightseeing and eating together in an Italian restaurant, before staying overnight at a Geneva Youth Hostel.

The following morning they took a tram ride out to CERN, which is also the European Laboratory for Particle Physics and the home of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC).

The students, along with three members of staff, were given a guided tour of one of the detectors which is used to study the results of high energy collisions between sub-atomic particles, and then moved on to visit the test and maintenance area for the huge magnets which make up the LHC itself.

There is no public access to the LHC, situated 100 metres below ground level and which forms an enormous 27 kilometre ring which crosses and re-crosses the border between Switzerland and France, but they were able to stand in a mock-up of the tunnel and feel that they were really there!

After lunch in the CERN canteen, shared with the thousands of physicists from all over Europe and beyond who work there, the students spent some time in the Visitor Centre, enjoying the hands-on exhibits in the Microcosm and the brand-new Universe of Particles which “allows the visitor to explore the world of particles by immersing you in a unique and spectacular ambience”.

During the return journey to London, many of the students enthusiastically expressed how much they had enjoyed this unique opportunity to see real Physics in action.