



2013-14 in the SEN Department

A year of successes and growth

- Revision skills sessions for all year groups
- Personal SEN 'passports' help to target teaching for specific students
- Fun times at Breakfast Club and in L5 at lunch!
- Radical '2 choice' option on cinema trip blows minds!
- Changes to SEN Provision from Sept 2014

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The SEN Department at Reading School has had a fantastic year in 2013-14. We have been continuing with several successful schemes and activities that were already running, developing them and moving them forwards; we have also introduced some new ideas, that we think have been very successful, and will be progressed further in future.

Amongst the successful schemes that have continued to thrive this year have been the ever popular tutor-time Breakfast Club; the much-anticipated yearly cinema trip (this year to a choice of

Frozen or Gravity); and of course L5 has continued to host its 'Usual Suspects'!

In newer initiatives, we have been developing our student 'SEN Passports' (more about these inside), and ensuring that all pupils with SEN at Reading have theirs kept up to date. We have also introduced targeted revision sessions and workshops, for specific year groups, to make sure students have the skills they need to prepare for exams calmly and successfully. These proved very popular, especially with boys in KS4 & 5 who have been preparing for external exams.

Breakfast club at...L5!

Run by Mrs Ellis, 'Breakfast Club' is a very popular morning get-together for like-



minded KS3 students, who want to work on their social interaction, listening skills and boost self-esteem. Students play description games (like Articulate or 5 Second Rule), and it always looks like they're having a great time- just playing around! But do not

Boys being inventive in L5



Sensory Circuits has been a massive success this year- boys have hugely improved their coordination skills, and perhaps learnt that *just sometimes* life isn't always about winning. There is much more to find out about all the other SEN initiatives, so please read on to find out more!

be deceived- key social interaction skills are being learnt- along with excellent board game tactics! Breakfast Club is great fun and an excellent place to work on social interaction skills- but it may be misleadingly named because there's no food. Nobody tell trading standards!

Sensory Circuits

Have you ever felt a bit un-coordinated? Wished your limbs would do what you told them to do, when you asked? Wanted to focus on team skills and make new friendships? To have a safe place where it didn't matter if you won or lost? Well, sensory circuits may be the place for you!

Every week we meet in the gym during one tutor time to practice agility circuits, and consequently learn new skills and make new friends. We do things like balancing on a narrow balance board; race with stack-



ing cups; throwing a bean bag from one hand to the other; racing on the giant space hopper; and making up agility circuits!

But we don't just go round this 'circuit' endlessly, individually. We like to mix it up, either by competing for a cake – thank you Mrs Ellis! Or by leading a (poor un-

suspecting!) friend around the course blindfolded, testing both our skills in team work and communication.

Sensory circuits gives you time to boost your confidence and self-esteem, by learning how to do new things and socialising with different people. We have learnt a huge amount from Sensory circuits – not just improving our general motor skills abilities and balance, but also that everyone has their own challenges to overcome, and that a victory doesn't always mean getting around the

course quickest.

We look forward to the sensory circuits continuing next year with Mrs Ellis, and welcoming lots more boys to join in with us.

L5: 3D Chess & Magic the Gathering



L5: the Chill-Out Room by Sam Miller

I have been spending my break and lunch times at L5 (a.k.a The Chill-Out Room, a.k.a The Chill Zone a.k.a The Mango...you get the idea...) for just over three years now. When I first started coming in Year 7 it hugely improved my enjoyment of school. Over the years, it has helped me become a more confi-

dent and independent person, and given me a strong, supportive network of friends.

What is it that makes L5 work so well? Partly because it's a sort of sanctuary, both away from the busy crowds of the Refectory or LRC, and from the regimented, sometimes relentless school day and timetable. Also,

just as importantly, it's a place where having different interests and ways of looking at the world is not only respected but valued and celebrated. Here in L5 we like to not so much think outside the box as in an entirely different astral plane. I admit I have never quite got the hand of 3D or 'delay'

chess, but I'm always up for a 'Would you risk it for a chocolate biscuit?' quiz (even though some of the Lord of the Rings or Game of Thrones references go over my head!) All in all, I think that the Chill Out Room is a great tradition at Reading School, and we would all welcome the chance to meet new people from all years who feel they would like to see what it has to offer.

Have you got your passport?

This year we have been producing personalised 'passports' for all our SEN students.

Importantly passports are co-written by each boy with Ms Rogers/ Miss Moore, so pupils have control over what their individual passport will contain.

The SEN passport tells teachers what the student finds difficult at school; what hobbies they like; subjects they excel at and those they find more challenging; and gives helpful advice on what techniques will help each boy to learn best in lessons, e.g. al-



Sadly our passport won't work at Heathrow

lowing them to use a laptop for extended writing, or breaking tasks down into small chunks. The aim of the passport

is to put all the 'need to know' information about a student together, so teachers can quickly see what they need to do to support that boy best.

But it's not all one-sided! Each boy has written themselves a particular target they will be working on this term, so teachers know what to expect from them too.

Staff CPD session on ADHD

Reading School staff recently attended a CPD (continuous professional development) session on ADHD.

The first thing we learnt is that 'Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder' is not always as neatly packaged as we might think- in fact specialists often prefer to call it ADD as sometimes there is no 'hyperactivity' associated with the condition. We learnt about 'delay aversion', meaning that sufferers of ADD often find it very difficult to wait for things to hap-

pen, or find it distressing and uncomfortable not to know how long a task will last, which is why they might often doodle or fiddle with things, getting them in trouble with teachers.

We realized that these coping mechanisms are in fact incredibly common- not many people enjoy waiting! We all have different techniques to use empty

time, (like playing on phones, or counting numbers of pupils wearing jumpers!) and thereby 'avoid' the delay.



The workshop gave us very practical ideas for ways to

teach that would help ALL our students, for instance saying exactly how long we would spend on each task. The session has given us ideas to manage behaviour and concen-

tration better for all pupils in our classes. The session was also interesting because it emphasised that having ADD was often a real bonus in life- many of our top entrepreneurs and world leaders show the signs of ADD, and they have used these character traits, like focus and determination, to build incredibly successful lives. In fact experts believe that unless a person's condition impacts their life negatively, we should not worry about diagnosis.

Cinema Trip

This year, the ever-popular cinema trip had an exciting new twist... No, Tom Cruise wasn't there to greet the group. No, there wasn't free popcorn for everyone. No, they didn't all get lifelong cinema membership. Ok, so it wasn't quite that exciting- but there was a



choice of film! The boys on the trip were lucky enough that there were several teachers willing to accompany them to the cinema meaning that there was a choice of films to see: either the hit animated

movie 'Frozen', or the decidedly more tense Oscar-winning 'Gravity'. General opinion was that Gravity was sadly lacking in real science, but was very tense throughout! And we're STILL singing the Frozen hit tune 'Let it Go!' Well, after many scares and much weeping (from the Frozen audience) the boys enjoyed

a trip to McDonalds for a suitably indulgent treat. It was Christmas after all!



Revision Workshops

Exam season can be a stressful time of year for many of us (parents and teachers included!) and we are always working on strategies to support students. So Miss Moore and Miss Rogers researched the best ways to revise (according to the latest educational research) and devised strategies to help stu-

dents at Reading School. Workshops and one-to-one meetings were then run, to target advice to suit the needs of particular year groups, and groups of students. We looked at the most successful strategies (spreading out revision over time, and changing regularly between topics, as well as testing

yourself on what you have learnt). Everyone who participated found the sessions useful, which was great news. Many also found that it was comforting to talk about their worries over revision, and discover they were not alone. Next year, the SEN Department plans to run these sessions earlier,

so boys can use these top skills all year round! In fact the revision sessions were so successful, the teachers were invited to run them again as CPD for 40 teachers of hearing impaired / visually impaired students from the Sensory Consortium, which was a great success.



With SEN changing from September 2014 (see details below), we want to review our provision at Reading School. We always aim to provide the very best support possible for all our SEN pupils, and so we would value your opinions, on what we do well and what could be improved. Many of the techniques that help SEN students are also beneficial for all students in a class, so if we get SEN right it benefits the whole school.

If you can spare 5mins to complete a (very short!) survey, please go to the Student Support section of SharePoint (Student) or Latest News on the School website. We will ask you what support activities you are aware that we do, what works well in your opinion, and what more we could do.

Thank you for supporting SEN at Reading School.

Check out the Student Support pages on Sharepoint!

You'll find:

Revision tips

Welfare advice

How to Manage Stress tips

SEN is changing...

From September, the Government's new approach to special educational needs provision will place students at the centre of planning, and focus on support in lessons and progress made.

The new system aims to put each young person and their family at the centre of discussions about the support offered. The government says that parents know their children best, although at 16 children's views should normally take precedence.

SEN includes health and disabilities which require special educational provision. SEN is divided into these areas of need:

- Communication & Learning
- Cognition & Learning
- Social, Mental & Emotional Health
- Sensory & Physical

There is now just one category of SEN provision; the intervention levels of school action (SA) and school action plus (SA+) have been removed.

Statements (for students with significant need of support and there-



fore individual funding) are also being replaced with Education Health Care Plans, where parents have a greater input on what money is spent on.

In the new SEN Code of Practice changes are similar to ideas under the Every Child Matters scheme of 10 years ago, but with much great-

er parent involvement. This requirement for greater communication has led to the introduction of the Local Offer (LO).

The Local Offer is a directory of everything available to parents, including: health, education, social care. It is an evolving and changing thing to adapt to needs of children. It covers all people 0-25 years with SEN & disability and includes public, voluntary and private sector resources. Each school will create their LO, which is added to the LA's LO. This will be published for September 2014 for parents to access.

Websites such as:

The National Association of Special Educational Needs (www.nasen.org.uk)

& the Government's website (www.gov.uk)

provide summaries and further information.