



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

10th January 2025

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Students, and Staff,

As we gather once again for the commencement of a new Lent Term, I would like to extend a warm welcome back to all our students and staff. Despite the near-freezing temperatures and dark mornings, it has been joyful to see so many smiling faces as my Leadership Team colleagues and I greeted students at the school gates upon their return this week. I trust that everyone enjoyed a restful holiday period, recharging and preparing for the exciting challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the coming year. Having been asked by Dr Evans to be a guest contributor to this week's Headmaster's Bulletin, I would like to share a little about my background and role at Reading School.

I was born and raised in Antrim, Northern Ireland and spent six years of my childhood living in Kathmandu, Nepal, before returning to study for my GCSEs and A levels at Methodist College Belfast. After graduating from the University of Lancaster, I studied for my Postgraduate Certificate in Education and have been teaching for over 26 years. I taught at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, which included a year abroad doing voluntary work, and then taught at Queen Elizabeth's Boys' School in Barnet. I have held various positions ranging from Head of Year, Master in Charge of Rugby, Director of Sport and Head of Faculty.

In 2019, I was drawn to Reading School because of its clarity of purpose in relation to social mobility, building people of character and academic excellence. I feel very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to work at the School as Assistant Head with oversight of lower school pastoral matters, and it is deeply fulfilling getting to know the students along with being able to play a part in their journey as they grow physically, emotionally and intellectually. Having now been at the School for five years, I am excited about the year ahead, which marks our 900th Anniversary.

I have been reflecting on this extraordinary milestone, along with considering the passing of time and the importance of acknowledging and celebrating achievements. As I prepare to raise my bat for a half-century, alongside my close relatives reaching the ages of 80 and 100, it feels invigorating to celebrate what has gone before while also looking forward to the exciting possibilities in the future. I would invite the whole School community to consider what part they can play in the School's Anniversary and all students will be attending assemblies led by Dr Evans in late January, which will mark the launch of the celebrations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome our new and returning staff members who have joined us this term: Mr Blade (Teacher of PE and Head of Cricket); Mrs Alberici (Boarding and Sixth Form Administrator); and Mrs Mann (Teacher of English). If you felt cold this week, please spare a thought for Mr Blade, who left a 30-plus degree summer holiday in Western Australia to join us and has already been building excellent relationships with the students who are keen to impress our new Head of Cricket. Some of you may recognise Mrs Alberici from her time previously working in reception at Reading School for three and a half years, and she will be an invaluable addition to our Boarding and Sixth Form Team. Mrs Mann brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and has a passion for providing students with opportunities to develop their skills and understanding. We are thrilled to have them all on board and look forward to the fresh perspectives and energy they will bring to our school community.

As we look ahead to the Lent Term, our vision remains focused on fostering an inclusive and stimulating school environment where every individual can flourish academically, intellectually, and personally. We aim to continue to encourage a culture of wellbeing, engagement, and achievement that will guide us throughout this term. Once again, welcome back, and may the coming Lent Term be one of growth, celebration, service and shared success for everyone in our School community.

Mr Dave McGall
Assistant Headteacher



Key information

All years and parents

Beyond 900 Years

The planned Year 11 Parents Meeting with the Headmaster has been re-scheduled from Monday 3rd February to Monday 10th March 2025 from 7:30pm in Big School.

For any parents across any year group who have been unable to attend a meeting, you are welcome to attend on Monday 10th March 2025. The meeting will share news of the School's ambitious development plans and you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts and views.

Clubs and Extra Curricular Information – Lent Term 2025

Please [click this link](#) to access a full list of clubs and extracurricular activities taking place from Monday 6th January 2025.

Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing

[January's Online Safety Newsletter](#) for parents includes information on:

- Monkey App – what it is, what you need to be aware of and further information.
- Report Remove – a tool to help young people to know how to report images of themselves they want removed from the internet.
- Age ratings of Apps – a reminder for parents

Reading School Vacancies

Teacher of Biology – for further details, please [click here](#).

Chef de Partie – further details, please [click here](#).

Sous Chef – further details, please [click here](#).

School Community News

RAL School Science Prize



Earlier last term, 20 students from Years 7 and 8 each wrote a 500-word essay on 'Why I Love Science' as part of the [Rutherford Appleton Laboratory \(RAL\)](#) school science prize. Out of a field of over 150 entrants, only 16 finalists were selected, and three of them were from Reading School: Hamza M (7W), Amogh B (7S), and Shaurya D (7C). The judging panel for the event consisted of many eminent scientists from RAL, working at the forefront of research in areas such as laser physics, particle physics, and space physics. To impress this panel and make it through to the final is a real achievement, and all three students should be very proud of themselves.

The final was held on Friday 13th December at RAL, with the families of the finalists and Dr Lewis-Brown from the Physics Department watching and supporting. The highlight for the finalists was a special tour of the ISIS neutron and muon source, one of the particle experiments at the laboratory, responsible for many discoveries in fields as diverse as archaeology, chemistry, geology, and biology. After the tour, the main event was a pre-recorded 2-minute video presentation from each of the finalists on why they love science. There was a remarkable amount of scientific knowledge and creativity on show in these presentations, with one finalist talking in detail about how science is used in football, another presenting a news report by special correspondent Isaac Newton, and a third demonstrating the earthquake detector project he had built himself in Year 5.

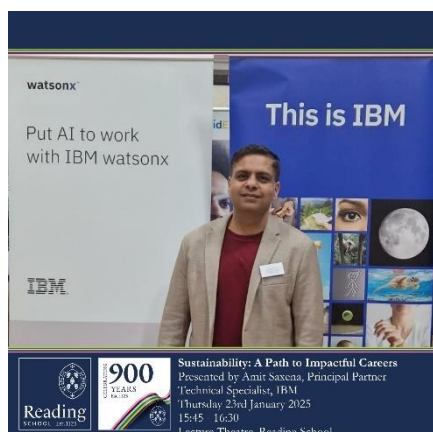
The awards were presented by Dr Rebecca Harwin, a scientist at RAL space – the UK's space research laboratory. Her current work involves building a satellite to demonstrate key technologies for quantum cryptography, which will launch in mid-2025. In quite a coincidence, she is also married to Dr Lewis-Brown, something the organisers were completely unaware of when they asked her to do the presentations. She did her own short presentation about why she loved science and was impressed with the quality of presentations by the students. As part of her presentation, she related how she herself went to a similar event as a student at Kendrick school. It is entirely possible that in a few years' time, Shaurya, Amogh, or Hamza could be standing in front of a similar audience of students telling them about the fantastic research that they are now doing.

Although our three finalists did not go on to win the competition, they all did exceptionally well to get to that stage, and we commend them for their efforts.

Upcoming Events

Explore Meaningful Careers with Seasoned Professionals

This January, students can attend two inspiring lectures led by accomplished professionals sharing invaluable insights from their career journeys. These sessions offer a unique chance to explore how passion, sustainability and global experiences can shape impactful careers.



Please encourage your child to take advantage of this valuable learning experience from industry experts with a wealth of knowledge and real-world advice.

Inspire Lecture: Sustainability - A Path to Impactful Careers

Speaker: Amit Saxena, Principal Partner Technical Specialist at IBM

Date: Thursday 23 January

Time: 3:45pm - 4:30pm

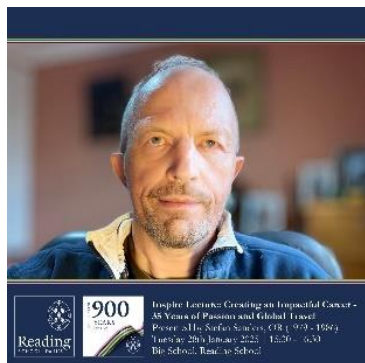
Location: Lecture Theatre

What to Expect:

- A Career in Sustainability: Insights from Amit Saxena, an expert in IBM's Sustainability Software with over 22 years of experience.
- Why Sustainability Matters: The importance of balancing environmental health, social equity, and economic prosperity.
- Career Insights: Lessons from Amit's journey on leading innovative solutions to climate challenges.
- Building a Meaningful Career: How to contribute to a healthier planet and resilient economy.

Register by clicking the following link: [Inspire Lecture: Sustainability - A Path to Impactful Careers | Events | Reading School Alumni Society](#)

Creating an Impactful Career - 35 Years of Passion and Global Travel



Inspire Lecture: Creating an Impactful Career - 35 Years of Passion and Global Travel

Speaker: Stefan Sanders (OR 1979-1986), a highly experienced professional with over 35 years in the rail industry.

Date: Tuesday 28 January

Time: 3:30pm - 4:30pm

Location: Big School

What to Expect:

- From Economics to Global Consultancy: How Stefan transitioned from an economics graduate to a global consultant in the rail industry.
- The Power of Travel: How international experiences broaden horizons and shape both personal and professional growth.
- A Consultant's Day-to-Day: Insights into the challenges and rewards of working in a global industry.
- Contributions to Global Rail Projects: Stefan's involvement in major projects, including UK rail privatisation and advisory roles across continents.
- Living and Working Abroad: Lessons from his time in Malaysia and Australia, embracing diverse cultures.
- Practical Advice for Students: The benefits of pursuing travel and international opportunities for a fulfilling career.

Register by clicking here: [Inspire Lecture: Creating an Impactful Career - 35 Years of Passion and Global Travel | Events | Reading School Alumni Society](#)

We look forward to seeing interested students at these upcoming Inspire Lectures.

Wellbeing Course

40% OFF DISCOUNT USE CODE JAN2025 AT CHECKOUT

THE
Art of Living
Part 1 Course

Learn **Sudarshan Kriya™** - a powerful rhythmic breathing technique, during our three-day workshop, and experience:

- enhanced well-being
- stronger immune system
- improved sleep
- increased focus
- reduced stress & anxiety

Fri 31 January - Sun 2 February 2025
Reading School, Erleigh Road, Reading RG15LW

Register Now: bit.ly/31JanPart

The Art of Living has become a regular fixture at Reading School as the organisation hosts a series of private wellbeing related events throughout the year. Recently, during late December, a Guinness World Record was set by the group at Reading School for the largest number of people taking part in a meditation session during World Meditation Day on Saturday 21 December.

The Art of Living is currently offering all members of the Reading School Community a 40% discount on their Part 1 Course, which is a 3-day workshop and experience designed to enhance wellbeing, improve sleep, increase focus and reduce stress and anxiety while using evidence-based breathwork and meditation. The course runs from Friday 31 January – Sunday 2 February at Reading School.

To register, click this link (using code JAN2025 for a 40% discount) and for all enquiries, please contact Priyanka Thombre by emailing priyankathombre@uk.artofliving.org.

Careers



Are you interested in finding out more about apprenticeships? Apprenticeship Advisor, Varsha Menon from the Berkshire Careers Hub will be available on Friday 17 January from 3:30pm – 5pm at Early Crescent Resource Centre, Warbler Drive, Lower Earley, Reading, RG6 4HB, to answer questions and share more about apprenticeship opportunities and career paths.

The event is open to all young people along with their parents and carers and all queries can be emailed directly to [Nikki Penman-Fea](mailto:Nikki.Penman-Fea@berkshirecareers.com) from the Berkshire Careers Hub.

RSPA

Welcome back to everyone in 2025! We are now in the 900th Year of Reading School and are looking forward to new and exciting events throughout the year and we are thrilled to have you with us to celebrate this historical milestone.

Together, let's make this year our best one yet and we are so grateful for your kind support. Also, many thanks to all parents and carers who has shown their support through our Amazon Wishlist 2024. All teachers and staff members are thankful to you and your kind gestures.

"We are over the moon with the items we received from the RSPA and the parent community. The trolleys and power cables will help us prepare for lessons and special events such as the Book Festival in March. Thank you so much." Mrs L Kesteven (School Librarian)

"We are extremely happy with the items we received from the RSPA Amazon Wishlist. Thank you so much." Mr M Cooper (Head of Classics & Scholarship Lead)

"A massive thank you to all the parents who have supported the Christmas wish list, especially F Aslam, V Timko, S Abedi and C Haines. The new and exciting dice we have will allow us to do more fun and interesting experiments when covering probability and the board pens and erasers will be used a lot by our exam classes when they get into revision. Many thanks again and we are hugely grateful of all the support from parents that we receive." Mrs Parker (Head of Mathematics)

"Incredible support from the RSPA and we couldn't do without the generous support from our parents. Thank you." Mr D Tridgell (Director of Character, Head of County House)

Get Ready for the Ultimate Year 7 Disco Night

It's time to dust off those dancing shoes because disco fever is coming to Reading School! The Reading School Parents' Association is rolling out the red carpet for our incredible Year 7 students, inviting them to a night of music, laughter, and unforgettable memories. And guess what? This year, during our 900th anniversary we're making it extra special by welcoming Kendrick School Year 7 girls.

We're thrilled to announce that we've extended an exclusive invitation to Year 7 girls from Kendrick School. Together, they'll join our students to light up the dance floor for an evening packed with fun, friendship, and fabulous tunes.

Mark Your Calendars:

- **Date:** Friday, 24th January 2025
- **Time:** 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
- **Venue Detail:** Reading School, Refractory Hall
- **Refreshments:** Soft drinks and light snacks available for purchase
- **Ticket Price:** £10 (first come first serve basis)
- [Link to buy the ticket](#)

Please note: Tickets are selling fast – please book as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

While Year 7 students socialise, parents of Year 7 students are invited to a special 'Meet and Greet' between parents. After dropping off your child at the refectory, head over to our exclusive parent gathering where you'll meet other Year 7 parents, connect with seasoned Reading School families, and share in the joy of our vibrant school community. Plus, we'll have refreshments available for a small fee to keep the conversations flowing and spirits high.

Why Attend?

- A night of fun and bonding for students and parents alike.
- Build new friendships in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

- Every penny raised supports our 900-year celebration fund, making a historic milestone truly spectacular.

This is more than a disco – it's a social event that brings our community together and sets the stage for lifelong memories. So, whether you're a dancing superstar or just looking forward to connecting with fellow parents, this is a night you won't want to miss. We can't wait to see you there! The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

The Pre-loved Uniform Shop will be open on:

- Friday 17th January from 3.30 pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 18th January from 10.30 am – 12.30pm
- Friday 28th February from 3.30 pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 1st March from 10.30 am – 12.30pm
- Friday 28th March from 3.30 pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 29th March from 10.30 am – 12.30pm

In the event of a poor weather forecast the opening will be cancelled and if this happens, information will be sent out via WhatsApp groups and Classlist.

We are always looking for more volunteers to join our shop team. It is a great way to meet other parents and to find out about more about the school. If you would like to join the team, please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Good luck to our Year 13 students for their Mock Exams

We wish our Year 13 students the best of luck for their Mock exams running this and next week. As the saying goes, "*The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.*"

Have a lovely weekend.

The RSPA Team

Lent Term – Week 1

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.



Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) school science prize finalists.

'Why I Love Science'



From left to right: Amogh B (7S), Hamza M (7W) and Shaurya D (7C)

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.