



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

17<sup>th</sup> January 2025

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# Introduction

Dear Colleagues, Carers, Parents and Students,

Environmental health inspectors visited the School yesterday and awarded it a 5 Star Food Hygiene Rating. Today therefore, I would like to share a very simple message of thanks. Positive judgements like this 5 Star Rating are only possible in a kitchen where chefs have a vision, a team knows how to collaborate and all work to high standards of food safety and hygiene practices.

As a school we consistently talk about the importance of excellence, integrity, leadership and of community. Many of you will see these virtues in action as students in Year 11 and 13 work together and reflect on mock exam performances and on University application successes and disappointments. Many of you will witness these values in the handball, football and basketball teams who have enjoyed fixtures this week. Those of you who did so well in the Ethics Cup, in Year 10's Latin Pompeii Day, in the 'Top of the Bench' competition and during our current Spanish trip, will certainly also have explored and demonstrated the principles we hold most dear.

I'm therefore delighted to thank our Catering team, not so much for the 5 Star Rating, as for the attitude, values, commitment and care that underpins it.

Thank you, Craig, Michelle, Nick, Emma, Marzena, Andrew, Neil, Joe, Helen and Purna for all you do to keep us fed and looked after, and for all you do to demonstrate excellence, integrity, leadership and community.

In this same spirit, with Year 11 and Year 13 students beginning to get mock exam results back, may I encourage all our parents and carers to praise process, rather than worry about outcomes.

It's mastering the process that leads to the best possible Food Hygiene rating, and it's mastering the process that leads to the best possible academic outcomes.

Did your son work independently in the buildup to his exams? Did he bring revision material to the kitchen table for discussion? Did he ask you to test him on his vocabulary? Did you wrestle together over the real-world implications of any of the things he is studying?

If your son has the right approach and the right attitude, then the outcomes will follow. If instead everything is focused on outcomes, then performance anxiety is the only guarantee.

We've seen this problem increase over the past few years, with children memorizing past exam papers, and showing sufficient recall, but insufficient understanding.

We've seen it too in the paucity of library borrowing records from some students who are desperate to do well in tests but aren't nurturing passion, developing curiosity or stretching their vocabulary.

In every walk of life, in all our relationships, in our work, our recreation, our giving and our vocations, our job is faithfulness to our calling. Our efforts must be focused on the things we are in control of, and our temporal focus must be the present. When we are present in the moment, focused on the things we can fix and are striving to use our gifts wisely, we all do much better than if we worry about the future and focus on results...

So good luck to all students getting mock exam results and news from universities and thank you to our catering team for proving that when we focus on the process, the results will look after themselves.

**Chris Evans**  
**Headmaster**

# Key information

## All years

### 900th Anniversary Commemorative Whole School Photograph

As we prepare to celebrate Reading School's 900th anniversary a whole school photograph was taken in November 2024 symbolising the unity and spirit of our community.

We are delighted to announce that the photograph is now available for ordering through Gillman and Soame's website. This is a wonderful opportunity for families to own a piece of Reading School's history during our Anniversary. To view the enlarged version and place your order:

**Website:** <https://www.gillmanandsoame.co.uk/>

**Login:** 420296

**Password:** 880009

There are two versions available: one with the building in the background starting from £34.50 and one without the building starting from £19, each with different purchase options.

This photograph is a lasting testament to an extraordinary moment in our school's 900-year history. We encourage you not to miss the opportunity to own this unique memento of your child's place in Reading School's rich legacy.

We also have exciting celebration events planned for the 900th anniversary, so please stay tuned for more details! Your continued support in celebrating this important milestone is greatly appreciated.

### Addington Road access

From Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January, the Addington Road pedestrian gate will be out of use until further notice. The closure is due to ongoing repair works to South House (Boarding) that are expected to last for three months.

*We are advising parents and carers who normally use Addington Road to drop their children off, to continue to do so. Children should then make the short walk from Addington Road to the Craven Road entrance. This advice is suggested to avoid Craven Road becoming congested with vehicles attempting to drop off students.*

## Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing

### Children's day to day experiences online

The 'Young Voices' event was an online safety summit which took place in late 2024 and attended by local children, young people, schools, professionals and charities. The aim of the event was to bring together local young people and professionals to find out how best to support them around online risks.

Examples of what adults need to know, a summary of the event, along with free resources for parents can be found [in the event's presentation which can be accessed by clicking here](#).

### Parent & Carer Online Information Session

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January from 9.30am – 10.15am, parents and carers are invited to a free online safety information session which will focus on current online trends and apps/games, risks associated with technology, what parents can do and available further support.

The link to access the session will be featured in next week's Headmaster's Bulletin. As a reminder, the session will also be recorded and subsequently shared.

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

We would welcome consultation with parents, pupils and staff to make sure our new Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum meets the government's requirements, as well as the needs of our pupils. We work hard to make sure that our new curriculum reflects:

- Our pupils' age and maturity levels, as well as their cultural and religious backgrounds
- The values of our school community
- Every pupil's learning needs
- What pupils need to know to be healthy and safe in school, in their personal relationships and in the wider world

The deadline for feedback on this consultation is Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February. For all feedback and comments, please contact Ms Lizzie Ayres, (Deputy Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead) by emailing [layres@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:layres@reading-school.co.uk).

## 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](#).

## Kenrick School Vacancies

[Geography Teacher with Business and/or Economics](#). Full time. For September 2025. Closing date for applications 9am Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

[Governance Officer](#). 200 hours over the year to be worked flexibly. Actual salary £3,566pa. For April 2025. Closing date for applications 9am Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

# School Community News

## Bridging Educational Cultures



Last week, Dr Jun Zou (Visiting Scholar at the University of Reading's Institute of Education & Director of Shaoxing University) visited Reading School to inform her research into the differences between British and Chinese secondary schools. We spoke further with Dr Zou after she spent the day with the English Department while getting to observe classes across different year groups:

**Q: What were some of your initial thoughts on the differences between teaching methods and the curriculum?**

'In China, teachers tend to lecture more and play a central role in delivering content whereas at Reading School, the approach is more student-centred with teachers encouraging active participation and independent thinking. Furthermore, the curriculum in China is standardised by the Ministry of Education with teachers following a prescribed syllabus to complete teaching tasks with each lesson often covering a significant amount of content. At Reading School, I observed that teaching content aligns with the requirements of GCSE exams with teachers having more autonomy to design and adapt lessons based on their preferences and the needs of their students.'

**Q: Can you share further observations of note?**

'During my visit, I noted that Reading School students were often highly engaged and active participants in classroom discussions, whereas Chinese students are less accustomed to expressing their own ideas in class, resulting in a more teacher-led atmosphere. Classrooms are fixed to specific student groups with positive messages often displayed as motivational tools whereas at Reading School, students moved between classes based on their chosen subjects with less explicit messages seen in and around the classroom.'

In China, English classes typically cover a broad range of skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing and the content taught is often generalised whereas at Reading School, classes were more specialised with literature, drama, poetry and film analysis on offer.'

We would like to thank Dr Zou for her learning visit where ideas on different approaches to education could be exchanged in the spirit of curiosity and collaboration. This enriching exchange highlights the value of cross-cultural dialogue in education and fosters mutual understanding and innovation in teaching practices.

## Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) Fundraiser



We are pleased to announce that our non-School Uniform Day in July 2024, retiring collection from the Commemoration Service in October 2024 and Carol Service in December 2024 raised a collective amount of £1,290 for the [Motor Neurone Disease Association](#) (MNDA).

A huge thank you to Charity Prefect Saad A (12SA), the School Prefect Team, and the Society Office for their support in fundraising for such an important cause to our staff and student body.

The MND Association works tirelessly to improve access to care, advance research, and campaign for those living with or affected by Motor Neurone Disease in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We are proud to contribute to this important work and thank you again to everyone who contributed.

## Excellence in Mathematics



## UK Maths Trust

During the Michaelmas term, several A-Level students participated in the first round of the [British Mathematical Olympiad](#) (BMO), a challenging maths competition designed for students in Years 12 and 13, as a follow-on round to the Senior Maths Challenge, a difficult competition in its own right where only 1500 out of an initial total of 600,000 qualify annually to take the Olympiad.

The BMO challenges students on using existing mathematical knowledge in a new context to solve problems encompassing topics such as number theory and geometry. In the challenge, there are 6 questions to be solved in 3.5 hours, worth 10 marks each, which require full written proofs of all assertions made. A candidate can get the right solution for a question but lose marks just from slight flaws in logic. This also means that if one has no idea how to approach a question, 10 marks are essentially lost. This is why, this year, a Merit was awarded to the participants who scored at least 10 marks (out of 60), and a Distinction was awarded to those who scored at least 26 marks.

Of the seven Year 12 participants, Akshith A (12SH) scored 6 marks, Zian C (12EL) scored 9, Zong L (12SP) scored 13, Rujul N (12ZMC) scored 15, Aryan K (12BS) scored 20. Siddhant D (12EL) and Parth G (12LD) both scored 28, achieving a Distinction. In addition, one of the Year 13 students, Konstantin S (12ZMC), scored 49 marks, achieving the Silver award and qualifying for the second round of the BMO.

Well done to all those participating and we look forward to further updates.

*"I think that one of the best things about the BMO is that, in theory, a participant could gain full marks solely from GCSE Maths knowledge. The UKMT has always been about finding ways to apply relatively basic concepts to solve problems that seem completely out of reach - until you use the right method."* Siddhant D

*"This year's BMO paper was especially difficult, and I am very pleased with my score of 15, which is a merit. I hope to try again next year and hopefully do even better!"* Rujul N

*"I am very thankful I had the opportunity to take part in the BMO this year. Although I didn't receive an award, preparing for the competition itself taught me a lot about maths problem-solving, and I think the problems are designed very well, to be challenging but also interesting to find the solution to. Hopefully, I can take part in the competition in Year 13 as well if I manage to qualify, it would be an incredible opportunity."* Akshith A

## The Ethics Cup

On Wednesday, 15th January, the Year 12 [Ethics Cup](#) team from Reading School embarked on an intellectual journey to Caterham School in Surrey. They were there to participate in the regional finals, competing against 12 other schools in a showcase of moral reasoning and debate skills.

In a tightly contested event, Reading School emerged as a formidable contender, scoring an impressive 296 points. This placed them just shy of the leading team, who scored 299 points. The debates centered around pressing moral issues, including the ethical implications of computer games and the complex topic of workers strikes. These subjects provided a rich ground for discussion, allowing the students to demonstrate their analytical prowess and ethical reasoning.

Reading School's team was particularly noted for their excellence in handling challenging questions posed by the judges. Their ability to respond swiftly and resiliently to opposing arguments was a testament to their preparation and teamwork. The team comprised of Indiana S, the team captain, alongside Oliver C, Harvey M, Yadveer G, Adi A, Aaryan A and Liam G. Under the guidance of their coach, Ms Geraldine Ng, who also runs the Philosophy Lab for Year 9 students, the team honed their skills and developed a deep understanding of ethical issues.

The day was not only about competition but also about learning and engaging with peers from other schools. It offered a wonderful opportunity to listen to exciting debates and to reflect on diverse perspectives. The experience was invaluable for the students, providing them with insights into the complexities of ethical decision-making and the importance of articulate communication.

## 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.

## External events, clubs and classes

### Sunday Arts Class

[Arty Class](#) (in association with [Artspiration](#)) have held weekly arts classes every Sunday during term-time at Reading School since September 2023. Classes are run from:

- 9:30am – 11am (Ages 8 to 12 years)
- 11:10am – 12:10am (Ages 5 to 8 years)
- 12:20pm – 1:15pm (Ages 12 to 15 years)

The 12-week courses are structured and designed to inspire children and young people to explore new art forms along with developing their core drawing and painting skills. The Spring 2025 course will focus on seven visual components: line, shape, space, form, colour, texture and value. The tutor will also explore texture in the line drawings of Vincent van Gogh, the shapes inspired by M.C. Escher’s tessellations, and expansive space created by Salvador Dali amongst other.

For all enquiries, please contact Adrienne by emailing [artyclassuk@gmail.com](mailto:artyclassuk@gmail.com).

### 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/31JanPart1](https://bit.ly/31JanPart1)

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](mailto:priyankathombre@uk.artofliving.org).

# RSPA

## Get Ready for the Ultimate Year 7 Disco Night – a reminder

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 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary we're making it extra special by welcoming Kendrick School Year 7 girls.

### Mark Your Calendars:

- **Date:** Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025
- **Time:** 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
- **Venue Detail:** Reading School, Refectory
- **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 uniform shop will be open on the following dates:

- Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January from 3.30 pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January from 10.30 am – 12.30pm
- Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February from 3.30 pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March from 10.30 am – 12.30pm
- Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March from 3.30 pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk)

Have a lovely weekend.

The RSPA Team

## Lent Term – Week 2

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.



### GCSE Latin

On Wednesday, Year 10 Latin came to Big School to take part in an event exploring the 79AD eruption of Vesuvius. Led by Mrs Thorpe (Teacher of Geography) and supported by the Classics Department, it was an opportunity to take their studies of Latin beyond the curriculum and combine Geography, Latin, Archaeology and History through various stimulating activities.



*"Vesuvius is a standing sermon on the mutability of human affairs."* Thomas Huxley



We would like to thank Katie Manby from the University of Reading, who attended the event to present to students about the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, as well as her own archaeological research. Her areas of interest include the archaeology of the Roman Empire, artefact studies, museum collection histories, and the scientific analysis of archaeological metals.



## The Ethics Cup

Reading School Year 12 Team



# New Year's Resolutions

By Henry R

## New Year's Resolutions

### 2024

1. Become poet laureate
2. Take it seriously



### 2025

3. Be less meta \_\_\_\_\_
4. Be more ironic \_\_\_\_\_