



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

21st November 2025

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Introduction

Dear parents, carers, colleagues and students,

At the end of a busy week, and with an even busier week ahead, may I thank colleagues for their amazing efforts covering each other, and continuing to deliver superb care, instruction and guidance to our students.

Thank you, colleagues!

I, myself, have been part of ‘the problem’ this week, rather than ‘the solution’! On Monday I attended a conference in Birmingham, on Wednesday a most remarkable lecture, and on Thursday visited another high performing Grammar School in Gloucestershire.

Each has left a mark.

Monday’s conference was driven by Reading School’s subsidiary company ‘Future Stories Community Enterprise’. This company exists to help improve social mobility and equal opportunity for all children and does so through the creation of 11+ entrance tests. We don’t often talk about this work in this newsletter, because it is separate from the main business of our school. Nevertheless, I wanted to note how proud I am of the team here that are leading this work. ‘FSCE’ is shaping the national conversation about admissions tests, to help ensure 11+ content works as well as possible for those who will most benefit from exactly the kind of education we provide.

The conference on Monday advanced debate around testing children in the summer at the end of Year 6 (to negate the effect of summer forgetfulness), about the future of online assessment at all levels of education, and about the importance of community centred primary school outreach. Our own school will be sending refreshed admissions policies out to the community for consultation next week – perhaps you would review them following next week’s bulletin and let us know what you think?

Wednesday’s lecture was given by the Right Honourable Lord Young, an old boy of Reading School from 1978-1985, whose varied career eventually led him to the role of Principal Private Secretary to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Lord Young’s address was one of the most thought provoking, humble, thoughtful and challenging messages I’ve ever heard. He left school with limited qualifications and even fewer plans, yet learnt how to make the most of opportunities, build relationships and balance competing advice. I repeat what he told our students, that “the less trodden path is no less full of opportunity.”

Similarly encouraging was my visit on Thursday to a School shaped by brave leaders. Its classrooms were filled with exactly the same buzz as our own – with a rich array of science practicals, evidence of sustained curiosity and learning environments filled with deep and passionate debates. Motivated sixth-form students, incredible art and music, a brilliant library team and a really broad curriculum reminded me of the things that make the biggest difference here at Reading School. How privileged we are to find excellence down every corridor and commitment in each classroom.

Finally, my thanks then, to our Year 7 tutors who made Year 7 parents evening conversations possible yesterday, our Theology and Philosophy team for the quality of the Year 12 Philosophy Day, our Music Department for the Year 7 concert, our Geography team for the Quiz on Monday, and the Climate

Conference on Tuesday, our Maths team for the Olympiad and Kangaroo competitions, our PE staff for the 8 fixtures facilitated this week, and all of those who have contributed to the MMI interviews this week for Year 13 students.

So many people in the community go above and beyond, and give without counting the cost. What a privilege to work with, and to be taught by these people.

Thank you to one and all,

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All Years

Year 11 and Year 13 Mock Exams

The Mock Exam timetables have been shared with Year 11 and Year 13 students, as well as being published to MCAS. The Year 11 Mock exams will take place between Monday 8th and Wednesday 17th December, with the Year 13 Mock exams running from Monday 5th to Friday 9th January.

Timetables can be found using the links below.

[Year 11 Mock Timetable 2025](#)

[Year 13 Mock Schedule 2026](#)

Students are only expected to attend school when they have an exam scheduled and will be registered at the beginning of each exam.

The last day of year 11 Mocks is on Wednesday 17th December, the last day of term is on Friday 19th December. Students are required to be in school on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th December.

Students are welcome to study on site in the LRC or Refectory but will need to ensure they sign in at student reception.

Term-Time Absence Policy

We have recently received a high number of parental requests to take children out of school during term time. We would like to remind all families that term-time leave is not permitted and can only be authorised in ***extremely exceptional circumstances***, and only for a ***limited number of days*** as set out in our Attendance Policy. If any child is taken out of school during term time without the headmaster authorising it, in line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) and school retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. As such you will be referred for a Penalty Notice under Sec. 444a. of the Education Act (1996) for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child(ren).

[Regular attendance is essential for your child's learning and progress](#). We kindly ask that all holidays, appointments, and family trips be arranged outside of the school term whenever possible.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support.

Parent Governor Election 2025 - Ballot

A reminder that the ballot for the election of a Parent Governor will take place next week.

There are 5 candidates:

- Jagadeesh Ratnala
- Satyajit Sinha
- John Alderslade
- Margaret Antony
- Lakshmanan Kuppaswamy Chokkalingam

Supporting statements from the candidates can be found by [clicking here](#).

The ballot will be electronic, using Microsoft Forms.

The ballot will be open from 10am on Monday 24th November 2025 until 4pm on Friday 28th November 2025. Votes cast after 4pm on 28th November will not be valid.

Voting instructions will be sent to parents/carers on the morning of 24th November.

The results of the poll will be announced to the candidates on 2nd December 2025, via e-mail, and to all parents on 5th December.

Have Your Say – Help Shape the Future of Reading School

We are inviting all families to complete our annual **Parental Engagement Questionnaire**, a 10–15 minute survey that will directly inform how we support your son and strengthen our partnership with you.

This questionnaire goes far beyond routine feedback. It asks about what matters most to you: your aspirations for your son, your concerns, how you experience our communication, the value of school events, your views on our mobile phone policy, and the ways we can better support you at home as you navigate teenage life. It also seeks your ideas on the single change that would most improve your son’s experience at Reading School.

Your voice genuinely shapes our decision-making. The insights you share will guide improvements in pastoral provision, communication, enrichment opportunities, parental involvement, and whole-school development in the year ahead.

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete the survey and help us ensure that Reading School continues to offer the very best for your son.

[Complete the Parental Engagement Questionnaire by clicking here](#)

Thank you for your partnership and ongoing support.

School Community News

Year 12 Philosophy Day: Debating the Soul, Free Will and Intelligent Machines

On Thursday 20th November 2025, Year 12 students gathered for Philosophy Day to explore the question “*Do We Have a Soul?*” with a particular focus on artificial intelligence, robotics, and the functional aspect of large language models.

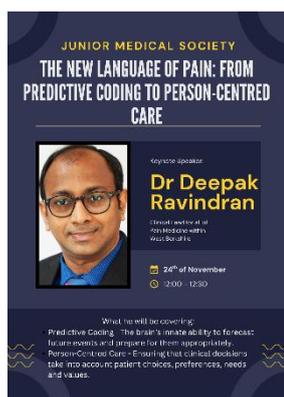


The event featured two guest speakers from the University of Reading: Professor David Oderberg, who proposed a fascinating possibility of the non-physical soul supported by empirical evidence in the field of neuroscience, and Dr Jumbly Grindrod, who took a functionalist position, leading us to consider the possibility that robots and AI may have knowledge and therefore leave a legacy in the future.

Throughout the morning, Year 12 A-Level Philosophy students led discussions and presented on a wide range of topics. These included Sumi S, who examined the Sleeping Beauty Problem - a mathematical paradox that questions the laws of probability; Akilan N, who explored free will; Remi S, who led a lively Ethics Cup-style debate; and Olti K, who rounded off the day in Big School with a passionate presentation on music, art, architecture, and the human soul, reminding everyone of the power of passion and our own creativity.

This was a highly engaging day that encouraged students to think more deeply about their minds, morality, and meaning, questioning what makes us truly human in an age of intelligent machines.

Guest Lecture: The New Language of Pain



On **Monday 24th November** the student-led Junior Medical Society will be hosting their second guest lecture. The speaker, Dr Deepak Ravindran, has over 20 years of experience within the NHS and Private Practice, in helping people overcome pain. He is one of the few consultants in the UK who possesses triple certification in lifestyle medicine, musculoskeletal medicine and pain medicine.

Additionally, he has been a consultant in pain medicine since 2010 at Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust. He is currently the clinical lead for the specialist pain services for all of West Berkshire since 2015.

Dr Ravindran is also an honorary professor at Teesside University, the Chief Medical Officer for Boutros Bear, a Trustee of the British Society of Lifestyle Medicine, a Council Member of the British Society of Integrative Oncology, the Head of Integrative Pain Care at Synthesis Clinic, a member of the British Pain Society, an ambassador for the Personalised Care Institute and a Senior Visiting Fellow at Reading University.

When: Monday 24th November, 12:00 – 12:30

Where: B3

Booking: No tickets required and please arrive promptly.

Dr Ravindran will return to Reading School on Thursday 27th November to deliver a further lecture for the Senior Medical Society during Senior Lunch.

If you are interested in joining the Junior Medical Society (open to Years 9 and 10), please email Mantra J (10W). If you are interested in joining the Senior Medical Society (open to Years 12 and 13), please email Samuel N (13ACr) and/or Raghav S (13PEI).

MMI - Multiple Mini Interviews 2025

We are proud to recognise the exceptional support from the Redingensian community for this year's Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) Circuit.

On Tuesday 11th November and Tuesday 18th November, 24 medicine/dentistry students, and professionals, generously volunteered their time to deliver virtual mock MMI circuits. A total of 43 students took part via Zoom, including local schools, Maiden Erlegh, The Abbey and The Piggott School. Their expertise offered invaluable preparation for these aspiring healthcare professionals ahead of their upcoming assessments.

We extend our sincere thanks to Old Redingensians Dr Tim Young (OR 1979–1986), Dr Sam Krauze (OR 1997–2004), Dr Yusef Karmali (OR 2006–2013), Dr Sunil Tailor (OR 2007–2013), Dr Andrew Prowse (OR 2011–2018), Dr Shameer Noori (OR 2010–2017), Dr Sebastian Young (OR 2010–2017), Dr Roy Wang (OR 2011–2018), Nirbhay Kaul (OR 2017–2023), Angelo Augustine (OR 2014–2021), Rohan Nambiar (OR 2017–2024), Sher Gakhal (OR 2013–2020) and Nikhil Patel (OR 2013–2020).

We would also like to thank members of our parent community (current and former) — Dr Ravi Kumar (Former Parent), Dr Pompa Bhattacharyya (Current Parent), Dr Apurba Chatterjee (Former Parent), Dr Rati Gill (Current Parent), Dr Aparna Balaji (Current Parent), Dr Patrick Purcell (Former Parent), Dr Sue Bowen (Former Parent) and Dr Oliver Flossmann (Former Parent) and Dr Hanya Kang, Dr Beenish Feroz and Dr Mallika Babu from the Royal Berkshire Hospital — who continue to champion and support opportunities such as this.



Here is just some of the feedback from students about the sessions:

Joshika M (External student) said, "I wanted to thank you for organising this event and giving me the opportunity to take part in the MMI mocks. It was very useful experience and provided great exposure for my first practice interview. I found the process really insightful, and it helped me understand what areas I need to work on moving forward. The feedback I received from Dr Chatterjee was particularly helpful and constructive, and I really appreciate the time and effort that went into setting this up. Please also extend my thanks to the interviewers and the whole team that got involved in organising this session."

Raghav S (13PEI) said, "The MMI session today was great. For starters, I felt it ran really smoothly so thanks a lot to you for all the work you put in to organise this. I was in interview Group 3, and all of my interviewers were very friendly and welcoming. They made it feel more like a conversation rather than a very rigid interview, and it definitely helped settle some nerves, but I was also able to lay out my points without getting too nervous.... Overall, really great experience and once again, thanks a lot!"

Ishita N (External student) also said, "Thank you so much for involving me in the MMI mock, it was really helpful! I appreciate the opportunity to do an online interview as most of my university interviews will be taking place online. I think it was structured well and went smoothly and the interviewers were really friendly and gave me prompts throughout. Overall, it was a very useful practice and the experience will definitely be valuable later on. I don't have any complaints about the circuit and the feedback was detailed and I will definitely be taking it on board."

We wish all our students undertaking interviews over the next few weeks the very best of luck.

Reading School Events

Silent Auction – Your Support for the Beyond 900 Campaign



To support the *Beyond 900 Campaign*, we are excited to launch our **Silent Auction**, featuring **over 50 fantastic prizes** across a wide range of categories. As a highly valued part of our school community, we warmly encourage our current parents to take part.

Thanks to the generosity of our Reading School community, local businesses and our auction partner, **Globexpert Fundraising**, we are pleased to offer an exceptional variety of items, including:

- Retail gifts and luxury items
- Dining and drink experiences
- Spa and wellbeing packages
- Family days out
- Short breaks, weekend getaways and holidays
- Unique experiences curated especially for this event

With the festive season approaching, the auction is a wonderful opportunity to find meaningful gifts—many within an accessible price range—while directly supporting a cause that benefits our boys and the future of Reading School.

The auction is open from **now until 6pm on Saturday 29th November**. To bid, simply register using the link below:

[Reading School 900 Anniversary - Silent Auction](#)

Registration only takes a few moments. Once completed, you will receive updates and your secure payment details will allow for smooth checkout if you win an item. No charges will be made unless you are a successful bidder.

Winners will be announced at 11pm on 29th November. Prizes will be distributed within 7 working days, with physical goods delivered within 28 working days.

By taking part, you are helping to support the *Beyond 900 Campaign*, with every pound raised contributing directly to the future of Reading School for generations to come. We truly appreciate your support and hope you enjoy exploring the items on offer. Happy bidding!

Inspire the Next Generation – Careers Convention 2026



Reading School's **Careers Convention 2026** will take place on **Thursday 5th February 2026, 18:30–20:30** (delegates arrive from 17:00). This biennial event brings together universities, employers, apprenticeship schemes, and a diverse array of organisations to help students explore career options.

We are looking for delegates from a wide range of fields to share their experience and industry insights with our students - from creative arts and technology, to law, medicine, engineering, and beyond. Sharing your experience helps students gain insight into different career pathways, from real-world professionals, and opportunities for apprenticeships and higher education.

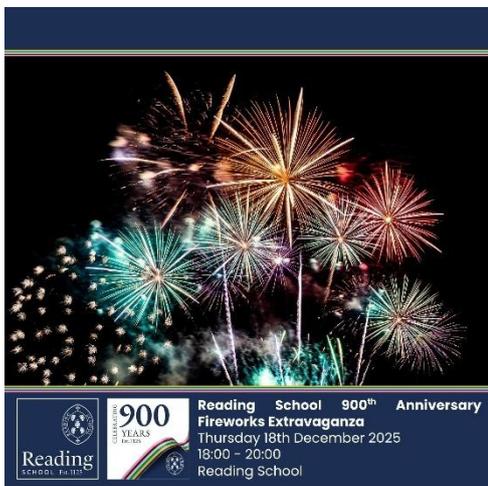
Last year, over **800 students and parents** attended, alongside **60+ representatives from 40+ organisations**.

We would welcome parents and professionals who are interested in participating, either via a stall or keynote talk to complete the **delegate registration form by Friday 19th December 2025**. Please feel free to share with colleagues and departments from your workplaces.

[Reading School Careers Convention Delegate Form Thursday 5/2/26, 18:30-20:30](#)

Don't miss this opportunity to inspire the next generation and share your career experience with our students.

The Grand Finale – Reading School's 900th Anniversary Fireworks Extravaganza



Our 900th celebrations began in March 2025, with eight major events showcasing your School while sharing reasons why its foundations remain strong, and what our exciting vision for the future looks like. From raising over £150,000 through the first ever Giving Day for the vital development plans of the School, to welcoming over 5,000 from our School Community and local residents during a free Community Carnival – what better way to cap off the year with a fireworks show to remember.

By partnering with Sonning Fireworks, award-winning experts with 25+ years' experience, a spectacular fireworks show set to music will light up the sky above Reading School. Come and enjoy hot food and drinks from 6pm during a family friendly evening.

[Secure your tickets now to avoid disappointment by clicking here](#)

RSPA

Annual General Meeting

Thank you to all who attended the RSPA AGM on Wednesday 19th November. We thanked Nishita Moody as outgoing Chair and Julie Bellingham as Uniform Shop Manager. Also, Veena Baggley and Jo Wyles were thanked for their dedication and hard work in all they do for the RSPA Team.

RSPA Committee voting results: The New RSPA Committee of the Year 2025-2026:

- Kerry O'Brien - Chair
- Deval Gujrati - Secretary
- Terri Lorrimore - Treasurer
- Anya Aldersalde and Jaspreet Dhanjal- Preloved Uniform Shop Manager
- Pallavi Chube - Digital Manager (and currently Membership Secretary, but we are seeking a volunteer replacement)
- Jayne Sturge - Hoodies Manager
- Jaideep Das - School Lottery Manager
- Helen Sturk - Lost Property Manager
- Yogakshi Munjal - Notifications Officer
- Rohini Luthra - Communications Manager
- Menaka Murthy - Events Manager
- Claire Kirby and Julie Bellingham - Committee Fundraiser and Volunteer

Please click [here](#) to read the new Chairs statement.



Teachers' Appreciation - Amazon Wishlist 2025



Following on from the tremendous success of the previous Teachers' Wishlists – we are delighted to announce that we are bringing this back for the FIFTH year running! **The list is being compiled as we speak and will go live before the end of the month.**

As with previous years, the Teachers choose gifts for you to purchase, being items to enhance the students experience and to benefit their departments. You can choose what to purchase directly from the list. If you can't decide what to buy you can instead donate an Amazon Gift Voucher or cash to contribute to one of the much-needed larger items.

Please take this opportunity to show your appreciation by purchasing a requested item. There are a wide range of requests and cost of items, so hopefully there is something to suit everyone who wishes to contribute.

We especially love the personal notes that accompany the gifts, thanking a particular teacher or department, from a student or family. Every single thank you note is forwarded on.

From gym equipment and science experiments, to books, games and fun resources; the Teachers are massively appreciative of your previous gifts, and we hope that you will support them again this year.

Limited edition "900" greetings card - order now for Christmas



The RSPA have created a special edition "900" greetings card to celebrate the 900th anniversary of Reading School. This limited-edition card has been designed using an original image by Denys Hinton, a former captain of the school from 1938-39.

These digitally printed A6 cards can also be used for all manner of occasions as they are blank inside.

We have created packs of 5 (with envelopes), and these can be purchased for £7 per pack or 2 for £12.

If you wish to make an order to use in time for Christmas, please email kerryobrien2004@yahoo.co.uk

The RSPA will be able to offer a further discounted price if you want to make a bulk purchase.

The cards will also be on sale at the upcoming 900th Anniversary Fireworks Extravaganza on Thursday 18th December at the RSPA stand located in the Refectory. We will also be selling the very popular School Hoodie in case any students or parents need an extra layer of warmth on the night!

Please do come and join us at the stand, to simply say hello and to support your RSPA, where all profits raised go back to the School for the benefit of all students.

We are looking for new members to join our committee, bring fresh ideas and consolidate some of our existing roles.

Highlights of the week: Michaelmas Term Week 10

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.



Year 7 Concert

This week, aspiring Year 7 musicians filled Big School with music - from Vivaldi and Burgmüller to Bon Jovi and student compositions. Each performance was a reminder of the confidence, creativity and focus that grow when children learn a musical instrument. Learning music from an early age gives them a powerful way to express themselves and discover what they're capable of.





A heartfelt thank you to all our parents and families for supporting the event. Your presence, encouragement and applause mean more than you know. For a child, looking up and seeing their parents, staff, and school community watching, listening and celebrating them builds belief, pride and a sense of belonging. These moments stay with them.



Model Climate Change Conference

Competing at the Model Climate Change Conference at Reading Civic Offices on Tuesday 18th November were two teams of students from Years 8, 9 and 10. Chosen for their awareness of the issues surrounding climate change, they argued as Team Australia (Grigory V, Rutwik B, Mufaddal A, Sameer S) and Team Brazil (Bhanuteja M, Ivan K, Jonah D, Shriyans I) against 10 other local schools. On the table were 'Who should take responsibility for mitigating climate change now and in the future'. Well done to all who participated.



Philosophy Day

"The soul becomes dyed with the colour of its thoughts." Marcus Aurelius



So what is "Good"?

Moral "good" can mean many things:

- The outcome of an action (utilitarianism)
- The intention behind it (deontology)
- The character producing it (virtue ethics)
- The culture defining it (relativism)
- A deeper objective truth (realism)

What counts as good depends on the ethical framework you adopt.



Championing Fair Access to Grammar Schools

Future Stories Community Enterprise (FSCE), a subsidiary company of Reading School, hosted its inaugural conference for Senior Leadership and Admissions Teams from Grammar Schools across the UK, at Birmingham Cathedral on Monday, 17th November 2025.



Entitled “Exploring Future Pathways for Grammar School Admissions,” the conference examined how the admissions process and the selective education system currently operate, the misconceptions surrounding them, the challenges relating to social mobility, and the avenues available for positive change.



All children, irrespective of socio-economic background or disability, deserve an equal opportunity to be aware of and to sit a test for one of the 164 Grammar Schools in the UK. The conference served as a platform to spark stimulating and healthy debate about future, positive and actionable admissions changes, with social mobility at its core.





“Have you ever wondered how many bright, capable children never make it to the starting line – not because of lack of ability, but lack of access?” ~ Caroline Mole, Director of Operations, FSCE



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