




THE SUNDAY TIMES

SCHOOLS GUIDE
2026

STATE SECONDARY
SCHOOL OF THE YEAR FOR
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
SOUTHEAST



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

5th December 2025

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Introduction

Dear parents, students and colleagues,

I am delighted to report today that Reading School has been named Secondary School of the Year in the South East for Academic Excellence 2026 in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide. This award recognises the remarkable education young people receive at the school and is a great encouragement to us.

Over the last few years we have avoided saying too much about academic excellence. This is deliberate. We want to focus on processes rather than outcomes, and encourage humility rather than boastfulness. This will remain our philosophy. Nevertheless, I do invite the whole school to celebrate this wonderful award. In the same week that we were named one of the top cricketing schools in the country, and brought the whole school onto the terrace to celebrate our history, we really are grateful for this recognition. It provides a clear message about the skills of our teachers and the progress of our students, and encourages us to continue on a pathway which nurtures collaboration, creativity, curiosity, imagination and agency.

The relationships that are forged in the classroom always define a school. We give thanks then today, for students who have been role models, for those who have asked questions, for those who have supported their peers, for those who have embodied academic virtue, and for the staff of this school, who in so many different ways do so much to nurture happy young people who are provided with opportunity and are able to fulfil their potential.

When we have a clear mission, are committed to each other as a community and collaborate compassionately, we become more than the sum of our parts.

Well done everyone, and thank you.

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All Years

Sixth Form Open Evening

Our Year 11 Sixth Form Information Evening took place on Wednesday 3rd December and provided parents and students with clear guidance on the application process, subject choices and the wider experience of Sixth Form life at Reading School. Dr Evans, Mr McGall and Mr Whitehorn each outlined key messages as our students prepare for the next stage of their academic journey.

To view the online presentation, [please click here](#) and a summary of the information evening is set out below:

Choosing A-Level Subjects

Mr Whitehorn outlined the three essential questions when selecting subjects:

- What do you enjoy?
- What are you good at?
- What might you need for future aspirations?

Key points included:

- Students should choose **three subjects**, with a fourth only where there is clear passion or where Further Maths is selected.
- Universities—including Oxford and Cambridge—base offers on **three A-levels**.
- Combinations such as **Physics + Economics** have sometimes been associated with weaker outcomes.
- Subject blocks are created only **after applications**, maximising the chance of securing first choices.

Sixth Form Life

Mr McGall emphasised that Sixth Form life is academically rigorous but also designed to build independence, collaboration and character:

- Students benefit from **later starts**, private study periods and clear expectations for independent reading and preparation.
- The pastoral structure continues through **Heads of House, tutors, the Sixth Form transition team and intervention support**.
- Community service, through programmes such as **Future Stories**, is central to the Reading School ethos of *Learn, Lead, Serve*.

Beyond Sixth Form

Mr Whitehorn introduced key elements of university and apprenticeship preparation:

- Strong **GCSE performance** is essential for competitive courses.
- Students receive structured support with **personal statements, entrance tests, university fairs, visits and careers guidance**.
- Reading School continues to see high progression to leading universities, including significant Oxbridge success.
- **Parent Governor election 2025**

Parent Governor Election

The parent governor election was won by John Alderslade, with 50% of the votes cast in his favour. Mr Alderslade will therefore serve as a parent governor for the period December 2025 to November 2029, alongside a further three parent governors, Mr Dozie Nnabuife, Mr Neil Holmes and Mr Sanjay Desai.

Mrs Emma Fallon is no longer a parent governor, but remains a member of the Governing Body having been appointed by the members of the Academy Trust.

School Community News

Reading School Maths Team Reaches National Finals

The [Senior Team Maths Challenge](#) is an exciting and highly competitive event where teams of four students from schools and colleges across the UK compete in regional finals with the potential to progress to the national-level finals. The competition consists of several rounds, each designed to test not just mathematical ability but also teamwork, strategic thinking, and time management.

The Reading School team comprising of Aryan K, Kushh M, Ashish G, and Nag V, competed in three main rounds: the Group Round, the Crossnumber Round, and the Shuttle Round. With a maximum score of 180 points available, the team finished with an outstanding 174 points, earning a joint first-place finish with other teams, and a place in the finals.

Group Round

The Group Round consisted of 10 questions with 40 mins, each worth 6 marks. Questions tested a wide variety of mathematical concepts, with a strong emphasis on number theory, algebra, and logic.

Crossnumber Round

In the Crossnumber Round, the team was split into pairs, to do 'across and down' parts and only able to communicate to ask for specific numbered answers. Each clue had to be solved to fill in the appropriate number on a grid. Questions ranged from simple algebraic expressions to more complex problems involving prime factorization and modular arithmetic. The team performed well under the pressure, with 15 minutes left to spare.

Shuttle Round

The Shuttle Round was a fast-paced, dynamic challenge in which the team was split into pairs, with each pair solving a set of problems before passing their answers on to the next pair to continue solving. One of the most exciting features of the Shuttle Round was the opportunity to win bonus points by answering questions quickly. For example, the first pair could earn 6 bonus points by solving their questions before the timer ran out, which was crucial for maintaining a competitive edge.



Reading School Combined Cadet Force 125th anniversary



On Friday 28th November, during the morning of Reading School's Commemoration Day, the Combined Cadet Force celebrated their 125th Anniversary during a spectacular parade.

Contingent Commander, Lt Col John Flexman, and School Staff Instructor, Capt Ali Matthews, worked extraordinary magic with the CCF team and cadets. During the inspection, the cadets' precision and immaculate dress uniforms were truly remarkable. It was equally inspiring to see junior officers perform their duties with such competence and confidence.

Headmaster, Dr Chris Evans, said:

"I could not be prouder of the contingent. Watching their drill progress from a nervous cohort just months ago into a unit demonstrating extraordinary synchronisation and discipline has been a joy. This transformation reflects the dedication of our CFAVs, particularly Staff Sergeant Robbie Jackson, our lead drill instructor, and the outstanding leadership of our Cadet NCOs.

The CCF continues to play a vital role in the life of the school, fostering both character and opportunity. This was especially evident during the inspection by Brigadier Evans of the Royal Engineers – the CCF's 'parent regiment.' Her reflections were deeply moving, reminding us of the sacrifices made by the School's first cadets in WWI, and celebrating the contingent's history of innovation, including the introduction of the Cycling Section in the 1920s, which broke new ground at the time.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend special thanks to Ms C Kattirtzi, Head of Kendrick School, whose partnership has enabled the contingent to grow by incorporating exceptional cadets from Kendrick, and to Lt Col John Flexman, whose leadership continues to profoundly impact the lives of all involved in the Reading School CCF."

Special thanks are shared with [The Connaught Trust](#) who generously provided equipment used by Cadets for the occasion.

Junior Science Clinic

Are you in Years 7 or 8? Do you need support with your Science homework and tests? The student-led Science Clinic will be able to provide help on explaining key concepts and ideas, while also being able to supply and teach study revision methods.

Run by Year 10s, Mantra J (10W), Hamd W (10C) and Adhvik R (10W), the Science Clinic aims for the betterment of the skills of Year 7 and 8 students while keeping it light-hearted and fun. Sessions will take place every other Monday (fortnightly) in C1 - the classroom overlooking the Science Playground.

If you are interested in joining the Science Clinic, please email Mantra J, Hamd W or Adhvik R, where you will be added to the Junior Science Clinic team; more information will be advertised in advance of the first session.

Reading School Events

Service of Nine Lessons & Carols 2025



We warmly invite the Reading School community to our cherished annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols - an evening filled with Christmas spirit, beautiful music performed by our talented students and moments of reflection.

Date: Monday 8 December 2025

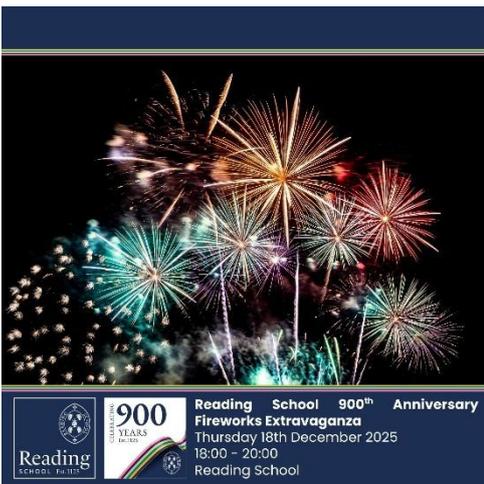
Time: 19:00 – 21:00

Location: Chapel, Reading School

Following the service, please join us for a reception in the Refectory with mince pies and non-alcoholic mulled wine. In keeping with our tradition of giving back, there will be a retiring collection at the end of the service to support [Motor Neurone Disease Association](#).

RSVPs is closing soon! Due to limited capacity, we kindly ask that you confirm your attendance as soon as possible: [Carol Service 2025](#). We look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to this festive celebration.

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

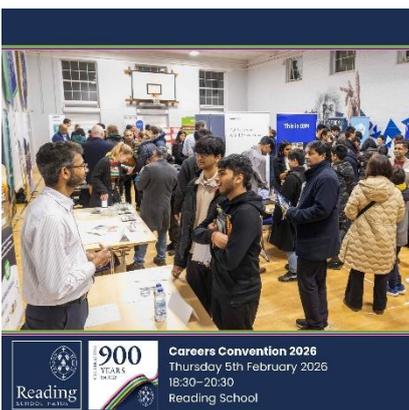


Our 900th celebrations began in March 2025, with eight major events showcasing your School while sharing reasons why its foundations remain strong, and what our exciting vision for the future looks like. From raising over £150,000 through the first ever Giving Day for the vital development plans of the 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](#)

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 volunteer organisations to help students explore career options.

We are looking for delegates from a wide range of fields to share their experience and 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,

emerging fields such as AI, data science, and technology, real-world professional experiences, and opportunities for apprenticeships and higher education.

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

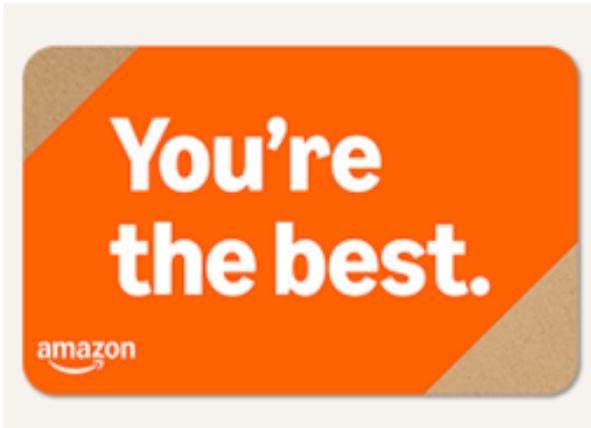
Parents or professionals interested in participating, either via a stall or keynote talk, are very welcome. To secure your place, complete the **delegate registration form by Friday 19th December 2025**.

[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!

RSPA

Teachers' Amazon Wishlist 2025



Thank you so much to everyone who has already responded to the Teachers' Amazon Wishlist appeal.

Deliveries are now arriving daily, and your generosity is enormously appreciated in supporting our teachers with some much needed and personally requested resources.

[The current list can be viewed by clicking here](#)

If you can't make your mind up then Gift Vouchers are most welcome. We are also trialling e-vouchers this year, in the hope that we can keep the delivery waste down. Please select the value of your gift and forward to us by email, to treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk

"Dear Teachers, I just wanted to express my heartfelt thanks for the wonderful support and guidance you have given my son since he joined secondary school this year. You have made the transition so smooth and positive. Wishing you all a wonderful year ahead. Thank you for everything you do."

Year 7 Parent

Or email if you wish to send a cash gift and use Gift Aid to boost the sum that we collect:

Name: RSPA No. 2 Account, **Sort Code:** 60-17-21, **Account No:** 15309096

Whatever you decide to gift...please add a personal message. We forward every one! Thank you all so much again, we couldn't provide such an amazing haul of resources without your support. We are currently just over half way there, but need your help to get finished in time. Please choose **RPSA PARENT GIFTING WISHLIST TERRI LORRIMORE** as the delivery address. Please don't deliver them to school as we lose track of who has received what.

For an additional boost to the wishlist, please use [Easyfundraising to make your Amazon purchase](#).

For [new Easyfundraising members please use this link](#), as we will receive £1 extra as soon as you register and make your purchase!

The list will close on **Sunday 14th December 2025**.

If you have any queries please do email Julie Bellingham jbellingham@readingschoolparents.co.uk or Terri Lorrimore treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk.

The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

As the shop is outside, opening is weather dependent.

Unfortunately, the forecast is for rain at various times over this weekend therefore the uniform shop will **NOT be opening** on **Friday 5th December OR Saturday 6th December**.

We will endeavour to have an opening earlier in the next term. Thank you for your continued support and have a lovely, restful festive holiday.

Lottery Update

Fancy Winning A Christmas Golden Draw?! £10,000 Cash Bonanza!



Yes, that's rightttt!! Then wait no further!!

We've got exciting news: we're counting down to Christmas; Santa is on his way - and so is the brand-new Christmas Golden Draw!

This whopping £10,000 cash bonanza **MUST BE WON** in our huge draw on **Saturday 20th December**. The winner will take home a cool £5,000 for them, and a whopping £5,000 for your school, too! What a way to spread some festive cheer!

Every ticket in a draw between **29th Nov - 20th Dec** will mean an extra entry into our Christmas Gold Draw!

Also any ticket holder can invite their friends and family using the "Refer a Friend" process. For every person that signs up using their unique referral link, **BOTH** of you will get an entry into the exclusive £200 prize draw!! There's no limit to the number of entries you can get, either the more people you refer the more entries into the Draw!

[It's easy to buy a ticket all you have to do is click this link.](#)

Happy Shopping and best wishes.

RSPA Team

Highlights of the week: Michaelmas Term Week 12

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.

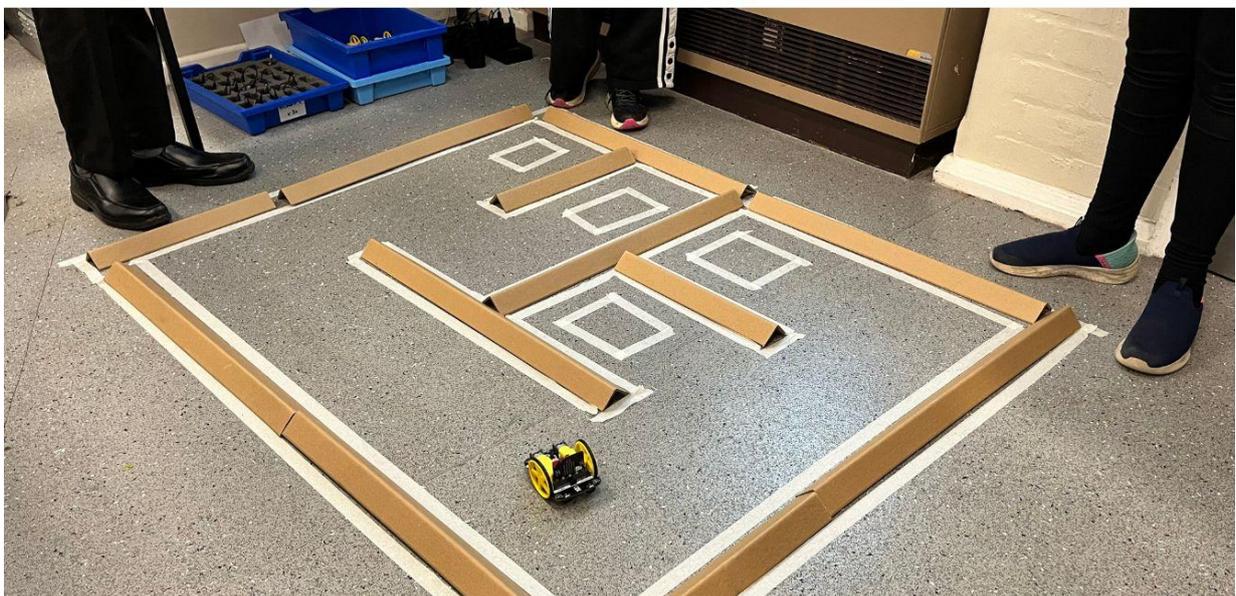


Future Stories

On Thursday 4th December, 22 of our Sixth Formers, led by Future Stories Leads, Mrs Heston and Mr Dimmick, delivered Computer Science and Biology sessions for Battle Primary School pupils.



Reading School's Future Stories is a social-impact outreach programme that works with local primary schools in order to provide opportunities and raise aspirations among pupils living in disadvantaged areas. The programme benefits not only primary school pupils, but also our own students.



Combined Cadet Force 125th anniversary

“It is rare that a state school CCF celebrates such a milestone as a 125 year anniversary, but through the dedication of our Cadets, the leadership of our Cadet NCOs and the selfless commitment of our Adult Volunteers our Contingent has once again stepped up to the mark. I’m incredibly proud as a Contingent Commander. Our Cadets have been reminded once again of some core life lessons that we teach - that ambitious targets are achievable, and that hard work does pay off.”

Lt Col John Flexman





















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