



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

12th December 2025

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Colleagues, and Students,

At the end of a remarkable year, this is our last bulletin before the end of term. This week Year 11 students have been incredibly disciplined in their mock exam work, and we congratulate all of them for showing such a mature attitude to preparation and to assessment. Year 13 Parents' Evening was as enjoyable as it was busy, and it was a privilege for us to report on the progress of our senior students. Years 8, 9, 10 and 12 reports are currently being finalised and will be sent home next week. Parents of students in Years 10 or 12 who have any particularly significant areas for improvement in their work will have an individualised comment, which we hope will encourage students to renew their efforts and focus in these areas.

Next week, we are looking forward to Christmas jumper-wearing on Tuesday; House Activities on Wednesday afternoon for Sixth Form, on Thursday for Years 7–11, and on Friday morning for all year groups, followed by an early finish on Friday. The grand finale of our 900th Anniversary will be Thursday's Fireworks Display. I very much hope you are able to come for this wonderful occasion. This is also an event where we will welcome members of our wider community and celebrate our sense of community.

As we finish this term, I find myself full of gratitude for the energy, contributions, and creativity that have been poured into the School's 900th Anniversary. So much has been achieved by the whole community, on top of our day-to-day life at Reading School. A thank-you letter from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's office following his visit on Commemoration Day noted that,

“His Royal Highness...was pleased to have the opportunity to meet so many of your students and learn a little more about their achievements and the work they are doing both academically and beyond. Whilst we only saw a small amount of what the school has to offer, it is evident that there is a real sense of community which you are all rightly very proud of.”

As we say goodbye to our 900th year, we must sustain the same sense of community and optimism that has sustained us throughout this anniversary.

To our students: enjoy the rest that you have earned. Use the festive break to spend time with family and friends, read, reflect, and recharge, ready to return to School revitalised.

To staff: thank you for your care, for going the extra mile, and for the countless small kindnesses that make this School what it is.

To parents and carers: thank you, again, for your partnership. The amazing Parents' Association wishlist, the delightful notes, cards – and an amazing basket of fruit in the staff room, all bring us so much encouragement.

With deep thanks for all that has gone before, and with excitement for what lies ahead, I wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas.

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All Years

End of Term Arrangements for Friday 19th December

08:20	Tutor Time: Year 7-11				
08:30	Final House Activity: Year 7-11				
09:15	Final House Activity: Year 7-11 / House Debating Year 12-13				
10:10	West Chapel	Break	Tutor time	Tutor Time	Break
10:30	Break	School Chapel	Tutor time	Tutor Time	Break
10:50	Tutor Time	Tutor Time	Laud Chapel	Break	Tutor Time
11:10	Tutor Time	Tutor Time	Break	County Chapel	Tutor Time
11:30	Depart	Depart	Depart	Depart	East Chapel
11:50					<i>Depart</i>

Non-Uniform Day - Tuesday 16th December 2025

Our students are coming together to make a difference in our final week. Initiated by Jiji Wu (13 JTe) and supported by Charity Prefects Vashisht K (13 JTe), Yadveer G (13 SHu), Benjamin H (13 FHo), and Vivaan C (13 JPi), a non-uniform day will be held on Tuesday 16th December to raise funds for the [Alzheimer's Society](#). This vital charity works towards a world where dementia no longer devastates lives, helping those living with the condition today and giving hope for the future.

The initiative is also supported by Mrs M Smith, Deputy Operations Manager, and draws inspiration from her friend Jim Jones's campaign in July 2025, when he completed a 7-day trek along the South West Coastal Path in memory of Alan Jones and Alan Cartwright - both lost to Alzheimer's.

Students are invited to wear blue or a festive Christmas jumper and contribute a minimum suggested donation of £2. To ensure donations are correctly tracked, please include your child's full name and form group in the notes section when submitting.

You can donate online here: [Fundraising for Alzheimer's Society](#)

Important: Cash payments **cannot** be accepted on the day.

Every donation counts and will make a real difference to those affected by dementia. Let's support our students in their efforts to help this important cause!

School Community News

Berkshire Book Award 2026 Longlist



The Berkshire Book Award began in 2004 to celebrate the best, recently published books written for young people. This Award is the first of its kind in Berkshire and is unique because young people both nominate the titles and select the winner. Thousands of young people from across Berkshire have taken part.

The Aim of the Berkshire Book Award is to contribute to young people's achievement by:

- encouraging them to develop a love of reading and become lifelong readers
- encouraging social inclusion by organising events and activities for young people

Research has shown that a love of reading is more important to [young peoples' educational success](#) than either their family's wealth or social class. Supporting young people to take part in the Award is one way in which schools can encourage young people to read more, improving their educational opportunities and encouraging social responsibility by giving them a major say in running the Award.

Participation in the Berkshire Book Award is open to all young people living or studying in Berkshire through their middle and secondary schools.



The longlist of the top 21 titles, was announced on 19 November. All students in year 7 and 8 were invited to special library lessons to look at some of these books and to get involved by rating the front cover, first page and back covers of at least 3 of the longlisted titles. These scores were translated into votes which we have fed back to the BBA 2026 Team. This is a fantastic opportunity not only to discover great new books but also empowers students by enabling them to contribute to their local Book Award. For students in Year 9 and above, there is still time to get involved. Students can vote for up to 6 titles from the longlist [here](#). The deadline is 21 January 2026 and the shortlist will be revealed at a very special event at Reading School on 4 February 2026.

The titles Reading School Year 7 and 8 students have enjoyed the most so far are:

Skandar and the Spirit War, Impossible Creatures: The Poisoned King, Under a Fire-Red Sky, Dragonborn, The Hunt for the Golden Scarab, The Ice Apprentices, The Grandest Game, Bite Risk: Cold Blood and The First Year.

LRC books can be borrowed for the Christmas holidays and will be due back on 6 January 2026.

Reading School Squash Club - Strong Performances in National Championships



Over the past two weeks, Reading School Squash Club, under the guidance of Dr Lewis-Brown, has competed in the first round of the KS3 and KS4 National Schools Squash Championships.

The Key Stage 4 team, comprising Henry R, Abraham S, Maxim H, Oscar Z and Varnesh R, demonstrated outstanding determination throughout their matches. The team secured a strong win against Bradfield College and put in commendable performances against Eton and Wellington College. They now progress to the next stage of the competition, where they will compete in the Plate.

The Key Stage 3 team, comprising Mayur J, Kaushal N, Ethan A, Dylan DS and Dheer D, delivered an exceptional set of performances. They achieved victories over Eton, Berkhamsted and John Hampden Grammar School, finishing first in their group. The standard of squash was impressively high, with all Reading School players engaged in tough, hard-fought matches that showcased both skill and resilience.

This achievement marks a significant milestone - the first time a Reading School team has won a National Championships fixture. The students should be extremely proud of their success. They now advance to the Championship round, with an opportunity to qualify for the National Finals.

From Classroom to Culham – A Student’s Nuclear Fusion Placement



During half-term and Reading Week, Mohit K (12KAv) took part in a work experience placement at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, part of the UK Atomic Energy Authority. The site is home to the record-breaking JET and STEP nuclear fusion reactors as well as a variety of cutting-edge research and testing facilities.

How did you get the placement?

I first heard about the placement from a post Dr Lewis-Brown made on Teams. The application process had two steps. First, I submitted my CV. After that was well received, I was invited to the campus for an interview and a group task. There were around 200 applicants at the start, and I was selected as one of just 25 to be offered the opportunity.

Could you describe what a day of your placement looked like?

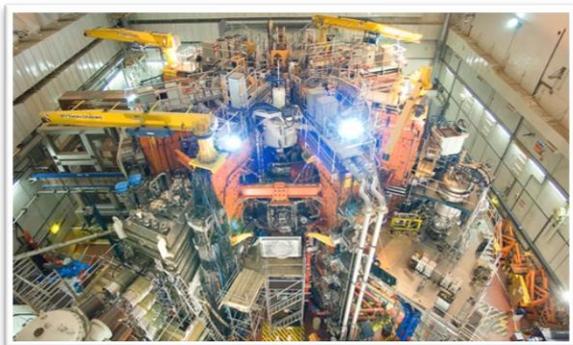
My placement timetable was set by my supervisor, a graduate engineer who supported me throughout the week and was always ready to answer questions about fusion, university, careers, or anything else. A typical day included three parts: time to work on my main project, a tour of a specific facility, and chances to speak with staff at every level (from apprentices to senior leaders).

What did you learn about working at the laboratory?

The project I was involved in consisted of a lot of CAD software and 3D printing parts (sometimes with tungsten) as well as physically assembling a testing rig. We were involved in producing parts for a facility to test superconducting magnetic materials. I knew a bit about this already because of an Inspire lecture at school last year by Dr Ellison on the same topic, so that really helped me get what the

project was about. Fusion only comes up a little in GCSE Physics, but it grabbed my interest and made me read more about it before the placement.

What was the coolest piece of science you saw or were a part of during the placement?



The coolest science highlight of the week was seeing the MASCOT robot operating live. The team were using it to play a very tense game of Jenga, relying on the fine control of its movements to remove and place each block safely. The same robot is currently being used in the decommissioning of the JET reactor, (has been used to conduct careful repairs in the past) greatly reducing the risk of radiation exposure and contamination for the workers on-site.

For those students seeking further education and careers related advice and opportunities, please refer to the 'Careers and additional opportunities' Teams Channel.

Year 12 Student Combines AI and Collaboration in Scholarship Project



This week, we spoke with Nag V (JTe) who has recently been awarded an Arkwright Scholarship award – a two-year program for young people aged 16-18, interested in a career in engineering. In speaking more with Nag, he emphasised and echoed Reading School's approach towards collaboration over competition, valuing community and working with like-minded peers to achieve shared success.

Q: What is the Arkwright Engineering Scholarship?

It's a prestigious two-year program for young people aged 16-18, interested in a career in engineering that offers a unique opportunity to be mentored by an industry expert, receive real-world engineering insights, network with other scholars, and receive funding from a sponsor firm. Basically, it's a great way to showcase your engineering passion and to go deeper in that field, which can help you develop

crucial engineering skills and experience, all of which set you apart from others.

To apply, you fill in an application form where you detail your passion for engineering, your engineering interests, as well as a project that you are working on. After that, you are required to complete an online assessment that tests on numerical and spatial reasoning, as well as mechanical and structural engineering skills. Those shortlisted will then be selected for an interview where they will need to present their completed project, and then their scholarship decision will be made.

Q: How did you find out about the opportunity?

Last year there were three Reading School students in the year above who also secured scholarships and they talked about their experiences in the Headmaster's Bulletin. So, I went to go have a talk with them, and they shared their tips for applying for the Scholarship. I would really encourage those currently in Year 11 applying for the scholarship to email or talk to me directly – I'm more than happy to give any tips and advice about the assessment, project, interview etc.

Q: There is a perception that there is a high-degree of individualistic competition between students – is this true?

Not in my experience. There is competition but we all want to succeed together at the end of the day. I think we should collaborate so we can better ourselves as a collective and that's going to lead to a more successful outcome than each of us on our own.

Community is, I think, really, really important and can be seen everywhere across School. I think we should continue to help each other out and work together so we can achieve something greater than ourselves.

Q: You sound passionate about working in collaboration with others

Being able to bounce ideas off each other, talking to like-minded individuals who want to succeed just as well as you do – I think that's really important. It can help push you as well as promote you and there's a really good culture within classrooms and within friendship groups where everyone wants to succeed together but also enjoy it at the same time.

I also became a Computer Science Prefect at the start of term and am looking to co-lead a Computer Science Society with others. We want to be able to create a space where people can just showcase their interest and passion for this subject and work together with like-minded individuals through presentations, team challenges etc.

Q: What are the next steps now that you've secured a Scholarship?

The program started just a couple of weeks ago, where we had a networking event and then we're going to get assigned a mentor who will help guide us on pathways to engineering, education and career development. I'll also want to continue working on the project that I submitted to get onto the programme with the added support of my mentor.

Q: What was your project you showcased in your Arkwright application?

It was an obesity prediction project using machine learning. It basically provides a better alternative to the BMI index, which is not that accurate in determining whether a person is obese or not. It takes into account a huge number of factors, like your exercise, diet, family history of obesity, which is a major factor. It takes all of that into the algorithm, and then it outputs your obesity level, whether you're underweight, healthy weight, obese or overweight. By the time of the interview, I extended this project to not only have the obesity level displayed on a scale but also have it tied up with Google Gemini, which will generate a four-step plan for how to lose weight healthily.

Q: Where did your interest in your project stem from?

I've always been very interested in computer science and was just experimenting with machine learning at home. I read some articles on obesity and BMI and how it's not very accurate. So I essentially tried to combine these to make something that would be interesting and technical, but also very helpful to the wider community.

Q: As a Year 12, what are your general thoughts and views on AI?

AI is a very useful tool, and if you don't use it, I think you're missing out on a lot of the opportunities it can offer. I feel it should be used to help with school work, not just to give you the answer. AI is not like a factual machine – it works based on probability, meaning it will generate the next probable word in a sentence as opposed to the correct answer. So, it should be used as a tool rather than a direct source of information. You have your teachers, your textbooks, which will come before the use of AI.

Q: Do you have any concerns about the use of AI?

I was listening to an interview with the CEO of Open AI, Sam Altman, and he was saying the most dangerous and worrying problems of AI are the ones which are not being talked about yet. AI chatbots like Chat-GPT are providing responses for millions, billions, of people worldwide, and this can be extremely problematic, especially in terms of global issues and ethical issues, where people are turning to ChatGPT as a source of help and support rather than a real person. And obviously there are global issues such as job losses, deepfakes that are only going to get worse as AI keeps developing.

Q: It's been hard not to notice it's been the School's 900th Anniversary this year. What's been your experience of it?

It's definitely a cause for celebration, right? This is a once-in-a-lifetime event that current students of the school will get to experience. I think it's an extremely important point in the School's history that we should be marking and celebrating together. At the same time, we should definitely look forward to see what we can do in the next 100 years, so that the 1000th year anniversary is just as successful and that the school keeps thriving and being at the forefront of academic and character education.

Q: Has there been any one particular event or moment during the year that's been a highlight?

The Giving Days were particularly fun. I did canoeing for the first time with a friend, and although we ended up crashing into other canoes and getting lost in reeds, it was a fun experience!

Reading School Robotics Team



Did you know Reading School has its very own student-led Robotics Team? On Saturday 6th December, the Reading School Robotics Team (led by Mr Henry) had the opportunity to visit Gordon's School in Woking as part of a "Scrimmage Day". The day's report has been provided by Yatharth P (10C):

The team are participating in the REV First Tech Robotics Challenge, and the Scrimmage day aimed at collaboration with other teams in the South-East region (which we are competing in within these initial stages). The students engaged with other schools, learnt from their systems, and made new friends which allowed them to improve their

approach, as well as gain guidance. All the schools (more specifically, St Paul's School from London), staff and students at the Scrimmage Day were very amiable, willing to help and learn.

This competition extends beyond the robotics side of things. Working alongside others, commitment to the project, and contribution within the community is a crucial part of the judging process, which this day helped us get a deeper insight into. The team were especially thrilled at being able to see the 2v2 Decode game field (where the robots would execute, and clash with other robots) in real life.

"This Scrimmage day provided us with an opportunity to make tangible progress on our robot, whilst being able to liaise with other local teams. A really fun, productive day which will serve our team well as we progress forward." Yatharth P

Pictured from left to right: Jun L (8S), Daniel K (10S), Hamd W (10C), Yatharth P (10C), Arnav H (10C), Amogh R (12FHo), Vihaan K (8W)

Please support the Robotics Club this coming **Monday 15th December** as they raise funds with a cake sale during Junior Lunch and Breaktime. All funds will contribute to robotics equipment and the development of the Robotics Club.

The Dozen – December Issue Out Now



Written, designed, and edited entirely by students - *The Dozen* celebrates diversity, creativity, and the power of student voice.

[December's edition](#) reflects on endings, transitions, and cultural shifts as 2025 closes. Across culture, humanities, sport, and science, the student writers explore what it means to reach the end of something—whether an artistic movement, a political era, or a technological age.

Inside you'll find:

The Demise of Bands - Tom C explores the decline of traditional music bands, the rise of solo artists, and how AI and electronic production are reshaping the music landscape.

Why Do We Love Scary Movies? - Jamin H breaks down the psychology behind horror enjoyment, fight-or-flight responses, adrenaline, personality traits, and the “protective frame” that allows audiences to enjoy fear safely.

We Killed Fashion - Daniel N argues that fashion is “dying” because of loss of originality, fast-moving trends, and the decline of meaningful subcultures. He calls for intentionality and personal expression to revive fashion’s creativity.

The Two Faces of Art - Amanuel Y examines realism vs. abstraction, social media’s influence on hyper-realism, and the challenge AI poses to creativity. He suggests great art lives between reality and imagination.

The End of the Patriarchy? - Tom C and Evan M analyse gender inequality in sport, poorly fitting kits, pay gaps, barriers for girls in football, and recent improvements in women’s opportunities. Progress is happening, but slowly.

The Glorious Revolution - Nandan K recounts how James II’s unpopularity led to the bloodless 1688 revolution and explores its long-term impact: constitutional monarchy, Enlightenment ideas, and even modern Euroscepticism.

The Midpoint Checkpoint (Post-COVID Progress?) - Mojtaba C reviews the UK’s economic recovery since the pandemic: GDP and investment are up, but inflation, unemployment, and a heavy digital dependence present challenges.

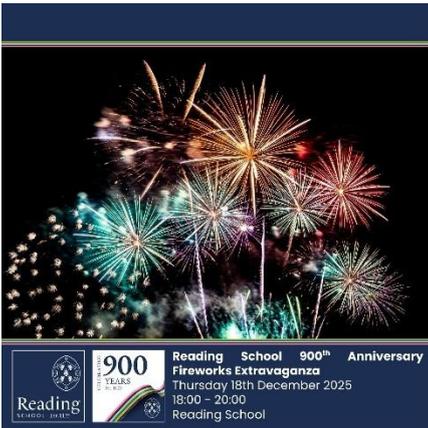
What We Leave Behind - Gil O imagines future archaeologists studying our digital clutter. He argues that our era may be defined by information overload but will ultimately reveal timeless human desires for connection.

And much, much more. [Click here to enjoy the December edition of The Dozen.](#)

Previous issues are available to download from the [Reading School Website](#).

Reading School Events

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



With **just 6 days to go**, Reading School’s 900th Anniversary Fireworks Extravaganza, in partnership with Sonning Fireworks, promises a breathtaking finale to our 2025 celebrations. Tickets are selling fast for this family-friendly evening of light, music and community spirit. This will be the last major event of 2025, so [please secure your tickets by clicking this link](#).

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.

Please note: this is an outdoor event - bring warm clothing, arrive early (*no entry after 7.15pm*), and follow stewards’ instructions on the night. Children must be supervised at all times.

[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**.

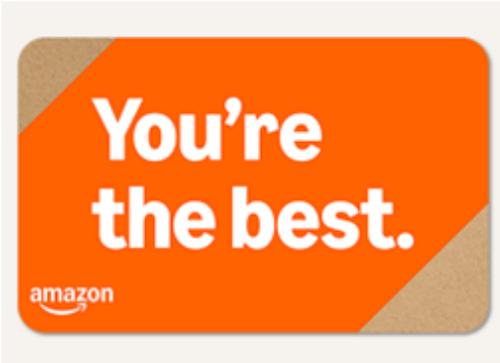
Parents or professionals interested in participating, either via a stall or keynote talk, are very welcome. To secure your place, complete the **delegate registration form by Friday 19th December 2025**.

[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



URGENT - Deadline Sunday 14th December

Please help us to reach our final target value of £1,000! Many of the departments have now sold out, but gifts remain for Geography, Mandarin, Design Tech, Floreat, PE and Music. Several headsets are also still available which will be used across all of the Languages departments, and are much needed.

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

If your circumstances allow, please do purchase a gift from the list so that we can deliver the maximum possible to our teachers next week. It is their commitment and passion that provides your child with the best education possible, and your generous support through this wish list initiative plays a pivotal role in enabling them to access a variety of resources that aid them in that mission.

If you just want to make a contribution, please do purchase a gift voucher and we will put it towards one of the larger items that has been ordered in advance to guarantee the delivery date, including an enormous whiteboard for the maths department and a state-of-the-art mixing unit for Drama. Or please consider a voucher towards restocking the LRC which will be underway early 2026.

Cash donations can also still be made, to our account at:

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

Please email Terri at treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk if you would like to use Gift Aid - time is running out!

With our thanks to all the parents and carers that have taken part in this 2025 Teachers' Wishlist fundraiser and sent both gifts and inspirational messages. We will make sure that any personal message is passed on to School, and we've enjoyed reading them all – including the jokes!

Join the RSPA at the Fireworks Extravaganza



Please do visit us during next Thursday's Fireworks Finale event at Reading School. Meet the RSPA Team where we will be selling mulled wine, hot chocolate, samosas and cakes.

The RSPA Stall will be open from 6pm on 18th December where the school community will also be able to purchase special 900th Anniversary Christmas Cards and Reading School Hoodies.

Reading School Hoodie

New stock of RSPA hoodies currently priced at £26.50 are available to order. Please note, due to increased supplier costs, the price will be increasing to £28.00 starting from 1st January 2026.

To order, [please click here](#) or visit us at the RSPA Stall on Thursday 18th December in the Refectory.

Year 7 Disco



The Reading School Parents' Association is delighted to announce the upcoming Year 7 Disco on **Friday 23rd January 2026**. We are pleased to also welcome Year 7 students from **Abbey School and Kendrick School** to join our Reading School boys for an evening of music, fun, and socialising.

The event offers a wonderful opportunity for students across the three schools to meet new friends and celebrate the beginning of their secondary school journey together. The disco will take place in the Reading School Refectory Hall from **7:00 pm to 8:30 pm**.

[Tickets are £10](#), available on a first-come, limited-capacity basis via the link below. Students will enjoy unlimited squash, and there will also be a stall offering merchandise, soft drinks, and treats for a small additional cost.

We look forward to a fantastic evening for all our Year 7 students from all three schools!

Event Details

Date: Friday 23 January 2026

Time: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Location: Reading School (Refectory Hall)

Ticket Price: £10 (first come, first served)

Ticket Link: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/98949>

Please note: This is a Year 7 only event, and no siblings or additional guests are permitted. Parents will automatically get access to two free tickets for the Meet & Greet event happening at the same location and around the same time, giving you an opportunity to drop your kids off and socialise with the RSPA team and fellow parents from the same year group. Light refreshments and Drinks will be available to purchase for a very small price.

We look forward to a memorable evening for all our Year 7 students, parents & guardians.

Signing Off for 2025

The year 2025, marking the 900th Anniversary of Reading School, was a truly remarkable and combined success for Team RSPA and the School. These celebrations and achievements would not have been possible without the unwavering support of parents, pupils, alumni, teachers, neighbours, and the wider community.

Together, we created memories that will last for generations and strengthened the bonds that make our school and association so special. We truly appreciate all the time, energy, and enthusiasm you have contributed.

We hope this holiday season brings you joy, rest, and precious time with your loved ones and we look forward to seeing you all in 2026 and wish you a New Year filled with prosperity, success, and happiness.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

RSPA Team

Highlights of the week: Michaelmas Term Week 13

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.



900th Anniversary Highlight Reel

Words cannot capture or express what the School and its collective community has contributed towards this monumental year, but maybe a video can capture a little bit of the magic that was cast over Reading School this 2025.

[Click this link or the thumbnail below](#)

