



**TRUSTEES & GOVERNORS
ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS
2024/25**



Word from the Chair



We exercise strategic leadership regarding all aspects of safeguarding for both the Day School and Boarding, promote the welfare of our students and ensure that the education which Reading School provides has a positive impact on both the students in the School, and on the wider community.

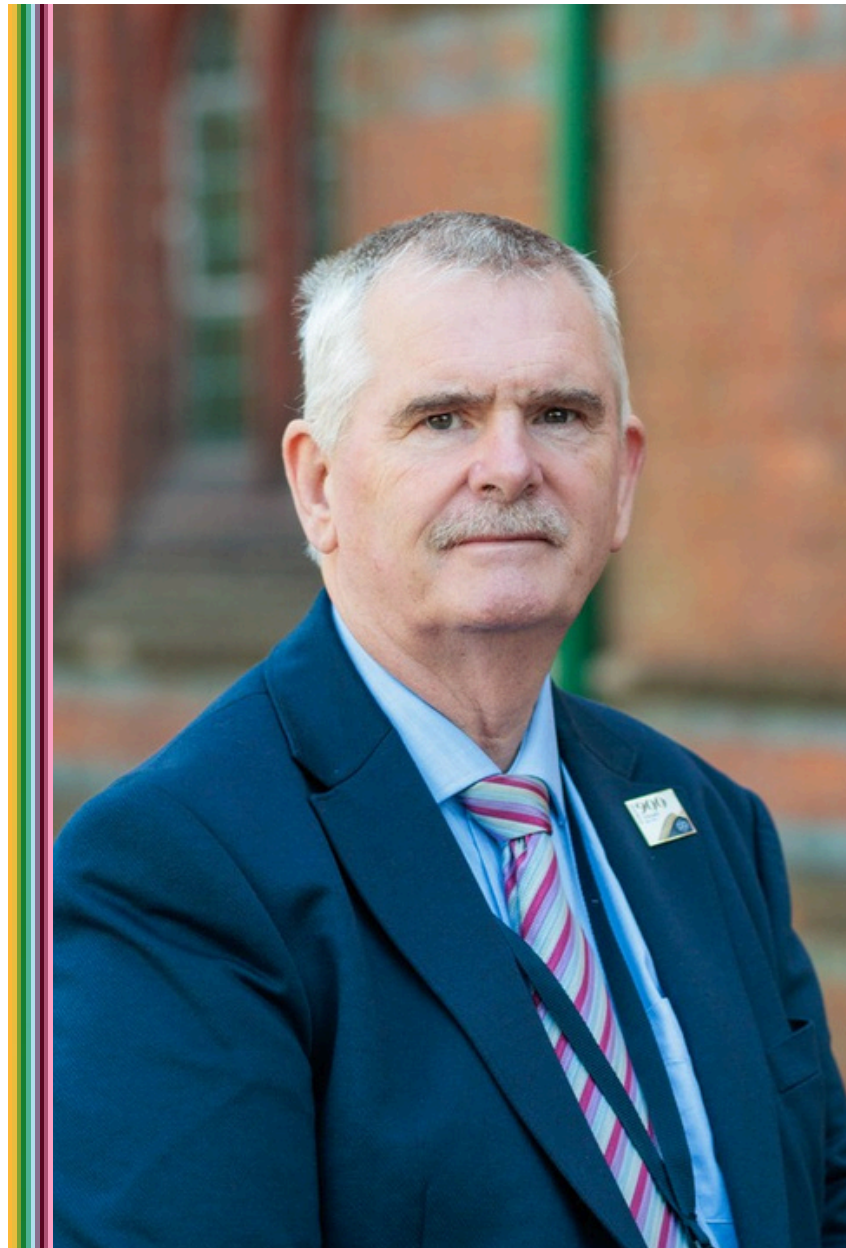
MR BOB KENWRICK

Chair of Governors

The governors and trustees of Reading School have several key responsibilities, including setting the School's vision and strategic direction, holding the Headmaster and staff accountable for educational performance, overseeing the quality of education, and managing the organisation's assets and finances.

They also play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting student welfare. The Annual Report for 2024/25 outlines the processes for governor appointments, governance, performance and risk management. It sets out details of achievements for the year and identifies some of the future challenges the School faces.

The report aims to inform parents about the School's plans and progress. Evidence for this includes the School again being awarded the Sunday Times South East Secondary School of the Year for Academic Excellence in 2025, its excellent GCSE and A-level examination results in 2025, and the continued development of its admissions procedures, which received a Sutton Trust gold award in 2025



How is the School run?



Status of the School

Reading School is a single Academy Trust which operates as an exempt charity and a company limited by guarantee, not having share capital. It is currently a selective secondary day and boarding boys' school. It was previously a Foundation School, and converted to Academy status on 1 February 2011. It had 1,138 students on its roll as at 8th September 2025, 86 of whom were weekly boarders.

The Trustees (usually referred to as the Governors) have responsibility for setting the overall strategic direction of the Academy Trust and the School, approving decisions reserved to Governors, and appointing key members of staff.

How are governors appointed?

To ensure a proper representation of parents, four places on the Governing Body/Trust are reserved for parent governors. These places are filled by election, following notification of vacancies and invitation of nominations. All parents and carers of students at the School are eligible to stand, and the electorate comprises all parents and carers. Dr Shahi resigned as a parent governor on 11th September 2024, and, following an election, Mr Desai replaced him as a parent governor from 1st December 2024. Mrs Fallon's term of office as a parent governor will end on 30th November 2025 (whereupon she will become a Trust-appointed governor). Nominations for a replacement parent governor will be sought in October 2025, and a new parent governor appointed from 1st December 2025.

There are two places on the Governing Body/Trust reserved for staff members, and these are filled by election, the electorate comprising all teaching and associate staff. The staff governors in 2024/25 were Mr Tuggey and Mr Sellwood. Mr Tuggey's term of office will end on 30th November 2025, and a replacement staff governor will be sought.



Two places on the Governing Body/Trust are reserved for representatives of the Reading Foundation, which owns the School's main site. Mr Hudson and Mr Follen were the Foundation's representatives in 2024/25.

Appointments to the remaining places on the Governing Body/Trust are made by the Academy members. From the start of the 2024/25 school year there were six such governors, and there will be seven from 1st December 2025 onwards. Most Academy Trust-appointed governors will be drawn from the local community and/or will have shown an interest in the wellbeing of the School and its students. In appointing new governors, there are also procedures for reviewing the mix of skills that should be available to the Governing Body. Potential new governors are usually required to submit a letter of interest and a CV, and are interviewed by the Chair of Governors, supported by the Governance Professional, before a recommendation for appointment is presented to a meeting of the Academy Members.

At the end of their initial term of service, all governors are eligible for re-appointment for a further term (or re-election as parent governors if they have a student at the School, or re-election as staff governors if they remain eligible).

New governors receive information packs and undertake a tailor-made induction programme, including a meeting with the Headmaster (if required), a site visit and induction training from the Chair and Governance Professional and from external agencies. New governors are given an opportunity to attend all Governing Body Committees as observers, before being appointed to one or two Committees.

Governor training is an important issue for the Governing Body, and is a specific responsibility of one of its Committees (the External Relations and Pastoral Care Committee). This Committee, supported by the Governance Professional, was responsible for monitoring the extent and appropriateness of training offered to governors in 2024/25. A record of the training undertaken by all governors is kept by the Governance Professional. This shows that almost all non-staff governors took part in 3 or 4 training and development events in 2024/25.



The governing body as at 1st October 2025

S Desai*
C Evans #
E Fallon *
M N J Faulkner
D R Fisher
T Follen §
N Holmes *
D Hudson §
N Johnson
R J Kenwick
D Nnabuife *
K Ross MBE
G Sellwood +
T Tuggey +
L Wakelin

§ Governor appointed by the Reading Foundation; * Elected parent governor; + Elected staff governor; #Headmaster and ex officio governor.

The Governing Body also seeks to maximise the use of online training and subscribes to the National Governance Association, Modern Governor and The Link, all of which offer a range of online briefings and training courses for governors.

The School also makes use of internal resources to train governors, such as a session on sexual harassment and a number of sessions were conducted as part of Governance Day in 2024/25.

How do the Governors operate

The Academy Trust Members and the Trustees/governors have responsibility for setting and monitoring the overall strategic direction of the Charitable Company and the School, including approving decisions reserved to governors and the appointment of key members of staff.

From 1st September 2024, the School's new Articles of Association ensured that the Members and Trustees are separate groups of people. The Trust has just three members – the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the Reading Foundation and one other person.

Academy Trust Members:

Mr Bob Kenwick (Chair of Governors)

Mr Richard Childs (Chair of the Reading Foundation)

Mr Toel Koyithara

The Academy Trust members meet at least annually, at an AGM in January, and as required during the year. The role of the members is to ensure that the Trustees (otherwise known as the Governors) have taken the steps necessary to ensure:

- The sound financial management of the Trust
- Effective governance arrangements
- Legal compliance by the Trust and its adherence to statutory guidance
- The overall strategic direction of the Trust

The Members' role is to satisfy themselves that the Trustees are handling the above matters in accordance with the provisions in the Articles of Association and in a manner which is proper, reasonable and effective, whilst acknowledging that the business of the Academy Trust will be managed by the Trustees who may exercise all the powers of the Academy Trust.

The Governing Body meets at least six times each year, including an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM normally takes place in July, and appoints the Chair, Vice Chair, Committees etc. for the next school year, which starts the following September. In 2024/25, the Governing Body met on 6 occasions (including the AGM).





Governor committees have also been established to consider detailed matters. In 2024/25, there were four main committees, each of which met four times in the course of the year, except the Finance Committee, which met five times:

- Curriculum and Standards
- External Relations and Pastoral Care
- Finance
- Property and Projects

Additionally, a Staff Pay and Performance Committee has been established to consider personnel matters, and it met twice in the course of 2024/25.

There are also governors' committees established to hear and adjudicate complaints from parents (and others) and appeals against disciplinary decisions (relating to staff and students). These committees did not need to meet in 2024/25, other than the Student Discipline Committee, which met in January and April 2025.

An Admissions Committee is responsible for considering and recommending the school's Admissions Policies and related matters.

This Committee met on three occasions in 2024/25.

A committee of governors (with the participation of an external advisor) undertook performance reviews of the Chief Executive and Headmaster, and met on two occasions to monitor their performance and achievements against targets in 2024/25.

Ad hoc groups of governors are also established as and when required to consider specific issues and make recommendations to the Governing Body. In 2024/25, one such group has been considering sustainability, including climate change and decarbonisation issues, as well as long-term strategic issues.

The majority of the decisions reserved to the governors (including all major expenditure decisions) are taken by the Governing Body as a whole, on the recommendation of a committee or in relation to reports submitted by senior management team members. Committees have delegated powers to deal with certain matters.

The Chief Executive, the Headmaster, the Deputy Headmaster, the Finance Director, the Head of Operations and Projects and other members of staff have attended committee meetings to present reports on their areas of responsibility, for example curriculum development and special educational needs.

A new system of governor engagement was implemented for 2023/24 and has continued to operate in 2024/25. This new system features lead governors for key areas, like boarding, safeguarding, health and safety, SEND etc, and regular governance days, when all governors visit the school for a programme of activities designed to ensure governor involvement and understanding. One such day was held in December 2024 and proved highly successful. Governance days will continue to be held annually.

The Headmaster is the School's Accounting Officer and works closely with both the other governors and the senior staff of Reading School.

Following a change in the leadership structure of Reading School from the start of the Lent term in 2024, a new post of Chief Executive was created (and Mr Robson appointed to it). A new Headmaster was appointed (Mr Chris Evans, formerly Deputy Headmaster), with day-to-day responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the School. Mr Robson retired from his post on 31 October 2025 and will not be replaced as Chief Executive.

Mr Ashley Robson led the School as Headmaster from September 2012 to January 2025, having previously served as deputy head. During that time, he played an integral role in shaping the school community.

Through his steadfast commitment, wisdom, and passion for education, he made an indelible mark on the lives of students, staff, and families alike. His leadership has helped guide the school through challenges and successes, always with integrity, vision, and a deep sense of purpose.



His retirement marks the end of a remarkable era, and while the School is sad to see him go, it is filled with gratitude for all he contributed. His legacy will be felt for many years to come, both in the traditions he upheld and the progress he inspired. The School wishes Ashley every happiness and fulfillment in the next chapter of his journey.

All aspects of the management of the School and the conduct of the Governing Body are based on openness, accessibility and accountability. Governors are encouraged to participate fully in the work of committees and the Governing Body, and are encouraged to bring matters of concern before governors and to raise any queries with the Headmaster.

The detailed administrative work of the governors is undertaken by the Governance Professional, reporting to the Chair of Governors. Mr Steve Vale has continued to fulfil this role throughout 2024/25.

The School has established two subsidiary trading companies:

- The Reading School Overseas Partnership Company Ltd, which was established in June 2018, facilitates the School's involvement with international partnerships. The Board of this company consists of the Chair of Governors, the School's Headmaster and the Chair of the Reading Foundation. It has no employees, but remains a going concern, with plans to expand its activities in 2025/26. 100% of the company's share capital is owned by Reading School.

- Future Stories Community Enterprise Ltd, established in April 2022, with aims to establish wraparound care, English language summer schools, summer holiday activities, an on-site nursery and to market the School's admissions tests to other schools. The company's focus is currently on marketing the admissions tests. The Board of the company consists of a Governor (Mr Faulkner), the Headmaster, the Director of People, and a person independent of the School (Toel Koyithara, a barrister with a government background). Services are provided to the Company by Reading School employees under the terms of a service agreement and recharged to the company. 100% of the company's share capital is owned by Reading School.

Reading School has a close working relationship with The Reading Foundation (Registered Charity number 294640) which is landlord of the School's main site and has as its own charitable purpose "to advance the education of the public, and in particular, to endow Reading School".

The Governing Body's representatives on the Foundation's Council in 2024/25 were Mr Faulkner, Mrs Fallon and Mr Nnabuife.

The School also co-operates on a regular basis with the Old Redingensians Association (ORA). This comprises alumni of the School, and seeks to support the School in appropriate ways. A new Heritage Committee has recently been established, with membership drawn from both the School and the ORA.

The School also works closely with the Reading School Parents Association, whose contributions in 2024/25 are gratefully acknowledged.

Risk Management

The governors have a robust attitude to risk management. The risk register and has been revised in 2024/25, so that risks are aligned with the remits of Governing Body committees and its continuous review focuses on the highest areas of risk. This will increase the rigour applied to the assessment of risks.

All governors have received up-to-date training in safeguarding, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have undertaken required training in Safer Recruitment, and the Chair is the designated Governor with responsibility for child protection.

Governors receive regular reports from staff, the School's Health and Safety Committee and the Health and Safety link governor.

A number of policies have been adopted by the Governing Body, covering risk and health and safety matters. These are reviewed regularly, including annual reviews of the following policies:

- Accident Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health and Safety Statement and Policy
- Infection control
- Risk Assessment Policy

Key policies of this type are published on the School's website, as per DfE requirements.



Governors' attendance in 2024/25

The following table shows total attendances by governors at all main Committees (i.e. Curriculum & Standards, External Relations & Pastoral Care, Finance, Property & Projects) and at Governing Body meetings in the 2024/25 school year:

Governor	Possible	Actual	%
S. Desai	7	6	86%
E. Fallon	10	10	100%
M. Faulkner	14	10	71%
D. Fisher	11	9	82%
T. Follen	15	15	100%
N. Holmes	15	10	67%
D. Hudson	14	10	71%
N. Johnson	15	11	73%
B. Kenwick	23	19	83%
D. Nnbuiefe	14	14	100%
A Robson	10	6	60%
K Ross	14	12	86%
G Sellwood	14	12	86%
T Tuggey	15	14	93%
L Wakelin	14	8	57%

Performance Management

The primary measures used by the governors to assess the success of the activities of the School are a medium-term strategic plan, together with a series of annual Operational Plans.

A revised and updated strategic plan for 2020 to 2025 was approved by the Governing Body in July 2020, superseding the previous 2018 to 2025 plan. A new strategic plan for 2026 onwards will be drafted and approved in the autumn of 2025.



The Operational Plan for 2024/25 was approved by the Governing Body on 1st July 2024, and a further Operational Plan for 2025/26 was approved on 7th July 2025.

The School last updated its Master Plan in October 2024 and this sets out key priorities for the development of facilities at the School, such as a new Sports Hall and a 6th form centre. A further updating of the Master Plan may be required, depending on the availability of funds for these facilities.

These plans continue to place student and staff wellbeing and development at the heart of the School's vision, supported by a robust programme of Continuous Professional Development, as well as a system of peer reviews of the various departments.

The Operational Plan for the year is monitored as a standing agenda item at each Committee meeting, and the Headmaster is required to report to the governors regularly at Committee and Governing Body meetings on progress in meeting the targets and measures set out in the Operational Plan, on any corrective actions required in pursuit of the Plan, as well as on Academy performance, personnel matters, university entrance and staff training.

More information about these targets, and the successes and challenges in meeting them in 2024/25, are set out in the Achievements and Performance section, below.

In addition:

- Regular budget monitoring reports are submitted to each meeting of the Finance Committee and the Governing Body and monthly management accounts are sent to the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Finance committee;
- The Curriculum and Standards Committee receives a detailed report on performance in external examinations each year, and commissions appropriate actions as a result, including looking at comparative data for other schools and undertaking self-assessment of school performance;
- All policies are reviewed by the relevant Committees at appropriate intervals, in accordance with a schedule agreed by the governing body, including consideration of their value and effectiveness in delivering the aims of the Academy.
- Committees receive regular reports on fundraising, partnership activities, quality assurance, the School's social impact, safeguarding, health and safety compliance, staffing and the School's Pupil Premium and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategies.

Self-assessment

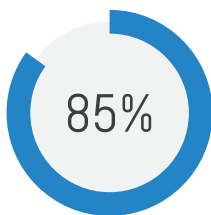
The Governing Body is now actively engaged in the regular self-evaluation of governance, with self-assessments of the effectiveness of the Governing Body undertaken regularly, as well as a skills audits and 360° appraisals of the Chair. The Governing Body keeps a record of all training undertaken by governors. All these measures are designed to improve and sustain its effectiveness.

Achievements & Performance 2024/25

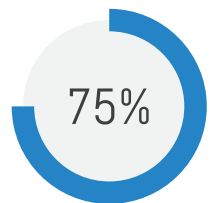
Set out below are details of:

- a) The School's examination results performance in 2024 and 2025;
- b) Details of progress and achievements during 2024/25, set out under the Governing Body Committee primarily responsible for their achievement;
- c) Key Performance Indicators

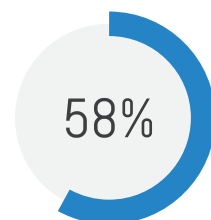
2024 GCSE & A level Examination Results



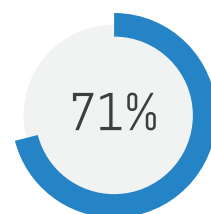
In 2024, 85% of the 1488 GCSE entries were awarded grades of 7-9. Subjects like Computing, History, PE and Physics achieved their best results on record. 39.3% of all GCSE entries were awarded the highest '9' grade.



In Biology, Chemistry, Mandarin, Computing, Electronics, Geography, Mathematics, PE and Physics, over 75% of entries gained grades 9-8. Moreover, over 50% of entries in Biology, Computing, Mathematics and Physics achieved grade 9.

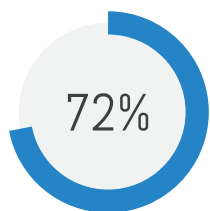


A-level results in 2024 saw one in five Reading School students achieving at least 3 A* grades, and 58% of students attaining 3 or more A grades.

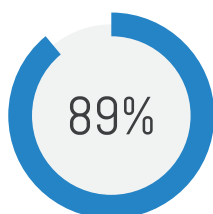


71% of all grades achieved by Reading School students were awarded A* or A, which is a remarkable achievement. 32.5% of the students achieved A* grades and 90% of the 189 entries achieved A* to B grades overall.

2025 GCSE Examination Results



At GCSE, students earned grades 9-8 in 71.9% of entries. This was a significant 5.9% improvement on the previous year's outcomes.



88.6% of grades were awarded grades 9-7, which was very much in line with expectation (85.7% in 2024 and 91.2% in 2019 being the fairest benchmarks). Just ten students missed the required entry for Sixth Form.

Ukrainian guest students did exceptionally well, with one achieving the required points score for study in the Sixth Form from UK qualifications alone, and two doing so through their UK and Ukrainian matriculations.

Subjects that were most delighted with 2025 GCSE outcomes included Maths, Physics, MFL and Computer Science. The School is particularly pleased with the outcomes in Photography (which was examined for the first time), Modern Foreign Languages (where more than 80% of students were awarded grades 8 or 9) and Mathematics (where 136 students achieved grades of 8 or 9).

2025 A Level Examination Results

At A Level, 35% of grades were awarded A*. 71.5% were awarded A*- A, and 88.4% A* - B. This was an increase 2% on 2024 A* achievements, but 1.6% fewer entries achieved A* -B grades in 2024. The School was pleased this picture, and especially grateful that a record number of students achieved their first-choice university places, and that brilliant quality offers were available in clearing for those who just missed out on their original choices. Subjects that were most delighted with these outcomes included English Literature, Classics, Modern Foreign Languages, History, Philosophy, Physics, Art and Mathematics.

Record numbers of students gained places for degree apprenticeships and directly into employment. Multiple students gained places on a wide range of courses, including Acting, Agriculture and Artificial Intelligence. Whilst a significant majority of students will go on to study Engineering, there was an increase in History, English and Sports Science offers, and over 20 students received successful Oxbridge offers

Progress & Achievements 24/25

900th Anniversary celebrations 2025

2025 marks a remarkable milestone, being the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading School. We have taken this once in a lifetime opportunity to remind ourselves of our purpose, to celebrate the rich history and traditions on which the School has prospered and to look forward with optimism and enthusiasm to the future. We intend to continue achieving strong academic outcomes whilst simultaneously nurturing young people who value others, lead with compassion and demonstrate curiosity, integrity and humility.



All members of the Reading School community have been invited to participate in our 900th anniversary celebrations.

In March, current students took part in the inaugural Giving Day, which united the school through a wide range of activities and raised in excess of £150,000 to launch the Beyond 900 campaign. This initiative aims to enhance the school's facilities for the long term. We extend our sincere gratitude to parents, families, and alumni for their generous support.

In July, we welcomed families, neighbours, local primary schools, and community groups to our Community Carnival. More than 5,000 visitors enjoyed music, dance, sport, food, arts, and crafts at an event generously funded by the Reading Foundation. Shortly thereafter, the Grand Reunion brought together alumni from across the world to reconnect, express gratitude to current and former staff, and witness the school's ongoing development. This remarkable occasion was made possible through the generosity of an Old Redingensian, to whom we are deeply thankful.

In September, alumni once again gathered for the Old Redingensians House Music Competition - an evening that demonstrated the talent, dedication, and sense of community that continue to define Reading School.

The celebrations will conclude in 2025 with a visit from a member of the Royal Family, the burial of a time capsule to commemorate this milestone, and a Gala Dinner to mark the culmination of this historic year. It is our hope that many will reflect on 2025 with pride and affection for their School, and that these bonds will continue to strengthen in the years ahead.



“ I was a boarder in East Wing House from 1953-1960 under the administration of the fabulous Frank Terry. It, and Reading School, gave me a preparation for life which I do not think could have been surpassed anywhere. Floreat Redingensis! ”



An anonymous donor gave £25.00



Shyamala Nandhakumar
Reading
United Kingdom

Reading

United Kingdom

“ Congratulations Reading School, on the incredible milestone—900 years! Proud to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime journey. ”



“ Nil ”



An anonymous donor gave £5.00



Miyuki Jarvis





OFSTED Inspection

OFSTED undertook full inspections of both the main School and Boarding in November of 2023. (This was the first OFSTED inspection of the main School since it became an academy in 2011.) Both reports rated the School as outstanding. The inspection process itself was good and thorough and the School is proud of the sense of purpose that was visible to inspectors and emerged in the reports.



In addition, the School was again listed as the Top State Secondary School in the Southeast as published in [Parent Power: The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2025](#). This survey identifies the 2,000 highest-achieving schools in the UK, ranked by their recent examination results. The School was the 12th best nationally.

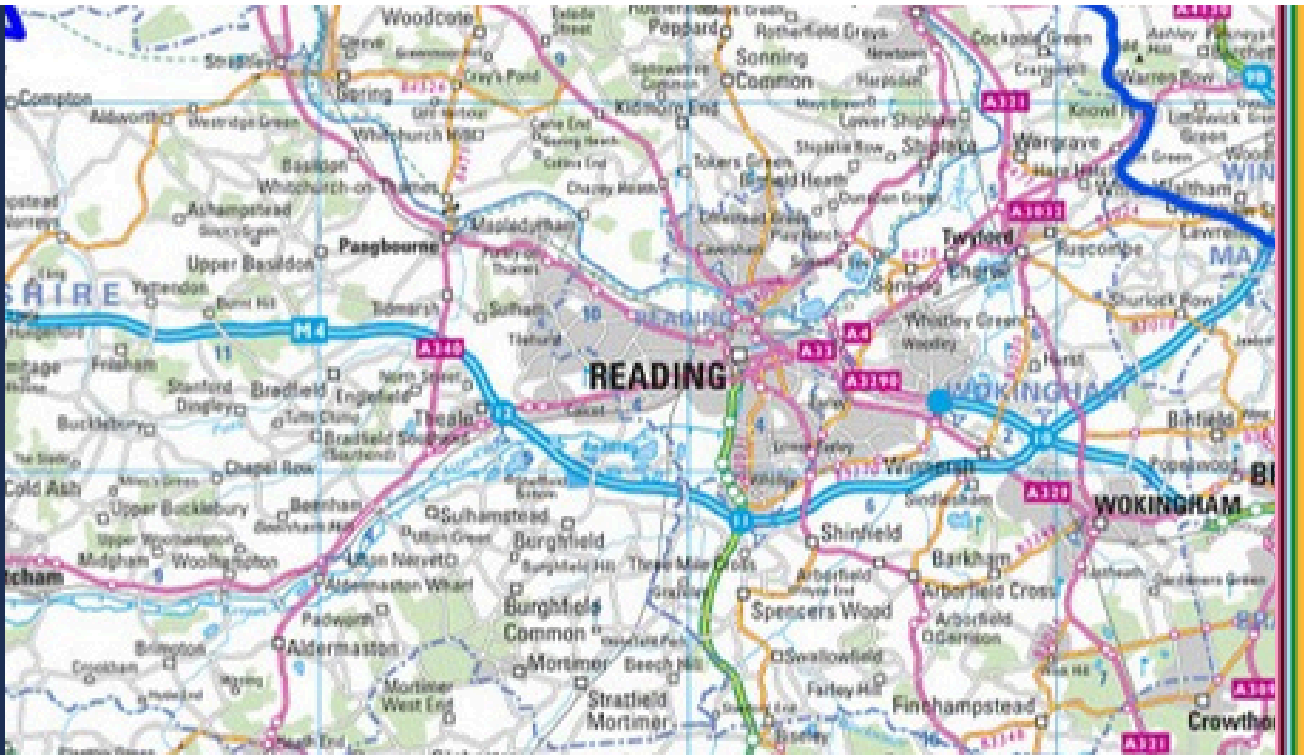
Admissions

The admissions policies applicable from September 2024 introduced further changes to increase the School's social impact, by offering even greater opportunities for applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds to gain entry to the School. The new policies reserved 10% of admissions (a maximum of 15 places) for applicants who have passed a sporting aptitude test, as well as achieving the pass mark.

As a result of these changes, a total of 27 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted in September 2024. 19 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted to Year 7 in September 2024, with a further 8 Pupil/Service Premium students joining the 6th form.

The admissions policies for entry in September 2025 were largely unchanged from those relating to September 2024. In September 2025:

- a total of 20 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted to the School
- 11 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted to Year 7
- 9 Pupil/Service Premium students joined the 6th form



Pupil/Service Premium students accounted for 9% of all admissions in September 2025. The policies agreed for entry in September 2026 enable a greater emphasis on creativity in the entrance examination and introduced a new entry criterion where evidence showed that attending the School was essential for the wellbeing of the child.

The School has plans for more radical changes to its admission policies from September 2027 onwards, designed to ensure that entry criteria favours students who will most benefit from attending the School in the greater Reading area, whilst conserving academic standards. These include:

- Changing the date of the entrance examination from September to July
- Identification of local primary schools, attendance at which would give students priority status for admission to the School
- Rationalising the catchment area, with changes to postcode at the fringes of the current catchment area

Curriculum & Standards

Major achievements this year included:

- A thorough and detailed analysis of the 2024 GCSE and A-level outcomes in order to pinpoint their implications for future years in terms of expected outcomes, student subject choices, teaching resources, and for plans future examinations. This led initiatives to increase performance/progress monitoring of certain students from Year 7 onwards.
- 18 students entering Oxford or Cambridge University in September 2024 and 22 in September 2025. 77% students obtained places in Russell Group universities in 2025, with Southampton, Bath, Bristol, Imperial College London, Warwick and Kings College London the most popular destinations.

- Instituting a programme of presentation by Heads of Departments at Committee meetings, designed to promote governor knowledge and understanding of key issues.
- Progress in preserving the breadth of the School's curriculum, with a relatively high number of students opting for modern foreign languages at A level and good numbers opting for Geography, Latin, History, modern foreign languages, Music, Drama and Ancient History at GCSE students.
- A continued focus on quality assurance of the School's curriculum through analysis of outcomes, benchmarking etc.
- Considering the potential benefits of AI for use by teachers in reducing their workloads and making the reports more consistent.
- Approval of the School's 2024/25 Pupil Premium Strategy, in support of the School's key priority of supporting more students from disadvantaged backgrounds and increasing its social impact.
- Continuing efforts to reinvigorate the School's partnerships at local, national and international level.

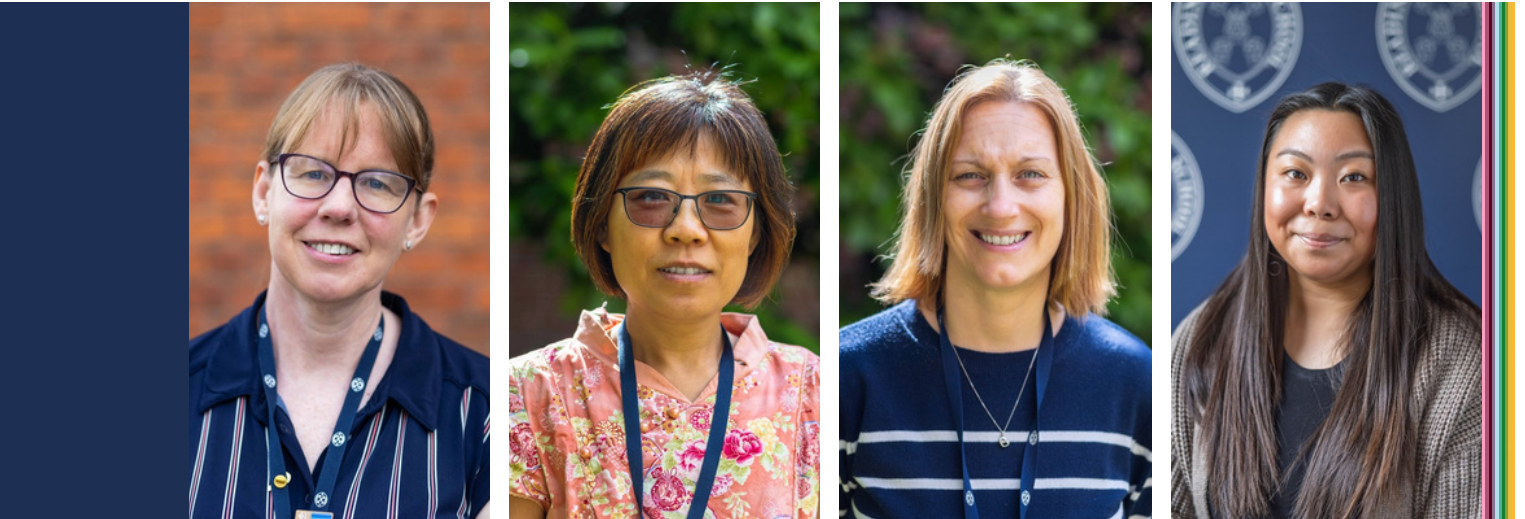




External Relations and Pastoral Care

In the course of 2024/25, the Committee:

- Continued to review progress on issues relating to the School's social impact and contribution to social mobility at every meeting.
- Approved the pastoral elements of the School's 2024/25 Pupil Premium Strategy.
- Worked with Student Representatives, securing their input to many of the issues considered by the Committee and supporting them in strengthening the student voice and making it more effective.
- Instituted a programme of presentations to the Committee by student support and pastoral care staff, to improve governor understanding and appreciation of the work involved.
- Continued to work on Governor Training, including keeping a record of all training undertaken.
- Undertook and responded to a Governing Body self-assessment.
- Monitored the Schools Safeguarding policies, procedures and outcomes.
- Reviewed the School's Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and the School's SEND Policy, focusing on the student support provided.
- Reviewed and updated numerous school policies relating to student welfare, discipline, complaints etc.
- Continued to monitor the School's boarding provision, through self-assessment and measurement against national standards for boarding.
- Supported measures to support national and international partnerships with schools, including a school in Ukraine.



Finance

Achievements in 2024/25 included:

- Successful completion of the 2023/24 audited accounts, with an unqualified auditors' opinion
- Careful monitoring of 2024/25 income and expenditure across all areas, in a tight financial environment, resulting in a small end-of-year surplus
- An internal audit report on key financial controls, which showed the School to be sound in all elements
- Revision of the way the School's risk register is presented and managed, with sharper focus on the key elements of risk and wider input to their review
- Setting a balanced consolidated budget for 2025/26 (including the required rate of return on Boarding), notwithstanding a challenging financial environment
- Undertaking benchmarking of key financial indicators against other schools
- Overseeing fundraising, including, the joint fundraising initiative with the Reading Foundation and the activities connected with the School's 900th anniversary celebrations, as well as monitoring the work of the Society Office
- Approval of a business strategy for the School's trading subsidiary, Future Stories Community Enterprise
- Ensuring the School's full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Reviews of the School's future gas and electricity contracts to secure the best value for money.



Property & Projects

Key developments in 2024/25:

- Following agreement for the development of the Morgan Road site to improve the School's facilities, particularly sports facilities on the School's main site and at Morgan Road, continuing to work with the developer on a planning application which (although delayed) it has now agreed will be submitted in 2025.
- Careful monitoring and planning of the use of the property maintenance budget and the budget for health and safety compliance works, working with the Reading Foundation to ensure that maintenance and refurbishment priorities were identified systematically and tackled in the most cost-efficient manner.
- A rigorous approach to securing value for money on all contracts, led by the Chief Operations and Projects Manager.
- Major external refurbishments of the Chapel and South House.
- Completion of fire prevention works, funded by the DfE Condition Improvement Fund, including emergency lighting, and the provision of fire-retardant blinds.
- A range of smaller improvements to the School site, including drainage improvements, better traffic circulation and relocating all student services together in the West Wing.
- A detailed report analysing the scope for decarbonisation through improvements to the School's heating systems, ready for implementation when funds permit.
- Overseeing a drive to increase income to the School from external lettings.
- Commissioning a full site condition survey, to be undertaken in August 2025 and funded by the Reading Foundation, with the results available in for the 2025/26 school year.
- Reviewing and updating of Health and Safety and related policies.
- The updating of the School's Master Plan in September 2024.



Sports

Key data:

Sports played	10
Fixtures Completed	337
Number of individual student participants	486

The sports played were badminton, basketball, cricket, football, handball, hockey, rugby, swimming, ultimate frisbee and volleyball. Table tennis, basketball and ghost were run for all year groups over a whole half term. House Competitions - rugby, football, cricket and sports day - take place during the school day, but others are after school adding to extra-curricular provision.

12 different members of staff were engaged in managing the School's sports teams.

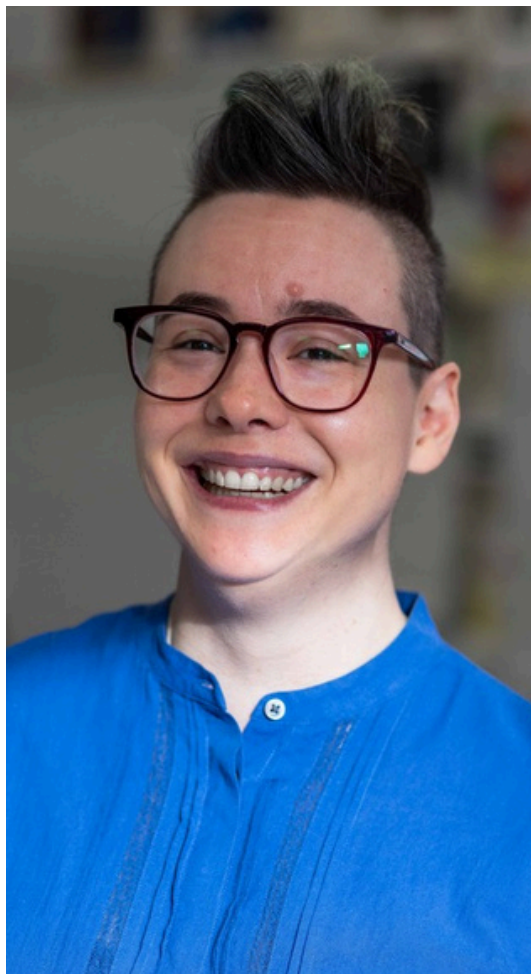
Each fixture requires approximately 8-10 hours of staff time dependent on venue, sport and level of competition. This workload is split between staff and the head of relevant sport, who handles the communication with other schools.

The School's primary offerings are football, cricket and rugby, and PE staff devoted 2256 hours to these in the course of the 2024/25 school year (equivalent to 59.4 hours per week or 11.9 hours per day). In addition, considerable time commitments were given by other staff to badminton and basketball, ultimate Frisbee and tennis.

Key Highlights

- 2025 Cape Town Senior Cricket Tour
- Lords Cricket Ground Invitational Day Tour
- Badminton National Champions
- Table Tennis National Runners-Up
- Year 8 Football: 2025 HD Sportz tournament Shrewsbury, Champions (first time in 10 years)
- First XI Football: Berkshire County Cup Semi-finalists
- First XI Cricket: 2025 Toby Radford Trophy Champions
- Year 8 Cricket: Berkshire County Plate Champions
- Year 10 Cricket: Defeated Eton College
- Senior Rugby: Super League Finalists'
- Year 8 Rugby: Abbey Tournament Winners





Enrichment, sporting and cultural activities

The School's 900th year was one in which collective consensus and collaboration came to the fore in creating and offering a huge range of additional opportunities for its students.

Corporately, the School sought to emphasise creativity. The Heads of Music, Art and Drama – self-styled as the MAD collective - rose to the challenge of placing music, drama, art and dance at the heart of school life. On both Open and Giving Days, students led superb activities including street dance, drama and photography workshops.

The Art department's trips program included more vulnerable and disadvantaged students per capita than any other and the 'music for all' instrument scheme, now in its second year in the music department gives access to instrumental lessons to every student in year 7. Drama workshops took place alongside music and art in Belonging Week and thus broadened access to performance for students in Year 7. The 900th anniversary drama performance, curated by the Head of Drama, was exceptional.

This year was the first year of a new 'creative design' elective running with Year 7&8, and the School is excited to be giving more students opportunities to design and make, to collaborate and to get hands on with their peers.

After school activities continue to be well attended. As noted above, the PE department are running an expansive fixtures program, and other minority sports such as badminton, basketball, squash and frisbee capture large audiences of students with the staff involved giving up their time to create outstanding opportunities for students. The School also buys in staff to deliver specialist activities such as fencing and boxing (fencing was back for the first time since Covid last year) These activities create space for students' leadership and service, with our squad of fencing running a tournament for SEN students from local primary schools within weeks of starting sessions, thus exemplifying an ability to learn, lead and serve consecutively.

These after school activities are entirely funded by the generous donations of parents and alumni to the 365 Fund, without which we would not be able to offer such a broad range to students.

Over the course of last academic year the School ran 215 trips, 19 overseas and 30 residential. 10,174 participant days of activity were offered, equating to around 10 days of activity per student each year. There are a broad range of opportunities offered through partnership work in Finland and Denmark and with European Schools, with character and culture as the emphasis of most trips.

Belonging Weeks place service at the heart of school life for students in year 10, but sit alongside work to deliver mentoring programs, sporting activities and residentials to students from local primary schools.

The School's rowing squad hit a collective target of rowing 900km in the middle of Giving Days, in partnership with Battle Primary School. This was just one of over 30 activities that ran on this incredible day. This was a one- off, but an opportunity for staff and students to join in collaborating with purpose and celebrating the culture of the School.





In this 900th year, it felt that the School was able to emphasise how strong it is when everyone comes together, how much it can achieve. It felt as if collaboration and creativity were at the heart of what the School does, and all benefited from the opportunities to run and walk, cycle, jump, sing, dance and build new opportunities together.

C. Key Performance Indicators

- Number of permanent exclusions: 2.
- Number of suspensions (i.e. fixed term exclusions): 19.
- Number of racist incidents: 8.
- Number of incidents of bullying: 0.
- Overall school attendance (Years 7 to 11- including study leave absence in Year 11): 95.61%.
- Attendance for Years 7 to 10: 95.89%.
- Student Lateness: 1.11%.

Plans for future periods

The School's long term strategy covers the period 2020-25. This is available on [the School's website](#). The Annual Operational Plan, mentioned above, includes a target to create a new strategic development plan 2026-2036, to be approved early in 2026

The Operational Plan for 2025/26 was approved by the Governing Body on 7th July 2025,. The Plan sets out 36 targets under 5 headings: purpose, people, standards, infrastructure and scholarship. Each target has a number of measures, and responsibility for these is delegated widely amongst senior staff. The plan and is too detailed to set out in full here, but examples of some of the targets under each heading are set out below:

Purpose

- Overhaul of admission processes.
- Engagement with parents.
- Reading School approach to the digital universe.

People

- Staff support.
- Skills Audit across all staff.
- Comprehensive professional development programme.

Standards

- Common standards for lesson starts, homework, uniform, phone use, and respect for colleagues.
- The Reading School curriculum promise guaranteeing assessment, resources and homework in return for a commitment towards respect, independence, diligence and curiosity.
- Presentation of the School site and behaviour around it.

Infrastructure

- Long term site strategy identifying areas of investment and maintenance.
- Development of outdoor teaching and play spaces.
- Phased implementation of a digital strategy.

Scholarship

- Safe to flourish: a safeguarding yearly calendar shaped by and for students and wellbeing themes.
- Capable to Create: renewed connections between the Arts and Design and Technology which bring creativity to the forefront.
- Accountable for Actions: students sign up to effective behavioural contracts that include creativity, improvement, awareness of self, and understanding.

The Governing Body seeks to make continuous progress towards the development of the School's facilities over the next few years. This is a challenge both in the logistical sense (i.e. designing and building new facilities within a confined site which includes listed buildings) and in a financial sense, since, realistically, major developments will need to be funded from funds obtained through grant aid or funds raised by the School itself.

As noted above, the School's Master Plan (updated in 2024/25) identifies the main facilities which will be required to deliver the curriculum, pastoral care and associated support facilities at the heart of the School's strategic vision and operational priorities.

In order to fund the major facilities outlined in the Master Plan, the fundraising partnership with the Reading Foundation, the initiatives led by the Society Office and the imaginative use of existing assets are crucial. In particular, a successful conclusion to the proposals for the Morgan Road site (currently subject to planning approval by the local authority) will transform the sports facilities at the School.

Other key challenges faced by the School include:

- Ensuring that the excellent education it offers benefits students in the Reading area who can derive the maximum benefit from it, thereby increasing the School's social impact, and developing partnerships and admission policies to support this aim.
- Sustaining the breadth of the curriculum in the face of current student preferences and of financial constraints which mean that subjects are viable only if a sufficiently large cohort of students opt for them.
- Meeting the challenge of future revenue funding in the face of a growing gap between anticipated income and increasing costs. This has been a challenge for many years, but is becoming more acute, as many of the measures to address the gap have already been taken.
- Maintaining a programme of priority repairs and refurbishments, working in partnership with the Reading Foundation, and sustaining a more planned approach which prioritises compliance with high standards.
- Associated with the previous point, maximising funds available to improve and maintain buildings and facilities through successful grant applications to external bodies – e.g. CIF bids and bids to the other organisations, such as the Wolfson Foundation.
- Anticipating and dealing with the implications of any future changes in government policy on education and school structures. As a highly successful single-academy trust, the School's future needs to remain within its own control whatever transpires in terms of overall governance structure. The school will need to work carefully with key players in education at local and national level to ensure that such control is retained.



Fundraising

The School's fundraising activities, led by the Society Office, have focused on two key priorities in 2024/25.

Firstly, managing the "365 Fund" which the School relies on to provide daily opportunities for all students to take part in activities we would not otherwise be able to fund from DfE grants. These donations from current and former parents, alumni and other benefactors are fully utilised to sustain transport, hire of facilities, external expert providers and other resources as set out on p28.

Secondly, delivering the rich programme of events to celebrate the 900th Anniversary set out on page 16, including the highly successful Giving Day which raised in excess of £150,000 for the "Beyond 900" campaign. This campaign will be extended in future years to focus on fundraising for the longer-term development of facilities including sports, expressive arts and sixth form.

The Reading Foundation

Support from The Reading Foundation continues to have a profound impact on our school's infrastructure, student opportunities, and overall educational experience. In 2024/25 significant funding contributed to essential external maintenance works on South House and the Chapel which will protect the fabric of these buildings for many years to come. The ongoing commitment to character development, enrichment opportunities and prizes underpin our focus on providing a well-rounded education.

This funding supports the celebration of student achievement, which fosters leadership, creativity, and resilience in our pupils. Additionally, the Future Stories initiative, supported by the Foundation, creates an opportunity to inspire current and future students alike. The Society Office and Reading Foundation also work together with OR donors, who provide bursaries to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For instance, the Mary Bursary now provides additional support to 21 students, running in its fourth year. In addition, one student is supported by the James Scholarship beyond Reading School for 3 years at university.

Reading School Parents' Association

The RSPA play a key role in fundraising, sponsoring and supporting school events. They have sponsored the drinks for Senior Prize Giving & Leavers BBQ, run a Year 7 & 8 Disco, provided refreshments stands at Sports and Music events and also at the Community Carnival. In 2024/25 they have generously funded interactive whiteboards in History, Biology and Chemistry departments, a gazebo, AV facilities in the Lecture Theatre and 900th Anniversary badges for all students and staff.

The Community Relations Office

The Community Relations Manager has led on the school increasing its lettings capacity to generate income through the academic year, holidays and weekends by letting the school's facilities. There has been a significant increase in income from higher numbers of lettings in 2024/25, with a wide range of lettings to different sporting, cultural, religious, corporate and community groups. Measures are in place to screen clients hiring the School's premises and avoid risks, The School utilises a lettings portal. Plans for the future include the expansion of a sustainable lettings programme and an official business launch.

Principal Risks and uncertainties

The School has an excellent record in meeting its challenges, and the governors recognise the key role of talented and dedicated staff in this. The School's high standards, its excellent record and its popularity with potential applicants, mean that the main risks are financial in nature. Currently, the principal risks and uncertainties are:

- Major efforts made to bridge the funding gap caused by reductions to revenue funding will need to continue. Revenue expenditure has been progressively reduced to the minimum level compatible with sustaining academic standards and meeting all the ambitions set out in the Strategic and Annual plans.
- Given this position, and the fact that there are elements of costs which the School cannot control (e.g. pension contributions), it is vital that the School sustains and (if possible) increases its level of revenue income in future years. In the past, the main means of doing so has been through increased pupil numbers, but the School has now increased student numbers in Year 7 and the Sixth Form to maximum capacity.
- The School's funding position is such that subjects which few students opt for, particularly at A-level, cannot be offered economically. This poses a potential threat to the breadth of the curriculum. Governors will continue to monitor the position, whilst recognising that it is ultimately difficult and undesirable to attempt to control or unduly influence student choices. Annual Operational Plans will continue to include actions aimed at sustaining curriculum breadth.
- The School needs to be able to raise additional funds at local level to support major improvements to its facilities, particularly sports facilities. The position on fundraising and the use of funds raised is regularly and closely monitored by governors in Committee meetings and the generation of substantial funds for capital projects is one of the major future challenges facing the School.
- Given the nature of the School site and buildings, the risk of unforeseen and expensive repair work is substantial and can lead to urgent funding needs, as recent experience shows. The Governing Body is seeking to reduce this risk by identifying the highest priorities and tackling them pro-actively, so as to minimise the extent of unexpected problems – in this context, governors acknowledge the contributions made by the Reading Foundation.
- The nature of the School site and buildings also puts an emphasis on monitoring and upgrading building services and facilities. In the past three years, governors have increased monitoring activities designed to ensure that the School is safe, well maintained and complies with relevant regulations, particularly through improved reporting to the Property & Projects Committee.
- The listed status of much of the School's buildings creates additional complications, as it can make the obtaining of consents for repairs to the fabric of buildings more complicated and expensive.
- Like most organisations, the School is potentially vulnerable to cyber-attacks, and continually seeks to better its protection against such attacks in the future.

Financial Review

Most of the Academy's revenue income comes from the Department for Education in the form of recurrent grants. These grants and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities. The School continues to seek to maximise student numbers and carefully manage costs in the light of restricted funding growth.



The Academy also received a small annual devolved formula capital grant in 2024/25, which has been applied to purchasing IT equipment.

The consolidated budget for 2024/25, set in May 2024, showed a small surplus of just over £105,000, before accounting for depreciation and movements in the local government pension scheme. The final consolidated accounts for 2024/25 show a loss of £784,000. This loss includes significant projects required to maintain the estate, amounting to £1,264,000 which were funded partially from reserves (£1,048,000) and partially by the Reading Foundation (£216,000). The underlying, comparable surplus was therefore £264,000.

Reserves Policy

The Governors have determined that the School should set a balanced annual budget each year and maintain adequate reserves in accordance with this policy. General reserves of 5-10% of income (excluding Boarding) should be maintained to provide working capital and to form a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies or short-term changes in funding.

Additionally, reserves may be designated to support CIF bids, to finance a capital improvement or maintenance programme or for other specific projects as approved by the Governors.

Boarding should maintain a general reserve of approximately one term's worth of expenditure to protect against unexpected loss of revenue and other emergencies and may also designate reserves for other capital improvement or maintenance programmes.

The Governors review the reserve levels of the School annually, taking into account the expected income, committed expenditure and future plans of the School.

The School's current level of reserves (excluding fixed asset and pension reserve) is £2.4m, of which £1.2m is restricted. The School's free reserves (including the GAG reserve) are £1.8m, which is 16% of income, of which 0.9m has been designated as contingency and for specific projects. The remaining £0.9m is maintained to support the School's development plans in a sustainable and long-term capacity.

Investment Policy

The governors' investment powers are set down in the Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, which permit the investment of monies of the Charitable Company that are not immediately required for its purposes in such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit subject to any restrictions which may from time to time be imposed or required by law.

All investment decisions are made in accordance with the requirements of the academies financial handbook and the Charity Commission's guidance.





Reading

SCHOOL Est. 1125