



**TRUSTEES & GOVERNORS
ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS
2023/24**



Word from the Chair



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

MR BOB KENWRICK

Chair of Governors

The governors of Reading School have several key responsibilities, including defining the school's vision and direction, holding the Chief Executive and the Headmaster accountable for educational performance, overseeing the quality of education, and managing the organisation's finances.

They also play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting student welfare. The Annual Report for 2023-2024 outlines the appointment of governors, governance processes, risk management, committee meeting attendance, and performance monitoring, including achievements in that year.

The report aims to inform parents about the school's plans and progress. Evidence of this includes being awarded The Sunday Times South East Secondary School of the Year for Academic Excellence in 2023, School of Sanctuary status, and becoming a Regional Hub for character excellence.



This is the twelfth Annual Report to parents by the Governors since the School converted to academy status in 2011.

The School publishes these regular Annual Reports to parents each October, reporting on the previous School year.

The report includes some background information on the Academy Trust and the Governing Body.

It also reports on achievements and events in the 2023/24 School year and on the challenges the School faces in the years ahead.

How is the School run?



Status of the School and the Governing Body

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 1134 students on its roll as at 7th September 2024, 85 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. Mr Pilkington resigned as a parent governor on 31st October 2023. This meant that a parent governor vacancy was filled via an election. Mr Holmes was duly elected and took office from 1st December 2023.

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 2023/24 were Mr Tuggey and Mr Sellwood.

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 2023/24.



Appointments to the remaining places on the Governing Body/Trust are made by the Academy members. From the start of the 2023/24 school year there were six such governors. 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 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 Chief Executive (if required), a site visit and induction training from the Chair and Clerk 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 2023/24. A record of the training undertaken by all governors is kept by the Governance Professional. This shows that all non-staff governors took part in at least 4 training and development events in 2023/24.

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

The School also makes use of internal resources to train governors, and sessions on finance and curriculum principles took place in 2023/24.



The governing body as at 1st September 2024

E Fallon *
M N J Faulkner
D R Fisher
T Follen ~
N Holmes *
Dave Hudson ~
N Johnson
R J Kenwick
D Nnabuife *
A M Robson #
K Ross MBE
G Sellwood +
S Shahi *
T Tuggey +
Lesley Wakelin

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

More details of each Governor's background and areas of interest are available on the School's website. Note that Dr Shahi resigned as a parent governor on 12th September 2024, and a replacement governor was being sought as this report was being compiled.

How do the governors operate?

The 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. 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 school year which starts the following September. In 2023/24, the Governing Body met on 6 occasions (including the AGM).

Governor committees have also been established to consider detailed matters. In 2023/24, 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 the 2023/24.

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 2023/24, other than a single meeting of the complaints panel in November 2023.

An Admissions Committee is responsible for considering and recommending the school's Admissions Policies and related matters. This Committee met on two occasions in 2023/24.

A committee of governors (with the participation of an external advisor) undertakes performance reviews of the Chief Executive and Headmaster and monitors their performance and achievements against targets. This Committee met on three occasions in 2023/24.

Ad hoc groups of governors are also established as and when required to consider specific issues and make recommendations to the Governing Body.

In 2023/24, one such group has been considering sustainability, including climate change issues, the suitability of the School's site and buildings to meet its needs in the longer term, and 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 leadership team members. Committees have delegated powers to deal with certain matters (for example, the approval of policies relevant to their remit).

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

The Chair of Governors, the Chief Executive and Headmaster meet regularly to monitor decision implementation and to review matters affecting staff and students and other issues affecting the School.



A new system of governor engagement was implemented for 2023/24. This new system featured lead governors for key areas, like boarding, safeguarding, health & 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. Two such days were held in 2023/24 and proved highly successful. Governance days will be held annually from 2024/25 onwards

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

There was a major change in the leadership of Reading School in 2023/24.

From the start of the Lent Term in 2024, a new post of Chief Executive was created (and Mr Robson appointed to it), with responsibility for setting the overall vision and strategy of the organisation (subject to the approval of the Governing Body), as well as developing talent and culture and leading on social impact, partnerships and brand development.

A new Headmaster was appointed (Dr Chris Evans, formerly Deputy Headmaster), who has responsibility for the day to day operation of the School. Both the Chief Executive and Headmaster continue to operate in partnership with the School's Senior Leadership Team

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 Clerk to Governors, reporting to the Chair of Governors.

Mr Steve Vale has continued to fulfil the role of Clerk throughout 2023/24. (On 1st September 2024, the title of his role changed to Governance Professional).

The School has established two subsidiary trading companies:

(1) 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 Chief Executive, the Headmaster and the Chair of the Reading Foundation. It has no employees, and its future is due to be reviewed in 2024/25.

(2) 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 in the short term is on marketing the admissions tests. The Board of the company consists of a Governor (Mr Faulkner), the Chief Executive and a person independent of the School (Toel Koyithara, a barrister with a government background).

The company does not have any employees at present, with all services being provided and recharged by Reading School under the terms of a service agreement.

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 Chief Executive is a trustee of The Reading Foundation, and, the Governing Body's representatives on the Foundation's Council in 2023/24 were Mr Faulkner, Mrs Fallon and Mr Nnabuife.

The School also co-operates on a regular basis with the Old Redingensians Association. This comprises alumni of the School, and seeks to support the School in appropriate ways.

The School also works closely with the Reading School Parents Association, whose contributions in 2023/24 are gratefully acknowledged.



Risk Management

The governors have a robust attitude to risk management. The risk register defines and considers risk under the headings of Strategic and Reputational Risks and Operational Risks. The register was subject to continuous updating by governors through a rolling review process in 2023/24, and the same rigour will be underpinned by new risk management arrangements in 2024/25.

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 2023/24

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 2023/24 school year:

Governor	Possible	Actual	%
E Fallon	13	11	85%
M Faulkner	23	13	57%
D Fisher	11	8	73%
T Follen	15	15	100%
N Holmes	8	8	100%
D Hudson	14	11	79%
N Johnson	15	14	93%
B Kenwick	23	22	96%
D Nnabuife	14	13	93%
O Pilkington	3	0	0%
A Robson	19	17	89%
K Ross	14	13	93%
G Sellwood	14	13	93%
S Shahi	14	9	64%
T Tuggey	14	14	100%
L Wakelin	14	10	71%

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. The Operational Plan for 2023/24 was approved by the Governing Body on 10th July 2023, and a further Operational Plan for 2024/25 was approved on 1st July 2024.



The School last updated its Master Plan in 2018, and this sets out key priorities for the development of facilities at the School, such as a new Sports Hall. The updating of the Master Plan is currently under consideration (September 2024) and includes a Sixth Form centre.

The strategic and operational plans focus on 4 key strategic objectives of:

- Academic excellence
- Integrity and the building of character and a sense of community
- Leadership, fostering a culture of leadership and accountability across pupils and staff
- Community, with the building of effective local, national and global partnerships and a focus on social mobility and the building of cultural capital

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 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 2023/24, 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, the Governing Body and (for the property budgets) to the Property and Projects Committees;
- 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, measures to support social mobility, 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 2023/24

Set out below are details of:

- a) The School's examination results performance in 2023 and 2024;
- b) Details of progress and achievements during 2023/24, under the Governing Body Committee primarily responsible for their achievement
- c) Key Performance Indicators

2023 Examination Results



In 2023, 43.1% of all GCSE entries were awarded the highest '9' grade



92% of students studied for 10 or more different qualifications, with 26 students studying for 12 different qualifications



Over 85% of English Literature students gained grades 9-7



Mathematicians continued to excel with 83.9% of students achieving the top grades 9-8



It was particularly pleasing to see students succeeding in Electronics, following its reintroduction 3 years previously, with 68% of students achieving a grade 9 or 8.



Of 171 students sitting A-level exams, 90% achieved A*-B grades overall.



34% of A-level entries achieved grade A*



38 % of A-level entries achieving grade A



76% of students achieving A*- A in Computer Science



78% achieving A*- A in Economics



47% of all Mathematics candidates being awarded A* grades

2024 Examination Results



85% of the 1488 GCSE entries were awarded grades of 7-9



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



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

Progress & Achievements 23/24

OFSTED inspection – November 2023

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.

The report of the main School inspection can be found by [clicking here](#).

The report of the Boarding inspection can be found by [clicking here](#).

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 2024](#). This survey identifies the 2,000 highest-achieving schools in the UK, ranked by their recent examination results.

Admissions

A total of 22 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted in September 2023. This was nearly 15% of all admissions, and shows the success of admissions policies designed to maximise the opportunities for such students, without compromising academic standards.

The admissions policies agreed for the 2023 entrance examinations (for admission to the School in 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. The School worked in partnership with Go Perform to administer these sporting aptitude tests as part of the September 2023 entrance examination process.

As a result of these changes, 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 will be largely unchanged from those relating to September 2024.

The School continues to manage its admissions process directly, including setting its own entrance examination.



Curriculum & Standards

Major achievements this year included:

- A thorough and detailed analysis of the 2023 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.
- 23 students entering Oxford or Cambridge University in September 2023 and 18 in September 2024, and a total 22 starting courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine. There was also a rise in successful applications for Computing, Economics, Engineering, Law and Philosophy related courses in 2024, and record numbers of students gained places for degree apprenticeships and direct employment this year.
- Continuing work on developing the School's curriculum offer and timetable, with approval of a revised Curriculum Policy and the development of The Reading Way curriculum, which was designed to provide a stable curriculum and timetable structure up to at least the end of the 2023/24 school year.
- The preservation of the breadth of the School's curriculum, through its 2-year Key Stage 3, which was endorsed by OFSTED's inspection, its broad offer in Key Stages 4 and 5, and its approach to languages, so that a very high proportion of students attain the EBacc.
- Approval of the School's 2023/24 Pupil Premium Strategy, in support of the School's key priority of supporting more students from disadvantaged backgrounds and promoting social mobility.
- Continued focus on quality assurance and self-assessment.
- Approval of a Music Development Plan.
- The continued development of water-based sports following the reopening of the School's boat house.
- Continuing efforts to reinvigorate the School's partnerships at local, national and international level.



External Relations and Pastoral Care

In the course of 2023/24, the Committee:

- Continued to review progress on issues relating to the School's social impact and contribution to social mobility at every meeting. This included a full review of the extent and development of the successful Future Stories outreach programme and work with local primary schools.
- Approved the pastoral elements of the School's 2023/24 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.
- Oversaw an external review of the School's safeguarding provision and practice.
- Monitored behaviour, attitudes and attendance amongst students, with a particular focus on restoring attendance to pre-Covid levels.
- Undertook a skills audit of the Governing Body and took actions to address the skills deficiencies it revealed.
- Continued to work on Governor Training, including keeping a record of all training undertaken.
- 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 safeguarding, student welfare, discipline, complaints etc.
- Continued to monitor the School's boarding provision, through self-assessment and measurement against national standards for boarding.
- Approved measures to support international partnerships with schools, including a school in Ukraine.



Finance

Achievements in 2023/24 included:

- Successful completion of the 2022/23 audited accounts, with an unqualified auditors' opinion.
- Careful monitoring of 2023/24 income and expenditure across all areas, in a tight financial environment, resulting in a small end-of-year surplus.
- Commissioning internal audit reports on the management of risk and cyber security, and taking action in response.
- Continuing to update the School's Risk Register, through a rolling review programme, and commissioning a review of the way the register is presented and managed, with changes to be effected in the autumn of 2024.
- Setting a balanced consolidated budget for 2024/25 (including the required rate of return on Boarding), notwithstanding a challenging financial environment.
- Reviewing tendering, financial procedure and financial delegations to improve the letting and management of contracts.
- Undertaking benchmarking of key financial indicators against other schools
- Overseeing, from the School's perspective, the joint fundraising initiative with the Reading Foundation, and monitoring the work of the Society Office.
- Ensuring the School's full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).



Property & Projects

Key developments in 2023/24:

- 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, working with the developer on a planning application which will be submitted in the autumn of 2024.
- The restoration of the School's Boat House to being fully operational from September 2023.
- A successful bid to the Condition Improvement Fund for grant aid towards fire prevention works to be completed in 2024/25.
- 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.
- Overseeing a drive to increase income to the School from external lettings.
- Reviewing and updating of Health and Safety and related policies.
- Commissioning an updating of the School's current Master Plan, undertaken during the summer of 2024.

The Committee has also continued to use a systematic reporting system which has greatly improved its ability to monitor the condition of School buildings and their compliance with statutory regulations. This supports a more systematic and planned approach to maintenance in the future.



Enrichment, sporting and cultural activities

The school continues to enhance its "learn, lead, serve" philosophy through a broad programme of enrichment visits, which includes the well-received Belonging Week. We continue to involve an increasing number of both teaching and associate staff in sharing these valuable learning experiences.

Over the last academic year (September 2023 to August 2024), 109 trips or visits were conducted, 18 of which took place outside of the UK. A total of 28 visits included a residential component. An impressive 893 students participated in at least one of these trips or visits during the 2023/2024 academic year, highlighting strong student engagement. Additionally, 72 staff members led or supported these trips, showcasing a high level of staff involvement. A special focus was placed on ensuring that disadvantaged students were supported and able to participate fully in these enriching experiences.

Belonging Week in 2024 engaged students from Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 in a variety of activities designed to foster community and teamwork. Year 7 students celebrated the week with the now annual Belonging Festival, culminating in an overnight stay in a tented village on the school's front field. The week ended with a celebration of house activities, providing a memorable experience for students.



Year 8 and Year 9 students participated in trips to outdoor centres across the UK, with one Year 9 group visiting Copenhagen for an international perspective. Year 10 was divided into themed groups—Science, Football, Cricket, Music, and Water Sports - each offering a specialised programme. The Science group engaged 225 students from four schools in a "Science and Me" carousel, which combined science activities with rugby and cooking. The Football group completed their FA Level 1 training, organised three community football tournaments, and delivered sessions to 360 students across three schools.

The Cricket group hosted three community tournaments and held sessions in three schools for 240 students. The Music group introduced instruments to Coley St Mary's, providing music coaching to 180 students over two days. Finally, the Water Sports team ran daily sessions with students from Whitley Park and St Mary's, involving 135 students in water-based activities.

The school also continues to offer a diverse range of extracurricular activities through its extensive club programme. Over 30 clubs operate during the school week, catering to various interests and helping students broaden their skills beyond the standard curriculum. Additionally, the school's elective programme enhances student learning by offering lessons within the school timetable, but are outside of the regular curriculum. A total of 57 elective lessons were provided each week throughout the academic year, giving students even more opportunities to explore and develop new areas of interest and learning.



PE & Sport

Rugby

45+ fixtures, including Reading Schools league and County Cup/Festivals- 180 players representing Reading School. Four students representing Berkshire.

Football

75+ football fixtures, Reading Schools league, County Cups, National Cups- 230 students representing Reading School. Two students representing Berkshire.

Cricket

55+ fixtures, Reading Schools league, County Cups, National Cups, hosting annual MCC match (which Reading School won). 20+ students representing Berkshire/Hampshire.

Athletics

Three teams – Year7, Year 8, Year 9/10 (eight matches). Numerous students selected for Berkshire team; three students selected for GB representation Sports Day 2024 -whole school competing at Palmer Park.

Minor Sports

- Basketball- seven fixtures with 30 students representing
- Badminton- two competitions, James S (Year 12) selected for England National Squad
- Table Tennis- four competitions, National Finalists (12 students)
- Cross Country- four matches (64 students representing)
- Lacrosse- only state school offering boys lacrosse



- Ultimate Frisbee - 30 students training and team competed in National Tournament
- Hockey - two competitions entered, Junior and Senior Team
- Swimming team debuts in September
- Power lifting – Rajan D (Year 13 leaver) U18 Regional Record Holder (started strength and conditioning through PE curriculum and trained in Huggins Suite)
- Judo - George R (Year 13) selected for England National squad

Academic PE Results

- A-Level PE- 100% A*-A
- GCSE PE- 100% 7+
- Classes and students choosing subject continues to grow.

House Competitions

- Rugby
- Football
- Cricket
- Table tennis
- Basketball
- Ghost
- Sports day (Athletics)
- Softball
- Rubix Cubing

Trips

- Basketball - London Lions Olympic Park, 70 students from all years watching BBL match
- 1stXI Football - Squad went to watch Carabao Cup match Chelsea U21's
- Academic PE - GCSE and A-level PE students to Sports Science Labs at Bath University
- Belonging Week - Year 10 went to St George's Park for coaching experience
- Football Tour - Year 7 and 8 teams went to four-day tournament at Shrewsbury School
- Rugby Tour - Senior pre-season four-day training camp in Swansea
- Cricket tour to Cape Town February 2025

Conclusions

The School's academic success in 2023/24, its emphasis on character development, its growing social impact and the 2023 OFSTED reports show that it continues to be one of the highest performing state schools in the country. It is continuing with its aim to continue to develop it to be a 'World Class School', which nurtures integrity and academic excellence through the development of leadership potential, and which measures up to international benchmarks. It prides itself on its commitment to sustaining a high academic tradition and a willingness to embrace change in the interests of its students (as evidenced by the new executive leadership arrangements implemented in 2024).



In its Strategic and Operational Plans, and in identifying the other challenges it faces, it recognises that sustained success depends on continuous improvement, effective leadership, strong partnerships and effective learning environments.

The School regularly attracts over 1,000 applications for day places at the School at Year 7 and a further 60-70 applications for boarding places, also at Year 7. For 2025 entry, it has received over 1,070 direct Year 7 applications for day and boarding. The range of its feeder schools is diverse geographically. Its student population is ethnically and socially diverse with 81% of students coming from ethnic minorities (as at September 2024). Most Year 13 leavers gain admission to leading Universities.

C. Key Performance Indicators

- Number of permanent exclusions: 0
- Number of suspensions (i.e. fixed term exclusions): 10
- Number of racist incidents: 15
- Number of incidents of bullying: 28
- Overall school attendance (Years 7 to 11): 92.3% (including study leave absence in Year 11);
- Attendance for Years 7 to 10: 96%
- Pupil Lateness: 1.2%

Plans for future periods

The Operational Plan for 2024/25 was approved by the Governing Body on 1st July 2024, and is too detailed to set out in full here. The Plan contains the following overview of the School's priorities for 2024/25:

Purpose

Positive Social Impact is the purpose of all true education. Reading School should measure itself ambitiously according to (i) our success at engaging those who most benefit from the opportunity we provide and (ii) the onward transmission of a commitment towards the common good. Another way of putting this is to ask, "Do we reach those who need us most, and do we nurture in them the attitudes, talents, skills and knowledge that leads to lives of character, care and service?"

People

Education matters, because people matter. Reading School cannot hope to achieve its purpose without supporting its people. The school should measure its success at supporting staff and students according to (i) how well-prepared people are for the tasks that they face, now and in the future, and (ii) the strength of the relationships between people. In the year ahead, supporting the people of Reading School must include developing extensive networks beyond the school, utilising the 900th anniversary to leverage wisdom and resources for the future and removing silos that have divided teams.

Systems

Consistent application of diverse systems, which are driven by specialised teams is essential for the delivery of all other goals. There is room for improvement in many of the systems that keep Reading School functioning, and the school should measure itself over the year ahead according to (i) the consistency and replicability of our best processes; (ii) the co-ordination and communication of these to ensure clarity for all stakeholders and (iii) the improvement of our least good systems.

Standards

The drive for excellence is most clearly demonstrated in the academic outcomes of our students. These are a necessary, but ultimately insufficient, measure of the education provided by the school. More broadly, Reading School should also measure excellence by the standards of (i) uniform & identity, (ii) attendance & punctuality, (iii) stewardship of resources and financial management. Striving for the highest possible standards must occur equally across every facet of the life of Reading School:

The School's long term strategy covers the period 2020-25. This is available on the School's website, at [download.asp \(reading-school.co.uk\)](https://www.reading-school.co.uk/download.asp).

The Governing Body continues to make 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 (last updated in 2018) was under review in the summer of 2024, and will identify 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 Manager 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:

- 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.
- Continuing to develop the skills and effectiveness of governors, so that the ethos of Excellence and Leadership is strengthened in the School.
- 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

As a member of the Institute of Development Professional in Education, Reading School is committed to following best practices in all its development and fundraising activities. The Society Manager is a member of the South West Regional Area sharing best practices with independent and state schools in the local area. All fundraising activities and approaches to constituents for funds meet the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission, GDPR and PECR legislation. We have received no complaints about our fundraising in the past year.

The Alumni, Careers & Society Office plays a vital role in managing these connections and driving greater engagement within the wider school community.



The Society Office's strategy is focused on both celebrating this historic milestone and meeting the school's ongoing needs. Key priorities include widening access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, enhancing wellbeing support for staff and students, expanding co-curricular opportunities beyond the classroom, and strengthening careers and mentoring advice for all students. Importantly, we remain committed to improving the school's current facilities as well as improving our sports, expressive arts and sixth form spaces.

The Society Office manages the 'Charitable Annual Trust Fund – Building for the Future,' our key fundraising initiative, providing a vital opportunity for parents, carers, Old Redingensians, staff members, governors, and friends of the school to support Reading School. Contributions to this fund enable us to sustain and enhance our essential co-curricular, sports, Floreat and elective programmes, which are crucial for student development and well-being. In addition, the Society Office works to successfully secure corporate sponsorships for events such as the Careers Convention, Sports Awards and the Grand Reunions, building partnerships with local businesses that share the same ethos and values of Reading School.

The joint partnership with Johnson Matthey & Co has seen the third year of the 'Science & Me and Future Stories' project deliver Science workshops to over five local primary schools. In 2024, through the Sheila Coates Foundation a grant was received to support a Special Educational Needs (SEN) project focused on noise sensitivity, benefitting students with specific needs by Sophy Rogers (Head of Student Support and Teacher of Classics). Additionally, the School Games Organiser programme, funded the delivery of sports initiatives to local partner primary schools.



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. The Reading Foundation's ongoing commitment towards character development, enrichment opportunities and prizes underpin our focus on providing a well-rounded education. These funds support the celebration of student achievement, all of which are key to fostering leadership, creativity, and resilience in our pupils. Additionally, the Future Stories initiative, supported by the Foundation, offers a platform to celebrate individual student success stories and 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 third 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 and run refreshment stands to purchase at the Year 7 Welcome Picnic, Sports and Music Awards and a Year 7 & 8 Disco. As well as raising funds through the RSPA membership and weekly lottery. They also run and support the nearly new Uniform shop and sale of hoodies, parental corporate matching and ongoing online fundraising platforms such as Giving Machine and Easy Fundraising.

The Community Relations Office - Lettings

Dal Singh (Community Relations Manager) has led on the school in increasing its lettings capacity to generate income through the academic year, holidays and weekends by letting the school's facilities. Thus, Reading School now hosts computer and activity workshops for children, church groups for various communities and various sports for our local community and organises catered events including weddings and wedding receptions, conferences, team meetings, private parties, charity events and corporate events. This year Reading School also hosted a Sporting and Cultural trip from the USA over the summer holidays in one of our Boarding Houses as a pilot with the potential to increase in size next academic year.



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. The Sustainability Working Group referred to above has been created to address this need in a systematic way.
- 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. This issue is another that is being addressed by the Sustainability Working Group.

- 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 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 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 has sought to ensure that absolute revenue funding levels remain constant, with funding cuts being offset by increases in pupil numbers, following decisions a few years ago to increase entry numbers at Year 7 and in the sixth form.



The Academy also received a small annual devolved formula capital grant in 2023/24, which has been applied to purchasing IT equipment.

The consolidated budget for 2023/24, set in July 2023, showed a small surplus of just over £133,000, before accounting adjustments. The final consolidated accounts for 2023/24 are likely to show a small improvement on this projected out-turn.

For accounting purposes the Boarding department is fully integrated within the Academy Financial Statements, whereas at operational level Boarding is run entirely separately from the School. Boarding numbers in 2023/24 have remained at virtually the maximum capacity.

As at 31 August 2023 the net book value of fixed assets was £12,866,240. The figure for 31st August 2024 will be available in the final accounts for 2023/24 when they are published in December 2024.

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.

At the date of the 2023 balance sheet, the Charitable Company had free reserves of £1,161,464. The figure for 2024 will be available in the final accounts for 2023/24 when they are published in December 2024.

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. The Charitable Company's current policy (as set out in the School's Financial Procedures Manual) states:

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

- The Governing Body may invest to further The Trust's charitable aims, but must ensure that investment risk is properly managed.
- When considering making an investment, the Governing Body must:
 1. Act within their powers to invest as set out in their articles of association.
 2. Have an investment policy to manage, control and track their financial exposure, and ensure value for money particularly if using unfamiliar investment techniques.
 3. Exercise care and skill in all investment decisions, taking advice as appropriate from a professional adviser.
 4. Ensure that security takes precedence over revenue maximisation.
 5. Ensure that all investment decisions are in the best interests of The Trust and command broad public support.
 6. Review The Trust's investments and investment as part of the 'Financial Procedures Manual' review.