



Reading
SCHOOL Est. 1125



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

16th January 2026

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Introduction

Dear parents, carers, students, and staff,

The Annual School Magazine has been shared with all students this week, and I hope that most of you reading this have already had a chance to peruse it. Apologies to any tutor groups that are yet to receive their copy. I must thank Piatrice Hutchinson, our Redingensians Office coordinator, for her outstanding work on this publication, which so beautifully showcases the past 12 months in our school. Thank you, Ms Hutchinson!

This week, students have travelled to Spain, taken part in the Chemistry and Ethics Cup competitions, visited the Tate Modern art gallery, and played in four football fixtures. We've also had to unfortunately speak to students about throwing stones, theft, swearing, and bringing a vape into school. We are still looking for the student who made fourteen prank 999 calls today and the pair who pushed in front of an elderly lady at the bus stop yesterday. With so many exciting opportunities to celebrate, I wonder if we could also take a moment to reflect on the challenges of adolescent decision-making. The two go hand in hand, don't they? Greater agency provides freedom for adventure – but also the opportunity to make mistakes.

Indeed, in Chapel this week, we reflected on a tricky disagreement between two of our very loveliest junior students. In December, two good friends had a significant disagreement about Kashmir, which spilled from a geo-political conversation into something that became (accidentally) quite hurtful. This can easily happen when we don't understand each other, fail to see the value in another's perspective, or feel the need to defend our own position or identity.

One of our goals must be that every student feels proud of their heritage, secure in their identity, and grateful for the gifts they have been given. When we have this security, assurance, and awareness, we are able to move on to the second element of being human – loving others. If students from the 70+ ethnic backgrounds that make up our school all graduate able to couple academic excellence with self-confidence and a deep appreciation of the perspectives, cultures, and heritages of those around them, then our diversity becomes a strength, and our differences a source of deep learning.

I suspect that the need to know ourselves more fully and to celebrate the gifts that others have been given is not only an imperative for teenagers – but a mission for all of us. Whatever steps you take in the week or year ahead, I hope you find yourself enjoying the joy of others.

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All Years

What I wish my parents knew: A guide for parents on managing children's digital lives

Students in Year 7 have recently been educated on online safety during their PSHE classes and The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, has also published a new guide for parents and carers.

The guide recognises the increasing challenge families face in balancing children's safety online with access to digital spaces that are now central to learning, socialising and play. It focuses on managing children's everyday online habits, rather than a single issue, reflecting the fast-changing digital world young people navigate.

Importantly, the guidance has been shaped directly by children and young people in England, including those with SEND. *Many young people shared that, with hindsight, they would want stronger boundaries around smartphone use and value adults being firm, informed and protective when it comes to online safety.*

We would encourage parents and carers of children of all Year groups to spend some time familiarising themselves with the guide which can be [accessed by clicking here](#).

Admissions Consultation – your voice helps shape fairness

In October 2025, Reading School was awarded the Sutton Trust Gold Award for Fair Admissions, recognising the significant steps we have taken to ensure fair access regardless of socio-economic background.

While we are proud of this progress, we know there are still bright and curious boys in local primary schools who may not yet be aware of Reading School or may hold outdated perceptions. One of our aims is to better serve our local community by reflecting the town's diversity, widening access for disadvantaged pupils, and enabling those who will benefit most to access the exceptional education we offer.

We are therefore proposing some admissions changes (full details and rationale for which can be found here [Reading School - Admissions Consultation](#)):

- Addition of Oversubscription Category 7: Prioritise children enrolled at a state-funded Primary School in Designated Postcode Areas;
- Moving the main entrance test date from September to the July before the summer holidays;
- Addition of Oversubscription Category 5: Prioritise Eligible Twins/Multiple Births if one registrant is ranked in the top 150;
- Addition of Oversubscription Category 6: Prioritise Children of School Staff;
- Other minor proposed changes, mainly for clarity.

As these changes will shape the cohort of students joining in September 2027, we would value your views. Completing the consultation ensures that the voices of those closest to the school community are heard, supports shared understanding of policy direction, and helps shape admissions arrangements with fairness and transparency in mind. Please [complete this short form](#) before **28th January 2026**.

School Community News

Five minutes with Miss Povey, Exams Officer



Often unseen, but absolutely essential, the work of an Exams Officer underpins every exam our students sit and every result they receive. We turned the spotlight this week on Miss Povey, Reading School's Exams Officer, to explore what a day in her role really looks like. From meticulous long-term planning to managing countless details under pressure, Miss Povey ensures that every examination is conducted fairly, securely and smoothly. Her work, alongside a team of invigilators and teachers, is fundamental to the integrity of the exam process and to the confidence our students can have when they take their seats in the exam room.

We caught up with Miss Povey this week to find out more about the complexity, responsibility and rewards of her role.

Q: If we followed you from the moment you arrive at school on a 'normal' exam-day, what would we see you doing first?

The first thing I do is look at the exam schedule for the day. I have trays set-up for each exam room containing all the information the invigilators would need, as well as spare equipment for the students. So, all my trays will be set-up in my exams office where I'll meet the invigilators in the morning. I make sure each invigilator gets the right tray, and that they know which room they'll be in. We also have a quick run through of any room-specific information they need to be aware of. Then, I'll go and get the exam papers. Myself and an invigilator will go through each set of papers against the timetable of the day, making sure we've got all the correct papers for this session and then take them to the correct room where a final check will be done before opening them.

I'll check in with the invigilators to ensure each room has the required set-up and we'll then start laying exam papers on desks. Once the papers are laid out, the senior teacher, who is responsible for registering the students, will ensure they are lined up in the correct order to be escorted in. There's a lot to do even before the exams start! On a busy exam day, we can have up to 250 students taking an exam across multiple rooms at the same time.

Q: People may think exams are just about invigilators and exam papers - what's one part of your job that might surprise parents, students or staff?

It might be surprising that I'll be working on one exam series for around 10 months of the year. I'll start making the entries for the summer exams in January and will continue to work on this season until the post results have finished in October. The remaining 2 months are reserved for planning and running the Year 11 and Year 13 internal exams, while liaising with teachers about any entry changes for summer. Then it all starts again!

Q: What's at stake if something goes wrong and how do you manage that level of responsibility?

So as an extreme example, if it all went terribly wrong, which it won't, the school would no longer be an approved exam centre! Other things that could go wrong would be if a student's paper is disqualified as a result of them breaking the exam rules. So, there are potentially high stakes. That's why mocks are important so that the chances of a smooth-running and error-free exam season are increased, with the integrity of the exams being upheld. I find lots of check lists help me manage this responsibility...I've

got a massive planner on my wall with deadlines marked down for the year. I have a whole year plan, which I break down into a monthly, weekly and daily to-do list. I'm constantly checking deadlines!

Q: Who do you end up working closely with in your role?

I work very closely with my invigilator team. I've already started emailing them now to be ready for the summer and to see who's available and who's coming back. We'll have a meeting at school for in-person training where we go through school specific exam information and chat through any new exam rules, as well as anything we can improve on from last year, or any top tips that make it easier for new invigilators. I will also work closely with Mrs Rogers, the Head of Student Support, who brilliantly manages all of the access arrangements with the Student Support team.

Q: What's one thing you would want students to know ahead of their exams?



I'm hoping we cover it all in the exam assemblies we hold for students in Year 11 and Year 13 prior to the exams! I guess I would want all students to know that it's all going to be okay. The Exams are very well thought out and planned for, with staff across the school taking steps to ensure they run smoothly. If they do encounter any problems, they can come to the Exams Team and we'll do everything we can to help them. Nine times out of ten, if they have a problem, we'll be able to fix it. It's preferable if you come to me with a bit of notice so that we have time to plan and sort it out, but even if it's an unexpected issue that pops up on the day of the exam- please do let us know, we are here to help you.

Q: What's the most rewarding part of your role?

I'm very aware of all the hard work our students have done up to this point and all the work the teachers have put in, the exams represent the finish line for them, and I'm just here helping them to cross it. So, it's nice to be there when they do, and to make it all run as smoothly and calmly as possible.

Q: Sum up your role in one sentence.

The Exams Officer role can be busy and full-on, but I'm very lucky that I have tremendous support from staff across the school, as well as a wonderful team of invigilators, so even at its busiest times it's still enjoyable and very rewarding.

Ethics Cup 2026



Reading School's Ethics Team achieved an impressive victory at the Regional Ethics Finals held on Thursday 15th January at Dean Close School in Cheltenham.

Led by Indiana Storm (Year 13) and supported by Year 12 students Jaden L, Remi S, George G and Tejas P, the team delivered strong performances throughout the day. The judging panel included members of the University of the West of England Philosophy Department, currently ranked second in the UK by the Guardian.

In the final knockout round, the team stood out for its organisation, teamwork, and empathetic engagement with opposing teams, securing overall success. The squad was also supported by four reserves: Mikhail C, Sumi S, Nicholas A and Jamin H, who, while not competing, followed the debates closely and gained valuable experience. The team is hugely grateful to Geraldine Ng, director of Philosophy Lab, for coaching them each week. The team now looks ahead to the National Final at the University of St Andrews later this year.

Reading School Events

Start the New Year with a Coffee & Chat with the Headmaster



Open Coffee & Chat with the Headmaster
Tuesday 27th January 2025
15:45 - 16:45
Refectory, Reading School

We warmly invite all Reading School parents and carers to join the second of our informal 'Open Coffee & Chat' sessions on Tuesday 27 January 2026, 3:45pm – 4:45pm in the Refectory.

This is a valuable opportunity to meet with the Headmaster and members of the Senior Leadership Team, be informed of the latest school updates, meet with other parents from your son's year group, and share your feedback or suggestions to help us continue improving the school experience for your sons.

We already have over 20 parents signed up for the session, and we would love to welcome more of you. Each family may bring up to two adults, and students or siblings are also welcome.

Please register in advance using the link here: [Open Coffee & Chat with the Headmaster \(Lent Term 2025/2026\) | Events | Reading School Alumni Society](#)

Start 2026 by connecting with the Headmaster, enjoying a coffee, and having your say – we very much look forward to seeing you there.

RSPA

RSPA Fireworks Finale Stall Update



What a fantastic way to finish the 900th Year and 2025 at Reading School on Thursday 18th December.

At the School's dazzling fireworks event, the RSPA team raised a fabulous £698 with sales of samosas, mulled wine and hot chocolate.

Not to be outdone by the spectacular display of fireworks on the school grounds, our Chair Kerry Kingston also produced a display of eye-catching 900th celebration cup-cakes for sale on behalf of our fundraiser.

Funds raised have gone towards improving the School's football goals, which needed replacing after ten years of use. Supporting this

request in December means that Reading School are ready for the start of the January football season, and they already have a huge number of fixtures planned.

Thank you everyone for taking part and helping the RSPA team and the school.

Teachers' Wishlist 2025 Update



Thank you again to every family that supported the 2025 Teachers' Wishlist – and we're delighted to announce that it was our best year ever, raising at least **£5,317** to date in gifts and donations.

Lamps, thermometers, microscopes, books, construction tubes, costumes, and a variety of equipment and fun items have now made their way to the various departments within school, accompanied by all your messages of support and encouragement.

A special mention also to Piatrice Hutchinson for her hard work co-ordinating all the Teachers' requests on behalf of the RSPA. It's a lot of work all squeezed into just four weeks - but it's been an amazing experience with a phenomenal total raised.

Thank you again from the RSPA team!



Year 7 Disco – tickets are selling fast!



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

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

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

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

Event Details

Date: Friday 23 January 2026

Time: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Location: Reading School (Refectory Hall)

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

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

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

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

Pre-Loved Uniform Shop Opening

The Uniform Shop will be opening on **Friday 16th January** from 3.30pm – 4.30pm and on **Saturday 17th January** from 10.30am – 12.30pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

We would also love donations of any Macron kit, House and Sixth Form ties. Donations can be handed in at the Uniform Shop or given in to Student Services (located next to Reception).

Thank you for your continued support.

Highlights: Lent Term Week 2

To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow, be part of, and stay connected with the Reading School community.



Spanish Exchange to Albacete

Reading School students have been really enjoying their time in Albacete, Spain this week. They witnessed the historic win of Albacete Bolompie football team over Real Madrid. A couple of them were there to experience this amazing victory first-hand with their exchange partners at the stadium!



Chinchilla, a lovely, quaint place filled with history and interesting landmarks was also visited where students also got to share a meal of tapas and enjoy the sunshine.



All students are making a lot of effort to communicate in Spanish as much as possible. To quote one:
" I have never spoken this much Spanish in my life!"



Feedback is important to us and if you have any positive news, comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk