



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026

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# Introduction

Dear Students, Parents, Carers and Colleagues,

We often celebrate our students in these pages. Indeed, doing so is one of the purposes of our weekly bulletin. Today, however, I would like to celebrate the accomplishments of one of our parents.

Mrs Adisa, who is the mother of one of our Sixth Form students, was recognised in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List and was presented last week with an MBE for services to diversity and the financial services sector. Mrs Adisa is Head of Digital X Controls and Transformation at NatWest, and we are thrilled by the recognition she has received for her pioneering work in building masterclass programmes and nurturing projects that have supported improvements in diversity in a sector where this has not, historically, been a strength.

Today, then, it feels an honour for us to salute Mrs Adisa. She has reflected on the fact that building a career in financial services in the UK after arriving as an immigrant required exceptional resilience. We salute the way in which she has converted her own experiences into a determination to champion the cause of underrepresented groups, even when this will sometimes have felt like an impossible task. For her character, as much as for her success, we give thanks.

Congratulations, Mrs Adisa!

To our students, perhaps I may add one further note. To my shame, I confess that I only really understood that my mother was a human being in her own right when I was about 17. Until that point, I had only really seen my mother as 'my mum'. Many of us see one another only as bit-part characters in our own story, but growing up is about understanding ourselves as small players in the stories of others. I hope, then, students, that you arrive at this epiphany sooner than I did, and that as we celebrate Mrs Adisa's success, you might realise that your own parents are not just 'your parents', but individuals with their own ambitions, struggles and stories. Perhaps the real mark of growing up is learning to see those closest to us not just through the lens of our own lives, but as remarkable people in their own right.

I wish you all a good weekend and look forward to seeing you back on Tuesday, after staff have had an important day of training on Monday.

**Chris Evans**  
**Headmaster**

# Key information

## All Years

### INSET Day – Monday 26 January

Students have been advised and are expected to find out about the world of work during Inset Day. All information that has previously been shared is on the Student Teams Channel and Careers Channel. Unifrog should be used to document a very brief record, under 'Activities'.

### Hemisphere – racial literacy training

Students will also receive their annual online racial literacy training for PSHE homework. INSET day is a perfect opportunity to complete this. The login guidance is available on Teams.

### Safeguarding behaviour and bullying survey

We would value as much feedback as possible from all students so that we can continue to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all – please click the following link to share your views [Reading School Safeguarding Behaviour & Bullying Student Survey January 2026 – Fill out form](#)

### Resilience Workshop for Parents

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is hosting a free workshop designed to help parents:

- Understand what resilience is and why it is important for children and young people
- Learn about the key factors that help children develop resilience
- Explore practical ways to support and strengthen resilience at home
- Understand when and how to seek further support if your child is struggling

**Date:** [Monday 9 February, 4:30pm – 5:30pm](#) & [Wednesday 11 February, 9:30am – 10:30am](#)

**Format:** Online/Teams

### Online Safety Session for Parents and Carers

Do you want to find out more about the latest online trends and emerging threats that have an impact on children and young people? If so, join a free online safety information session for parents and carers on Wednesday 28 January, 9:30am – 10:15am.

The session will also focus on developing an understanding of online gaming, associated risks and the steps parents and carers can take in order to support their children. No registration is necessary and the session will be recorded and subsequently shared.

[Please use this link to access the session scheduled for Wednesday 28 January, 9:30am – 10:15am](#)

## Years 11 and 12 only

### Finland Canoe Trip 11 to 17 July 2026

We are excited to provide you with details of an exciting opportunity that we have been planning with our partners in Finland at the end of the summer term.

We have been working with Adventure Apes for a number of years, and our students have had the most incredible adventures and learning experiences in Finland. Their approach to outdoor learning,

adventure and leadership is very much aligned with our school's vision and this expedition is a chance for our students to collaborate and contribute to a team that will experience the challenge of a canoeing expedition in pristine wilderness on the edge of the Arctic Circle.

The programme takes place from the **11 to 17 July 2026** for seven days.

Using small shelters and wild camping, students will be taking the lead from the beginning, preparing and cooking all meals and demonstrating their ability to enable and sustain a climate of collaboration and a culture of contribution.

It is important that students recognise the nature of this challenge and are open to working with any and all students. We have intentionally made this experience available to those in both Years 11 and 12, as this trip is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the leadership and character that the Sixth Form Character Education programme values.

All students that are keen to take part will complete a short leadership-themed task in groups and receive feedback on their contributions.

The indicative cost of the trip at this stage is £1750.00. However, the final costs will be calculated once the school has confirmed the number of participants and the bookings have been confirmed by our travel intermediary.

Please complete the expression of interest form below by **Monday 26 January 2026**. Trip deposit payments for **£500** will be required by **Monday 2 February** to reserve your child's place on the trip. In the event of oversubscription, a randomised ballot will take place.

[Finland Canoe Trip 11 to 17 July 2026](#)

# School Community News

## Reading School Book Festival 2025

The Learning Resource Centre Team are delighted to announce the following exciting lineup of authors for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Book Festival. The author talks will be held at Reading School during the school day, as detailed below.

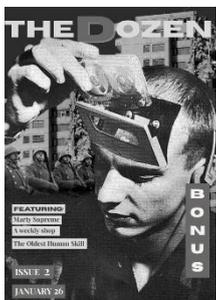
- Professor Nicolas Tredell will deliver an online sixth form lecture on **Tuesday 3 March** (organised by Mr Baldock)
- Crime and mystery author, [Sue Wallman](#) will be speaking to all Year 8s on **Monday 9 March**. In addition to this, she will also host a small creative writing workshop during Junior Lunch for budding Year 8 writers. Please use this [link](#) to book a place.
- Bestselling author, [M.G. Leonard](#), will be speaking to all Year 7s on **Tuesday 10 March**. She will be focusing on her incredibly popular Time Keys series.
- Dystopian fiction author, [Sarah Govett](#), will be speaking to all Year 10s about her career and her writing on **Wednesday 11 of March**. We are also running an informal discussion session for keen Year 10 students who prefer a less formal setting to speak with Sarah. There are still a few places available, please use this [link](#) to book.
- Polar explorer [Alex Hibbert](#), will be speaking to all Year 8s and all Year 9s on **Thursday 12 March**.

There will be a book sale and book signing after each in-person event (cash only). We are also offering convenient pre-order and online payment of books using the MCAS parent portal. For more details about how you can pre-order and pay for books in advance, please see the following year group letters:

- [Year 7 – M.G. Leonard](#)
- [Year 8 – Sue Wallman](#)
- [Year 8 and Year 9 – Alex Hibbert](#)
- [Year 10 – Sarah Govett](#)

The Old Redingensians Association are gratefully thanked for their support.

## The Dozen – January Issue Out Now



Written, designed, and edited entirely by students - *The Dozen* celebrates diversity, creativity, and the power of student voice. The January issue features a diverse collection of articles spanning culture, current affairs and academic reflection.

Highlights include reflections on the impact of artificial intelligence on modern music, an exploration of peace through history and philosophy, an article on Ashoka and the Mauryan Empire, and discussions on women's sport and changing cultural narratives. [Click to here for The Dozen – January 2026 edition](#).

## Behind the Scenes of the 900th Anniversary: Casting History in Bronze



One of the quieter but most symbolically powerful moments of Commemoration Day 2025 was the unveiling of a bronze plaque by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh within the Reading School's Chapel. For those watching, the plaque marked a historic milestone with elegant simplicity. Yet behind that moment lay a remarkable process that mirrors the very story of Reading School itself: tradition and continuity across centuries.

The plaque unveiled on Commemoration Day was created using an ancient technique known as green sand moulding, a method that has been used for thousands of years and remains largely unchanged.

Long before modern machinery or digital design, this was how permanence was made tangible, and it is fitting that such a process was chosen to mark our 900th year.



The journey begins not with bronze, but with a pattern. A carefully made prototype of the finished plaque. This pattern is placed into a moulding box and surrounded by specialised sand, tightly packed by hand using a rammer. It is a physical, almost meditative process, requiring skill and patience. When the pattern is removed, it leaves behind a perfect impression in the sand: a negative space waiting to be filled with molten metal.

Into this mould, bronze is poured at extreme temperatures. Once cooled, the raw casting emerges — recognisable, but far from finished. The runner bar, which allowed the bronze to flow into the mould, is removed, and the plaque begins its refinement. The surface is sandblasted clean, edges are carefully smoothed, and the lettering is sharpened and finished by hand.

To achieve the distinctive antique appearance, the plaque is treated with a traditional patination process. A compound known as liver of sulphur is mixed with hot water and brushed onto the bronze. As it reacts with the metal, it produces the rich brown tones associated with historic plaques. The reaction is then stopped, the lettering brightened once more, and finally a matte lacquer is applied to protect the surface for generations to come.



It is striking to reflect that a school founded in 1125 is being commemorated using a technique that would have been familiar to craftsmen of the medieval world. Just as Reading School has evolved while remaining rooted in its values, this ancient method continues to be used because it produces something modern shortcuts cannot: character, depth and longevity.

When HRH The Duke of Edinburgh unveiled the plaque, it marked more than a ceremonial moment. It revealed the result of a process that quietly connects our present to our past. A reminder that the 900th Anniversary was not only about looking back, but about ensuring that the story of Reading School is cast, quite literally, to endure.

# Reading School Events

## Reading School Careers Convention – Thursday 5 February 2026



We are delighted to invite parents and students to the Reading School Careers Convention 2026, taking place on Thursday 5 February, 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Reading School. All students and parents are welcome to attend to visit stalls hosted by over 40 organisations from industries including engineering, finance, technology, healthcare, law, media, science, and professional services. This is a valuable opportunity to speak directly with professionals about career paths, qualifications, and real-world experiences.

Event registration is now open: <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/events/view/careers-convention-2026>

In addition, the event will be hosting six keynote talks, each 20 minutes long, and delivered twice during the evening, particularly suitable for students in **Years 9 and above**. Speakers include representatives from **IBM, IChemE, NVIDIA, Berkshire Pain Clinic, Bournemouth University Media School**, and a professional working for the **United Nations** (participating in a personal capacity, not representing or endorsed by the UN).

Due to limited capacity, tickets are allocated on a **first-come, first-served basis**, with a maximum of **two per session** (*one student and one accompanying adult*).

Talk registration is now open (*applicable to Years 9 and above*) – [please click here](#).

## Faith and Reason Lecture – Thursday 26 March 2026



Hosted by the Reading School Chaplaincy, we are inviting students to the upcoming Faith and Reason Lecture on **Thursday 26 March 2026, 3:30 – 4:30 PM, Reading School, RG1 5LW**.

**Lecture:** *What Does It Mean to Be Human in an Age of AI?*

**Speaker:** Jeremy Peckham, Commissioner at the AI, Faith and Civil Society Commission

In this engaging talk, the speaker will explore how artificial intelligence is shaping our understanding of humanity, ethics, and society, and the opportunities and challenges this presents for individuals and communities.

The lecture is part of Reading School's Faith and Reason series, which explores the interplay between religion and science. The event has been promoted to students and we encourage parents to support them in attending. Parents are also warmly welcomed to join; however, space will be allocated to students as a priority.

Please register by clicking this link: <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/events/view/faith-and-reason-lecture-lent-term-2025-2026-thursday-26th-march-2026>

## External Events



Soulful Events is an events organisation focused on bringing live comedy and music shows especially acts rooted in Indian comedy and music to audiences in the UK and Europe. Their upcoming tours include live stand-up comedy in cities across the UK including London, Slough, Birmingham and Reading.

On **Saturday 31 January (6:00pm – 7:30pm)** at Reading School, popular Indian comedian Angad

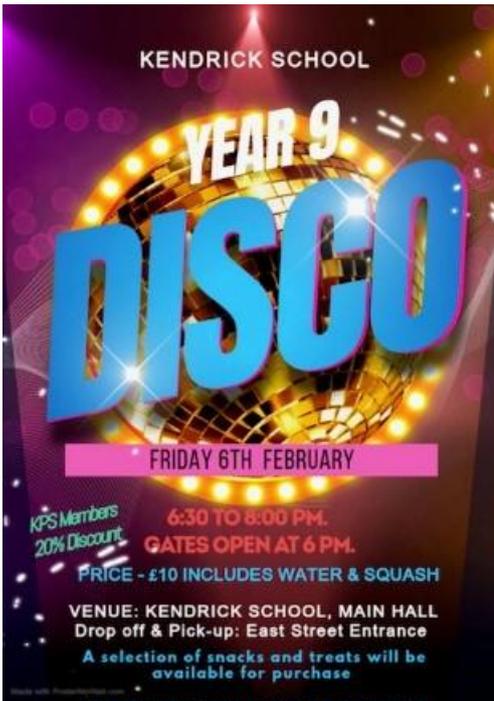
Ranyal will be performing for the first time in the UK with his brand-new show, 'Silly Papa!' which explores parenting, nostalgia and multi-generational experiences.

[Click this link to find out more and book tickets.](#)

**External Events Disclaimer:** Events listed under “External Events” are organised by third parties and are not Reading School events.

# RSPA

## Year 9 Disco – Kendrick School



We're absolutely thrilled to invite you to our Kendrick Year 9 Disco! Get ready for an electrifying night filled with music, dancing, laughter, and unforgettable memories. It's the perfect chance to mingle, make new friends, and have an absolute blast—so bring your best moves and get ready for loads of fun!

**Date:** Friday 6th Feb 2026

**Time:** 6:30pm – 8:00pm (Gates open at 6:00pm)

**Venue:** Kendrick School, Main Hall

**Ticket Price:** £10 (includes water & squash) *Snacks & treats available for purchase*

**Drop-off & Pick-up:** East Street Entrance (please note parking is not available onsite)

- Parents are welcome to meet and mingle with other Year 9 parents
- Cash and cards are accepted at both the disco and the parents meet and mingle

Tickets are first-come, first-served and [please click here to book](#).

## Highlights: Lent Term Week 3

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.



### National Schools Squash Championships

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January the KS3 Reading School squash team took part in the second round of the National Schools Squash championships. To qualify for the second round is already an achievement, and in this round the team truly excelled, coming second out of the four teams competing and only narrowly missing out on a place in the National Finals.



The team of Mayur J (8E), Ethan A (8W), Dylan DS (9L), Ethan Y (9S) and Dheer D (9L) beat teams from Bedford Modern School and Haberdashers' Boys school, and lost 3-2 to the team from St Joseph's College Ipswich. The winning team included two sons of Daryl Selby, a former world number 9 squash

player, so to get close to matching them was impressive. Dr Lewis-Brown was very excited that Daryl Selby turned up to watch!

### Mandarin Trip

This week, Year 8s had the opportunity to visit a well-known family-run Chinese restaurant known for its traditional Chinese specialties and authentic dishes.



Led by Mr Wu (Teacher of Mandarin and Boarding House Tutor), students got to learn how to use chopsticks, order their food in Chinese, and all received red envelopes. As the trip took place ahead of Chinese New Year, it allowed students not only to study Chinese culture through textbooks, but also to experience the celebration first-hand.



A family reunion dinner is central to Chinese New Year, and participating in this meal gave students the opportunity to share in the festive atmosphere and sense of togetherness that define the celebration.





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](mailto:communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk)