



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

30th January 2026

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Introduction

Dear Students, Parents, Carers and Colleagues,

I wonder what you think Reading School stands for, and what we value most?

To help explore this question, this week I uploaded 22,000 words of bulletin introductions into an AI analysis tool and asked it to identify the most important concepts within the short welcomes we write each week. I was provided with the following response:

1. Gratitude and Appreciation

The word “*thanks*” or “*thank you*” appears in nearly every bulletin, recognising the contributions of students, parents and staff. You often use terms such as:

- **Gratitude:** Often described as a “sure foundation” for growth
- **Privilege:** Frequently used to describe reporting on student progress, working with colleagues, or witnessing the community’s achievements
- **Salute:** Used regularly to formally honour specific accomplishments, such as those of parents or resilient students

2. Character and Personal Virtues

You prioritise *character* over academic outcomes, describing it as the core of the school’s mission. Associated words include:

- **Resilience:** Often referred to as “bounce-back-ability”, used to describe students and staff navigating challenges
- **Humility:** Commonly paired with gratitude, encouraging a lack of boastfulness around academic success
- **Compassion and Kindness:** Frequently highlighted through references to service, small kindnesses, and the need for compassionate leaders

3. Community and Belonging

Community is perhaps the most frequently used noun, appearing in contexts ranging from our 900th Anniversary celebrations to daily school life. Related significant words include:

- **Belonging:** Used particularly in reference to Belonging Weeks and our culture of belonging
- **Partnership:** Often describing the relationship between the school and parents
- **Collaboration:** Reflecting how staff and students work together to achieve shared goals

4. Intellectual Engagement

Education is framed as an active, ongoing process rather than a static goal:

- **Curiosity:** Frequently described as a hallmark of the school

- **Thinking:** You often invite students and parents to reflect on the “stuff of thought” and the value of deep, independent thinking
- **Excellence:** Mentioned regularly, though often with the caveat that it is most meaningful when coupled with character

5. Mission and Future Impact

Your words frequently focus on the long-term influence of the school on society:

- **Mission and Purpose:** Used to describe the school’s overarching goal to make society better
- **Shaping:** Commonly linked to shaping the future, students’ character, or the wider world
- **Legacy:** Particularly prominent during the 900th Anniversary, referring to the golden thread connecting current students with the past

I wonder whether you agree that these themes genuinely resonate in our work together, or whether you feel they are just words. I was surprised by some of the themes and pleased to see how consistently others appeared. Equally, I apologise if any terms are used too frequently!

This week, leaders have been thinking about the foundations of our future planning, as well as the values, behaviours and goals we should set. In a fortnight, we will send out a form and would love your views and feedback as we work together to set priorities for the school over the coming years.

I hope the reflections above provide some stimulus, and that you might share virtues and behaviours you would like to see referenced more often, as well as ideas or approaches you feel it may be time to retire. We would really value your input, and I hope this advance notice gives you time to prepare.

With thanks and best wishes,



Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 only

Belonging Week 2026

What is Belonging Week?

Belonging Week is a dedicated programme of personal development activities and educational experiences for students in Years 7 - 10. It is part of the School's broader Learn-Lead-Serve character education framework and is integrated into its Personal Development provision. During this week, students step outside the regular timetable to take part in a range of purposeful activities designed to deepen their connection to school life, build character, and strengthen community.

When It Happens

Belonging Week takes place in the Summer Term, either side of May half-term and running over multiple days with different year groups participating in scheduled activities and educational visits.

Core Aims & Purpose

Belonging Week is designed to:

- Foster a sense of belonging within the school community by engaging students in collaborative, experiential and reflective learning.
- Support personal growth by helping young people develop character, confidence, leadership and social awareness.
- Provide real-world experiences through educational visits, residentials, local activities and project work that extend learning beyond the classroom.
- Reinforce The Reading Way ethos of learning with purpose and connecting with others.

Why It Matters

Belonging Week reflects Reading School's commitment to holistic education - developing not just academic skills, but also the confidence, teamwork, empathy and connectedness that help students feel rooted within the school community and prepared for life beyond school.

Belonging Week will include Year 10; however, we are currently awaiting some essential information from our partners before sharing further details. We can confirm that Year 10 Belonging Week will take place within the local area and will include opportunities to develop key skills, followed by sharing and applying these in line with our *Learn, Lead, Serve* philosophy. Further information will be shared in the coming weeks.

[Click here for Year 7 Belonging Week Parent Letter](#)

[Click here for Year 8 Belonging Week Parent Letter](#)

[Click here for Year 9 Belonging Week Parent Letter](#)

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

Student-led Sustainability



During January, Reading School's Sustainability Team, led by Maulik S and Abhiram G, organised a clothes swap to make it easier for students to reuse clothing, reduce waste, and support good causes at the same time.

The sustainability project invited students to donate unwanted clothing (excluding school uniform) that would fit another Reading School student, was clean, in good condition, and suitable to be worn again. These items were then sold at lunchtimes and after school for a low price, helping to keep clothing out of landfill, giving items a second lease of life, and raising funds for charity. All proceeds will be donated to charity, and any remaining items will be given to local charity shops.

Thank you to all families who donated unwanted clothing during January's Clothes Sale event. The next event is planned for **Tuesday 3 February**. We warmly invite students, parents, and carers to attend the after-school sale from **3.30pm to 4.30pm** in **Big School**.

Please note that **no parking is available on site**. We recommend attending from **4.00pm**, once school pick-up congestion has eased.

Reading School Events

Reading School Careers Convention – Thursday 5 February 2026



Our biannual Careers Convention is almost here! We've already received **over 700 registrations** - thank you to everyone who has signed up. If you haven't registered yet, please do so via the link below so your child can meet delegates from 40+ companies.

Our keynote sessions (opened last week) have also received over 750 registrations. *Sessions 3 and 4 still have plenty of spaces available therefore we are opening these sessions to Years 7 and 8 as well, to help younger students start exploring options and planning ahead.*

Keynote Session Times

Session 1: 6:40pm – 7:00pm

Session 2: 7:10pm – 7:30pm

Session 3: 7:40pm – 8:00pm

Session 4: 8:10pm – 8:30pm

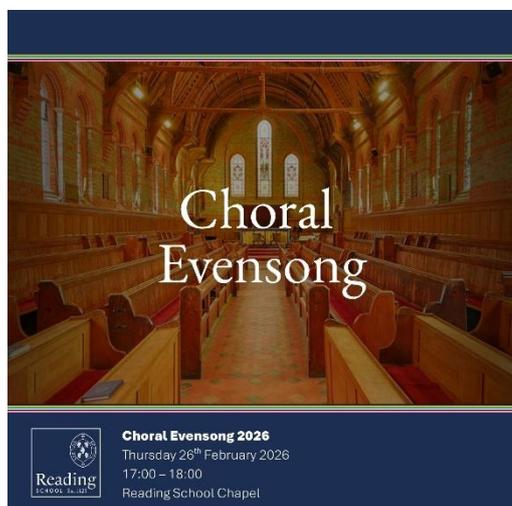
Speakers include professionals from IBM, NVIDIA, IChemE (Institution of Chemical Engineers), the United Nations, Bournemouth University Media School, and the Founder/Director of Berkshire Pain Clinic, sharing how to design a career that creates impact. Don't miss it!

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

Talk registration (**all years**): <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/97026>

Once again, we sincerely thank all sponsors, speakers, delegates, and members of our school community for supporting this event. We look forward to welcoming you and your child to this exciting evening.

Choral Evensong 2026 – Thursday 26 February 2026



The Music Department is delighted to invite you to a traditional Choral Evensong in the School Chapel on Thursday 26 February 2026.

This event is free and open to all. Register via the link below to reserve your seat and enjoy a serene break from your day in our tranquil chapel, accompanied by the beautiful music of the Reading School Chapel Choir.

Book now - <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/events/view/choral-evensong-2026>

Location: Chapel, Reading School, Erleigh Road, Reading
Time: 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Programme:

- Introit: *Drop Drop Slow Tears* – O. Gibbons
- Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis: Walmisley in D minor
- Psalm 150: Stanford
- Anthem: *Set Me as a Seal upon Thine Heart* – W. Walton

We look forward to welcoming you to this special musical occasion.

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

Summer Coding Club



FunTech is a summer coding club for children that has been hosted by Reading School since 2024 and they will be returning to School again this summer 2026. FunTech has been teaching Tech & Coding for 30 years and will again be offering a range of courses, including Game Development, Python, Roblox, Minecraft, Cybersecurity, and AI.

FunTech's annual Flash Sale offers the best rates of the year and will go live on **Monday 2nd February at 10:00**. All summer camps will be £200 off for the first 200 bookings. FunTech also offers a camp swap option, meaning families can book now and change the camp date, location, or course, up to two weeks before the camp start date.

[Preview the Flash Sale schedule and see further information ahead of Monday 2nd at 10:00 by clicking this link.](#)

RSPA

Year 7 Disco & Parent Meet and Greet Update - £2,325 raised!



What a fabulous evening! Several committee members and I came together for a very successful Meet & Greet and Year 7 Disco. A special mention must go to our Events Manager, Menaka Murthy, who spent a huge amount of time preparing for the big day.

Aside from one small mishap involving me, a very full urn, and Big School (thank you to Mr McGall for helping mop up!), both events ran brilliantly.

Evenings like this really highlight the importance of teamwork and how much we rely on one another. The team included fellow RSPA committee members and several schoolteachers; without whose help we simply wouldn't have been able to pull it off. Everyone pitched in and did what needed to be done without complaint (again, except me when I pulled the urn off!).



We were also lucky to have the help of a fantastic group of Year 13 students, who were brilliant. Take my word for it - when you get older, the muscles don't quite work the way they used to, so their help was very much appreciated! With no moans or groans, they tackled everything asked of them: lifting crates of heavy Coke cans up to Big School, setting up tables and chairs, marshalling outside with walkie-talkies, and more.

They did themselves proud and even modelled their newly purchased "Student Helper" tabards, bought via the 2025 Amazon Wishlist.

Everything fell into place and the boys and girls all had a wonderful time. I even managed to squeeze in a quick "YMCA" on the dance floor while checking in on the refectory team - the kids loved it and were suitably impressed!

Meanwhile, upstairs in Big School, parents had the opportunity to learn more about how the RSPA works, how we raise money, and, most importantly, how heavily we rely on the help and support of parents. Without that support, the RSPA simply wouldn't exist.



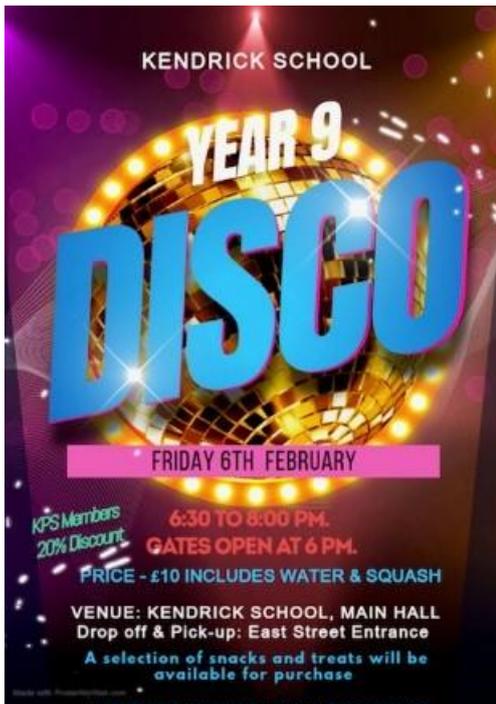
As a committee of 14 parents, we work continually and entirely on a voluntary basis to raise as much funding as possible, all of which is donated back to the school in various ways for the boys' benefit. We hope you enjoyed our offering of the ever-popular samosas and our signature themed buns. To top it all off, initial profits from the evening look to be a staggering £2,325!

If you would like to find out more about the RSPA and meet the team, we have a social meet up to which you are invited, organised for Monday 23rd February. Please do get in touch at contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Thank you.

Kerry O'Brien
RSPA Chair

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 4

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.



Work Experience

Monday 26 January was INSET Day at Reading School, and while staff attended training sessions and external visits to improve teaching skills, students from Years 7 – 11 had been asked to source work experience. Well done to all students who took part in opportunities – we hope these experiences helped you develop new skills and gain valuable insights.



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