



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

6 March 2026

Contents

Introduction	3
Key information	4
All Years	4
Lockdown Drill	4
Careers Coaching	4
End of Summer Term 2026 – Wednesday 15 th July reminder	4
Year 11 and Year 13 Only	4
Exam Timetables	4
School Community News	5
Cloud Busting: Kacper on Cloud Busting, Character and Commitment	5
Work Experience: From Wind Turbines to Distant Planets	7
Reading School Events	8
External Events	10
The Abbey Careers Fair	10
The Historical Association Lecture	10
Summer Coding Club	10
RSPA	12
Easyfundraising Update	12
The Uniform Shop	12
The Team	12
Highlights: Lent Term Week 8	14
A Visit from Dr Richard Elliott	14

Introduction

Dear Parents, carers, colleagues and students,

Without fail, whenever I bring visitors round the school, I take them to the library and describe the Learning Resource Centre as the heartbeat of the school. I introduce them to our library team and show them student reading records with great pride.

This is because words are our major medium, because language is our most valuable (and dangerous?) tool, and because books are our best pathway towards words.

Despite the protests of one of our students, who last year declared he didn't really need English lessons because he'd "got all the words now." I think about that comment more than he probably intended me to. There's always another word. Always another book that reframes what you thought you already understood.

It is desperately sad that new research from the National Literacy Trust shows that reading enjoyment among 8 – 18 year-olds has fallen by 19% over 20 years. Fewer than 1 in 3 young people now say they enjoy reading.

This week, during Reading School's Book Festival, the Learning Resource Centre published its own survey data. 406 students responded. 2 in 3 reported enjoying reading - double the national figure. Nearly 1 in 3 read daily.

The most popular genres: action, adventure, crime, mystery, fantasy. The most popular non-fiction subject: sport.

The numbers matter less than what they represent - a school library that 72% of students say they enjoy using, that is stocked with books that 95% feel reflect their actual interests.

That's not accidental. It's the result of consistent, quiet work by the people who run it.

Thanks Ms Kesteven and Ms Loft, and thanks Student Librarians - we are indebted to you.

The Book Festival continues next week - more authors, more words, more reasons to prove that student wrong.

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All Years

Lockdown Drill

In the week commencing Monday 23 March, we will be practising our school lockdown procedure.

Prior to the drill, tutors will speak with students to explain what the procedure involves and what to expect. Students will be reassured that this is simply a practice, designed to ensure that, in the very unlikely event of a real situation, everyone knows how to stay safe.

Further information for parents can be accessed [by clicking here](#).

Careers Coaching

Reading School has appointed Charlotte van den Berghen, a Level 6 Careers Advisor and founder of Brighter Careers Coaching, to provide impartial, student-centred careers guidance to our community. Online sessions with Charlotte begin this week.

Charlotte's guidance covers the full range of post-16 and post-18 pathways, from A Levels and university to apprenticeships, T Levels and vocational routes, as well as support around neurodiversity and strengths-based career planning. Charlotte's latest newsletter can be accessed [by clicking here](#) and students can check for further opportunities on the student Teams Careers Channel.

Booking a session: If your son would like an appointment with Charlotte, please contact Dr P Brookings by emailing pbrookings@reading-school.co.uk. Year 11 and Year 8 students are currently being prioritised, with Year 12 sessions available after Easter.

End of Summer Term 2026 – Wednesday 15th July reminder

Please note that Summer Term 2026 ends for students on Wednesday 15 July, not Thursday 16 July as previously published on the [School website](#).

Year 11 and Year 13 Only

Exam Timetables

The summer exam timetables have now been shared with Year 11 and Year 13 students and are also available on MCAS.

To help ensure a smooth and stress-free exam period, we encourage families to print off the timetable and place it on the fridge or another visible location. This will help everyone stay organised and ensure all students arrive on time for each exam.

We wish all our students the best of luck as they prepare for and complete their exams. With the support of families, we are confident they will do their very best.

For the June 2026 exam series, the standard contingency day remains at the end of the timetable being scheduled on Wednesday 24 June 2026. Students should factor in this date when making plans for the summer, ensuring they are available on this date should they be required to sit a postponed exam.

School Community News

Cloud Busting: Kacper on Cloud Busting, Character and Commitment



Year 10 student Kacper L (10S) recently took on the lead role of Sam in *Cloud Busting*, a stage production by Berzerk Theatre Company, based on Malorie Blackman's novel and adapted by Helen Blakeman. The show ran over three days at the Alan Cornish Theatre at the Oakwood Centre in Woodley, with a further performance scheduled at The North Wall Arts Centre in Oxford on 25 April.

Cloud Busting tells the story of Sam, a boy who leads a group that bullies an imaginative, free-spirited classmate called Davey - until an act of unexpected kindness forces him to question where he truly stands. The production explores themes of friendship, moral courage and the cost of conformity, presented in a way that resonates strongly with young audiences.

We sat with Kacper this week in order to hear about his experience of being part of the production:

For anyone who hasn't seen the production, what's the story about?

The story centres on Sam, a boy who's used to fitting in, and who leads a group that bullies a kid called Davey for being different. The turning point comes when Davey saves Sam from being hit by a car. From that moment, Sam starts to question whether fitting in is actually worth it. Davey has this philosophy; the worst thing you can do is walk, talk and think exactly like everyone else. Slowly, Sam is drawn toward that way of thinking, and his friends turn on him for it.

It builds to a really dark moment. Davey has an inhaler, and he makes Sam promise not to tell anyone. Sam breaks that promise, and when Sam isn't watching, the boys take Davey's inhaler and force him unconscious. The ending holds both possibilities up, what happened, and what could have happened, and makes you sit with how wrong the bullying was, and how much peace of mind Davey was denied.

You played Sam. How did you find that?

Genuinely difficult. In primary school, I was in Davey's situation, so stepping into the role of the bully wasn't natural for me at all. And beyond that, getting the finer details of a character right, the real realism, is the hardest part of any performance.

So how did you get there?

You have to live the character. Start walking like them, talking like them, doing things you think they would do. But the foundation is having their aims and intentions clearly mapped out - what do they want, what do they like, what do they hate? Once you have that, the performance follows. That's what really matters in your acting.

How did the opportunity come about?

Berzerk Productions do a yearly drama production for a teenage group of actors. I tried for the one last year, *The Company of Trees*, and didn't get a place. This year they did *Cloud Busting* and I got the lead. Going straight to a main role was a big jump. In primary school I was always the narrator, every single time, because apparently that's what I was good at. Suddenly I had to adapt quickly to something completely different.

What has acting given you as a person?

The biggest thing is understanding people. If you know how to perform anger, happiness, worry on stage, you start recognising those things more easily in real life. There's a genuine psychological dimension to drama that I'd recommend to anyone for that reason alone.

That's why it's great getting an opportunity like this. Being able to perform a variety of characters in different situations allows you to transfer them to real life – exactly what Berzerk offer, which is why I highly recommend them as a performing arts company.

But beyond the emotions, it teaches you commitment. When you have a substantial role, the character work is demanding, there are so many layers and finer details to hold. Acting taught me how to be consistent with the effort I was putting in, and how to sustain that effort over time.



Has it built your confidence?

Definitely. I wouldn't say my confidence was poor before drama, but performing in front of people changes a lot. Whether it's a play or a speech at an awards evening, being able to stand in front of an audience and be whoever you need to be, that's a transferable skill. And it teaches you not to lose focus. With enough time and practice, the confidence just becomes part of you.

Do you see yourself pursuing acting seriously?

I've been stuck between two paths for a while. One is creative arts, music and drama. The other is finance, which is probably where I'm more likely to go, because I've been drawn to maths and economics since I was young. I could do mental arithmetic well at an early age and I've just always had an open, curious relationship with numbers. Drama came later. But I'll go where the opportunities take me.

What would you say to a Year 7 who's nervous about performing or public speaking?

If you're scared the first time, that's fine - you'll be less scared the second time, and less the third. If that doesn't work, start smaller...perform in front of your parents, then your friends, then gradually build up. I recently read that Colonel Sanders was rejected over a thousand times before anyone accepted his fried chicken recipe, and as of today, KFC is a massive company. He got there because he didn't give up. Consistency is everything.

And when you do feel nervous yourself, how do you manage it?

When I do, I just try to forget I'm performing. You can imagine the audience isn't there, it's simpler than it sounds, and it works most of the time. And if something goes wrong, keep going. Nobody in the audience knows how the play is supposed to go. Cover the mistake and move forward. If you start thinking about being nervous, you become more nervous. Believe you own the stage, and that's what's going to happen.

The full production can be viewed by clicking here: [Cloud Busting — Berzerk Theatre Company](#)

A Painful Listen: A New Student Podcast



Rushil S (12SAI), Akilan N (12 PEI) and Abdul A (12SPe) have launched a podcast with a purpose. A Painful Listen is a new series dedicated to raising awareness of chronic pain, a condition that affects millions yet remains poorly understood and rarely discussed openly.

The first episode, 'The Great Betrayal – Why Your Brain Lies to You' explores why two people with the same injury can feel completely different levels of pain, and why scans often don't match what is felt.

Tune in to learn the difference between nociceptive, neuropathic, and nociplastic pain, and discover how your brain "predicts" danger – sometimes getting it hilariously wrong. By the end of the podcast, listeners will start to see pain not as a damage meter, but as a constructed experience to be understood and possibly retrained.

The [first episode is now available to stream on Spotify](#). We would encourage anyone with an interest in health, wellbeing, or simply a good listen to seek it out.

Work Experience: From Wind Turbines to Distant Planets



Year 10 student Aryan V (10C) recently completed two virtual work experience programmes through the Futures For All platform.

The first, with Siemens Energy, explored sustainable energy production across the company's global operations, covering wind turbine technology, smart grid infrastructure, and the circular economy. A career panel gave insight into routes into the industry, including university and apprenticeship pathways.

The second, with QinetiQ, took a rather different form. Working in a team of five, Aryan's group developed a mission proposal to send 500 people to Kepler-69c, researching fuel requirements, navigation systems, and command structures before presenting their bid to senior management. Career sessions highlighted the breadth of roles within the company, from aerospace engineering to consultancy.

Futures For All is available to all Reading School students and comes recommended by the School. Details on how to access the platform can be found by [clicking here](#).

Reading School Events

Soloists Concert - Tuesday 10th March 2026



Organised by Mr J Newman, Teacher of Music, our talented students are taking the stage to showcase their skill, passion, and artistry in an inspiring evening of music.

From classical masterpieces to contemporary favourites, this concert promises a wonderful celebration of young musical talent.

Date: Tuesday 10 March 2026

Time: 5:00pm - 6:30pm

Venue: Music Department Recital Hall, Reading School, RG1 5LW

Tickets: £5 per person; [Book your spot by clicking here](#)

Vocal Showcase - Tuesday 24 March 2026



Do you want to see your child take the stage and shine as a star singer? This is your chance!

Organised by Mr J Druce, Director of Chapel Choir, our Vocal Showcase celebrates the passion, dedication, and talent of our student singers. Each performer will present a carefully chosen piece, highlighting their unique voice and style. From stirring solos to captivating performances, the evening promises to inspire, delight, and celebrate the joy of music.

Date: Tuesday 24 March 2026

Time: 5:00pm - 6:30pm

Venue: Music Department Recital Hall

Tickets: Admission Free; [RSVP by clicking here](#).

Redingensians Golfing Society Fixture – March 2026



The Redingensians Golfing Society warmly invites you to join their March 2026 fixture.

Mr A Lloyd (South House Boarding Master; Teacher of English) and Mr R Blade (Teacher of PE; Head of Cricket) will be leading a small group of current students to take part alongside former students.

It promises to be an enjoyable day of friendly competition and relaxed hospitality in beautiful surroundings.

Date: Thursday 26 March 2026

Time: 9:30 – 16:30

Venue: Henley Golf Club, Harpsden, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 4HG

Format of the day:

9.30 - Assemble

10.00 - Full English Breakfast

11.00 - First tee time

16.00 - Trophies, prizes, pudding and coffee

There will be plenty to play for on the day, with trophies awarded for:

- Best Individual Gross Score
- Best Individual Stableford Score
- Best Team Stableford Score (ORA Past Presidents' Salver)
- 2 × Nearest the Pin
- Longest Drive

Tickets can be booked via the registration page: [Redingensians Golfing Society Fixture - Mar 2026 | Events | The Redingensians](#)

Our next fixture is scheduled for 8 October 2026 at Newbury & Crookham Golf Club. Further information will be shared soon.

Kindly organised by Michael Barrott (OR 1966-1973) and the Redingensians Office.

If you have any queries about the golf fixture, please email Michael at michael.barrott@btinternet.com. For any other queries, please email alumni@reading-school.co.uk.

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: [Faith & Reason Lecture](#)

External Events

The Abbey Careers Fair

The Abbey School is hosting its annual Careers Fair on Thursday 19 March, 5:30pm – 8:00pm, at The Abbey School, 17 Kendrick Road, Reading, RG1 5DZ.

With over 70 industry experts in attendance, the evening covers a broad range of sectors - including leading universities, medicine, finance, engineering, law, the Armed Forces, technology, sustainability and creative industries. Represented organisations include Durham, Imperial, Warwick and Bath universities, alongside employers such as Deloitte, EY, the BBC, TfL, Network Rail and multiple NHS specialists.

Entry is free and students can book their place via [Eventbrite](#).

The Historical Association Lecture



The Historical Association's Reading branch returns to the Lecture Theatre at Reading School for its next talk on Friday 13 March 2026.

Professor Josephine Quinn, Professor of Ancient History and Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, will deliver a lecture titled *How the World Made the West* - drawing on her recent book to challenge the familiar story of Western civilisation as the product of Ancient Greece and Rome. She argues instead that global connections, encounters, and exchange, not isolated cultures, shaped the world we inhabit.

Date: Friday 13 March 2026 **Time:** 7.30pm – 9.00pm **Venue:** The Lecture Theatre, Reading School
Cost: £3. Members, Associates and students are free of charge.

Those wishing to join the speaker and committee for supper from 6.00pm (£20 including wine) should contact Ralph Houlbrooke at r.a.houlbrooke@reading.ac.uk by Monday 9 March.

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.

There are three camp formats to choose from:

- In-Person (at Reading School)
- Live online
- Flexi (the ability to keep the same expert tutor and peers, but join either from home or the centre, giving parents maximum flexibility)

Camps to support Computer Science programming:

- GCSE: [Python Coder \(ages 10 to 16\)](#)
- A Level: [Python OOP \(ages 11 to 16\)](#)

Developed entirely in-house and supported by a dedicated student support team, FunTech's camps focus on building real understanding to leave your child feeling confident in their skills, all while making sure learning stays fun and engaging from start to finish. Over [14,000 reviews](#) and [to book, please click here](#).

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

RSPA

Easyfundraising Update



If any parents, carers, or staff are booking a holiday with TUI this month, each booking could raise a £125 donation for your school - at no extra cost to them.

This special TUI Classroom Commitment is exclusive to schools registered with [easyfundraising](#) and runs until 31 March.

Just six holiday bookings could mean £750 raised for the School.

The Uniform Shop

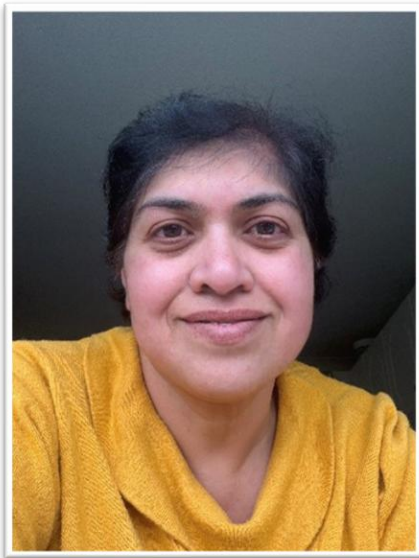
The next opening of the RSPA uniform shop is scheduled for **Friday 20 March 3:30pm - 4:30pm** (there is no parking available on site) and **Saturday 21 March 10:30am - 12:30pm** (parking is available onsite).

We are always grateful to receive donations, especially PE and games uniform, and look forward to seeing you there.

The uniform shop is held outdoors in the walled garden and as such can be subject to cancellation due to weather conditions but should this occur, we aim to communicate this as best as possible beforehand.

The Team

Introducing our Membership Manager, Mrs Pallavi Chube



Although I have spent over three decades building a fulfilling IT career, achieving goals, embracing challenges, managing deadlines, and navigating both successes and setbacks - being part of the RSPA team has brought me a level of joy that surpasses them all.

As a parent of twin boys in Year 10, I have been part of the Reading School community for the past four years, and it has been an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience for our family.

As Membership Manager for the Reading School Parents' Association, my main responsibility is to welcome families into our community and ensure they feel informed, connected, and valued from the very start of their journey at Reading School. The role involves overseeing membership registrations, managing our Classlist parent platform, maintaining accurate records, coordinating Gift Aid submissions, and acting as a key point of

contact for parents and carers. It is about building strong communication channels and ensuring that our membership scheme runs smoothly and transparently.

Beyond the administrative responsibilities, the heart of the role lies in fostering a sense of belonging. Every new member represents a family placing their trust in the school community, and helping to create that bridge between parents and the RSPA is incredibly rewarding.

Volunteering with the RSPA brings a unique kind of fulfilment. It offers the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the school experience of our children - whether through fundraising initiatives, supporting events, enabling careers guidance activities, or helping run the uniform shop. Seeing funds raised translate into tangible benefits for students is deeply satisfying.

Perhaps the greatest joy comes from the people. The RSPA is powered by passionate, generous parents and carers who bring diverse skills, ideas, and energy. Working alongside such a committed team creates friendships, shared purpose, and a real sense of achievement.

Volunteering is not just about giving time - it is about being part of something bigger, strengthening the school community, and leaving a positive legacy for every child who walks through its doors.

Best wishes

RSPA Team

Highlights: Lent Term Week 8

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.



A Visit from Dr Richard Elliott

On Wednesday this week, we welcomed Dr Richard Elliott, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Reading, for a talk with our students.

Dr Elliott's specialism lies in the post-Kantian tradition, and he is currently writing a book on Nietzsche for Cambridge University Press. Dr Elliott is also an Old Redingensian, having been in County House, and we hope to welcome him back soon.



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