



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

27 March 2026

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Introduction

Dear colleagues, students and parents,

Thank you all for your hard work this term. It feels good to finish well together and to break for a fortnight's holiday.

You will notice the same remarkable stories in this week's bulletin that we have grown so used to: Amazing Physicists. Unbelievable numbers of sports fixtures. Winning Chess teams. A wonderful student publication. Innovative interaction with Old Boys. Outstanding student leadership...My thanks go to everyone involved in these triumphs – and in many more not reported.

Today I'd also especially like to share my profound gratitude to my Mum! This isn't a narcissistic awards nomination speech, in which every family pet, every relative and every make-up artist gets windy praise. Rather, I present a picture of our school.

We were really sad in the Autumn when Mr Sandiford handed his notice in as Head of Drama. He has been a wonderful servant of the school, and inspired so many boys. We were thrilled for him that he has been promoted to a role which will shape performance across the whole town. We were also delighted that we found Mr Jenkins through the recruitment process: Mr Jenkins - we are all really looking forward to your full-time arrival after Easter!

It is almost impossible to find brilliant teachers at short notice – because brilliant teachers are always deeply committed to their students. This term then, we have had some challenging gaps to fill, not only in Drama, but also because of unavoidable circumstances that have stretched a number of our teams.

We've managed before with Mr Wheeler in Chemistry, Mrs Postlethwaite in the English team, and Ms Readings in Maths – each gladly came back to help us out after their retirement. This term though, after searching high and low, the only person I could call to fill our Drama gap, was my Mum! As a teacher with over 50 years of experience teaching and examining A Level Theatre Studies classes, I knew she'd enjoy working with our Year 12 thespians, and I am grateful to them for making her welcome. I'm also grateful that my mum persuaded one of her very best colleagues, Mrs King, to join the team...they've both given the school a great deal at short notice, and made a huge difference.

Other colleagues have stepped up too, and together we've had to take on extra classes or unusual assignments to help out where it's been needed. I've enjoyed working with Year 7 Chemistry and Year 8 English classes for example. Others have filled gaps in the Estates Team, in Computer Science and, daily, at short notice, in a myriad of ways.

I think that's what teams, what communities, and what families do.

They look out for each other whenever and however they can.

But the other side of this coin is that, in teams, in communities and in families, we also have to be brave enough to ask for help when we need it, and willing to receive help. Not because we have earned it, but because being human means being in need of grace.

I share this message at the end of term, because I think it is inevitable that each of us goes through times when we have to ask for help. We pass through valleys of tears, through times of need and periods

of grief. I'm not emailing today asking people to do more, or give more, or cover more – rather I encourage each of us to lean on one another, and to ask for help when we need it.

So, thanks Mum, and thanks to every colleague who has filled gaps, covered lessons and looked after those around them. Thanks for being there when we needed you.

I wish you all the happiest possible Easter holiday.

Chris Evans

Key information

All Years

Safeguarding Survey

Every year, the School will complete a safeguarding survey in order to seek the thoughts and views of our students in relation to student concerns ranging from bullying to online safety. 473 students responded in January 2026, rating 18 statements on a 1–5 scale across six areas: student safety, PSHE topics, support services, physical site safety, student worries, and online safety.

The findings of the survey [can be accessed by clicking here](#) and for all enquiries, please email Ms Lizzie Ayres (Deputy Headteacher & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) by emailing layres@reading-school.co.uk

Current School Vacancies

Teacher of Chemistry - We are looking for an enthusiastic and inspiring member of staff to join our Chemistry team from September 2026. We offer an exciting opportunity in an exceptional team and a School that is passionate about Chemistry as a subject.

To find out more details and submit an application, please [visit our recruitment portal by clicking here](#).

Science Technician (Biology & Chemistry) - We have an exciting opportunity for a suitably qualified Science Technician to provide effective support to our Biology and Chemistry departments. Reporting to the Senior Science Technician, you will ensure a safe and efficient laboratory technical service is provided for students and teaching staff in both departments.

To find out more details and submit an application, please [visit our recruitment portal by clicking here](#).

School Community News

Reading School Students Shine at Redingensians Golfing Society Fixture



Six Reading School students joined former pupils and staff at Henley Golf Club on Thursday 26 March for the Redingensians Golfing Society's spring fixture, competing across a full day of golf, trophies and hospitality at one of Oxfordshire's finest courses.

The standout performance of the day came from George G (12STh), who claimed the Best Individual Stableford Score with an impressive 39 points. With a handicap allowance of 23, George finished three shots under par equivalent, edging out Society Treasurer Steve Johnston (37 points) into second place.

Mr Lloyd (South House Boarding Master & Teacher of English) also had a day to remember, picking up a Nearest the Pin trophy and a share of the Best Team Stableford prize. That category produced a three-way tie, with Owen L (12STh) and Thomas C (9S) joining Mr Lloyd's respective adult teammates on the podium for prize photos.

Trophies and prizes were presented by Ken Brown with characteristic style, rounding off a day that combined friendly competition with the kind of cross-generational connection that defines the OR community at its best.

The fixture was kindly organised by Michael Barrott (OR 1966-1973) and the Redingensians Office.

National Schools Chess Championships

Reading School's Senior Chess Team has qualified for the National Schools Chess Championships which will take place in June. We sat down with one of the team members, Moksha S (12SPe) to find out what it took to get there and what chess really looks like at the School.

Tell us about the competition structure.



The competition is a national school's tournament. Every region has a qualifying mini-tournament. We did ours online and topped the qualifier, which put us through to the regional tournament. That has eight teams across three knockout rounds.

In the final, the South East is always incredibly competitive and we almost always face either Eton or Hampton. Hampton are the national champions and came third internationally in Washington last year, so we knew it would be tough. Last year we lost to them

4.5 to 1.5. This year, after being three-nil down, we drew three-three and won on tiebreak. That was monumental for us. We went in outscored on every board and not very confident, but team spirit got us through.

How did the tiebreak work?

Nobody actually knew the rules, so we had to send the results to the tournament organiser and wait for him to go through the tiebreak lists. It came down to board count. We won on boards one, two and four, and because that total was lower than boards three, five and six, we won on that mathematical tiebreaker (7-14 lower count wins).

So you're through to nationals. What will that look like?

Nationals will be held in late June, after GCSEs and A Levels, at Nottingham University over one weekend. The winners of all 23 regional tournaments come together for a two-day event. The winner then represents Great Britain at the international tournament, this year in Budapest.

Talk to us more about chess at the School.



Chess is a really significant part of life at Reading School. A lot of students genuinely enjoy the analytical side of the game. Covid gave it a huge boost online and that carried into school as well. Every week we have online tournaments through chess club, and every other week we play against other schools across the country. We also have junior chess clubs running, and yearly in-person tournaments at Eton.

What I think makes chess special is that it doesn't matter how old you are, how tall you are, how strong you are - everyone has equal standing at the board.

Why do you think it hasn't had more visibility?

I think it's because it's a one-versus-one game rather than a team sport with large squad numbers. In football or rugby you have squads of 30 players in a loud atmosphere. In chess, it's one versus one, and both players are operating at a really high level. It's not loud. It's very mind-focused. There's even a genuine debate about whether chess is a board game or a sport. I think it sits right in the middle of that Venn diagram. Its uniqueness is part of what gives it its own kind of visibility.

Has it grown in popularity recently - with recent series like The Queen's Gambit?

Definitely. Chess has a much bigger online presence now. On social media, Netflix, YouTube - people are streaming games, playing internationally at all hours. You can wake up in the morning and play someone in America. You can play people in Australia. Because of that online reach, and because of things like The Queen's Gambit, the popularity of chess has grown well beyond schools.

If a student wants to get involved, where can they go?

We have a Microsoft Teams group for chess club (jmv2qi2). We also have online teams on **LiChess** - just search Reading School Teams. And honestly, at lunchtime, you'll always find people playing, whether that's in the LRC or outside. Just join in. Nobody knows your ability when you first sit down. You can learn from others and they can learn from you.



How long have you been playing?

Almost ten years. My dad got me into it and thought I'd be good at it. Since Covid I've been playing more and more because the shift online made tournaments so much more accessible. I'm really grateful I started early. Chess has taken me all around the country, and it's given me some genuinely memorable experiences.

Your dad started you off. Do you still play him?

That probably stopped within the first week of me learning! I have to thank him for taking me to tournaments and putting in the effort, but playing against him anymore...not so much. I do play my brother, though that's also slowed down a bit now. Playing family is always good and I really enjoy club chess, and playing on the street when I get the chance. When I was in America I played some street chess players. That's a very unique experience - quiet, but very quietly aggressive.

Did you hustle them, or did they hustle you?

I honestly can't remember. I can only assume I got hustled. But there's no language barrier with chess. Go anywhere in Europe and you'll find people playing on the street. Just be mindful of who you sit down against.

What's your most memorable game?

Back when I was in the Under-11s at the county championship. I needed a draw to secure the title. I lost that game, but the player who was also in contention for first place lost too, which I hadn't expected at

all because they were very strong. The disappointment of losing, the effort I put in, the relief when I realised I'd still won the title...that combination has stayed with me.

Reading School's chess team will compete at the National Schools Chess Championships in Nottingham in late June.

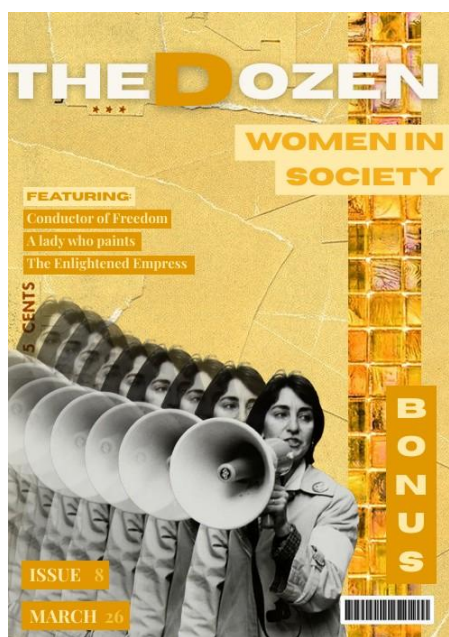
School Sport Summary

This term has been one of the most active in recent memory for sport at Reading School, and the numbers speak for themselves.

- **23 teams** have played from the start of January to the end of March including football, badminton, squash, basketball, handball and multi sports SEN team at the pentathlon.
- **300 students** (27% of the student body) have represented their school this term.
- **97 fixtures have been played** in 11 weeks. That's an average of 9 matches a week.
- **90 students** attended the FIFA Club World Cup match at the GTECH Arena.
- **Year 8 and Year 10** have made the School's Football league finals to be played after Easter.
- The **Football 1st XI** reached the semi-final of the Gibbs Cup.
- Our **U14 Badminton Team** are in the Badminton England National Schools finals tomorrow.
- Reading School was ranked 25th nationally for sport (and was the 5th state school in the country).

Beyond school fixtures, many of our students also represent external clubs and regional teams, bringing that experience back into everything we do here.

The Dozen – March Issue



The latest edition of The Dozen, Reading School's student-run cultural magazine, has just been published. Issue 8 is dedicated to women in society, with the editorial team, led by Editor in Chief Daniel Nenguke, producing twelve articles spanning culture, humanities, science, and sport.

March edition highlights include:

- *An exploration of sexism in the music industry (Tom C)
- *A personal account of visiting the Beatriz Gonzalez exhibition at the Barbican (Daniel N)
- *A profile of Maryam Mirzakhani, the first woman to win the Fields Medal (Richard W).
- *Nandan K narrates the story of Harriet Tubman,
- *Abdul S-A examines Tu Youyou's Nobel Prize-winning malaria research
- *And much, much more.

The full issue is [available to read now by clicking here](#).

National and International Physics Olympiad

Over the past months a group of Year 13 students have taken part in the Physics Olympiad and follow-up competitions.

In October, all the A Level physicists at the school sat the round 0 physics Olympiad competition. Of the 67 students who took part, 27 qualified for the next stage. The round 1 paper, sat in November, was a challenging 2-hour exam designed to push students to apply their physics knowledge in novel situations, with the problems significantly harder than those encountered at A Level. The students showed their ability, picking up 3 commendation certificates, 3 bronze II certificates, 5 bronze I certificates, 7 silver certificates, 2 gold certificates and 1 top gold certificate. Particular congratulations to Patrick D for his top gold certificate and Tristan S and Parth G for their gold certificates, placing each of them in the top 300 physicists in the country.

Physics and Astrophysics Olympiad - Round 2



After achieving a top gold certificate, Patrick D was invited to participate in both the Physics and Astrophysics Olympiads (Round 2) in January, one of only 70 or so students to be invited nationally.

These papers are incredibly difficult, 3-hour exams that test the problem-solving skills of the very best student physicists in the country.

Patrick did very well, receiving a silver certificate in the physics competition and a bronze certificate in the astrophysics competition. Afterwards, Patrick answered a few questions about his experience.

How did your interest in physics begin?

I always remember as a kid being fascinated by space and was always curious about why the world around me worked as it did. But it wasn't until year 11 that my interest piqued when I started watching F1 and learned about the fundamental physics behind the aerodynamic car design which allows the cars to travel at over 300kmph and give them the edge over their competitors!

What have you done during year 12 and 13 to prepare for problems like those found in the Olympiads?

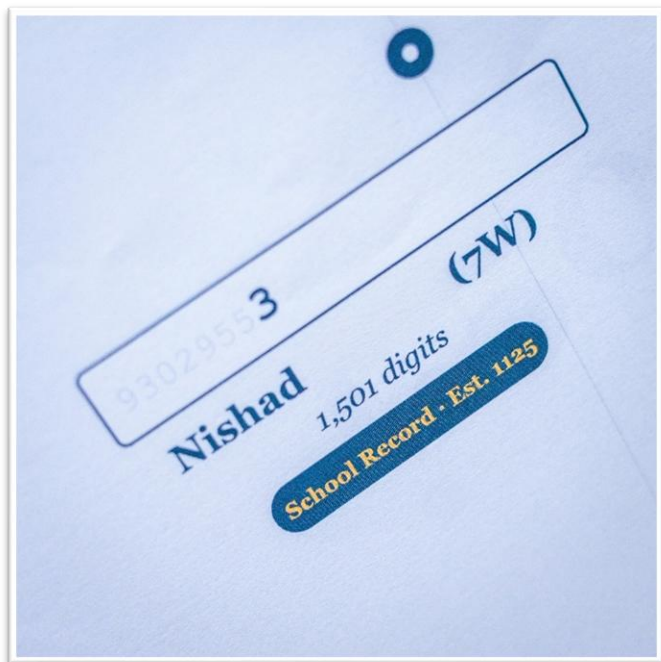
In year 12 I did a lot of work for the Isaac Physics Senior Physics Challenge. I completed over 600 challenging questions, many of which were on topics I hadn't encountered before, similar to the Olympiads where they introduce new concepts and scenarios. I'd also done a lot of preparation inadvertently through the entrance exams and interviews required for my application to university which really helped push my problem-solving skills even further. I additionally did lots of practice past Olympiad papers in order to accustom myself to the style and format of the questions which differ a lot from your standard school exam questions.

What would you recommend to anyone in the younger years at the school who would like to improve their problem-solving skills?

As Mr Pedlow always says, 'maths is not a spectator sport', and the same is true for problem solving! The best way to improve your skills is to practice solving tough problems which go above and beyond what you're being taught in school to really extend yourself. Also make sure to not to get discouraged and stay resilient when you inevitably get stuck on a problem. It's all part of the process. There are lots

of maths and physics challenges you can do throughout all your years at school which are a great place to start, with past papers being available online.

Pi Day Memorisation Competition 2026



This year's competition, led by Dr Hu, Teacher of Physics, once again demonstrated that memorising large amounts of information is not simply about repetition, but about understanding how memory works and applying effective techniques. Methods such as pattern recognition, imagery, and association allow students to engage more of the brain, leading to stronger retention and more accurate recall under pressure.

A standout performance came from Nishad V (7W), who broke the school record with an extraordinary **1,501 digits**. Notably, Nishad relied on rote learning for the first 1,000 digits before switching to linking images to support the final 500, highlighting the impact of more advanced memory strategies. Pragnya K (8S) achieved an impressive **802 digits** to secure second place, followed by George S (7C) with **384 digits**.

There were also significant improvements from returning competitors. James C (13L), building on his attempts over the past few years, incorporated more advanced techniques to reach 314 digits - a very fitting total for Pi Day.

These results show that, with simple techniques and consistent training, students can significantly improve their memory and retention, achieving outcomes that may initially seem out of reach.

A special mention also goes to Ethan J and Kabir G for their strong performances this year.

Reading Youth Council 2026 Annual Conference



The Reading Youth Council Annual Conference 2026, held in March, brought together young people from across Reading to discuss key issues, focusing on themes such as climate action, local democracy, and the 2026 National Year of Reading.

Isaac L, Sudhish D, and Yatharth P are current members on the Council and they were joined by 9 further students at the Annual Conference.

Yatharth P shared:

“Reading School sent a team of 9 students to this event, who took part in activities from various campaigns the Youth Council has to offer, including Model UN for Political Education and the Media Literacy Campaign, a witness inquiry for the Community Campaign (in which all 3 Reading School RYC members spoke), and First Aid For Wellbeing Campaign. This provided an excellent opportunity for students willing to advance debate and public speaking, while liaising with students from other schools.”

For more information about the Council, [please click here](#).

Reading School Events

Support Christopher Fordham OR (1994-2001) - 7 Marathons in 7 Days



From 20–26 April 2026, Chris Fordham (OR 1994-2001) is taking on *The Long Run for Mental Health*: seven marathons in seven days, finishing with the London Marathon. He is doing this in support of Samaritans, in memory of a close friend who sadly passed away last year. Suicide is the leading cause of death for men under 50 in the UK. Life can be overwhelming, and it's not always easy to talk when things aren't going well. Samaritans provide a 24-hour, confidential listening service for anyone struggling to cope, offering support when it's needed most.

On Friday 24th April, Chris will talk to Year 9 students in Chapel, sharing his personal journey, including his challenge of running seven marathons in seven days to raise awareness for mental health. The talk aims to highlight the importance of looking after mental health, particularly for young people navigating the pressures of school life. Following the talk, Chris will run a lap of the field with each House. Students will then line the drive to cheer him on as he begins the next leg of his journey.

If you would like to support Chris' challenge, please donate here: [Christopher Fordham is fundraising for Samaritans](#). Please reference *Reading School* in your reference so he is aware of the support from the school community.

Reading Repair Cafe at Reading School – Save the Date



Got something broken? Bring it along to our Repair Cafe on **Thursday 23rd April**, running from **3:45pm to 5:30pm** (last repair accepted at 5:30pm).

Volunteer repairers can help with electronics, mechanical items, computers, toys, clothing, textiles, and tool sharpening. If you want to tackle your own repairs or work on a craft project, you're welcome to do that too.

The event is free to attend, with donations encouraged. Refreshments will be on sale.

For more information, contact Dr Young, Sustainability Lead: kyoung@reading-school.co.uk

RSPA

Books to School - April Campaign

Please can you support the LRC by having a look through your families unwanted paperback books at home.

When school re-opens in April, it would be fantastic if we could welcome back the LRC by providing as many of the books listed below as possible. Please take them to reception marked, "*LRC Donations*".

Books needed - (good condition paperbacks only please) from the following series:

- The Hunger Games series / Collins
- The Summoner series / Matharu
- Cherub series / Muchamore
- Bodyguard series / Bradford
- Young Samurai series / Bradford
- Edge Chronicles series / Stewart
- Skulduggery Pleasant series / Landy
- Keeper of the Lost Cities series /Messenger
- Inheritance cycle / Paolini
- Wings of Fire series / Sutherland
- Lorien Legacies series / Lore
- Agent 21 series / Ryan
- Arc of the scythe series /Shusterman
- The Wizards of Once series / Cowell
- Magnus Chase series / Riordan
- Kane Chronicles series / Riordan
- Plus - any good condition, secondary school appropriate, sport related books!

The LRC are looking to update and replace their collection, and your donations will help ensure every student has access to exciting, engaging reads throughout the school year.

Pre-loved Uniform Shop

Please note our next planned openings are on:

- Friday 24th April 3:30-4:30pm / Saturday 25th April 10:30am-12:30pm
- Friday 12th June 3:30-4:30pm / Saturday 13th June 10:30am-12:30pm

If you have any questions and want to get in touch with the shop team then please email us at shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk. Thank you for your continued support.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Bag 2 School Collection - reminder

We are planning a collection for shortly after the Easter holiday, date to be confirmed. Our pesky children seem to grow like weeds and with the change of season we hope you will have lots to donate. Please start to collect your items, details of things we can take are listed below. You can put them in any plastic bags as they no longer send them out for us to use. We are planning to make drop off super easy, so the boys won't have to stagger up the drive under the weight of their donations. Let's start building those piles in the garage.



What we can take:	What we cannot take:
Clothes	Clothing with logos i.e. sports clubs
Paired shoes	Duvets
Handbags	Blankets
Hats	Pillows
Bag	Cushions
Scarves and ties	School uniform
Jewellery	Carpets/rugs
Bras	Corporate clothing and workwear
Socks	Textile cut offs
Belts	

The Team

Introducing our Notifications Officer, Yogakshi Munjal



Hello everyone, I work as a Roster Manager at Network Rail, where my role is about building effective communication channels, and maintaining a balance between operational needs and employee welfare.

I have been a proud member of the Reading School Parents Association in the capacity of Notifications Officer since my son, Arnav, now in Year 9, began his journey at Reading School in September 2023.

At its heart, the role is about keeping people connected. By sharing timely and clear updates whether through email, newsletters, or platforms like WhatsApp, I help ensure that parents feel informed and included.

There is real satisfaction in knowing that a well-timed message can boost attendance at an event, remind families of something important, or simply make someone feel more engaged with school life.

Another rewarding aspect is supporting the smooth running of the community. Behind every successful event or initiative is effective communication. When messages land well and everything runs seamlessly, you can see the direct results of your effort, even if much of the work happens behind the scenes.

The role also offers a strong sense of purpose and contribution. It's not just about sharing information it's about building a bridge between parents, carers, and the association. That connection fosters trust, encourages involvement, and strengthens the overall school environment for the students.

And then there are the people. Working alongside other committed parents and carers creates a real sense of teamwork and shared purpose. You become part of a supportive network, often forming meaningful friendships along the way.

Ultimately, what makes the role so rewarding is the combination of impact, connection, and community. It's about knowing that your efforts however small they may seem help create a more informed, engaged, and united school experience for everyone involved.

Volunteering with the Reading School Parents Association means being part of something that goes far beyond giving time. It's about contributing to a community that directly shapes our children's school experience.

For me, it represents a chance to give back in a meaningful way. The school provides so many opportunities for our children, and volunteering is a way of supporting that environment whether through events, fundraising, or simply helping things run smoothly behind the scenes.

There is also a real sense of purpose in seeing the outcomes of your efforts. Whether its funds raised being used for new resources, successful events bringing the community together, or improved communication keeping everyone informed, you can clearly see how your contribution makes a difference.

Volunteering also offers a unique kind of personal fulfilment. It's rewarding in a way that's different from professional achievements - more community driven, more immediate, and often more heartfelt. It brings a sense of pride in being part of something bigger than yourself.

Best wishes

Yogakshi and the RSPA Team

Highlights: Lent Term Week 11

Join the Reading School community online and never miss a moment.



Facebook: ReadingSchoolOfficial **Instagram:** @reading_sch **LinkedIn:** school/reading-school

Redingensians Golfing Society Fixture

No eagles on the scorecard, but we had something better overhead





20/3/20

Redington

COMPETIT DATE

Hole Markers/D Score

Hole	White Yards	Yellow Yards	Red Yards	Green Yards	Par	Stroke Index	Marker/D	Player's Score	H'Cap Index
1	435	424	413	397	4	5	A		
2	158	143	127	109	3	5	A		
3	501	446	457	420	3	11	A		
4	221	213	179	136	5	13	A		
5	364	336	309	274	3	7	A		
6	274	269	233	207	4	3	A		
7	126	119	118	92	4	15	A		
8	468	454	393	379	3	1	A		
9	530	516	461	415	4	9	A		
10	3077	2920	2690	2429	5	35	A		
11		430	421	393	367				
12		173	160	145	140				
13		427	388	379	379				
14		147	137	129	112				
15		465	477	419	399				
		384	372	359	349				
		198	188	179	169				
		391	378	369	359				
		488	475	465	455				
		5107	5005	4917	4829				

(M) Course 68.8 Slope 118

(W) Course 74.3 Slope 132

(M) Course 66.3 Slope 111

(W) Course 71.3 Slope 124

TIME

Playing H'Cap

Par M W

Stroke Index

Marker/D

Player's Score A B C

H'Cap Index







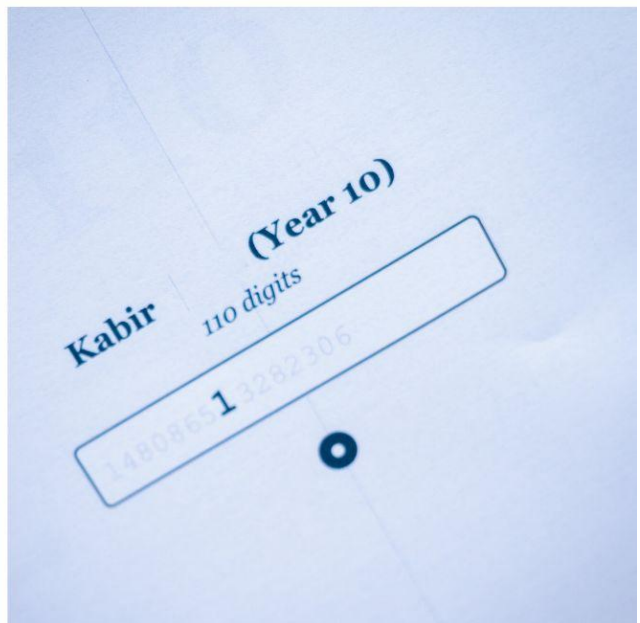
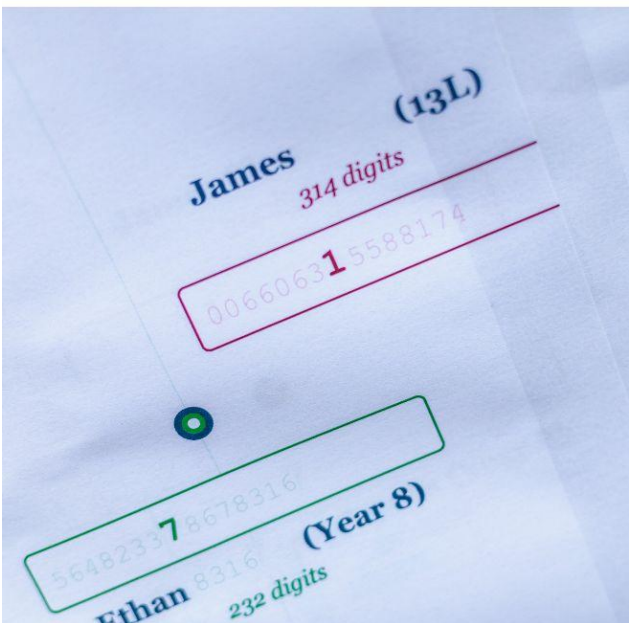
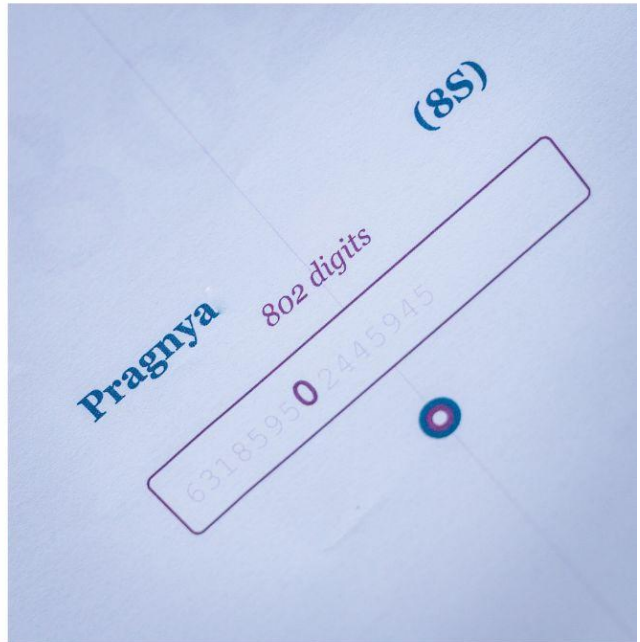


Physics and Astrophysics Olympiad

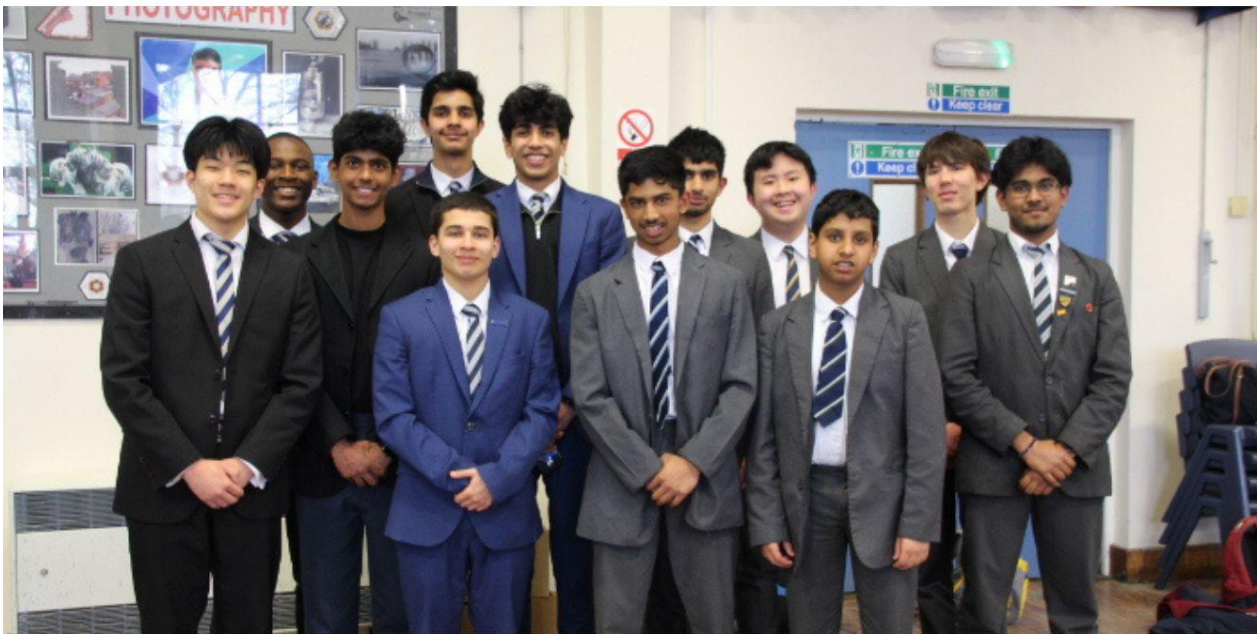


Top to bottom (l-r): Alexandru M, Rujul N, Parth G, Patrick D, Chinmay B, Benjamin L and Aadhav S

Pi Memorisation Competition



Reading Youth Council Annual Conference



National Sports Competition

On Saturday 14th March, former and current students took part in a national sports competition in Loughborough. The tournament featured 130 team entries from across the UK, and approximately 1,300 individuals taking part in the boys' and men's competition.

Results: Winners of Year 7-9 Kabaddi, Runners-up Year 10-12 Kabaddi

Arjun K received the Raider of the Tournament award from the National Kabaddi Coach for the England Kabaddi Team.



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