



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

24 April 2026

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Introduction

Dear parents, staff, students and carers,

When I asked Chris Fordham (OR 1994-2001) this morning what message he'd have for the Reading School community, I expected him to ask families to donate towards his challenge.

He didn't.

He shared something far more powerful with Year 9. So, I'll let him speak for himself:

"I left the school 25 years ago this summer, and it feels like 25 minutes. I remember the Headmaster, Dr Mason, told us how quickly our time at school will go. You're all in Year 9, and it probably feels like it's going relatively slowly, but very soon, you'll find yourselves as Year 13s.

When I was sitting where you are now, I wasn't a good runner. We used to have something called the Road Run, two and a half laps around the school, and it felt like a very long way. Even walking from Music School to my classes took me about 15 minutes!

I am not a gifted or talented runner. I never saw myself as an athlete at school, and I still don't. I am doing this challenge because I lost a friend to suicide a year ago.

Suicide is three times more likely to affect men than women. Men are three or four times more likely to die by suicide than in a road traffic accident. I know that is a morbid thing to say, but I wanted to start there, just to frame why the mental health conversation is genuinely important...not just a well-meaning phrase.

During my marathons this week, I've been thinking a lot about two things - kindness to others, and kindness to yourself.

In primary school, you were probably taught quite a lot about the value of kindness. It was likely one of your school's values. When you move into the stage you're at now, kindness can sometimes get lost. The focus shifts to academic progress, outcomes, and the pressure to perform.

When I think back to my time at school, I wonder if I was as kind as I could have been. There was a constant need to be funny, to make a joke that others would laugh at. I did that regularly. When I reflect on it now, I think about the people who were not laughing - who were the subject of those jokes. That can have a profound impact on people, even if neither you nor they realise it at the time.

I had an overwhelmingly positive experience at school. But I know there were people in my year who did not, and some of that was probably down to behaviour like mine.

Just because someone is not in your close friendship group doesn't mean you can't be kind to them. Those very small kindnesses...or simply dropping the unkindness, can matter more than you know. They can change the course and outcome of someone's life.

I think, for boys in particular, it is easy to forget to be kind. You will be so focused on your studies, on competing with people in your class and year. Just keep kindness alongside those things. Have the strength to say to others that you value them. That is real strength.

The other thing I've been thinking about is kindness to yourself. There is so much pressure to get outstanding GCSEs and A Levels, to compare yourself to the person sitting next to you. You don't need to.

Your performance is only relative to you - not to the person next to you, not to whoever you measure yourself against in your head. It's the same with running. Performance in sport is only ever an improvement journey over time. There will be dips. Some days will be good, some will not. As long as

your progress over time is positive, that is what matters. Be kind to yourself. Don't put that level of pressure on yourself.

It might not seem like a big thing now, but learning to be kind to yourself will be important once you leave the School. If you get drawn into that pressure culture, it will continue through your twenties, your thirties and forties during your careers. Take the time now to think about what improvement and progress look like for you personally.

That is really all I have for this morning...kindness to yourself, and kindness to others.”

I make no apology in sharing most of Chris' speech with you all. It resonated greatly with me as it validated the School's approach to education and what's important – not only in our formative years, but also during careers, and in the roles we play, far into the future. Research has shown that nearly 4 in 5 centenarians described relationships as the most important part of life, spending time with family or friends and cultivating both joy and purpose. Healthy and happy relationships were better predictors of long and happy lives than social class or IQ.

I wonder what kindness will look like for you today.

Dal Singh
Community Relations Manager &
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Key information

All years

Safeguarding

Online Safety: Gaming

Knowsley City Learning Centres have produced a video for parents and carers focusing on the risks associated with online gaming. It covers four key areas: communication risks from unknown players, in-game spending, age ratings, and how to use reporting tools.

Our students are experienced digital users, but the risks around online gaming, from unsolicited contact to in-game spending, remain live issues. The video is a practical resource for any parent who wants to open that conversation.

[Click this link to view video \(1hour 48mins\)](#)

Current Reading 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

Running for a reason: Chris Fordham's seven marathons in seven days



This week, Reading School welcomed back Old Redingensian Chris Fordham (1994–2001).

Chris is five days into running seven marathons in seven days, covering a route from Gloucestershire to London. He finishes this Sunday at the London Marathon and is raising money for Samaritans, and the reason is personal.

'I lost a friend to suicide just over a year ago,' he told students gathered in the Chapel. 'Like a lot of people who've experienced grief, I felt frustrated and angry, and I wanted to do something that might help others.'

His choice of Samaritans was deliberate. It is a charity he believes fills genuine gaps in mental health provision, working specifically in suicide prevention – especially for men.

He had a direct message for Reading School students. Recognise when help is needed, build the habit of asking for help, and learn to have honest conversations about mental health, all things best practised early.

'Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness,' he said. 'And kindness to each other matters more than we sometimes acknowledge. We can become so focused on performance and results, on how we compare to others, that we lose sight of a simpler question: are you doing better today than yesterday? And if not, that's all right too.'

That idea, of measuring progress against your own baseline rather than someone else's, ran through everything Chris shared. He was frank about how difficult performance culture makes this, in schools, in workplaces, across adult life, and about the quiet toll that can take on mental wellbeing.

Following the talk, Chris set off for Day 5 of his runs with students running alongside him and forming a guard of honour in order to cheer him on.

To support Chris's challenge, visit his fundraising page: [Christopher Fordham is fundraising for Samaritans](#). You can also read the BBC's coverage of his run [here](#).

If you or someone you know needs support, Samaritans are available around the clock on 116 123, or [online](#).

Data, bats and a top-five finish

Year 11 students Abhiram G and Maulik S have recently been placed in the top five nationally in a Cambridge Biology Challenge, a programme run by Homerton College, Cambridge.

The challenge required students to use R, a programming language built for statistical analysis, to examine real biological data. Their question centred on bat echolocation and a pattern known as harmonic hopping, which shapes how bat species communicate, mate and perceive their environment. Working in a language neither had used before, they analysed the data and submitted their own predictions about the causes of the patterns observed.

Finishing in the top five nationally is a strong result. Doing so while teaching yourself the tools as you go says something about how Abhiram and Maulik approach a problem. Speaking with Maulik earlier this week, he shared:

“Biology has always been a passion of mine, with aspirations of becoming a Cardio-Thoracic surgeon in the future. Likewise, for Abhiram computing and technology has been a long-time interest in pursuit of a career in engineering. The Homerton Bioinformatics Programme provided the perfect intersection between these fields, combining biological research with data analysis.

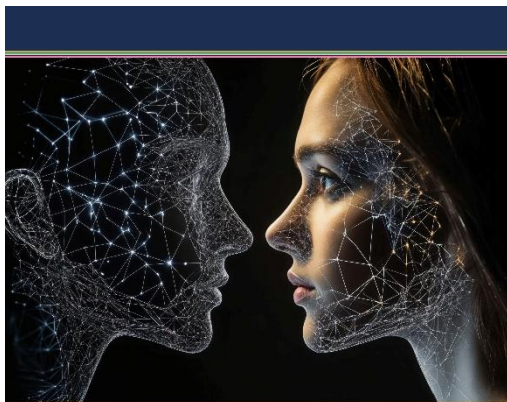
This project builds on the foundations of behavioural biology taught in Year 9, extending the concepts learnt into a data-driven research analysis. While the biology learnt in school often comes as established fact, this project required us to interpret our findings and make the links between the data and biological theory ourselves.”



Abhiram G (11L) and Maulik S (11L)

Reading School Events

Faith & Reason Lecture – What Does It Mean to Be Human in an Age of AI?



Due to unforeseen circumstances, the planned Lecture in March was postponed and a new date has now been confirmed. The Faith & Reason Lecture is confirmed for Thursday 7 May, 15:30–16:30.

As artificial intelligence increasingly shapes how we live, work and make decisions, fundamental questions about humanity, ethics and society come to the fore.

Join us for a thought-provoking lecture by **Jeremy Peckham**, Commissioner at the AI, Faith and Civil Society Commission, as he explores how AI is reshaping our understanding of what it means to be human and the opportunities and challenges this presents for individuals and communities.

The Faith and Reason Lecture Series, hosted by Reading School Chaplaincy, explores the dialogue between science and religion in the pursuit of truth.

Date: Thursday 7th May

Time: 15:30 – 16:30

Venue: Lecture Theatre, Reading School

[RSVP by clicking here](#)

About the speaker

Jeremy Peckham is a technology entrepreneur and AI pioneer with over 30 years' experience in research, innovation and business leadership. He has led major international AI projects, founded multiple tech companies, and now serves as a Commissioner working to ensure human values remain central in the development of AI.

Reading School v Marylebone Cricket Club 2026



Now in its 129th year, this historic fixture has been proudly contested since 1898, making it one of Reading School's most enduring sporting traditions.

Come along for a fantastic afternoon of cricket. Parents are invited to join us **from 3:15pm for the second session**, where you can watch the match and enjoy pizza and ice cream from on-site vendors. From around 5:00pm, there will also be friendly taster cricket sessions for anyone who would like to take part.

Simply bring a blanket, settle in and enjoy a relaxed picnic while watching the cricket.

Date: Friday 26 June 2026

Time: 12:30pm – 7:00pm

Venue: School Field, Reading School

Booking: [RSVP by clicking here](#)

RSPA

Year 7 & 8 Disco at Kendrick School



KPS – The Kendrick Parents' Society

The Kendrick School Parents' Association (KPS) would like to welcome all Year 7 and Year 8 students from Reading School to join Kendrick students for a special event. It will be a fantastic opportunity for students from both schools to come together and celebrate. We look forward to an evening full of fun, music, and dancing.

Date: Friday 24 April 2026

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

Venue: Kendrick School, Main Hall

Ticket Price: £10 (includes water & squash)

Drop-off point: East Street Entrance. Please note - there is no onsite parking.

Pick-up point: All students must be picked up by a parent or carer, as they will not be allowed to leave unaccompanied. We kindly ask that you make the necessary arrangements in advance.

Extras: Snacks and treats available to purchase (cash and card accepted)

Tickets are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. [Book by clicking here.](#)

Books to School – 36 books received so far

Could you please support the LRC by looking through any unwanted paperback books at home? If you have any of the titles listed below, please drop them into 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, which means that your help would be really appreciated.

Alternatively, If you would like to donate £3 to help this fundraiser, please do so by making a transfer to us at:

Reading School Parents Association

Sort code: 60-17-21 Acc no: 04619919

...and we will purchase a book on your behalf from the list. Thank you!

The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

Please note our next planned openings are on:

- Friday 24 April, 3:30 - 4:30pm and Saturday 25th April, 10:30am -12:30pm
- Friday 12 June, 3:30 - 4:30pm and 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 – Friday 1 May, 8am – 10am

We would like to thank all families in advance who have donations to drop off for the Bag 2 School Collection. We have made the drop off as simple and hassle-free for parents as possible:

1. The School's main vehicle gate will be open from 8am – 10am.
2. An RSPA volunteer will be stationed at the Chapel entrance in order to take your donation, leaving you to exit via Craven Road. For those in vehicles, please drive slowly up the drive.



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	

RSPA at the Goring Gap Race Event – Marshals wanted



We are looking for **volunteers** to assist with marshaling duty at The Goring Gap race on **Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 May, 2026**. In return for your help the RSPA receives **£60 per marshal** (with most slots requiring 2 people, paid as £120), in order to raise funds for the School.

Currently the slots are based in Caversham, Tilehurst, Purley, Pangbourne, Whitchurch-on-Thames, Whitchurch Hill, Goring, North Stoke, Wallingford, Shillingford, Little Wittenham and Moulsoford. Last year we raised £900 and the previous year £1,080. There are a lot more slots this year, we could raise £2,200 if we can fill all of them... but we need to be quick before they are taken elsewhere!

Please email Terri at t_lorrimore@hotmail.com or text to 07810 445474. Terri will co-ordinate a slot for you and then you'll be given the race organiser's email and a location map nearer the time.

It's a lovely event. Take a deck chair, a flask of coffee, a newspaper or book, and enjoy 3 to 4 hours of basically cheering people on as they run (or walk) past you. Secondary school age children count as Marshals, if accompanied by a parent, so this is also a way that your child can be with you to help raise funds.

Please see <https://goringgaprun.com/> if you're interested in the event generally.

Please contact us immediately, to register your interest. Many thanks again for all your support, from all on the RSPA team.

The Team

Introducing our Treasurer, Terri Lorrimore

Hello everyone, I'm Terri. I'm Mum to Henry in Year 12 and his elder brother Tom, already at Uni.

I've been part of the RSPA team since my boys started in 2020, when I asked the then Chair if there was anything that I could do to help. I'll confess it's not entirely altruistic. There's lots of research into how children can perform better academically if their parents are positively engaged with the school, and I also wanted to stay engaged before my youngest turns adult. So, after attending a few Uniform Shop openings, and taking on some easy admin stuff, I received a very persuasive phone call asking if I could take on the Treasurer role... and here I still am.

It does suit me. I'm self-employed as a personal tax practitioner, with a legal background also, and so the RSPA is a little like juggling another small business alongside my own. I enjoy the familiarity of the things that I do within my skill-set, but over the years I've also embraced and enjoyed the opportunities to challenge myself. My Classlist status is, "Working Mum, 2 boys, can't bake!" and that sums me up perfectly!

Initially I was concerned that the RSPA would be a closed team, not wanting anyone else to join the ranks. We've all experienced that feeling of being the new kid, wondering if you're going to fit in, and whether you are going to be of any value. Instead, I found that that the RSPA was a welcoming team, and I could go at my own pace until I felt ready to take on a larger role. We had a social night recently, and despite the dark and cold weather I was delighted to be meeting up with everyone in person, because most of our meetings are online.



It's also an organisation that embraces change. By its very nature it has to, since our role on the committee only lasts as long as our child attends Reading School. A good number of the current team have been there for years and will soon be moving on. I've definitely made some friends, had some fun, and felt support and kindness throughout both my mistakes and my successes.

The mistake I remember most was at the Goring Gap Marshaling event. It's one of our annual fundraisers...and I excitedly told everyone to watch out for "Rhino Steve", a familiar contender in the race, and running in his 3D Rhino costume. I made such a big deal of it, shouting "watch out for Rhino Steve, Rhino Steve!", despite the fact his costume clearly says he is called Chris.

This year it takes place on 9th & 10th of May. Do come and marshal, as it raises £60 per volunteer, and you are guaranteed to smile as you cheer and wave at everyone, including Rhino Chris. Bring your son with you. The help is

appreciated, but it can also go on their university application. It's often overlooked that we are a charity, and what we do matters.

If I had to say what I feel has been personally most rewarding for me, it's the Teachers Wishlist. Maybe it's the bargain hunter in me, but collecting all the boxes that arrive, sorting through the gifts to label them up for the departments, and using all the cash donations as efficiently as possible to maximise the gifts we give to the Teachers at the end of each year really is so satisfying. Also humbling when you see what parents donate. December 2025 was our best to date raising well over £5,000 in all sorts of useful equipment, books and toys. What's not to love.

I will be truly sad if this fundraiser doesn't continue after my time at Reading is over, and I thank every parent that supports this event with all of my heart.

I hope that the April Books Campaign also increases each year, as we ask parents to donate certain second-hand children's book to the LRC. I am keen that we all, in as many ways as we can, raise money or save money for the school where possible, preferably at no cost to parents.

Part of being on the RSPA is that you do gain an insight that you may not otherwise experience. When our Headmaster recently announced that certain activities may have to be "binned", because there had been a lack of take up by parents of the "365 Fund", this really resonated with me. There's an assumption that the school is well supported throughout our parent community. Unfortunately, I now know that this is not the case. It is just some of us bearing the responsibility of the many, and I'd like to remind our community that if you haven't already, please do consider signing up to the "365 Fund". Please don't just assume that there are enough parents supporting it. There are not.

[Reading School - Make a Donation](#)

Join in. Gift Aid it. You could minimise the cost to yourself and increase the benefit to School.

Likewise, if you haven't yet joined our RSPA community, please do consider helping us. You could become a member, volunteer at an event, buy a lottery ticket, raise donations just by doing your usual online shop, or ask your employer if they support corporate matching. Some of these don't cost you anything, just a little time. Please do look at our website for ways to help.

[Reading School Parents' Association](#)

And in true Treasurer fashion, I've got some figures to run past you.

- There are approximately 1,500 students at Reading School.
- That's 3,000 parents.
- Our RSPA committee currently has 14 elected and active team members.
- Just 14 parents representing 3,000. How crazy is that.

So, if you want to have a voice in how you can help Reading School; raise and spend monies on helping both the students and the school community, then please do join us. I'm a big supporter of the voting system that allows the committee to make decisions democratically, and your voice may help us to welcome in new energy and ideas! We're especially keen to hear from parents in years 7,8,9 and 10... pre GCSE years, as perhaps you'll become the committee to take the RSPA into the next decade!

Please do reach out to us on contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk if you would like to get involved.

It's been an amazing time for me being part of the RSPA team, and I'm glad that I didn't hesitate.

I hope that you will also find just a little time to join in.

Best wishes

Terri and the RSPA Team

Highlights: Lent Term Week 13

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



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

Seven Marathons, One Message

Kindness to Yourself. Kindness to Others.





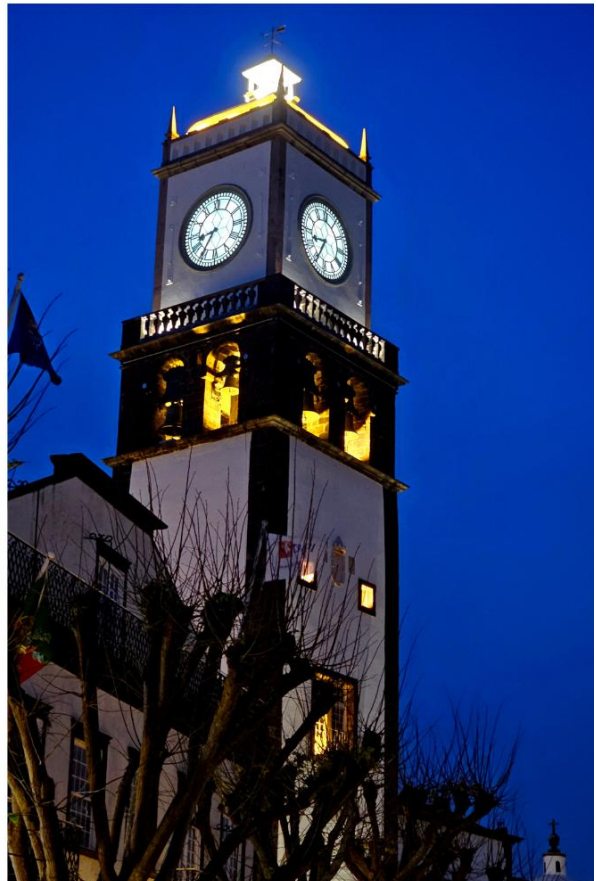




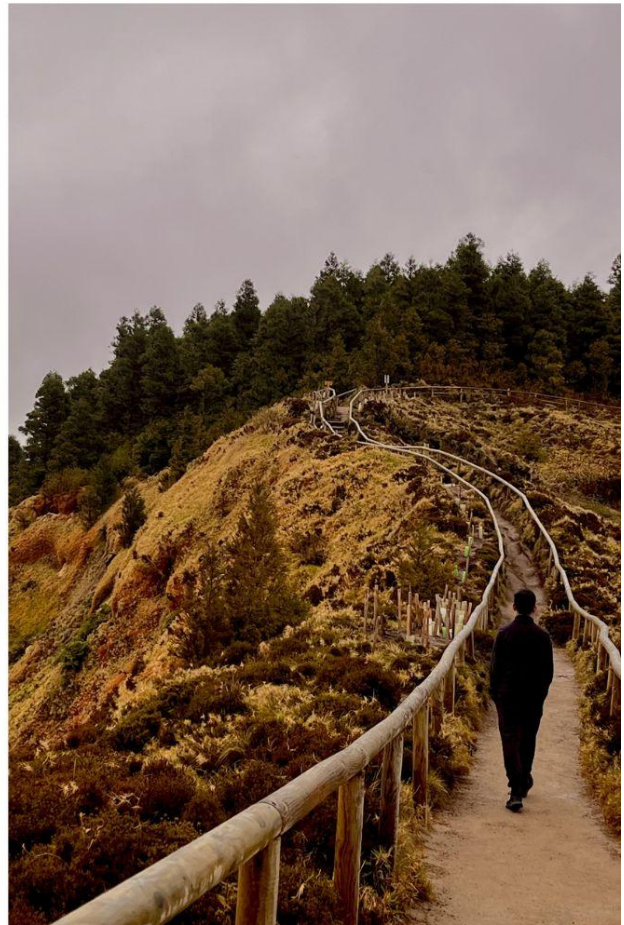
Azores Trip 2026

"Little islands full of prayers and shrines and vesper chimes, strung on a thread of water, like the decades in the windings of a Rosary of the Sea."

Jean Chamblin, Lady Bobs, Her Brother, and I







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