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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Colleagues and Students,

As this week ends, many of you will hear from your sons today how much they've enjoyed their walking in the Chilterns, their exploration of gorges and coasts, their experiences of mentoring primary school children, sleeping in tipis on the school field, creating magical drama and dance during our creative days or visiting Oxford University. Some of you will have heard about exams that went well or test questions that were a struggle!

How lucky we are to have all of these opportunities, and the amazing people who facilitate them.

None of you will hear from your sons, though, about the wonderful work of Mr Symonds, our Head of Operations and Projects.

I wanted to let you know that beneath all the layers of success and celebration in the past fortnight of Belonging Week and exams, we are also celebrating an award of £700,000 from the Department for Education. This won't fund more teachers, more sports equipment or a renewed swimming pool, but will instead be used to replace all of the heating systems in our Main building and in the Page building. These two spaces have been impossible to heat or cool properly for many, many years, but securing this sum from the hugely competitive DfE Condition Improvement Fund will now enable us to improve our environmental sustainability, save children falling asleep on Friday afternoons in sweaty temperatures on sunny days, and rescue colleagues from getting ill due to rooms being too cold.

I write about this hidden success because I want our whole school to celebrate secret, unnoticed, subcutaneous triumphs.

Sometimes, it is the young person who just manages to find enough courage to come to the Year 7 sleepover who has made the greatest achievement. Sometimes the biggest coup is putting pen to paper and attempting an impossible exam question. Sometimes it is a silent inner change – unnoticed by the world – that is the greatest victory.

I hope as this week ends, that we might all be grateful for colleagues like Mrs Phillips – who has tenaciously attended to all the administration of our Belonging Weeks. Or Ms Povey – who has managed all our exam entries. Or Mrs Woodcock – fearlessly focussed on making our budget work. Or Mrs Narayanan – who has been looking after all those students who couldn't attend one or other activity this week. Or Mrs Thorne – who has made sure we have appropriately recruited all the staff we need for next year.

Behind all of the joys and excitement of being a school there are dozens and dozens of staff who labour with profound commitment to make everything work. Their victories remind us that what matters most is often the paddling underneath the surface, and I can promise you, you'll not find a school anywhere in the world with more of that!

Wishing you all a happy weekend,

Dr Evans

Key information

Uniform Adjustment: Shorts Permitted from Monday 8 June

Formal/tailored charcoal grey shorts may be worn until the end of term, provided all other uniform standards are maintained. Socks must be black or grey; shoes plain black leather (brown for Sixth Form). Cargo pockets, shorts below the knee, or excessively short shorts are not permitted. Students choosing to wear blazers or coats should not be in shorts. This adjustment will be withdrawn for any student not meeting wider uniform expectations.

Uniform Standards - A Reminder

No branded or black leather trainers - students should ensure any worn or damaged shoes are replaced promptly.

Navy blue tracksuit bottoms only - black tracksuit bottoms are not permitted.

School Community News

Belonging Week 2026: Week 2

With both weeks of Belonging Week 2026 now complete, the school community can take stock of what was, by any measure, the most ambitious year of the programme yet.

Week 1 saw Year 8 students depart on residential trips to Rock UK's Summit Centre in the Brecon Beacons and Cumulus Outdoors in Dorset. Both groups returned having covered a remarkable range of experiences: caving through tight rock passages in the dark, kayaking, archery, indoor climbing, high rope courses, and, in the case of Team Cumulus, a final evening around a fire pit under dark skies. As Mr Tom Evans, Assistant Headteacher, reflected: "The trip is never really about the activities. It's about giving boys the space to reframe how they see themselves. To come back to school with a quiet new certainty: I can do this. I do get on with my peers. I am actually capable of more than I thought."

While Year 8 were away, Year 10 students spent the week in service. Coaching primary school children in cricket across multiple local schools, delivering Science, Computer Science, Robotics and music sessions, and taking pupils from St Mary and All Saints CE Primary School and New Town Primary School out onto the water for their first experience of rowing at the Reading School Boathouse.

Year 10 also travelled to Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School to deliver sports sessions.



The week closed with a fitting reward: Mr Blade, Head of Cricket, and Berkshire Cricket gave Year 10 a match of their own on the school field. Learn, teach, then play. Week 1 ended with the Year 8 House Cricket Tournament, with County, East, Laud, School and West Houses competing under the watchful eye of the Sixth Form Prefect Team, who umpired throughout.

Week 2 brought a different set of year groups and a broader geographical reach. Year 7 students began at Oakwood Climbing Centre, where harness checks, zip wires, archery and rope courses replaced the classroom for the day. Some discovered a talent for hitting targets. Others discovered something quieter and more lasting about what they are capable of when they have to be.



The following day, Year 7 took part in a Creative Day, with students choosing their preferred discipline for what was billed as a day of creative magic. Drama proved the most popular option, drawing over 40 boys. The day opened with group cohesion activities designed to build trust and confidence, before moving into the fundamentals of character creation, exploring how physicality and movement can shape a performance. The centrepiece was the Wheel of Doom challenge: groups were randomly assigned a genre, a costume item, and a prop, then tasked with building an original performance around all three. The day closed with a showcase of performances, with awards presented for Best Actor and Best Overall Performance. It was, by all accounts, exactly what a Creative Day should be.

Year 9 dispersed across Europe and the north of England. One group travelled to Copenhagen, where frisbee in the King's Gardens, an introduction to the Danish board game Klask, and an evening in a

board games café gave way to the kind of easy, unhurried conversation that only happens when boys are away from their normal routines. A second group headed to How Stean Gorge in North Yorkshire for caving, gorge walking and Via Ferrata, a high-wire climbing route built directly into the limestone cliffs. Further Year 9 groups headed to Sweden, Lee Valley, and worked with Reach Outdoors and Climb, Canoe and Camp. Year 7 also visited the Science Museum as part of their week.

And on Thursday, bringing the week to a close, Year 7s got to camp out on the front field during the annual Festival of Belonging – and by the looks of it, they all belonged.



“The new secondary school year began with many questions and uncertainties, from settling in to making friendships. Looking back, it has been an incredible year - my son has made remarkable progress in every way. We are truly grateful to the Reading School team for nurturing, safeguarding, and guiding him so thoughtfully. Your support has made all the difference.” Sue P, Year 7 Parent

Belonging Week is not a single event. It is, as the programme's design makes clear, a thread that runs through a student's time at Reading School: each year building on the last, each experience slightly harder, slightly more demanding, slightly more outward-facing than the one before. What Year 7 begins at a climbing wall, Year 10 completes on the riverbank with a primary school child in a boat.

From the riverbank to the rock face, from the science lab to the music room, Belonging Week reminds us that some of the most important learning at Reading School happens when the timetable stops.

Student Achievements

From the Solent to Buckingham Palace – Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award



In March 2026, Raphael N (12E) completed his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, and on 20th May was invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace to mark the 70th Anniversary of the DofE programme. He is one of a small number of young people nationally to have been recognised in this way.

The Gold Award is the most demanding of the three DofE levels, requiring sustained commitment across five sections: skills, volunteering, physical activity, expedition and residential. For Raphael, completing it was anything but straightforward.

His skills section centred on singing, both as a soloist and in choral settings, over a twelve-month period. During that time, he toured Finland and Estonia with the Taplow Youth Choir, achieved ABRSM Grade 6 Singing with Merit despite sitting the exam with a chest infection, won multiple categories at the

Woodley Festival of Music and Arts including the Brunel Cup for the best under-18 recital, and completed ABRSM Grade 8 Singing with Distinction. For his physical section he trained and competed with Tilehurst Swimming Club, progressing from the DEV squad to the JAG squad. His residential section was completed on his first ever National Youth Choir course in August 2024.

In January 2025, Raphael was hospitalised with a serious flare-up of gut-related issues and spent several months recovering. He is candid about the impact: the pause was significant. What is equally significant is that he did not use it as a reason to stop.

His expedition section involved sailing for the first time on a 38-foot yacht around the Solent, first on a practice expedition investigating coastal defences, then on a five-day assessed expedition examining pollution in the waterway. By the end, he had gained his Competent Crew certification.

For his volunteering section, Raphael served as a pupil librarian in the LRC for over twelve months, supporting events including House Reading, the Harry Potter Quiz and Book Week. He has, by his own account, been involved with the LRC since Year 7 and describes it as one of the most rewarding parts of his time at Reading School.

In his own words: *"I've found my Gold DofE Award to be an incredible and transformative experience. It has really helped me build my confidence and given me a massive sense of accomplishment, whilst still driving me to be the best I can be and achieve even greater heights."*



Reading School congratulates Raphael on an achievement that required not just effort and ability, but genuine resilience.

Eight Medals. Fourteen Personal Bests.



Taksh C (7W) has had an outstanding few weeks in the pool. Recently competing at the South East Regional Swimming Championships, he faced one of the most demanding fields in age-group swimming in the country: over 38,000 athletes across the region competing for just 1,850 places.

Taksh entered 14 events covering all four strokes and individual medley, qualified for finals in 13 of those 14, and set personal best times across all 14. He returned home with eight medals: four Silver and four Bronze.

His next target is a South East Regional gold medal, with national championships eligibility approaching as he turns 13. A significant achievement, and one the Reading School community will be following closely.

Taksh's father, Mr Chopdekar shared, *"The South East Regional Championships are a completely different level of competition to anything Taksh has faced before. To set personal bests in every single event and come away with eight medals tells you everything about the work he has put in. We could not be prouder."*

A black belt in Martial Arts - Training pays off



Earning a First Degree Black Belt is one of the most recognised milestones in martial arts, but it is frequently misunderstood. It is not the end of a journey. In most disciplines, it marks the point at which a student has demonstrated sufficient mastery of the fundamentals to begin learning in earnest. The grading process is rigorous: candidates are assessed on technical precision, physical conditioning, mental discipline, and the ability to perform under pressure. Most practitioners train for a minimum of four to six years before they are considered ready to attempt it.

Jishnu B (10E) has been training since the age of five. That is the better part of a decade of consistent commitment to his discipline, training through the junior-coloured belt grades before earning the right to grade for black belt through Matt Fiddes Martial Arts. He has now also taken on the role of junior instructor at his local branch, passing on his skills to younger students.

That progression, from student to teacher, is entirely in the spirit of what Reading School asks of its community. It is, in its own way, learn, lead, serve.

We congratulate Jishnu on a significant personal achievement and wish him well as he continues both his training and his teaching.

Reading School Events

Speech Day 2026



Reading School is delighted to introduce the inaugural **Speech Day 2026**, taking place on **Tuesday 23rd June 2026**, kindly sponsored by the *Reading Foundation*. This new event brings together the former Junior and Senior Prize Giving ceremonies into a single day celebrating our students.

The day will include:

- **Junior Celebration (09:00–12:00)** for Year 7–10 students and their parents/carers
- **Senior Celebration (13:30–17:30)** for Year 13 students and their parents/carers

The Junior Celebration will feature prize giving, speeches, performances and student showcases by year group across a range of subjects and activities. The Senior Celebration will include prize giving, presentation of A-Level certificates, student performances and guest speakers, followed by refreshments.

Students receiving individual prizes will be notified separately by email, no later than Monday 15th June.

Please note that the School will not be running timetabled lessons on Speech Day. Year 12 students will instead complete structured independent study tasks at home, with a small number of incoming prefects supporting the event during the day.

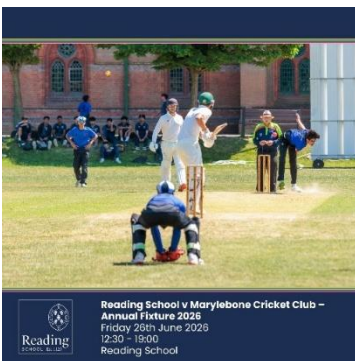
Further details are included in the letter sent earlier this week. Parents/carers are warmly invited to attend and are kindly asked to confirm attendance by **9:00am on Friday 5th June** via the links below:

[Junior Celebration](#)

[Senior Celebration](#)

If you have any queries regarding the Speech Day, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Chong at events@reading-school.co.uk.

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](#)

External Events

Brazilian Festival – Save the Date



Date: Saturday 18 July

Time: 11.00am – 17.00pm

Venue: Reading School Refectory

Tickets: Free Entry

Enjoy authentic Brazilian food, live music, traditional dancing, family entertainment, bingo, games and much more.

Summer Coding Club

FunTech will once again be returning to Reading School to deliver their summer technology camps, giving children aged 7 to 17 the chance to code, create and build exciting digital projects.

With over 30 years' experience, FunTech makes coding fun and purposeful, helping children design games, code robots and create digital worlds while developing real coding skills in small classes. From Minecraft and Roblox to Python, Java and AI, each course turns children's interests into valuable technical skills.



FunTech has also launched its new **AI Vibe Coding** course for students aged 13+, helping them use AI to turn ambitious ideas into impressive coding projects.

For families balancing summer plans, FunTech also offers:

Flexi Camps

Designed for hybrid-working families, Flexi Camps keep the full week experience while allowing children to attend from the centre or home on different days.

Camp Swap

Families can secure the Early Bird rate now and change the camp date, location or course up to two weeks before the camp start date.

[Explore courses and book here.](#)

RSPA

Reading 10k marshal event – raising £1,990 for an outdoor learning area

Following on from our success marshalling at the Goring Gap fundraiser, we attended another event as marshalling volunteers, this time The Green Park 10k. With the help of some kind parents and students we spent the morning of Sunday 31st May helping to organise the runners kit bags and distributing the medals and gifts at the finish line. It is such a joy to see the runners celebrating at these events as they cross the finish line, particularly the younger ones.

Our thanks go out to Pallavi, Menaka, Terri, Kerry, Suman & Sheshadri, Surangi & Mahesha, as well as Henry & Moksha (both 12E) and Satvick (9C), who did a fabulous job on the day, alongside the many volunteers and staff at Good Running events that help make these experiences happen.

We loved the positive feedback from everyone there, and all their smiles.

The total of the two events has now raised £1,990, which will be used to install a designated outdoor learning area in the school grounds, as part of the varied and unique floreat and electives programme, Future Stories, and opportunities for outdoor study, rolled out by Reading School.



The pre-loved Uniform Shop opening dates for the Summer Term

Please note our next planned openings are on:

- Saturday 13 June, 10:30 - 12:30pm
- Wednesday 24 June (Yr7 Induction Day) 3.00 – 4.30 pm
- Saturday 1 August 10.30 - 12.30pm
- Wednesday 26 August 6.00 -7.00 pm

If you have any questions and want to get in touch with the shop team then please email us at shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk. Should you have any unwanted items of uniform, please consider donating them to us. All donations can be left at Student Services in School. Thank you for your continued support.

We look forward to seeing you there!

The RSPA Team

Highlights: Summer Term Week 7

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



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

Belonging Week – Week 2

As a reward for their hard work delivering Science sessions to local primary school's during Belonging Week, Year 10s enjoyed action packed day on the water at Lee Valley White Water Centre. Most managed to stay in the raft on the rapids...



Year 10s who delivered music sessions to local primary Schools were taken to the [Bate Collection](#) housed by the University of Oxford. The collection of musical instruments covers Western orchestral traditions from the Middle Ages to the present day and it holds over 2,000 instruments.





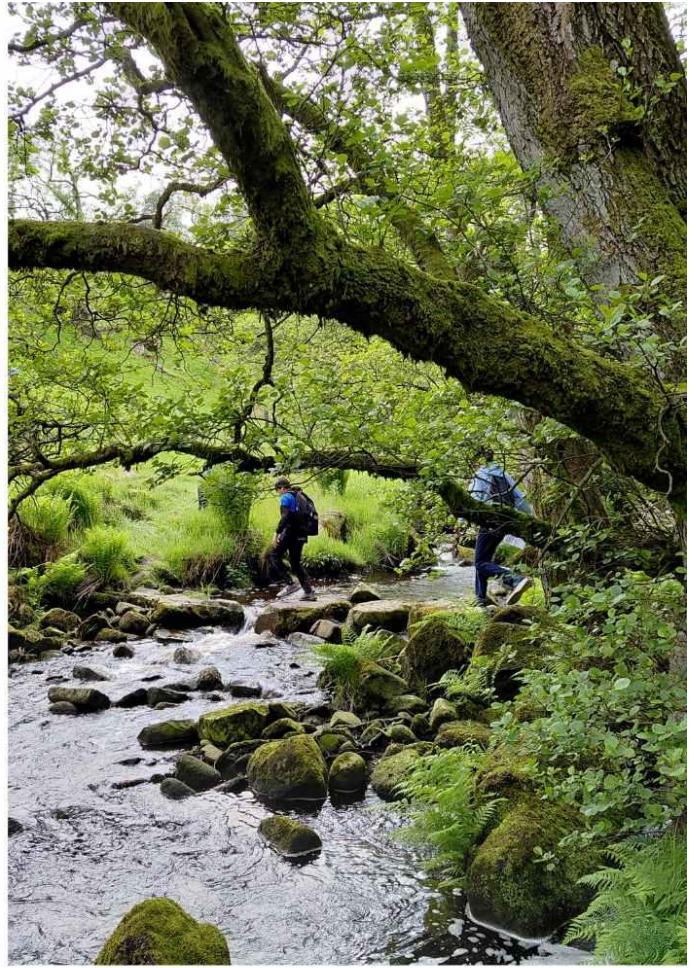
Year 7s spending a full day exploring dance with full performances at the end of the day



Year 9s experiencing outdoor adventures in Devon

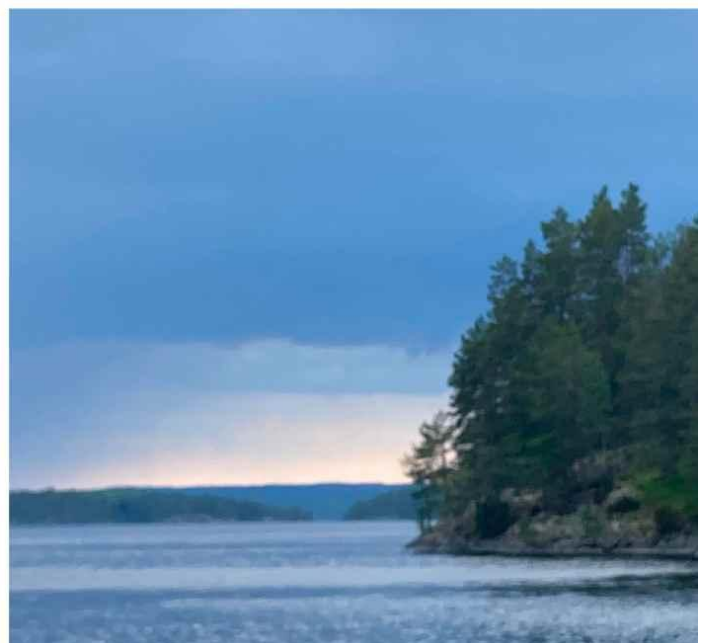


Year 9s taking in the Yorkshire Dales



International Trips to Dalstrand in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark









The whole of Year 7 camping out on the front school field













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