



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

01 October 2026

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Colleagues,

This week, I have found myself reflecting on the importance of the people we choose to surround ourselves with. As our community mourns the sudden loss of Damian, our Chef de Partie, I have been struck by the quiet strength, compassion and professionalism shown by our Catering Team. Every day, they do far more than prepare meals. They take time to get to know our students, to notice them, encourage them and care for them. Their dedication to our School community is remarkable, and in challenging circumstances they have continued to place our students at the centre of everything they do.

Helen Keller once wrote, "*Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.*" This week has reminded me how true those words are. Across the School, colleagues have rallied around one another with kindness, compassion and support. At moments such as these, we are reminded that our greatest strength is not our buildings, our results, or our traditions, but our people and the relationships they build together.

Many teams across the School have exemplified this spirit recently. Our Boarding Staff continue to go above and beyond in supporting and nurturing the young people in their care. Our Finance Team have embarked on the significant task of preparing for their annual audit with their usual diligence and attention to detail. Within our Estates Team, we say farewell to Marcin, who is leaving the School after 2 years. His warmth, positivity and willingness to help have touched countless members of our community, and I know many students will remember him fondly and be grateful for the many positive interactions they shared.

I have said many times this week that Reading School is a wonderful place to learn and belong. It is not wonderful because we never face challenges or sadness. Rather, it is wonderful because of the way people respond when we do. We are fortunate to work alongside colleagues who care deeply about one another and about the students we serve. In those moments of challenge, our values are not simply words on a page; they are lived through acts of kindness, service and collective support.

Looking ahead this month, I invite all students to prepare themselves for Reading Week. Scholarship is about far more than mastering examination content. It is about developing a lifelong curiosity about the world and a willingness to engage with ideas beyond the classroom. Reading remains one of the most powerful ways to achieve this. Through Reading Week, taking place from Monday 19 October – Friday 23 October, we strongly encourage every single student to stretch themselves, explore new perspectives, and encounter ideas that challenge and inspire them.

Books have a unique ability to introduce us to new ideas, cultures and ways of thinking - helping us better understand both ourselves and the world.

As J.R.R. Tolkien wrote, "*All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.*" We hope that our students embrace the opportunity to use that time wisely: to read widely, think deeply and discover something new, ensuring that their education extends well beyond the boundaries of any curriculum.

Lizzie Ayres
Acting Head

Key information

All Years

Reading Week 2026

The School's annual Reading Week will take place from **Monday 19 October – Friday 23 October**. The week represents an opportunity for students to focus on reading beyond the curriculum while using a framework provided by the School. Reading can take many forms; for academic development, discovery, as well as for pleasure, and we would encourage students to use the guidance provided by the School to immerse yourselves in a rich and varied diet of subject matter in order to increase your appreciation for reading, listening, researching and watching.

To find out more about your next steps in order to prepare for Reading Week, please [click this link](#).

Years 11 and 13 Only

GCSE and A Level Exam Contingency Day 2027

The awarding bodies have collectively agreed a contingency day for several years now which is always scheduled at the end of the GCSE, GCE AS and A-level exam timetables. The contingency day is in the event of national or significant local disruption to exams in the United Kingdom, being part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for exams. The June 2027 contingency day is at the end of the timetable being scheduled on **Wednesday 23 June 2027**. Students should factor in this date when making plans for the summer.

Safeguarding

Online Safety Briefing for Parents

A briefing on current online risks for children and teenagers is now available for parents to watch by [clicking here](#) (55mins). Prepared by Knowsley City Learning Centres, it covers sextortion and image-based abuse, extremist groups that recruit through gaming and chat platforms, Roblox and Discord, and why age limits alone are not protecting children. It also sets out practical steps for home, including parental controls, keeping devices out of bedrooms overnight and asking children who they are watching, not just what.

The most important message for families is that children are more likely to tell an adult about something worrying if they know they will not lose their device or be in trouble for doing so.

If you have a concern about a student's online safety, please contact Reading School's Safeguarding Team by emailing safeguarding@reading-school.co.uk

School Community News

Second Place at the 2026 'Chinese Bridge' Mandarin Speaking Competition

Last Friday, Year 11 students travelled to London for the awards ceremony of the 2026 'Chinese Bridge' Mandarin Speaking Competition, where they received second place in the Intermediate Level.

The competition committee received 108 entries from 49 schools across the country, involving 467 contestants in total. Placing second in that field is an outstanding result.

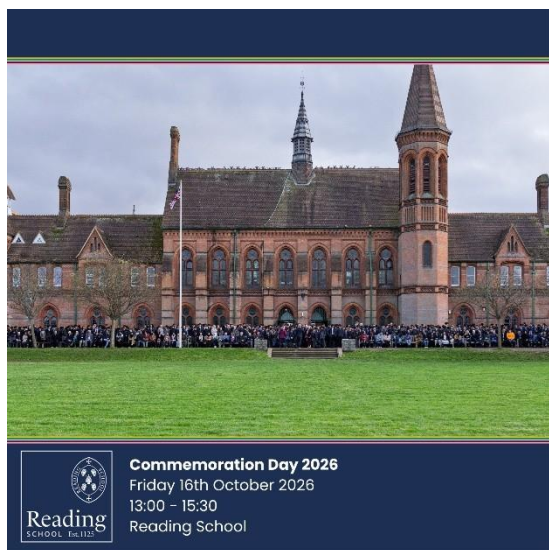
Congratulations to Yatharth P, Grigory V, Aarav S, Evangelos D and Bhanuteja M, who achieved second place in the Intermediate Group Video Competition! Their creativity and strong Mandarin speaking skills were fantastic to see.

A special mention also goes to Rupert T, who represented our School in the individual competition and made it all the way to the final. He gave an excellent performance and really demonstrated his impressive Mandarin language ability.



Reading School Events

Commemoration Day 2026



Following the success of the 2025 Commemoration Day, we are pleased to once again open the School to the Redingensian community for Commemoration Day on **Friday 16 October 2026** from 1pm. Parents and carers are warmly invited to join us in commemorating the founders and benefactors of Reading School.

On the day

1.15pm – Arrival and Registration with tea/coffee served in Music School

1.45pm – Student-led learning walks across the School

2.45pm – Commemoration Service in the School Chapel

3.25pm – Departure

You'll be welcomed with tea and coffee in the Music School by Acting Head, Lizzie Ayres, before setting off on a student-led learning walk, a rare and genuine window into a normal school afternoon. Each walk takes in three subject lessons (around 20 minutes each) across different parts of the School, giving you the chance to see teaching in action and chat informally with staff and students along the way.

The afternoon draws to a close with a moving service of praise and thanksgiving in the School Chapel, led by School Chaplain Mark Amos.

This really is a rare chance to step inside the life of the School on an ordinary teaching day and to stand alongside our whole community as we mark this important occasion together.

How to register your interest

Places are limited, and we expect demand to be high, so please don't delay. Please complete the form below to register your interest in attending:

[Commemoration Day 2026 - Parent Ballot Entry – Fill out form](#)

If the number of requests exceeds our capacity, places will be allocated by random ballot to keep the process fair for every family.

A few important details:

- Only adults (parents, carers, or family members) may register interest. Regrettably, we are **unable to accommodate children** at this event.
- Entries close **9.00am on Friday 2 October 2026**.
- **Successful applicants will be notified by Friday 9 October 2026.**
- Submitting an entry registers your interest but does not guarantee a place. We will do everything we can to welcome as many families as possible.

Thank you for your understanding, and we very much hope to see many of you there as we celebrate Reading School and its community together.

Years 12 & 13 Only - Interdisciplinary Academic Conference 2026



We are pleased to let you know about an exciting opportunity for our Sixth Form students to attend our inaugural **Interdisciplinary Academic Conference**, during **Reading Week** on **Friday 23rd October 2026**.

This conference brings together alumni, academics and leading professionals **from medicine and public health, law, politics and public policy, through to engineering and technology, economics, finance and business** to explore how failure, disaster and near misses shape innovation, safety, leadership, ethics and decision-making.

Date: Friday 23rd October 2026 (Reading Week)

Time: 8.30 – 16.45 with optional networking and dinner until 22.00

Location: Reading School

Please find the full **details of the programme, speaker line-up and ticket pricing** on the conference website: [Failure, Disaster and Near Misses · Interdisciplinary Academic Conference 2026 · Reading School](#)

This event is currently only open to Old Redingensians, with some tickets made available for Year 12 & Year 13 Sixth Form students who would like to attend alongside this wider audience.

It's a valuable opportunity to hear from leading speakers, learn about current developments in an array of fields, build a network and it can also be a strong addition to UCAS applications or personal statements.

How to Register your Interest

As places are limited, sixth form students will need to register to be considered for a space at this conference by completing this form: [Interdisciplinary Academic Conference 2026 - Limited Sixth Form Places – Fill out form](#)

1. Students **must use their school email address** when completing the form
2. If demand exceeds the number of available places, **random selection will take place via a ballot**. Priority will be given to those who can attend the full day.
3. **All students who registered their interest will hear back by Friday 9th October 2026.**
4. **Successful students will receive instructions on how to book their ticket. Tickets are a flat rate of £37**, whether attending one session or the whole programme. Catering is included throughout.
5. **Tickets must not be purchased until students have received an official invitation to attend.**

For any queries, please contact Miss Hutchinson at events@reading-school.co.uk.

RSPA

Uniform Shop – Grand Opening Saturday 3 October



The RSPA Uniform Shop has a new home next to Music School and we're excited to welcome you and your family during our next opening times:

Friday 2nd October: 3.30pm – 4.30pm (there is no parking on site)

Saturday 3rd October: 10.30am–12.30pm **“GRAND OPENING” (parking available in walled car park, opposite the chapel)**

As the weather turns, we're putting a special focus on autumn and winter coats - a great chance to get your boys ready for school trips and the colder months ahead:

🧥 Raincoats/Fleeces - £5 🧥 Spring/Autumn coats - £7 🧥 Winter coats - £10

To find us, after entering the School from Erleigh Road, turn left immediately and walk past Music School. The shop is clearly labelled and in the next building on the left.

All parents/families and carers are warmly invited to our new well stocked shop. Please note cash is preferred to avoid card transaction fees.

Please come and meet the RSPA team and Shop Managers Jas & Anya who have worked very hard to get the shop ready for you all. Some of our committee members will be there if you would like to have a chat about getting involved in some way.

To celebrate there will be tea & coffee, cold drinks, cakes & cookies and other refreshments for sale on the day. All proceeds from the shop and refreshments go to support our boys and our School - so please join us and give generously!

All enquiries: shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk



RSPA 81st Anniversary Quiz – only 2 weeks to go!



To celebrate this amazing achievement, we would like to welcome all parents, student, staff, families and friends to a quiz in the School Refectory on **Thursday 15th October at 7pm.**

Whether you are a first timer or a regular quiz goer this event is a great way to get to know fellow parents, staff and students who form the Reading School community. Have fun and enjoy a bit of friendly rivalry to help raise much needed funds to pay for projects that the School cannot.

We are organising a raffle with lots of amazing prizes, kindly donated by local businesses. A £50 voucher from Bills restaurant, a social darts experience for a team of up to 20, Cafe Yolk vouchers, luxury M&S chocolate/savoury selection boxes, £75 Floatation therapy and Steam sauna session, Introductory Hotpodyoga session and many more in the pipeline which will go down very well with the boys! **BUT YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!**

There will be a variety of hot & cold food and sweet treats, as well as drinks for sale, with all proceeds from the event going towards the RSPA and ultimately to the School for the benefit of all the boys.

This is our biggest event of the year with a lot of preparation going on behind the scenes. All we need you to do is to book your individual/team ticket using the booking link or QR code below. Let's be here for a further 81 years!

[Click here to book](https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GZFD)

Highlights: Michaelmas Term Week 4

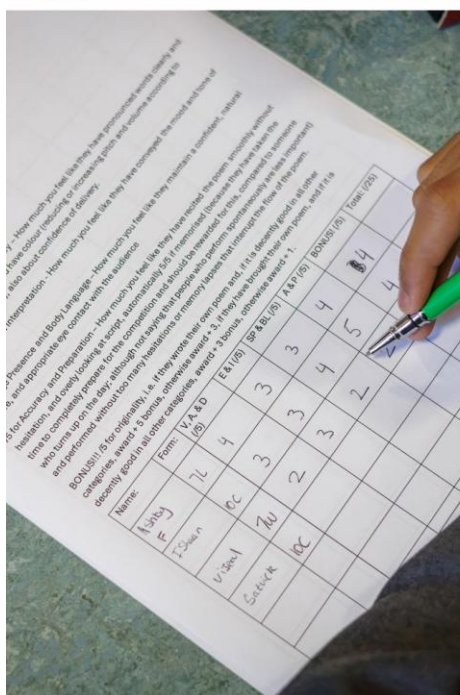
Join the Reading School community online and never miss a moment.

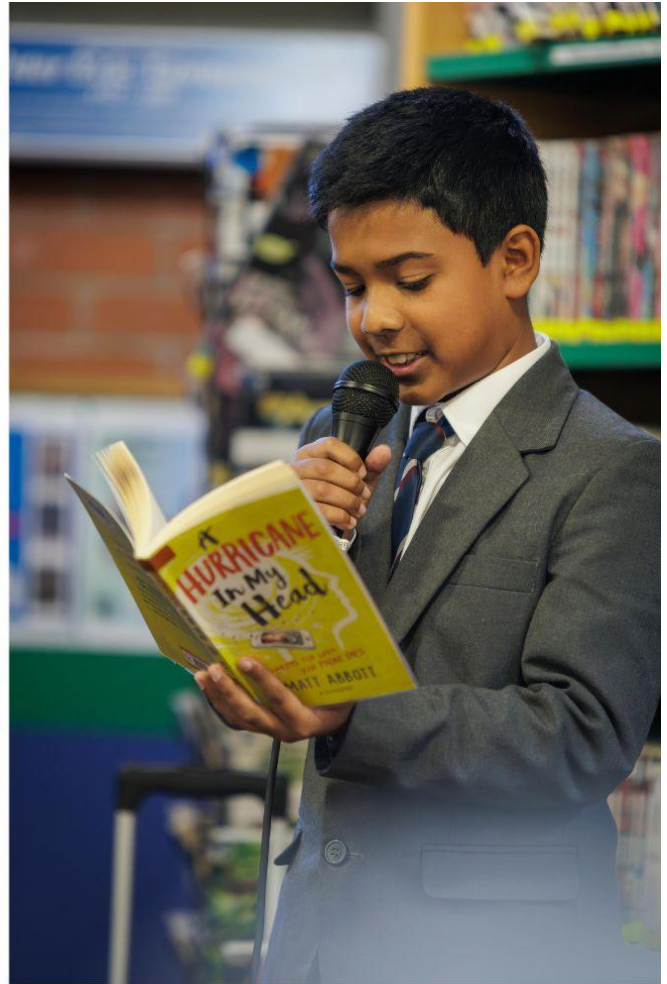


Facebook: ReadingSchoolOfficial **Instagram:** @reading_sch **LinkedIn:** school/reading-school

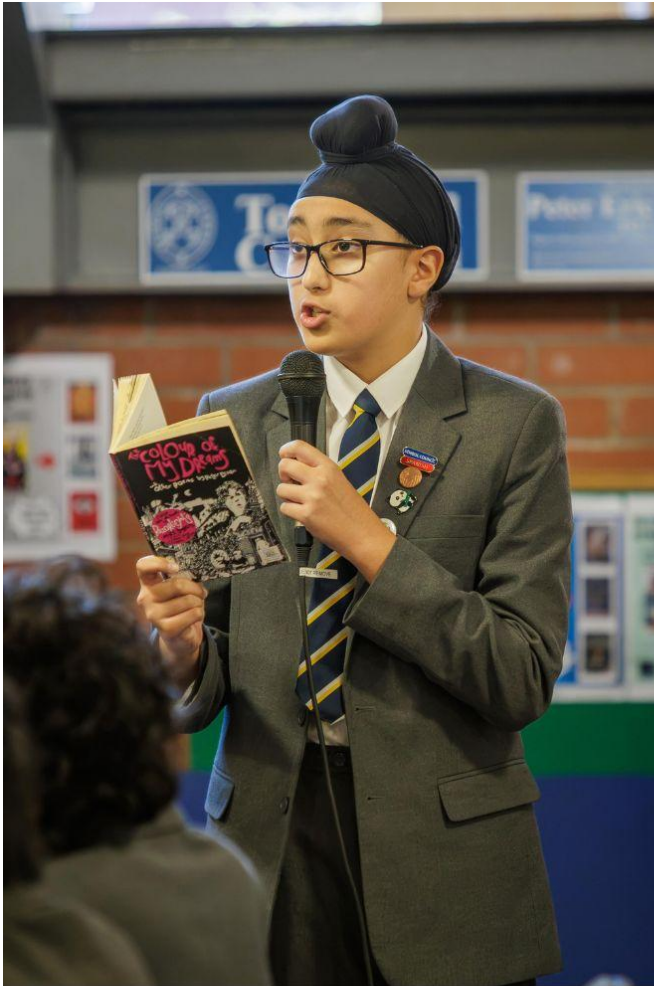
Poetry Under the Stairs Competition 2026

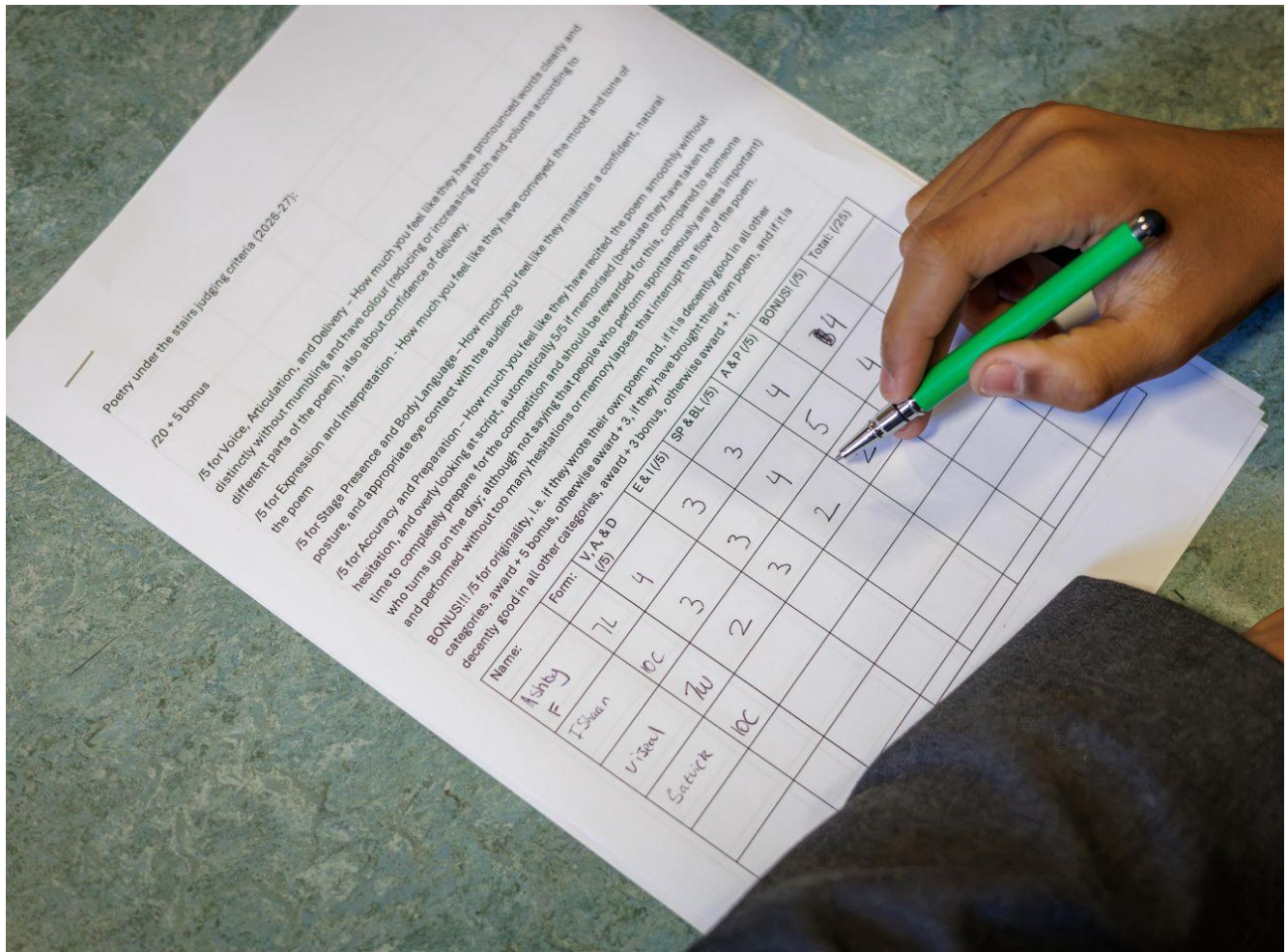
National Poetry Day was celebrated this week with our much loved annual Poetry the Stairs Competition. Students were invited to recite poetry (LRC) and were judged by a panel of their peers.











Extreme Reading Winners 2026

Each summer we challenge all new Year 7 students to take a photo reading somewhere interesting or unusual during their holidays.



38 students entered this year and we are delighted to announce that the winners are: Will L (7C), Oakley K (7E), Ashby F (7L), Shreyan D (7S), Zaid R (7W) and Joshua K (7W)







GCSE Drama Theatre Visit – Beetlejuice the Musical

Our Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE Drama students got to attend a performance of *Beetlejuice the Musical* as part of their GCSE Drama course. The visit gave students a fantastic opportunity to experience live theatre and deepen their understanding of the many elements of theatrical performance and production. Throughout the show, students observed acting, vocal and physical skills, set design, lighting, sound, costume, and special effects in a professional production setting.



The production brought GCSE Drama lessons to life, giving students a memorable evening and a deeper understanding of how every part of theatre works together. They will draw on it throughout the year in both their written and practical work.

Sports Fixtures

The 2nd XI Football Team fought back in the National Cup after going 1-0 down, to hold onto a win.
Goals from Henry R, Lloyd D-O (2) and Filippo B.



Year 7 played their first competitive rugby match, narrowly losing 6 tries to 4 against Bohunt.

Reading School swimmers took part in the Surrey Schools Relays at Guildford Spectrum on 25 September. The competition feeds into the national event and the Senior team swam against older, highly experienced opponents, with those watching praising the team spirit and sportsmanship shown throughout.



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