

Headmaster’s Weekly Bulletin

20 November 2026

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Colleagues,

As Pastoral Manager, my role is to help ensure that our students are safe, happy and well. This encompasses attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, medical needs and first aid.

On Wednesday, the Berkshire immunisation team visited Reading School to deliver the annual flu vaccinations for students in Years 7-11. Coordinating appointments for 776 students was no small task.

After a busy day of administering both nasal spray and intramuscular vaccinations, the team began packing up before heading off to their next school. During this time, one of the nurses, who was visiting Reading School for the first time, commented on how remarkable our students had been. She explained that of the 85 boys she had personally vaccinated, all but one had thanked her afterwards.

Her colleagues were quick to agree. They spoke warmly about how much they enjoy visiting Reading School because our students are consistently polite, respectful and well mannered.

For me, this feedback was particularly meaningful. We are rightly proud of our students' academic achievements, but qualities such as kindness, gratitude and good manners are equally important. Success in life is not measured solely by examination results, but also by how we treat others.

I feel this same sense of pride whenever a student comes into Student Services and says, "*Good morning, Dr Brookings*. *How are you?*", or when I hear a boy politely ask a parent for help and remember to say "*please*" and "*thank you*".

These everyday acts of courtesy may seem small, but they speak volumes about the character of our students. They reflect the values we strive to promote as a school community, and they remind us that working in partnership with you as parents and carers, Reading School boys are not only capable young men, but considerate and respectful ones too.

Dr Paula Brookings
Pastoral Manager

Key Information

Parents only

Parent Governor Vacancy - Election

A reminder that the ballot to fill the parent governor vacancy takes place next week.

There have been three nominations from:

- Roopinder Brar
- Michael Reed
- Claire Heffernan

Their statements in support of their candidacy can be found by clicking here.

The election will be by electronic vote. Ballot papers and details of how to vote will be sent to all parents via e-mail on the morning of Monday 23 November 2026. The ballot will close at 4pm on Friday 27 November.

Parents, Students and Staff

Governors' Annual Report to Parents 2025-26

Each year the Governing Body reports to parents on how the School has performed and where it is heading. This year's report covers the end of our 900th anniversary year and this summer's examination results: 74% of A level grades were A* or A, 86% of GCSE entries were graded 7 to 9, and 25 students won places at Oxford or Cambridge. It also covers our work to widen access, attendance and student welfare, sport and enrichment, improvements to the School site and our finances. It ends with the priorities in our new strategic development plan for 2026 to 2036, which governors approved in July. We encourage every family to read it.

Click here to read the Governors' Annual Report to Parents 2025-26

Boarding judged Outstanding by Ofsted

Ofsted inspected our boarding provision in September and judged it Outstanding in every area.

Inspectors found "*a highly dedicated and caring staff team who create a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where boarders thrive.*" The report highlights the warmth of the boarding staff, the strong sense of community and belonging among boarders, and the part this plays in "*the exceptional progress that boarders make.*"

The result belongs to the whole boarding community: the boarding team, the catering and cleaning staff who support daily life in the houses, and our governors, in particular our Boarding Governor. Above all, it reflects our boarders and the sense of family they create together.

Reading School is one of around 40 state schools in the country to offer boarding alongside a selective academic education and this report confirms that our boarders receive the same high standard of care as they do of teaching.

You can read the full report on the Ofsted website by clicking here.

School Community News

Exemplary on the Number 3



The best measure of a school's character is how its students behave when nobody from school is watching. This week a member of the public emailed us after a journey on a packed number 3 bus through Shinfield, and we wanted to share what they wrote:

"Hi, this is probably a bit of a long shot. I'm just a member of public who literally got off the number 3 in Shinfield. A group of about four or five lads were on the bus with me. It was particularly rammed and I have to say their behaviour was absolutely exemplary.

There was an elderly couple behind me who weren't sure where they were going so the boys had a look on the app to make sure they hadn't missed their stop and helped them on and off the bus.

Because there was only standing room, they were making space for other members of the public and getting on and off to make sure everybody had ease of access. And were checking that those passengers around them were okay. They were just fabulous. I know it's probably impossible to track them down. They were talking about a Badminton match that they were involved in, an upcoming rugby match that was a cup game. And also one of them was mentioning he's a compere for a show that's coming up. So if you are able to track them down, please say thank you."

Drop a stone into still water and the ripples reach places you never see. Kindness works the same way.

Bernoulli Bros take on STEM Racing



Six Reading School students (front cover image) are designing, building and racing a miniature Formula 1 car. They are also running the team like a small business, racing as the Bernoulli Bros. The team will compete in the Development Class regional final of STEM Racing on 25 February.

The team: Abhiram G (Project Lead), Noah V (Design Engineer), Paul T (Manufacturing Engineer), Michael T (Finance Manager), Bhrugu H (Sponsorship and Marketing Manager) and Joel A (Graphic Designer).

We caught up with the team earlier this week and asked them more about the project:

What is STEM Racing, and what does the car have to do?

Teams design a car body under strict regulations, and it has to complete a 20-metre straight-line race in the shortest time possible. Teams are also judged on building a strong brand identity and on establishing relationships with industry sponsors.

What does a typical team session look like?

We review our progress over the past week and highlight work that needs finishing soon. At the moment we're looking for sponsors and completing the first few iterations of our car design. We use FreeCAD and Ansys to model and test the car before we build it.

What has been the hardest problem so far?

We had an idea to use lift to reduce friction between the car and the track, by funnelling airflow over the wheels to create lift through the Magnus effect. This was weeks before we had a first draft of the design. Modelling it without a finished car took a solid five-hour session of learning basic vector calculus to work out how much the extra circulation would affect friction on the wheels.

You also manage sponsorship and media. What have you learned from that side?

Just having a cool car design is not enough. We need a strong brand identity and clear communication to build connections with sponsors. Small details, like using consistent graphics across our media, make a big difference to how recognisable we are. This project shows us the parts of engineering you don't normally see in a textbook but that decide whether a team succeeds or fails.

What are you aiming for at the regional on 25 February?

By then we aim to have tested and modified our rear wing design so it works efficiently and gives us the best chance of qualifying for the National Finals.

What do you hope to take away from this?

Using Ansys for CFD modelling lets us test the airflow over each part of the car and working with these industry tools helps us understand the engineering design process that we'll use at University and in the workplace.

What should a younger student considering a project like this know?

Planning matters most. It must be detailed, extensive and realistic to keep the project on track. Without a proper schedule, deadlines become unachievable and the whole project is at risk.

We wish the Bernoulli Bros the best of luck in February and will be sharing an update on their progress.

Can your employer support the team? The Bernoulli Bros are looking for business sponsors to help fund their car and their journey to the regional final. If your organisation may be able to help, please contact Mr McAllister at ZMcAllister@reading-school.co.uk.

Sixth Former Joins Europe's Top University Students at Hackathon

When Akshaiyan S (13JHu) heard about a hackathon in Munich run by thinc!, a student-led tech and entrepreneurship organisation, there was one obstacle - it was only open to university students. So he emailed the organisers and asked if there was a way in. A week later, he had a place.

Over one weekend, Akshaiyan joined 60 students from universities including LSE, Imperial, TUM, Bocconi and Mannheim. Three companies each set a real business problem, and teams had two days to build a working product.



Akshaiyan's team took the problem set by Taktile, an AI fintech company. Insurers decide on thousands of claims every day, by hand, whether to approve a claim, ask for more information or pass it to an expert. The team built 'Aegis', a tool that makes that decision on every claim and explains its reasoning.

Akshaiyan's role in the team was to build an AI assistant that users can talk to like a colleague. It explains its decisions, fills in missing information and, when it needs more details, phones the customer to ask. Akshaiyan shared, "*I went to Munich hoping I wouldn't be the odd one out and I left realising how badly I want to be back in that room.*"

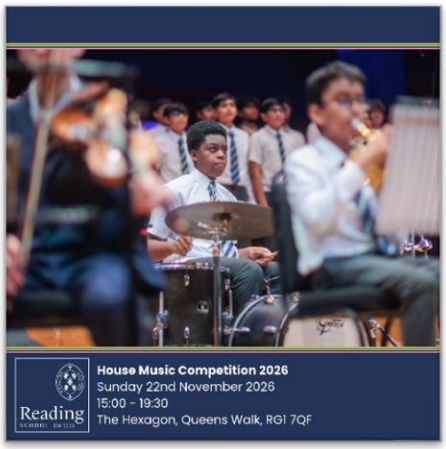
Congratulations to Akshaiyan on the initiative it took to ask, and on holding his own among students several years older.

Reading School Events

House Music Competition 2026

Only 2 days to go!

Date: Sunday 22nd November 2026
Time: 15:00–19:30
Venue: The Hexagon, Queens Walk, Reading, RG1 7QF



Join us for a spectacular celebration of music and creativity as our five Houses compete across a range of ensemble performances. The afternoon will also showcase exceptional solo performances from our talented Junior (Years 7–10) and Senior (Years 11–13) musicians.

Please refer to the letter sent on Monday 2 November for more information about rehearsals, drop-off and pick-up arrangements, backstage access, catering and parking.

Book your tickets here: [Reading School House Music Competition 2026 | What's On Reading]

Please note: Students taking part in the competition do not need to purchase tickets.

Pupil Premium Support

Families in receipt of Pupil Premium may request up to two discounted tickets for seats in the Arena Centre, Arena Left or Arena Right. Please email events@reading-school.co.uk for further details.

Reading School Junior Parkrun Takeover – Sunday 29th November

Ready, Set, Run – Represent Your House!



On Sunday 29 November, Reading School will take over Woodley Junior parkrun. We would like students in Years 7 to 9 to join us, whether by running the 2km course or helping out as volunteers.

Taking place at Woodford Park in Woodley, the event involves a 2km run and will form part of our House Competition, with valuable House Points awarded based on both the number of pupils participating from each House and their finishing positions.

Whether you are a keen runner chasing a personal best or simply fancy a jog or walk with friends, everyone is welcome. Participation is just as important as performance!

Event Details

- **Date:** Sunday 29th November 2026, from 9:00am
- **Location:** Woodford Park, Woodley
- **Distance:** 2km
- **Who:** All pupils in Years 7–9 are encouraged to attend

How to Get Involved

1. Visit www.parkrun.org.uk/register and register for a free parkrun account (if you haven't already).

2. When registering, select **Reading School** as your running club. Existing parkrunners can update their club through their parkrun profile.

3. Bring your personal parkrun barcode on the day so that your participation and finishing position can be recorded.

4. Turn up ready to represent your House and enjoy a fantastic morning of running!

Calling All Parent Volunteers!

A number of Reading School teachers will be attending to support, encourage and cheer on our pupils throughout the event. However, we would also love to see parents getting involved.

We are particularly keen to recruit parent volunteers to help marshal the course, providing encouragement to runners and helping the event run smoothly. This is a fantastic opportunity to further demonstrate the strength of the Reading School community and support our pupils as they represent their Houses. If you would be willing to volunteer, please email Mr Orgill at morgill@reading-school.co.uk.

We hope to see as many pupils and families as possible joining us for what promises to be a fantastic morning of sport, community spirit and friendly House rivalry.

RSPA

Teachers' Appreciation - Amazon Wishlist 2026



It's HERE...it's LIVE...and it's, "DEEPLY FABULOUS"! The Teachers' Amazon Wishlist appeal – is now OPEN for the SIXTH year running!

Every department is given the opportunity to request items up to the value of £250. The list consists of a combination of much needed resources and some fun items to benefit the students overall learning experience. We cannot stress how much the Teachers appreciate this particular fundraiser, as these are items that are outside the budget that School otherwise have. **The list can be viewed by clicking here**

The list features a wide range of requests and costs of items, from practical to fun, hopefully with something to suit every family who wishes to contribute. If you can't make your mind up then Gift Vouchers are most welcome. We encourage you to add your own comments or messages to a particular Teacher, to thank them for their efforts...we forward every one!

Can we also kindly request that you first link to our RSPA account at EASYFUNDRAISING and choose AMAZON as your retailer, before purchasing, to raise further money for the students with no extra cost to you. This link provides an extra £2 donation as soon as you register and make your purchase!

We can also accept cash, particularly if you would like to Gift Aid your donation. (Please email Yan Lin to request a Gift Aid form, at: treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk)

Name: RSPA No. 2 Account , Sort Code: 60-17-21 , Account No: 15309096

Please choose RPSA PARENT GIFTING WISHLIST TERRI LORRIMORE as the delivery address, but DON'T deliver them to school as we lose track of purchases. The list will close on Sunday 13th December 2026. Any queries? Please email Terri via tlorrimore@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Happy Shopping!

Hoodies

Can we also remind parents to purchase a school approved Hoodie, as the colder weather draws in. Please click on the link to order and we can arrange to deliver it to school.

School Lottery update - Win the Ultimate PS5 Pro gaming bundle!

There's an exciting chance to win a PS5 Pro 2TB console, disc drive, extra controller, PULSE headset and a 50" smart 4K TV. Bringing Lego Batman, Astro Bot and other games to life, this could be the dream gift for the gamer in your family! Or take the £1,000 cash alternative and spend it your way! Get your tickets before Saturday 28th November for your chance to win! Refer a friend for a chance to also win £200. Click this link to enter.

Wishing you all a great weekend.

From the RSPA Team

Highlights: Michaelmas Term - Week 9

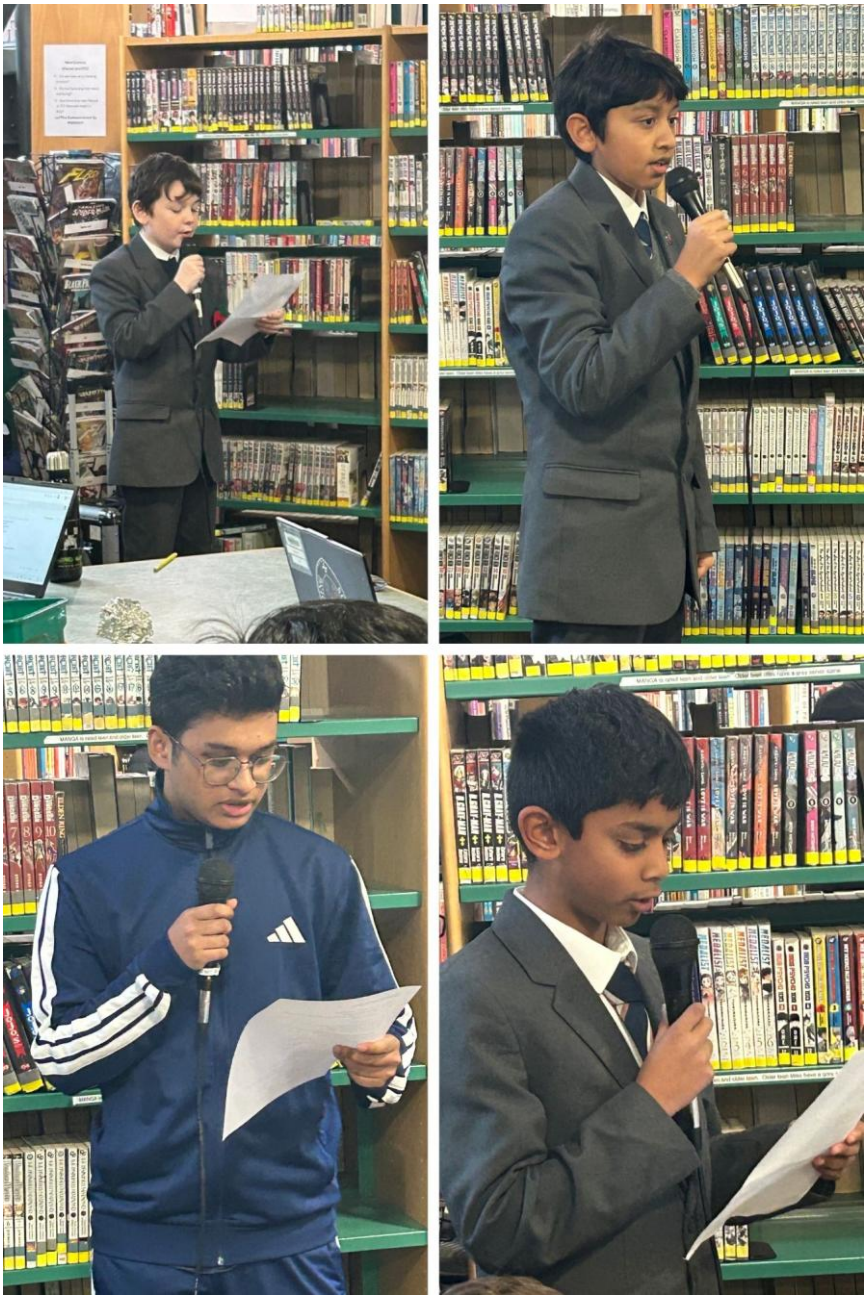
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Remembrance Day Poetry Reading

Students marked Remembrance Day last week with poetry readings across both lunches, sharing poems they had written or found especially moving. The School's Senior and Junior Poet Laureates, Rayyan C (12PEI) and Nivan S (7E), each read an original poem written for the occasion.

Click the following links to read Beyond Two Minutes and Untitled



Frank Terry Memorial Lecture – Thursday 19 November

The Frank Terry Memorial Lecture is Reading School's annual lecture honouring the legacy of Frank Terry (1917 – 2014), who served as a History Teacher and Boarding Headmaster from 1946 to 1982. It celebrates educational and professional achievement and brings distinguished alumni back to inspire current students, linking past and present members of the school.

This year's speaker was the Rt Hon Mark Field (OR 1976–1983), former MP for the Cities of London and Westminster (2001–2019) and Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office under Prime Minister Theresa May. The lecture was a valuable opportunity for our students to hear from an Old Redingensian with first-hand experience of international affairs and government.





COP31 Comes to Reading: Students Represent Türkiye and the EU

Modelled on the COP conference happening in Antalya, Turkiye this month, a group of Year 9 and 10 students represented Reading School and the nations of Türkiye and the EU at a conference at the Civic Offices on Wednesday.

"*It was a pleasure to watch the students meet the challenges of debate and negotiations that the Model Climate Change conference offered. They engaged in negotiations with older students from other schools, securing climate change agreements targeted towards the issues of cities and oceans. I hope the political leaders at COP31 this month show the same collaborative spirit and desire to protect our planet from future emissions as these students.*" Mrs S Thorpe, Teacher of Geography



Türkiye – Yash R, Krit V, Jayan JK, Nathan J

EU - Sameer S, Ethan Y, Akhil B, Arjun K

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