

Headmaster’s Weekly Bulletin

27 November 2026

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Colleagues,

If you walk past the front of school this week, you won't notice anything different. But under the soil in front of the Waterhouse building and outside the Chapel are hundreds of daffodil bulbs, planted last Sunday morning by a handful of parents and one student.

The idea came from Mr Ben Bryant, a Reading School parent. He asked families if they'd give up a Sunday morning to help, and four parents and one student turned up and got stuck in. Mr Bryant hopes to make it an annual event, and I hope more of us join him next year. Thank you to everyone who came along.

Kindness often works like that: you do it quietly, and someone notices later. On Thursday evening, a parent was stranded outside school with a flat battery after the gates had closed. Luckily, our Site Controller, Mr Hambrier, was still here. He fetched his own car, jump-started hers and made sure she got home safely. She emailed the next morning to say he "*could not have been more charming nor gracious*." Thank you, Mr Hambrier.

I see the same thing elsewhere in this week's Bulletin. Malhar Dasgupta, who left us in 2022, has sent a gift to the Teachers' Wishlist all the way from San Francisco. Four years on, he still wanted to say thank you. From Friday 4 December, every House will also be collecting for ReadiFood to help families in Reading this Christmas.

None of this was done for recognition. Much of it will help people the givers never meet. In my experience, the best of a school usually happens out of sight.

So come March, look out for the daffodils.

Ms Lizzie Ayres
Acting Headteacher

Key Information

Parents only

Can you help with our careers programme?

We are expanding our careers programme for students from Years 7 to 13, and we would welcome help from our parent and carer community.

Many of our students go on to higher education. Degree and higher apprenticeships now offer a strong alternative, combining a recognised qualification with paid work experience, and we want students to hear about these routes from people who work in those industries.

We would particularly like to hear from parents, or people you know, who work in the following professions:

- Construction
- Architecture
- Engineering
- Healthcare
- Policing
- Fire safety

You don't need to be an expert in apprenticeships. If you work in one of these fields and know how people are getting into it today, you have something useful to share. You could help in several ways, depending on the time you have:

- Giving a short talk or joining a careers panel
- Taking part in mock interviews
- Hosting a workplace visit or work experience placement

If you are able to help, please email Mrs Duxbury (Careers Lead) at HDuxbury@reading-school.co.uk giving your industry and how you would like to be involved.

Years 7 to 12 only

Careers: Experience of the Workplace 2027

This academic year, every student from Year 7 to Year 12 will spend time learning about the world of work. On Friday 12 February 2027, during a staff INSET day when school is closed to all students, Year 7 and 8 students will interview at least two adults from different sectors about their working lives. Year 9, 10 and 11 students will spend the day on a work placement. Year 12 will take part in Work Experience Week from 7 to 11 June 2027, aiming for at least two or three days of placement, and should have placements arranged by the beginning of March.

In every case, students find their own opportunities. This is deliberate: making the first approach, using their contacts and following up are skills in their own right, and the school does not find placements for students. Year 7 and 8 interviews should take place with parents' knowledge, any online interview should be supervised, and students should not visit workplaces on their own. The letters below give the details for each year group and include cover letters students can hand to the people they approach.

Questions about Year 12 work experience should go to Mrs M Alberici, Sixth Form Administrator, by emailing malberici@reading-school.co.uk.

Year 7 and Year 8 Work Experience 2027

Year 7 and Year 8 Careers INSET Covering Letter

Year 9, 10 and 11 Work Experience 2027

Year 9, 10 and 11 Careers Covering Letter

Year 12 Work Experience

Years 11, 12 and 13 only

Finland Summer Multi Activity Adventure Trip - July 2027

We are delighted to offer students an exciting opportunity to experience an unforgettable outdoor adventure in the spectacular Finnish wilderness from **Monday 12 to Saturday 17 July 2027**.

This promises to be an action-packed trip, giving students the chance to step outside their comfort zones, take on new challenges and make lasting memories. The programme includes hiking the famous Small Bear Trail, white-water rafting, river floating, a two-day overnight canoe expedition, fly fishing and traditional Finnish sauna experiences, as well as the chance to try Finland's popular sport of floorball.

Delivered by our experienced adventure partner, Adventure Apes, all specialist equipment and expert instruction will be provided, ensuring a safe, exciting and rewarding experience.

The anticipated cost is £1,750 – £1,800 per student, including flights, transport and all planned activities.

How to register your interest

The deposit payment link was sent to parents of students in Years 11, 12 and 13 on Monday 23 November. To register your son's interest, an expression-of-interest deposit must be paid via the Evolve payment link by 9.00am on **Thursday 3 December 2026**.

The deposit is £500 (£250 for students in receipt of Pupil Premium funding). Please note that this does not guarantee a place. If applications exceed the number of available places, a random ballot will take place, with unsuccessful applicants receiving a full refund.

This is a fantastic opportunity for students to embrace adventure, build confidence, develop resilience and experience the great outdoors in one of Europe's most beautiful natural environments.

Click here to access the trip letter for parents

Safeguarding & Wellbeing

Supporting Boys and Young Men in a Changing World

The University of Reading's Parents and Carers Together (PACT) Network recently held an evening event with Male Allies UK, led by Lee Chambers. The session looked at how parents, carers and educators can support boys and young men today. Key messages included giving boys space to be heard rather than simply talked about, approaching difficult conversations with curiosity rather than judgement, and recognising the influence of trusted adults and positive role models.

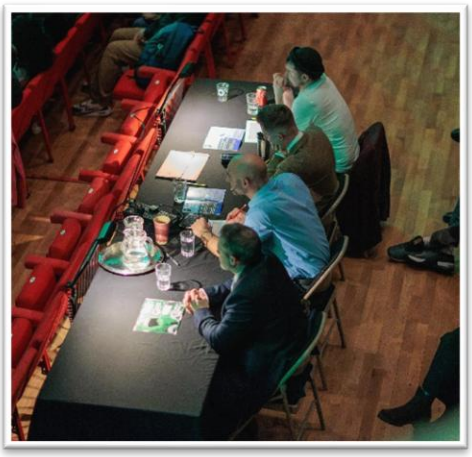
The recording and supporting resources are available here:

- **Event recording:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ytth8RcD304
- **Parenting in the Age of AI guide:** click here
- **Further resources referenced by Lee:** Voice of the Boys Report and Boys and Bots

School Community News

House Music Competition 2026

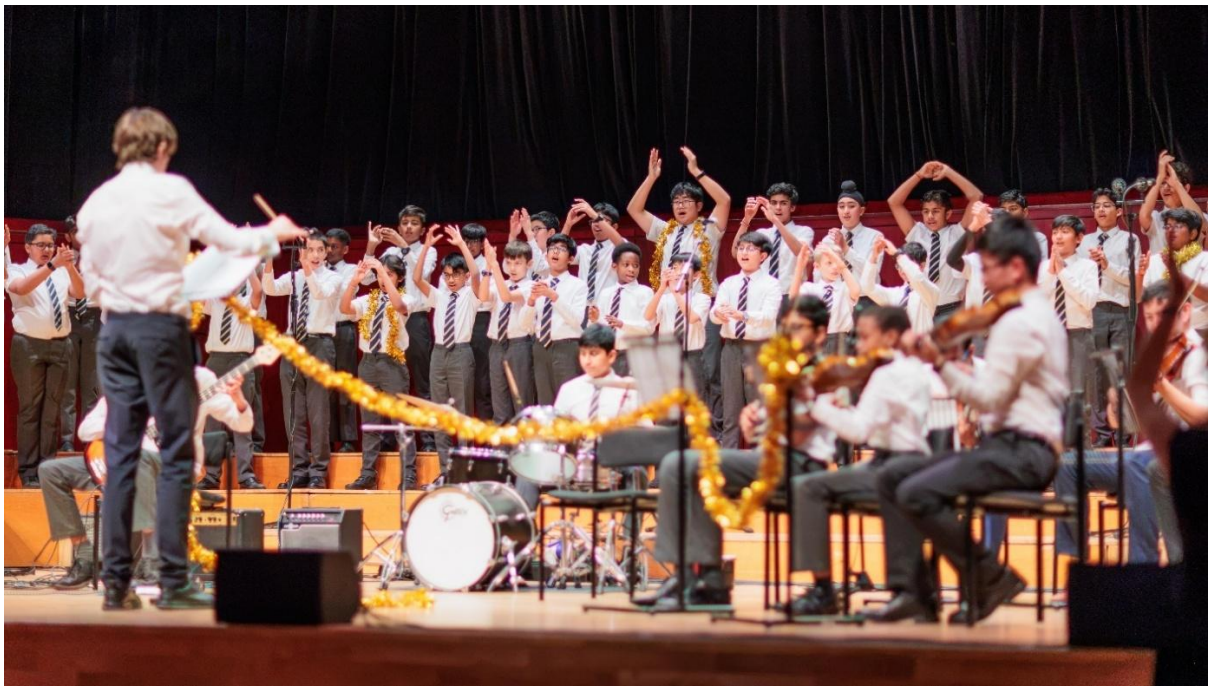
By Calvin H (13ACr)



Sunday 22 November. The lights dimmed, conversations faded, and a familiar sense of excitement and anticipation settled over the audience. Reading School returned to the Hexagon for House Music 2026, an evening where talent, teamwork and House pride took centre stage. Each House was as determined as ever to prove to the judges that they had what it took to claim the title, showcasing musical ability built on hours of preparation and rehearsal. Tensions were high, with each House having one final opportunity to refine their performances on the day. Excited and nervous faces could be seen among performers, teachers and parents alike, in a Hexagon filled with energy, enthusiasm and musical brilliance.

East kicked off the competition with a sporting medley featuring iconic tunes such as the Match of the Day theme and You'll Never Walk Alone. Dishanth G (11E) also delivered something entirely different, premiering his original composition, *Dream*. Laud followed with a series of standout performances, spanning jazz, hard rock and a touch of Spanish flair from George G (13CMa) in a sensational Senior Solo. School was next, transporting us back to the summer of 2010 in South Africa with K'naan's *Wavin' Flag*. They also brought the King of Pop to the stage with a Michael Jackson medley, complete with some impressive moves from their comperes.

County got the second half underway with a varied selection featuring Nirvana, Elton John and Chopin. Taking us from South Africa to the Wild West, Siyuan W (9C) delivered an impressive rendition of *Rondo Rodeo*. Last but certainly not least, West rounded off the evening. Amid a showcase featuring Debussy and Franz Ferdinand, Sergey D (9W) earned a special mention from the judges for his performance of Rachmaninoff's *Prelude No. 5*, before bringing the evening to a close with *Hey Jude*, celebrating one of England's World Cup superstars.



Overall, it was an exceptional evening, with every performance captivating the audience. The standard was arguably higher than ever, and the judges certainly agreed. After much deliberation, they returned to the stage to announce the results. Tension filled the room as each House waited to discover whether their efforts had been enough. With only a handful of points separating the Houses, the competition could hardly have been closer. Ultimately, it was Laud who emerged victorious, taking home the trophy for the second consecutive year.



Students develop employability skills with the EY Foundation

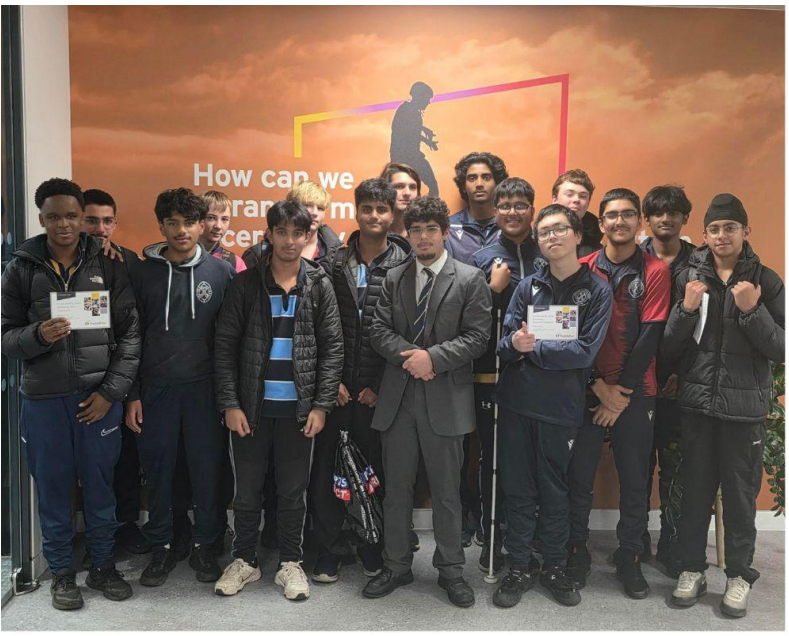
Sixteen Reading School students recently took part in an employability skills workshop hosted by the EY Foundation at EY's offices in Reading. The workshop provided students with a valuable opportunity to gain insight into the world of work, develop transferable employability skills and learn more about the range of careers available to them.

Working alongside EY professionals, students explored the skills and qualities employers look for, heard about different career journeys and took part in a team challenge designed to develop their communication, collaboration and presentation skills.

The session also allowed students to meet and network with professionals from EY, helping them to build confidence and broaden their understanding of future career opportunities. Prizes were awarded to recognise students' achievements and contributions during the activities, providing a welcome opportunity to celebrate their efforts.

We are particularly grateful to Amira Ismail for organising and delivering the workshop, with the support of Bradley Cooper, Mohammad Omar, Paulina Jach, India Dick and Nikodem Polplawski. Their time, enthusiasm and willingness to share their experience helped make this such a valuable and engaging opportunity for our students.

We are also grateful to the EY Foundation and EY Reading for hosting the workshop and supporting our students. Opportunities like this help to connect classroom learning with the workplace and equip our young people with the confidence and skills to take their next steps.









Reading School Events

ReadiFood Christmas Collection: Every House Has a Part to Play



Between now and the end of term, Reading School is collecting donations for ReadiFood, one of Reading's foodbanks. ReadiFood delivers emergency food parcels to individuals and families across the town who are in crisis, and demand is always highest in the run-up to Christmas.

There are two ways to give:

1. Place items in the collection tubs in Chapel
2. Collect items together in your form room

Our Charity Prefects will lead a team collecting donations from form rooms and taking them to Chapel.

Collections start on **Friday 4 December** and run until **Friday 11 December**.

What to bring: your House list

Each House has been given a category so that ReadiFood gets a balanced mix of essentials rather than a mountain of one thing.

House	Category	Items
County	Tinned foods	Tinned vegetables, tinned meat, tinned fruit, soup
East	Hot drinks and staples	Tea bags (packs of 40), coffee, cooking oil, flour
Laud	Carbs	Rice, rice pouches, dry noodles, pot noodles
School	Juices and dairy	Juice cartons, squash, long-life milk
West	Personal care	Shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, hand soap, sanitary items

A few simple rules

- Items must be unopened and within their use-by or best-before date
- Avoid glass jars where possible
- No fresh or chilled food

Small contributions add up quickly across more than 1,100 students. A single tin, a box of tea bags or a bottle of shower gel from each of you will make a real difference to local families this Christmas.

Thank you for your generosity.

Reading School Junior Parkrun Takeover – Sunday 29 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 29 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!

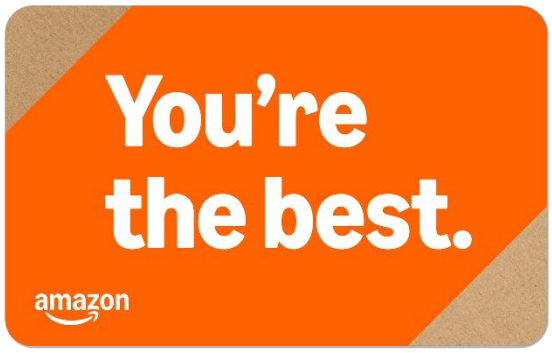
A number of Reading School teachers will be attending to support, encourage and cheer on our pupils throughout the event. However, we would also love to see parents getting involved.

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

Teacher Appreciation: Amazon Wishlist Update



Thank you so much to everyone who has already responded to the Teachers' Amazon Wishlist appeal. Deliveries are now arriving daily. Your generosity is enormously appreciated, supporting our teachers with some much-needed and personally requested resources.

The current list can be viewed by clicking here.

If you can't make up your mind, gift vouchers are most welcome. We are also accepting e-vouchers this year, in the hope that we can keep the delivery waste down. Please select the value of your gift and forward it to us by email at treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Alternatively, email us if you wish to send a cash gift and use Gift Aid to boost the sum that we collect. (Please also email the Treasurer address if you would like a Gift Aid form.)

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

Whatever you decide to gift, please add a personal message. We forward every one and some touching messages have already arrived, personalised to a named teacher. More of these later as we start to share some of those sentiments.

For the first time ever, we have also received a gift from a former student, Malhar Dasgupta. Now working in San Francisco, he wishes to thank Reading School for the amazing experience he had in his seven years here, finishing in 2022.

It's a sign of how long the Wishlist has been running, and how appreciated our teachers are. Former students who have completed university and are embracing their own professional journeys are now looking to send thank you gifts.

So, thank you all so much again; we couldn't provide such an amazing haul of resources without your support. We are currently just over one third of the way there, but need your help to get finished before school closes for the December break.

Please choose RPSA PARENT GIFTING WISHLIST TERRI LORRIMORE as the delivery address. Please don't deliver them to school as we lose track of who has received what.

For an additional boost to the wishlist, please use Easyfundraising to make your Amazon purchase or sign up and use this link, below, as we will receive £2 extra donation as soon as you register and make your purchase!

If you have any queries, please do email Terri Lorrimore at tlorrimore@readingschoolparents.co.uk.

Wishing you all a great weekend.

From the RSPA Team

Highlights: Michaelmas Term - Week 10

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

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

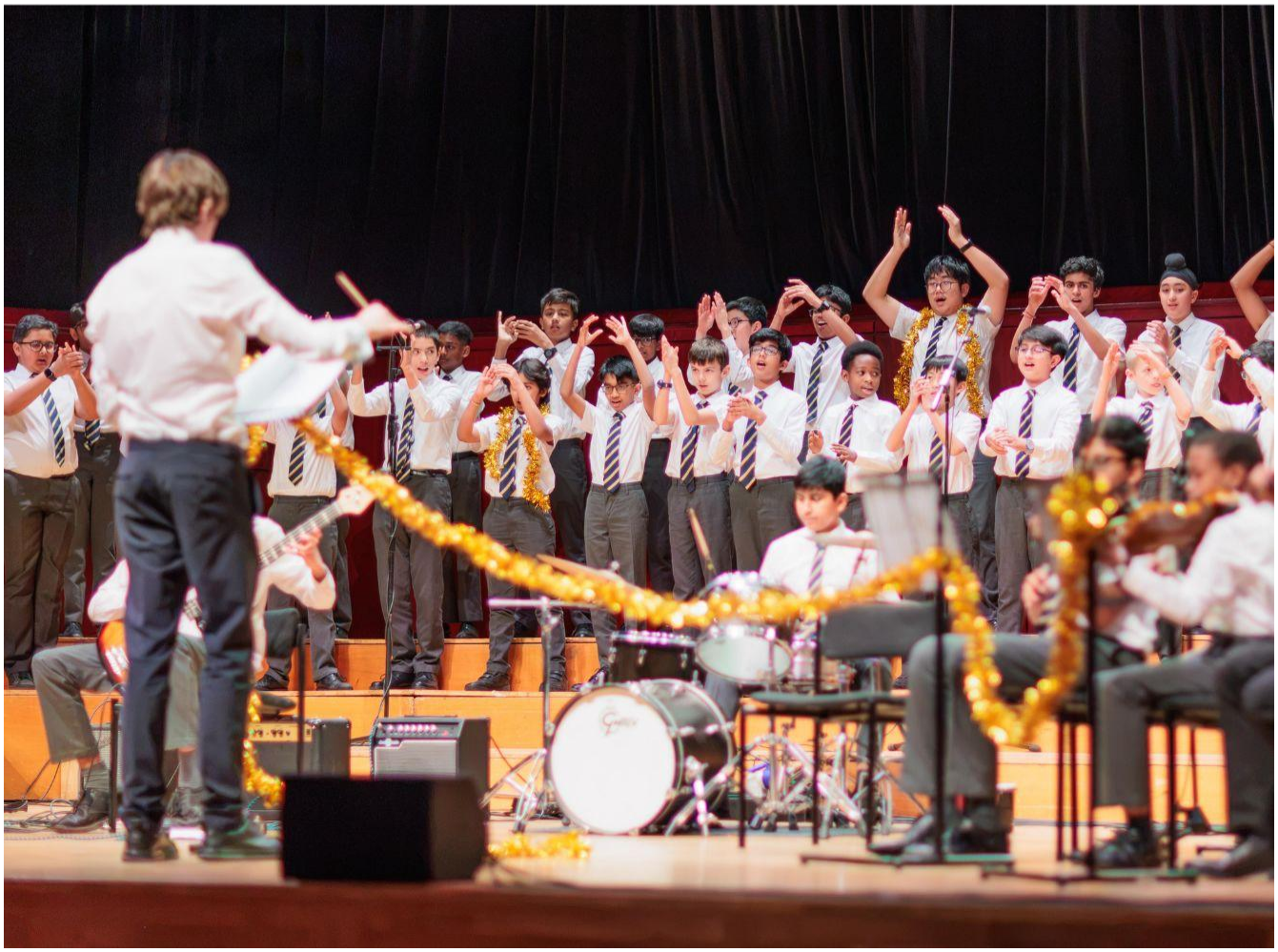
House Music Competition 2026

Photo credits / Student Photographer: Yicheng L (13MKa)



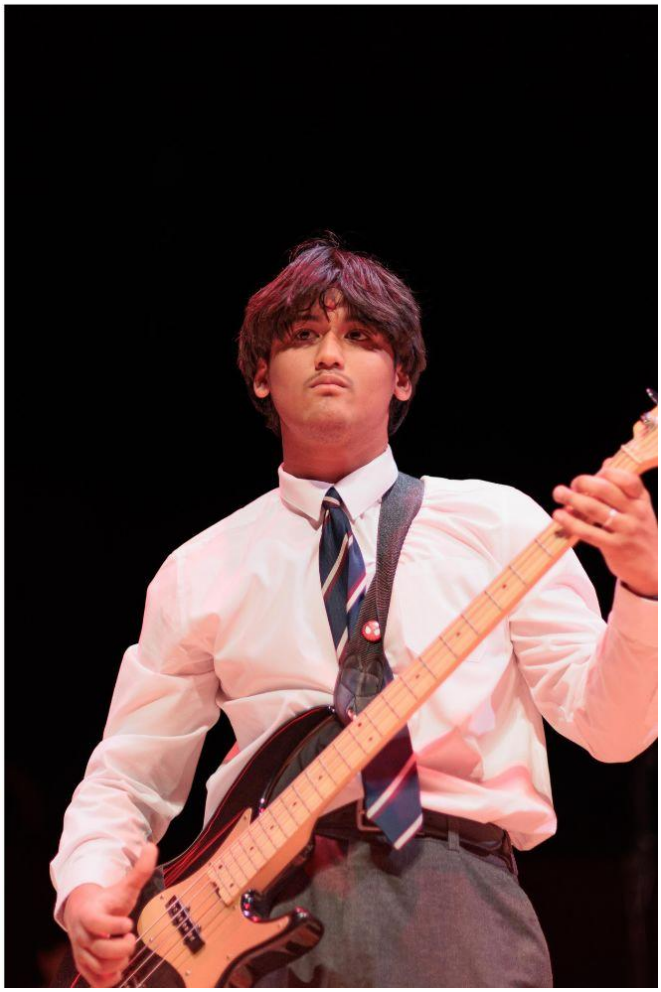




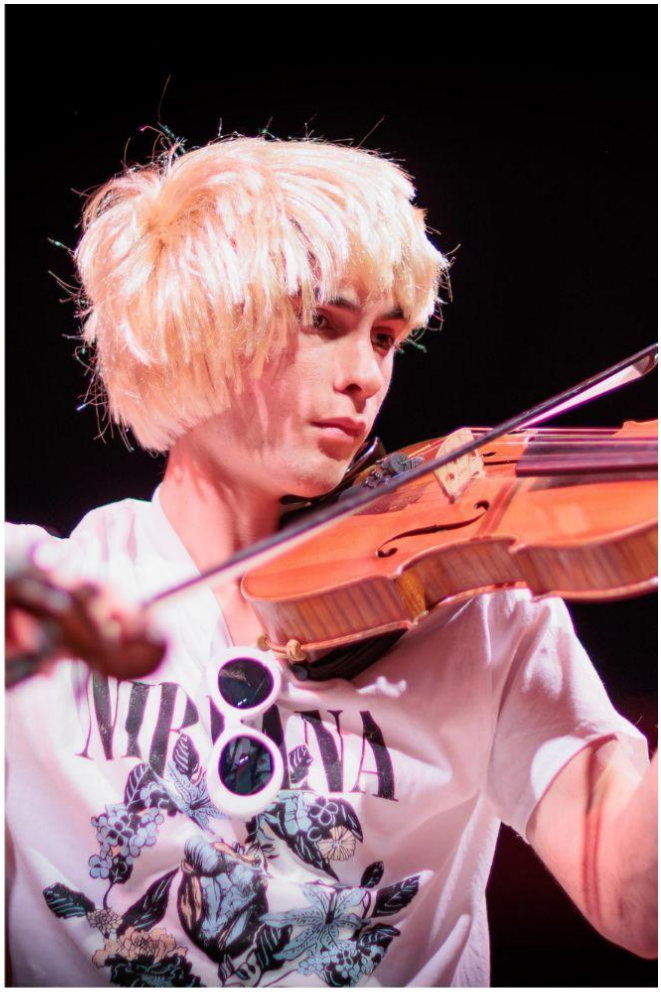



Squier













































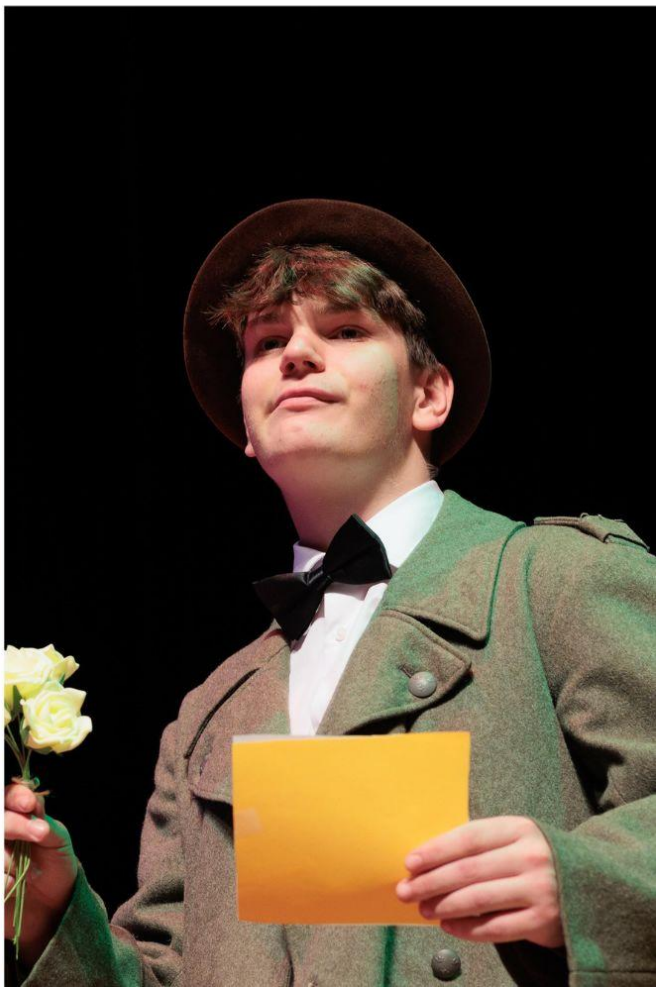



STEINWAY & SONS


















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Where the Universe Is Taken Apart: Physics Trip to Geneva

Fifteen students travelled to Geneva this month to visit the Large Hadron Collider at CERN and the Swiss Plasma Centre, which is dedicated to advancing research into nuclear fusion. They also immersed themselves in Swiss culture and heritage, visiting museums, exploring the city and enjoying a fondue evening.





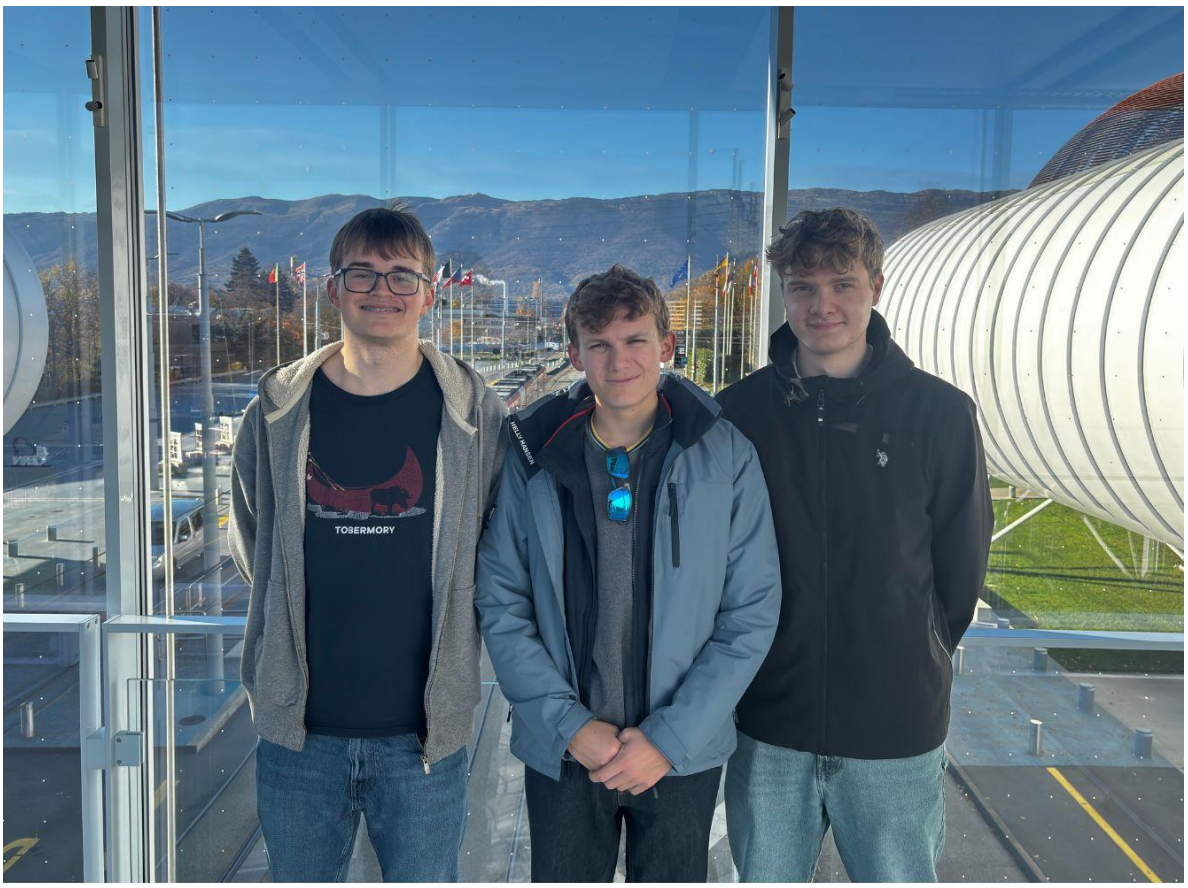
This visit perfectly complements the students' study of fields at this point in their A level as well as topics previously covered. A huge thanks must go to all the staff at CERN and the SPC as well as the Reading School staff who made this trip possible.







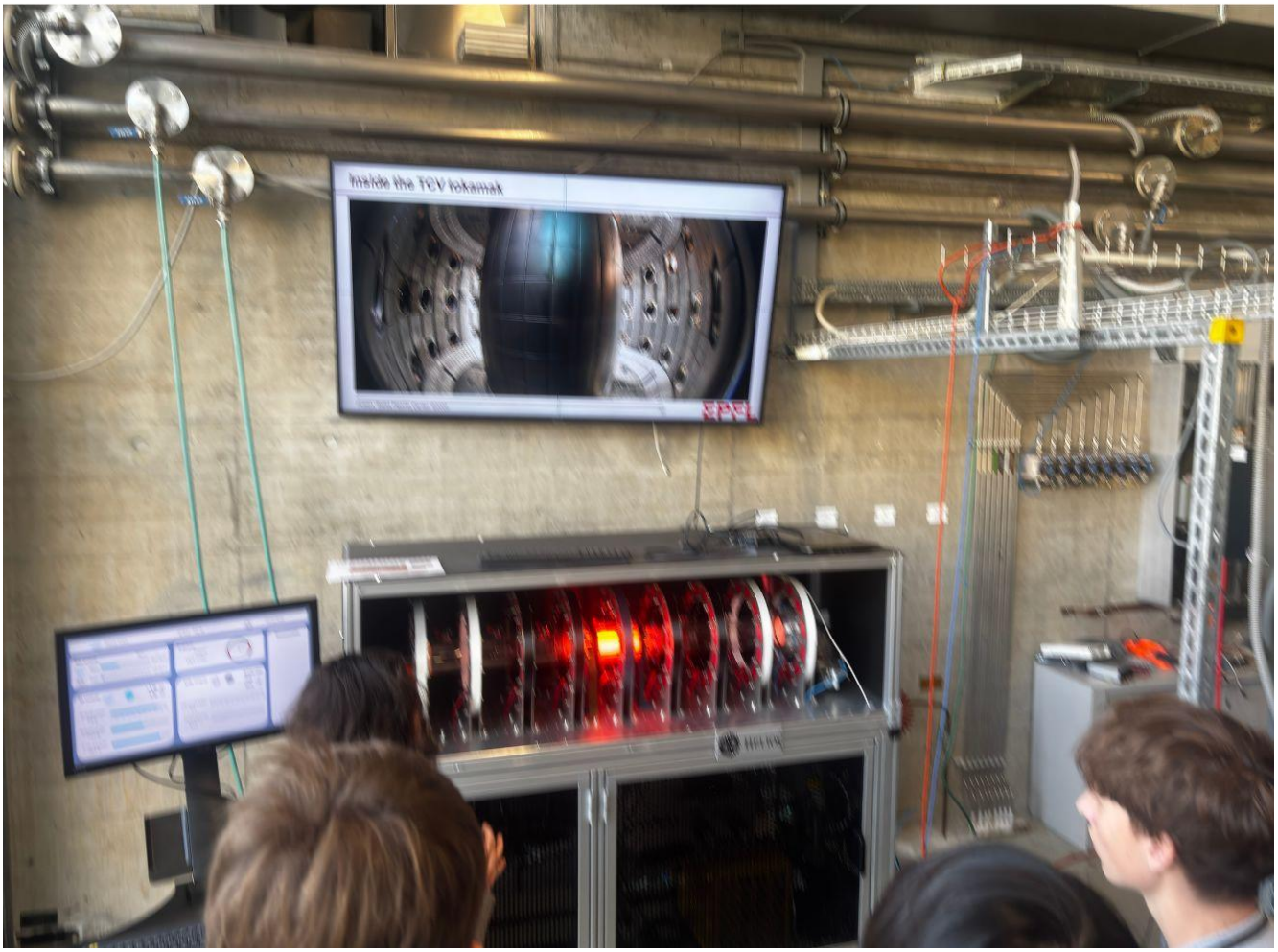
"A special thanks to Ms Hooker for joining the trip and for all her enthusiasm and wisdom. Lastly, thanks to the students who were wonderful throughout and really showed the best of character, curiosity and academic excellence that Reading School physics strives for."


TOBERMORY



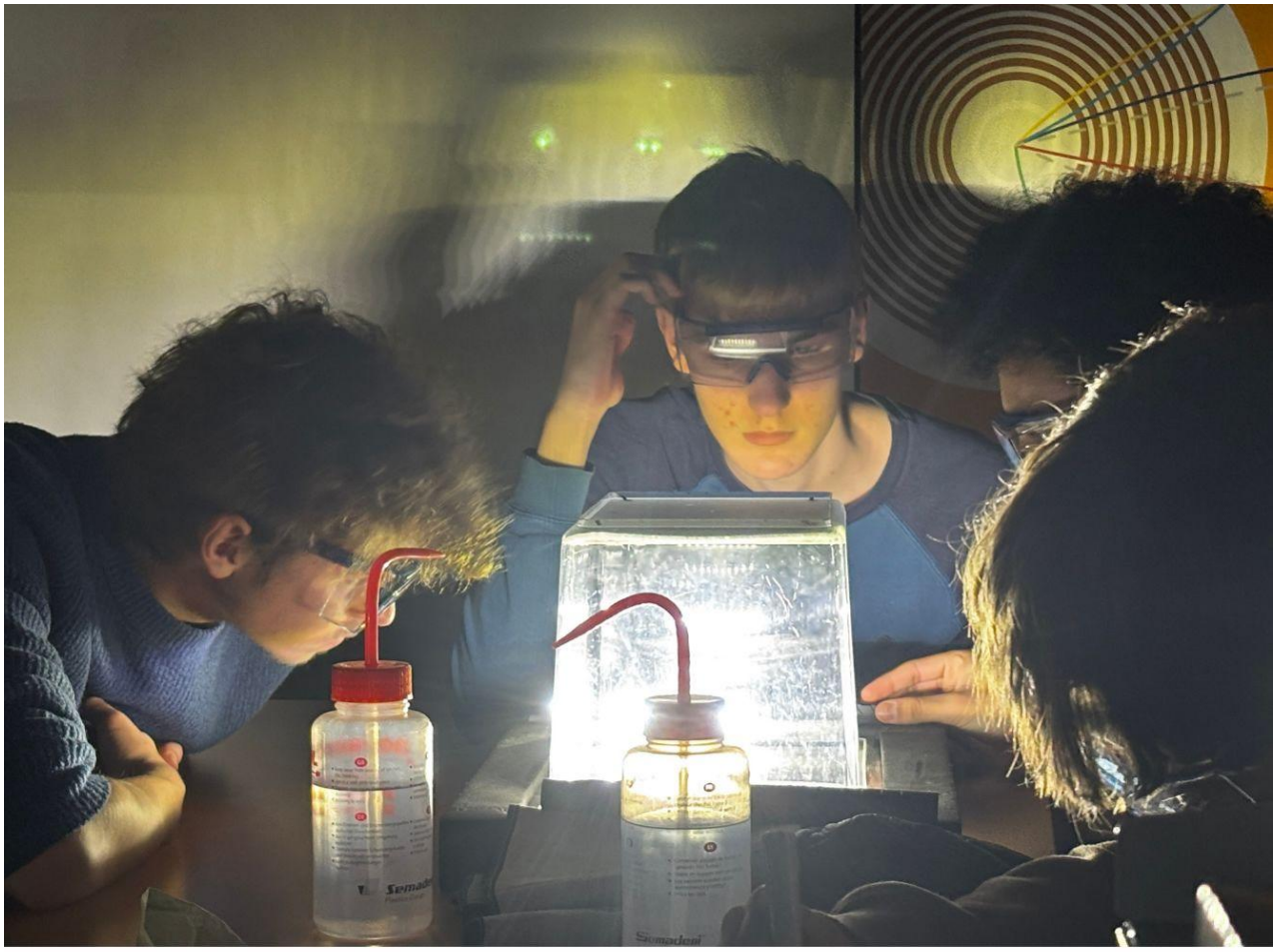





Inside the TCV tokamak


CERN


Servers
13 K
Cores
435 K
Disks
218 K
Tape Drives
127
Routers
339
Wifi Points
5.3 K
Batch Jobs Running
EOS Read Active Data Transfers
File Transfer Throughput
Cloud Virtual Machines Created
Databases Activity
LHCOPN, LHCONE and Internet network traffic





Feedback is important to us. If you have any positive news, comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk