

150th



Founded 1125

6 September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Via Redingensis

Developing Academic Excellence and Building Good Men

Welcome to Reading School at the beginning of the 2019-2020 Academic Year, which is the 150th anniversary of Reading School's presence on our current Erleigh Road site. I am proud to extend a special welcome to all our new students and their parents as they become a part of the 'Reading School Family'. Equally I am also delighted to welcome our new staff to the school. Each have been appointed for their specialist knowledge across a range of subjects and we look forward to their contributions as our team goes from strength to strength.

I hope that you enjoy reading the September 2019 edition of the School magazine, [Floreat Redingensis](#), which has 'Community' as its central theme. Thank you to all who contributed including the editor, Mr Alun Lloyd, Yash V in 10S for the inspiring cover and the Old Redingensians Association for their sponsorship.

I hope all parents connected with the School will be aware that as a community we continue to deliver on our vision to be a world-leading institution, developing academic excellence and building good men. This year will be significant in our endeavours to champion character, advance knowledge and enrich the sporting and cultural life of our students. Our governors and staff are determined to bring to life our core values of Excellence, Integrity, Leadership and Community and to ensure that all student flourish through the distinctive, holistic approach to educating young men that we term the Reading Way ('Via Redingensis'). We concur with Dr Martin Luther King Jr that, "*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education*". We are determined therefore that in 2019-20, Reading School continues to grow as a community that celebrates the development of civic, moral and performance virtues and helps exceptional young men to learn how to use their potential for the benefit of others. In addition to the brief weekly update you will receive throughout the year I have taken time to write this letter so as to inform you of some of our most important news, and highlight priorities for the year ahead.



Academic excellence is a consequence of effective and inspiring teaching and the application and the character of conscientious students. These foundations nurture pupils who are intellectually curious, who seek to do good for others and who apply their knowledge with resilience, character, diligence and perspective.



Students sitting public examinations this summer secured exceptional results. 48% of [GCSE](#) entries were awarded the highly coveted grade 9 and 91% of entries were awarded grades 9-7. A record 86 pupils achieved grade 9 in Chemistry with 96% of biologists and 97% of Physics students gaining grades 9-7. 95% of History candidates gained grades 9-7 and 53 geographers were awarded the highest possible grade. In Mathematics 111 out of 124 candidates gained grades 9-8 and students of Latin achieved 95% grades 9-8. John S (11W) and Arkin F (11E) achieved the highest possible grades in each of their GCSEs as well as A grades in AS Philosophy, James W also gained 10 grade 9s and Ed B (11C) gained 10 grade 9s and an A grade in Additional Maths. Boarders celebrated their best ever results: undoubtedly due to the excellent teamwork and support they provided for one another.

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At [A Level](#), over 25% of students achieved at least 3 A* grades, and 71% of candidates gained grades of AAB or higher. Art, Drama, Latin, English Literature, Music and Spanish all achieved 100% A*-B. 92.3% of students of Biology gained A*-B along with 94% of Economists, Geographers and Historians. In total 384 A* and A grades were achieved by our cohort of 156 students. There were 17 offers from Oxbridge this year and some of the successes include: Tommaso L who gained five A* grades and will be reading Natural Sciences at Cambridge University; Michael L and Cian O'H, who each achieved four A* grades and will be reading Medicine at Cambridge University; Rohit M, whose three A* and one A grade secured his place to read Physics at Oxford and Abhishek M who achieved two A* and 2 A's and will read Computer Science at Oxford University.

Despite sustained cuts in funding we have worked very hard to ensure that we continue to offer an inspiring, challenging, academic curriculum at Reading School. We are delighted with the continued growth in popularity of Ancient and Modern Languages; we remain absolutely certain that teaching separate Sciences from Year 7 onwards is of non-negotiable importance; we have developed our three year Key Stage 4 programme that enables the overwhelming majority to gain the English Baccalaureate; and have continued to grow the number of students in our rich Sixth Form Curriculum which includes Art, Music, Further Maths, Latin, Ancient History, three modern foreign languages and Computing. In addition, a wide range of co-curricular activities and educational visits clearly enhance and enrich the curriculum, including our Inspire Lecture Series and a plethora of educational visits and sports.

As a meritocracy we are committed to providing opportunities for talented young men, from all backgrounds, to flourish. Academic Excellence is a necessary but not sufficient outcome of education at Reading School. We would like to acknowledge the individual successes of our students not only in terms of outcomes, but also in the manner in which students have responded to personal challenges.



There should be no contradiction between learning and well-being and we would encourage all parents to make the safety, well-being and mental health of their sons their primary goal. I am rightly proud of the remarkable pastoral support from Tutors, Heads of House and the Student Support Team who labour tirelessly to ensure that the emotional needs of our students are met and help us to remember that individual success is not only measured in terms of academic outcomes but also the way in which many of our students respond to personal challenges or tragedy and show character and integrity.



Our [Enrichment Week in July 2019](#) once again included a remarkable range of educational visits, for students in Years 7 – 10. An undoubted highlight was our third annual 'Grandparents Day' which brought more than fifty grandparents and relatives of Year 7 students into Reading School to experience 'The Reading Way.' Please click the [co-curricular review of 2019](#) to read testimonials and achievements of 2019. A full list of co-curricular activities available this academic year will be emailed to parents by the end of Monday. To this end, co-curricular activities are paramount and we currently offer the following:

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- Over 50 weekly clubs for pupils at lunch-time and after-school, including sports, music, arts and other clubs ranging from Chess, Philosophy, Warhammer to Robotics, Coding, Language and STEM clubs. These activities allow pupils the opportunity to demonstrate creativity, innovation and excellence, and are provided on a voluntarily basis by teachers and sixth formers.
- There are also a range of clubs that require separate payment for the work for accreditation of for the provision of external staffing. These include CCF, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Fencing, LAMDA and after school Drama clubs.
- A series of 'Inspire Lectures' provided throughout the academic year give our students the chance to hear leading voices from the worlds of science, politics, business, career pathways and education. We offer talks, lectures and seminars to our pupils - and occasionally to the wider community.
- Extensive support for UCAS applications in the sixth form from our dedicated sixth form team including Oxbridge and medical mock interviews. We want the development of character to be evident in the curriculum through subjects as well as co-curricular activities.

We want the development of character to be evident across all we do and we are very pleased to have recruited Mr T Evans and Mr D McGall to join our Senior Leadership team as Assistant Head Teachers with areas of focus that will support and enhance our ambitious character education goals. Floreat, the student leadership programme, led by Assistant Headteacher, Mr G Fairchild, continues to be an essential aspect of our drive to Building Good Men but we have also restructured our delivery of Sport to increase participation. Please do encourage your son to participate in as many co-curricular activities as possible. These are an essential part of 'The Reading Way'.



During the 2018-19 Academic Year student leadership grew from strength to strength. Particular highlights included the national success of our Chess and Badminton teams, the team of Sixth Form boarders and Year 10 students who visited our partners in Kenya and the remarkable celebration of student achievements at Prize-giving ceremonies – generously funded by the Reading Foundation.



In addition, our flagship Future Stories programme continues to raise aspiration in primary schools across Reading who benefit from the input of our students and staff. Our approach is shaped by the belief and desire that all Reading School students become outstanding men of character – role models and ambassadors who will go on to have a lasting impact. Future Stories stretches our own students who provide mentoring and classroom support for students in Years 4-6 in Maths and English. Demand from local schools continues to grow, in significant part because of the leadership displayed by the 120 Sixth Form volunteers who participated during the year. We are committed to embedding our partnerships with local primary schools and are proud to make a difference through our students.



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Our partnership with the Reading Foundation also maximises opportunities for our students, especially through the annual Reading Foundation Award Scheme, which promotes leadership and allows students to apply for grants. I was also delighted by the character and leadership celebrated at our [Junior](#) and [Senior Prize-giving](#) events, revealed clearly in the work of the Charity Committee, led by Year 13 student Ben Coneybeare, in the impressive performance of students at the World Public Speaking Championships and through students in Floreat classes who competed for the Governors' Grand – bringing suggestions for projects to improve student wellbeing.

We greatly value the contributions that parents give to Reading School in terms of time and indeed, financial support. Our most sincere request is that as part of the Reading School family, parents are engaged and fully supportive of the values, ethos and policies of the school. We appreciate the support of parents in reinforcing expectations of high standards of behaviour, appearance, attendance and attitude.



This week I was very pleased to welcome so many new students to the School, and also to introduce myself to our new boarders. The Boarding family is a vital part of the Reading School family. Boarders often lead by example, throwing themselves into house events, boarding competitions and co-curricular activities. It is excellent to see such a vivacious cohort of new students arriving and we wish them all the best as they grow together into a harmonious and mutually supportive core at the heart of the life of the School. I have no hesitation in reminding new parents that every pupil from Year 7 is encouraged to participate in clubs and activities during the year, many of which are run in conjunction with other local schools – for example the remarkable production of *Les Misérables* shared with Queen Anne's school in the spring, or the CCF which now welcomes students from Kendrick School.

Our local, national and international partnerships are integral to our success. Nationally our work with the Prince's Teacher Institute which has led to the gaining of the Leadership kite mark. Internationally, we continue to nurture exchanges in Australia, China and Kenya. We are also looking to develop partnerships in the Americas and the Middle East and continuing our connections with high performing schools wherever they may be.

The Governing Body, led by the Chair of Governors, Mr Robert Kenwick and the Reading Foundation, led by Mr Richard Childs, are continually striving to improve facilities to ensure our students experience modern education within our Victorian buildings, and we continue to develop community partnerships that could make a difference to this ambition. It is also important to mention the sterling efforts of the Reading School Parents' Association led by Mrs Clare Shandling. The commitment of many parents to shaping a positive culture of commitment that benefits all students is a real asset for the School. The Old Redingensians Association also provide much support and these partnerships have been vital in an age of austerity.

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I very much hope you share my sense of excitement for all that lies ahead at Reading School. We value your feedback and partnership and both have had a sustained impact upon our development. Our society office would be delighted to hear of ideas, links or suggestions that will aid our ongoing mission and I have no hesitation in also highlighting three ways you can join in partnership with us.

1. Would you consider pledging £1 per day to help us build an even better school to continue to provide the opportunities we currently have in place and go some way to improving our facilities? A donation of £30 a month or £365 a year makes a huge difference, and without your generosity we could not run a fraction of our sports, clubs or societies. These are integral to our provision of a world class education. We appreciate that not everyone is in the same financial situation and all contributions are welcome, however large or small.
2. We also wonder if you might consider a one-off gift towards one of our more significant specific campaigns. In the next four years we hope to raise £10 million to create a Sixth Form Centre, a Maths Centre and to improve Sport, Art, Drama and Music facilities. Contributions will be of direct benefit to current pupils and to future generations. If you are in a position to make a pledge or a one-off donation please do get in touch directly with me or Mrs Jas Chhokar, Society Manager at development@reading-school.co.uk or by phone 0118 935 3505 ext: 249.
3. Finally, if you are able to volunteer your time to assist with providing a careers talk in your chosen profession or career path; to be a delegate at our Careers Convention in January 2021 or to offer a Year 12 student a work placement through your connections, please do complete the form at this link: [Parent volunteers](#).

Your partnership means a great deal to us, and helps our students of all backgrounds to access a truly world class education. We hope you might be willing to give something back to the School and would consider donating to help sustain and develop The Reading Way.

I look forward to working together with you all in maximising opportunities for your son to flourish.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Contributions on a monthly or annual basis can be made by cheque, standing order, cash or Scopay.

For cash and cheques, click on the link to the [Donation Form](#) and return it to the Society Office

If you would prefer to arrange a standing order through your own online banking our details are:

Bank: Lloyds TSB Account name: Reading School Charitable Fund

Sort Code: 30-67-9 Account No. 40733560

Reference: 365 and your son's name

So we can thank you and confirm payments please click: [365 Building for the Future](#).

If you would like to make your payment via [Scopay](#) please ensure you also complete the gift aid form.

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