



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

16 SEPTEMBER 2022

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Key information</b>	<b>5</b>
All Years	5
Parents Expectation Evenings	5
Year 7	5
Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11	6
Electives and Co-Curricular Activities	6
Michaelmas Term Co-Curricular Programme	6
Years 11 & 12	6
<b>Excellence, Belonging &amp; Community</b>	<b>7</b>
Excellence	7
2022 Reading School & Reading Foundation McIlroy Essay Competition	7
Could you be Reading School's new Poet Laureate?	7
Community	8
Student experience of an educational experience of a lifetime	8
Sports Fixtures	9
Sport and PE Journey – for new parents and students	9
<b>RSPA</b>	<b>10</b>
Reading School Parents' Association Recruitment	10
Online Shopping	10
Old Redingensians Association (ORA) Annual Dinner & AGM	10
<b>Michaelmas Term – Week 2</b>	<b>11</b>

# Introduction

We are flying the Union flag at half-mast as Queen Elizabeth II lies in state at Westminster Hall in advance of her state funeral at Westminster Abbey on Monday 19th September. [This week in Chapel](#) we have shown our respect for our longest serving monarch by observing a minute's silence. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a central political, social and cultural figure in the life of the Nation for 70 years.

In addition, we have been singing the National Anthem, with updated lyrics to illustrate the accession of King Charles III, following the death of his mother. I have sung the first verse at Wembley before a football International but not in the Chapel at Reading School before this week.

God save our gracious King!  
Long live our noble King!  
God save the King!  
Send him victorious,  
Happy and glorious,  
Long to reign over us:  
God save the King!

The second verse focuses on the need to 'scatter his enemies', 'confound their politics, frustrate their knavish tricks.' This is evidence that there is a political and historical context to the patriotic song. It took over a century before it became an official anthem. The words and tune are anonymous and 'God Save the King' was first publicly performed as a 'patriotic song' at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in London's West End in 1745. It should be noted that additional verses have been added since 1745, although rarely used. Indeed, in the Reading School hymn book only two verses are included.



Furthermore, as I visited King Edward VI Grammar School in Stratford-Upon-Avon ('Shakespeare's School') yesterday, as part of our commitment to learn from best practice, I found myself walking past Stratford-Upon-Avon Town Hall, built in 1767, and noted that it bore the painted slogan 'God Save the King'.

We should ensure that we support each other to emphasise the importance of service and building community. We all have the responsibility to respect people and be positive citizens. Arguably a true test is not whether we watch the state funeral on the television or even queue to file past the coffin, but rather how we can demonstrate our commitment to building relationships based on trust and respect.

A love of country, commitment to the rule of law, understanding of history and appreciation of living in times of change, should not be dismissed in a cynical way. Thus, in times of change we should redouble our commitment to adding value through showing integrity, positive behaviour and attitudes that seek to value service, belonging and community.

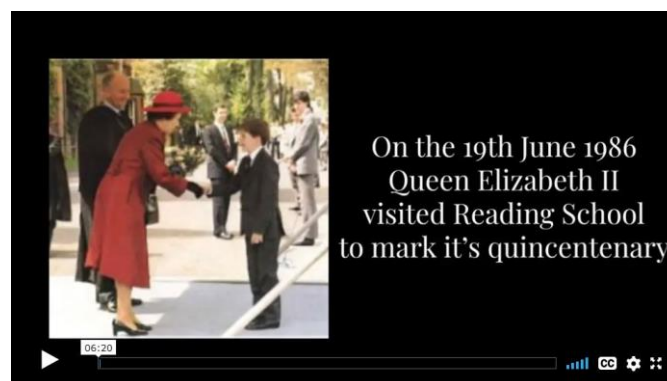
A friend of Reading School, the Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, has penned a poem marking the death of the monarch entitled '*Floral Tribute*', written through the metaphor of the lily of the valley. The first letter of each line spells out 'Elizabeth' when taken together. It is a fitting tribute that emphasises a life of service.

## Floral Tribute by Simon Armitage

"Evening will come, however determined the late afternoon,  
Limes and oaks in their last green flush, pearled in September mist.  
I have conjured a lily to light these hours, a token of thanks,  
Zones and auras of soft glare framing the brilliant globes.  
A promise made and kept for life - that was your gift -  
Because of which, here is a gift in return, glove-wort to some,  
Each shining bonnet guarded by stern lance-like leaves.  
The country loaded its whole self into your slender hands,

Hands that can rest, now, relieved of a century's weight.  
Evening has come. Rain on the black lochs and dark Munros.  
Lily of the Valley, a namesake almost, a favourite flower  
Interlaced with your famous bouquets, the restrained  
Zeal and forceful grace of its lanterns, each inflorescence  
A silent bell disguising a singular voice. A blurred new day  
Breaks uncrowned on remote peaks and public parks, and  
Everything turns on these luminous petals and deep roots,  
This lily that thrives between spire and tree, whose brightness  
Holds and glows beyond the life and border of its bloom."

After featuring an image of Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Reading School in 1986 to celebrate the School's quincentenary\*, we were contacted by David Grindal (OR 86-92) who shared that he was the young first former (Year 7) student featured in the image shaking hands with the Queen. Coincidentally (or not), he went on to serve in the RAF for over 20 years and an interview took place with him this week which can be viewed by clicking the thumbnail below.



(Duration 6mins 20secs)

As communicated to all staff, day students, boarders and parents this week, Reading School will be closed on Monday 19th September, designated a Bank Holiday, for the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Thank you,

**Mr AM Robson**  
**Headmaster**

\* 500th anniversary of the re-founding of the school by Henry VII in 1486

# Key information

## All Years

### Parents Expectation Evenings

Thank you to all parents who joined staff during online meetings for students in Years 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 during this week, so that we could share our plans and priorities for this Academic Year. Your questions, comments and contributions have been most helpful and we are pleased to provide presentations from the evenings as below and are grateful that so many parents took the time to join us for these vital conversations.

Please click the link/s below to access presentations:

Year 7 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

Year 8 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

Year 9 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

Year 10 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

Year 11 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

Year 12 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

Year 13 Expectation Evening [slides](#) and [video](#).

## Year 7

A reminder for new Year 7 parents to direct any student related enquiries to Heads of House and not the Admissions Team.

Mrs Clarke (Head of Laud House) - [lclarke@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:lclarke@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Sanchez (Head of West House) - [jsanchez@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:jsanchez@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Green (Head of East House) - [lgreen@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:lgreen@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Betteridge (Head of School House) - [cbetteridge@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:cbetteridge@reading-school.co.uk)

Mr Tridgell (Head of County House) - [dtridgell@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:dtridgell@reading-school.co.uk)

For further information, please also refer to the Year 7 Parent Handbook available at the link below:

[Year 7 Parent Handbook](#)

## Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

### Electives and Co-Curricular Activities



The full elective program is now underway with 100 electives running weekly.

The vast majority of electives are on the school site, take place during the school day and require no additional arrangements.

There are a small number of electives taking place at the University of Reading, including Volleyball, Squash, Badminton and Football. The students participating should all be aware of the arrangements required for these activities and parents have been contacted to confirm the 16:00 finish time of these sessions.

Adventurous activities including paddle boarding and canoeing require additional consent and all parents and students involved have been contacted for this purpose and to confirm arrangements.

A [list of all the activities](#), staff responsible and the Bromcom Codes which are shown on students' timetables is provided for reference, in addition to the guide shared at the end of the summer term.

Please note that for some clubs with limited capacity, run by external partners, or taking place offsite, parental sign up may be required. Links relating to these specific activities have been sent to parents and please do register your interest, even if for a place on the waiting list.

There are some electives and clubs that are oversubscribed but we will do all we can to optimise participation.

### Michaelmas Term Co-Curricular Programme

This week has seen an entirely unprecedented demand for a small number of activities for which sign up has been offered: for example, nearly 400 students have signed up for Badminton and 150 students have signed up for Squash. These activities have in previous years been attended by 10-20 students.

We are proactively working to identify ways to address the challenges caused by the increase in the numbers of potential participants in these specific activities. There will be further direct communication, to parents and students impacted by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

Please note that the majority of clubs and activities, run either during lunch or after school have no sign up required. For example, students in Year 7 could take part in Basketball on a Monday, Lacrosse on a Wednesday and Ultimate Frisbee on Friday without sign up.

To find out more about the range of activities running this term, please [click here](#).

## Years 11 & 12



We are delighted to announce that we have appointed an outstanding new Careers Adviser, Mrs Karen Wray, who will be in school on Mondays and Tuesdays. During the Michaelmas Term, she will focus on providing one-to-one careers support to Y11 students, who will all get an opportunity to meet with her along with offering appointments with 6th form students who request a meeting.

Careers Education at Reading School is provided in line with the 8 '[Gatsby Benchmarks](#)'. These benchmarks set out a curriculum of activities that should be provided to all students but still leave considerable room for each individual school to tailor the programme to meet the needs of its own community. As we continually evolve our Careers programme to strive for excellence, we would be delighted to hear your views on the careers education your child has received. A short feedback form can be found here <https://forms.office.com/r/fidNjtmvva>

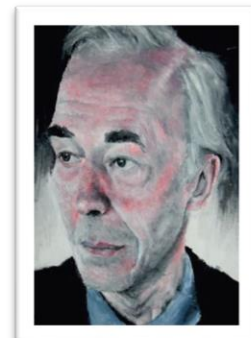
We would be grateful if you can respond before 7th October and if you have any questions in the meantime, please get in contact with Ms Ayres by emailing [layres@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:layres@reading-school.co.uk).

# Excellence, Belonging & Community

## Excellence

### 2022 Reading School & Reading Foundation Mcllroy Essay Competition

The annual [Mcllroy Essay Competition](#) is the tenth modern edition of the prize, which was reinstated under the guidance of our late colleague and OR Ian Judd (pictured). Each year we ask students to respond to a stimulus question which crosses curriculum divisions and academic disciplines. This year's essay celebrates the Year of Reading; details of how to enter, and some prompts to get students thinking, can be found in [this guidance sheet](#).

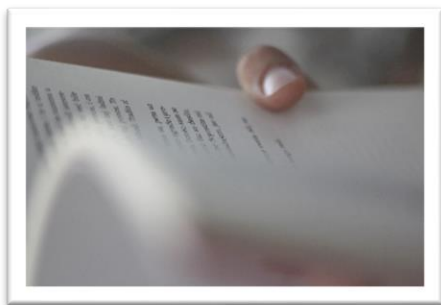


Students from Years 8 to 13 have the opportunity to enter and submit an essay which allows them to express their thoughts and feelings creatively and reflectively. Last year's winner, Branson R (12S) shared, *"I think the competition is a great chance for you to write about something you are passionate about, and I think everyone should have a go because writing in this form is a great life skill to hone before university."*

This year, you have the opportunity to be inspired by the title, **"How reading makes life better"** and apply to it anything you feel is of value which you've learned in your study of an academic subject, your pursuit of hobbies, pastimes and sports, or your general knowledge and interest in current affairs.

The closing date for the competition has been extended to take into account the forthcoming additional Bank Holiday Monday, therefore the submission deadline is now **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September**.

### Could you be Reading School's new Poet Laureate?



The Poet Laureate has been a tradition in the UK since 1668 when the first Poet Laureate was appointed by the Monarch to write verse for significant national occasions. Poets such as William Wordsworth, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Carol Ann Duffy and Ted Hughes have all held the position; Simon Armitage is the current Poet Laureate for the nation.

Applications for the post of Reading School's Poet Laureate are now open for any student across our school community from Year 7 up to (and including) Year 13. The position will be for a fixed term of one academic year serving from October 2022 to July 2023.

The Reading School Poet Laureate will be expected to write at least one poem every half-term that is shared with the whole school community. Poems may be linked to school, local or national events; current affairs; or be on a topic that the poet wishes to explore. There is opportunity and scope in this position for the Poet Laureate to become involved in school-wide poetry initiatives, including National Poetry Day activities, as well as our creative writing clubs.

If you would like to apply for this position, please write a poem based around the theme of 'the environment'. This year we are delighted to have our school writer-in-residence, and a poet who has written extensively about the natural world, Will Burns, as a guest judge.



All poems should be no more than a page of A4 and submitted via email to Mrs Ellis ([pellis@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:pellis@reading-school.co.uk)). The closing date for applications is **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September**.

## Community

### Student experience of an educational experience of a lifetime

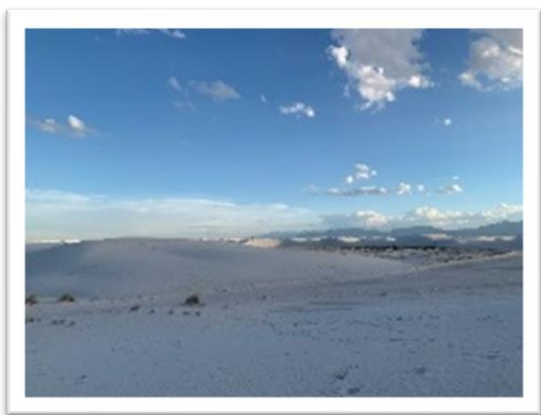
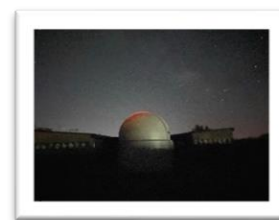


During the summer break, Ryan L (Year 13) had the exciting opportunity to attend [The Summer Science Programme](#), a free 6-week residential astrophysics research programme in New Mexico. The program is run by an independent non-profit organisation operated, governed and largely funded by its own alumni from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, California Institute of Technology, and Harvey Mudd University.

It has run for the past six decades.

Ryan L was asked to share his experience of taking part in The Summer Science Programme, via a blog which is shared with our school community as below:

Over the course of 6-weeks, I spent the nights taking observations of near-Earth asteroids at Etsorn Observatory, the daytime studying orbital mechanics and astronomy from the wonderful professors, and most of the other time writing python code to perform orbit determination. I determined the orbital elements of near-Earth asteroid 1981 QA and published my final data to the Harvard Minor Planet Centre of the International Astronomical Union – our asteroid had a calculated 4.44% chance of colliding with Earth in the next 50 million years and has the potential to cause an existential catastrophe if it does!



Aside from collecting data for the research project, we also had the opportunity to visit various interesting areas in New Mexico on field trips. I visited White Sands (a portion of the desert in New Mexico with strikingly bright sand), the Very Large Array (one of the largest radio telescope arrays in the world), Los Alamos (a national laboratory where the first nuclear bombs were developed and where the Mars perseverance rover is being controlled), and Santa Fe (the capital city of New Mexico).

I am extremely grateful for the skills and friends I made during my time at The Summer Science Program – it was a delight to get to know so many like-minded people in the field of physics as well as in everyone's attitude to make a positive impact to the world.

I want to thank all my teachers at Reading School who have taught me everything I know and love about science, which allowed me to be accepted onto this competitive program.



## Sports Fixtures

Our sports fixtures are back for a new term under the leadership of our committed Sport and PE Team:

### Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September

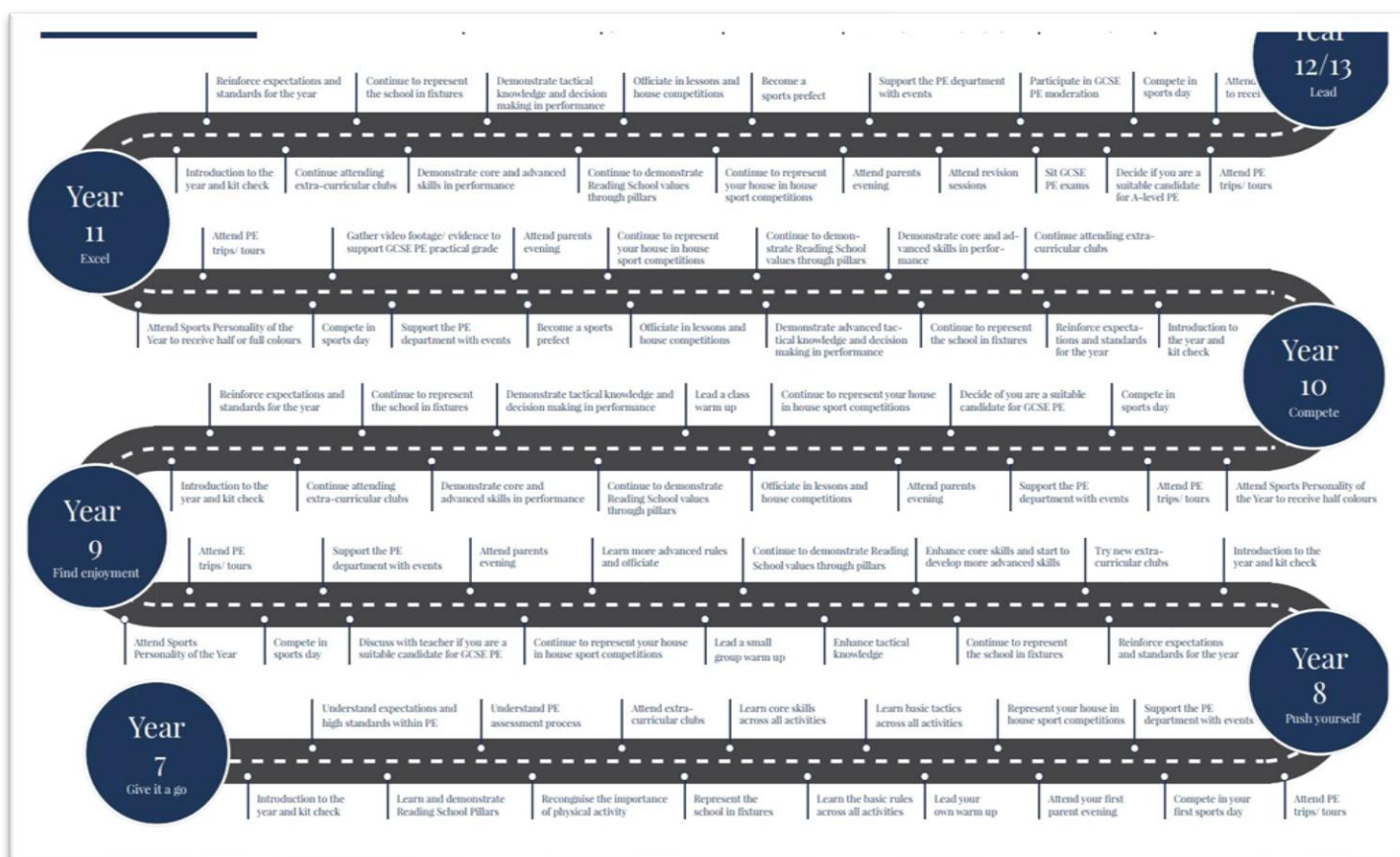
National Cup Football – Year 9A v Brighton Hill, Basingstoke (15:30 kick off)

### Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September

National Cup Football – Year 8B v John Hampden, High Wycombe (14:30 kick off)

## Sport and PE Journey – for new parents and students

In the 2022-2023 Academic year, the Sport and PE Department would like to share what a student's sport and physical education journey at our school looks like. The map features an overview from Year 7 through to Year 13 and allows students and parents to become familiar with what to expect during their journey. Please click [this link](#) to access the journey map.



# RSPA

## Reading School Parents' Association Recruitment



We are currently looking for new members to join our team. The [RSPA](#) plays such a vital role in assisting the School, its parents and carers and above all the children. It's a great way to meet people and have real input into how we can improve the Reading School experience for your children.

Over the years our work has provided, amongst other things, refurbishment of the Gym, the MUGA (Multi-Use-Games-Area), the LRC (Learning Resource Area) Canopy, Minibuses, Chemistry Lab Equipment, Laptops, Textbooks, Gym Equipment and most recently our new Cricket Nets.

We have also provided many social opportunities for people to get to know each other and have fun.

We NEED your help though. It doesn't matter what experience or skills you have. If you have a little time and interest then there is always something you can do. We would love to hear from you - [contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk](mailto:contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk)

## Online Shopping

There are ways in which you can help raise funds for the school without it costing you a single penny.

RSPA is connected to the following: Amazon Smile, Easyfundraising and The Giving Machine. Signing up to these sites takes a couple of minutes and you do not need to provide e.g. bank details. You simply make your purchases through these sites and they make a contribution to your chosen charity.

You can read all about them through this link - [Free Donations RSPA — Reading School Parents' Association](#)

## Old Redingensians Association (ORA) Annual Dinner & AGM

The ORA is an organisation whose membership is available to any former pupils or members of staff from Reading School. It seeks to provide financial support to enrich and enhance the experience of the pupils. [www.oldredingensians.org.uk](http://www.oldredingensians.org.uk)

Their annual dinner and AGM is open to all those connected with the Reading School community and their guests.

It is being held in Big School on Saturday 24th September 2022, 7pm - 11pm. Please note that this is an adult event.

Tickets can be purchased by [clicking this link](#).

We wish you all a very happy weekend.

The RSPA Team

## Michaelmas Term – Week 2

To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow and stay connected.



*Year 7 Product Design Elective with Miss Record*



*The Rugby season is back in full swing with training taking place this week with Year 9s*



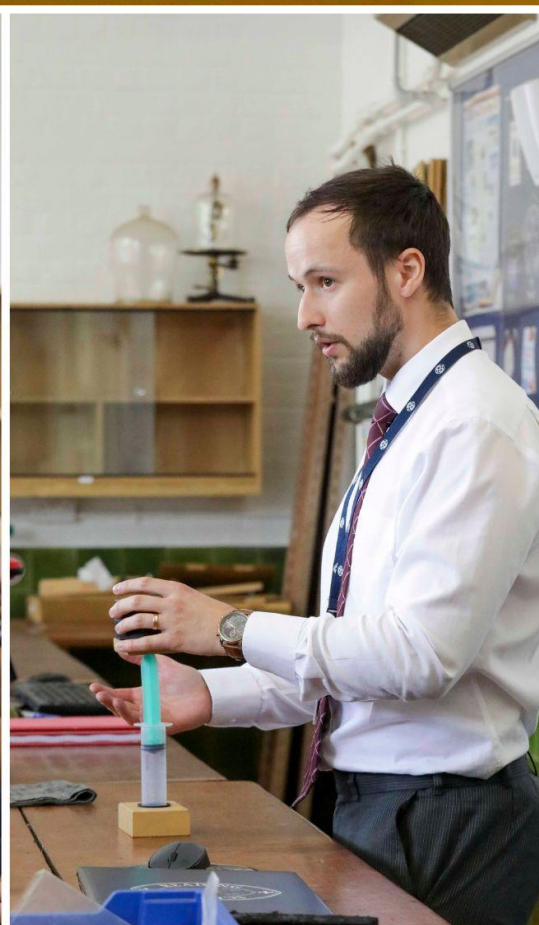


*GCSE Drama with Year 9s who led their own first practical lesson.  
The class was tasked with creating suspense within a scene of their own creation.*

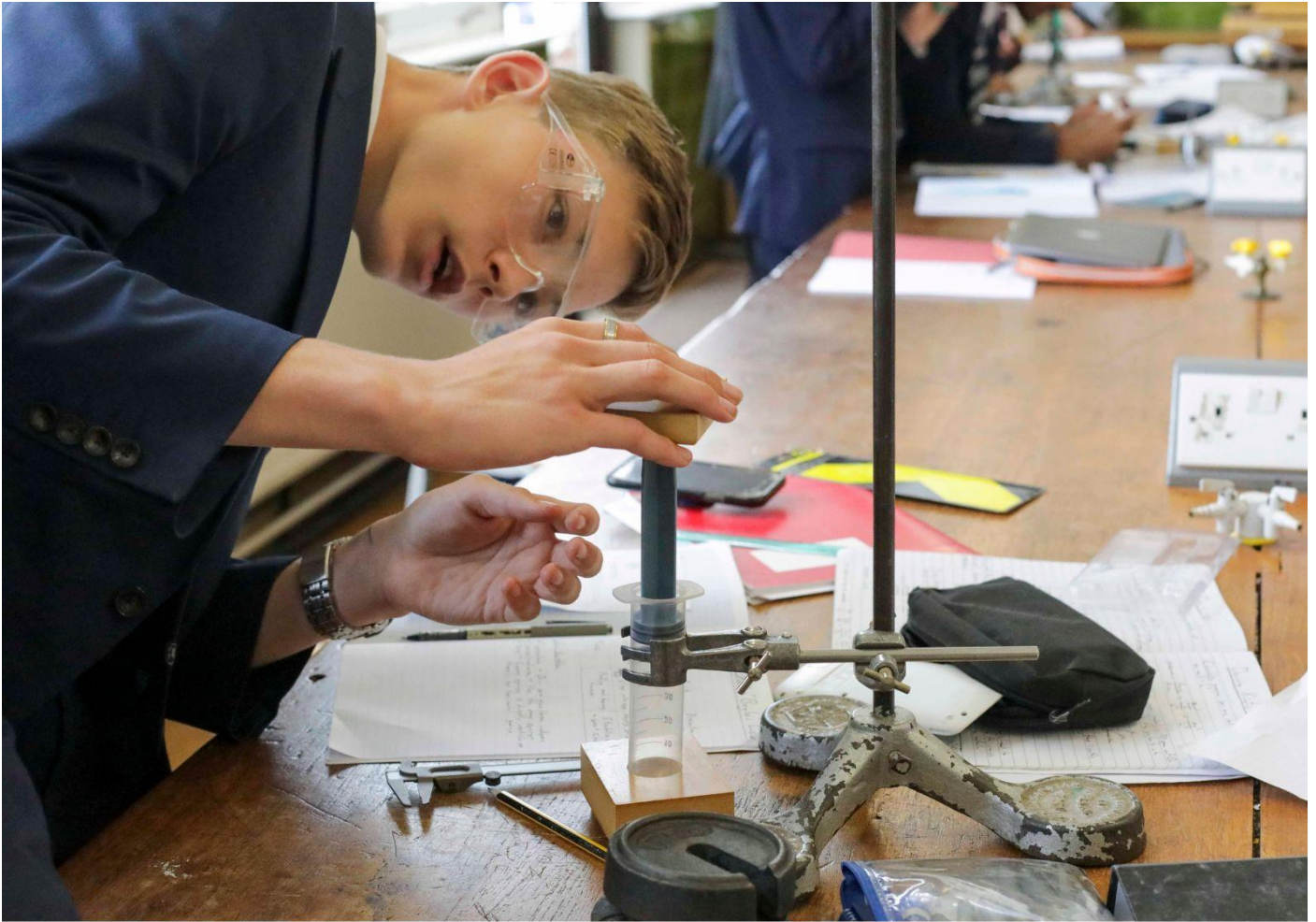


Teacher of Biology, EPQ and Medical School Applications Co-ordinator, Ms Pickering organised a visit this week by Charlie Taylor (OR 2015). Charlie met with Med Soc students to share his real-world experience of graduating in medicine while answering student questions about the application process, interviews and life as a medical student and doctor.









*The ongoing school partnership between Reading School and The Abbey saw a Sports, Social and BBQ event on Thursday afternoon, led by Teacher of History, Deputy Housemistress and Sixth Form pastoral lead, Ms Stratford. The event ended with an address by Headmaster Mr Robson and Headmaster of The Abbey, Mr Fleming.*



















*Please click thumbnail below to view an edited version of this week's Chapel Services*



Parent feedback is important to us and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing [communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk)