



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

09 DECEMBER 2022



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Introduction

“It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.”

Ursula K. Le Guin

“It ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it.”

The Fun Boy Three and Bananarama, 1982

Reading School is in the business of opportunities. It is in the business of creating dreams where we support children and young people to be the best versions of themselves. To be given opportunities to be the next generation of leaders while demonstrating compassion. We are shaping a positive future story which continues to emphasise academic excellence while prioritising belonging and community.

Purpose and Strategy

“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the people to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.”

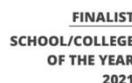
Antoine De Saint Exupery

A shared sense of purpose can be a guide to taking an organisation beyond the mediocre. An effective purpose will engage at an emotional level and energise people to act. Arguably one of the defining characteristics of organisations with sustainable high performance is the meaning and clarity of shared purpose.

The starting point of a strategic framework is purpose. What is it that we, as an organisation, are there for? We must dare to dream and be a purpose-driven organisation, shaped by our core values and the Reading Way. This can be accomplished by championing a narrative of a positive future story, through a proactive approach to strategic planning, for instance through the development of our 2023-2030 Strategic Development Plan. We would welcome the opportunity to work with partners, professionals and consultants to help shape a bold, ambitious strategic plan that has academic excellence and character excellence at its core. If you have professional expertise on strategic planning, leadership and management then the Senior Leadership Team would value your input on the format the next iteration of our strategic plan should look like.



Indeed, Reading School would like to proactively seek to develop partnerships that add value, this includes businesses, charities or individuals. Expertise, time or financial support are always appreciated.



Culture

I am increasingly convinced that an organisation, such as Reading School, is shaped by culture. Indeed, the dominance and coherence of culture is an essential quality of an excellent, high performing organisation. Our core values can be used:

- As a reference for decision making
- Clarity and increased awareness about behaviours
- An unambiguous environment for new employees to start off on the right track.
- Stories to build the heritage of the organisation
- Consistency – viewed from within or from the outside

Our school culture includes academic excellence which it is known for, however it includes so much more. Research shows that there is a strong and significant correlation between an organisation's culture and performance. By understanding what makes up our own culture, allows us to share this with our whole school community, so that it becomes tangible and can be evidenced within the day to day life of the school.



The many overlapping connections between our staff, students, governors and stakeholders results in our distinguishing character. While providing a high quality, rich curriculum supported by committed professional staff, the quality of education is enhanced by the breadth and depth of our Electives programme, that places excellence within the context of a holistic education. Crucially, the positive impact is evidenced by the development of attitudes and behaviours that aspire to healthy high performance, individually and as part of a team.

Recent examples include the multitude of examples of diverse student excellence featured in the weekly Bulletin to high-profile events, which bring the school community together, such as our annual Commemoration Service held at Reading Minster Church, House Music Competition held at The Hexagon and the upcoming Service of Nine Lessons & Carols.

Community and Partnerships

Our school culture is also demonstrated through our commitment to partnership development locally, nationally and internationally and this has been demonstrated in our work with:

- Royal Berkshire Hospital Trust
- Ukrainian students and their families
- The True Athlete Programme
- The Right to Dream organisation
- Bishops Diocesan School in Cape Town and more locally, The Abbey School.



All these partnerships and ones currently being developed, contribute towards providing our students with valuable opportunities to demonstrate their leadership, service and compassion, along with personal development opportunities that will prepare them for life after Reading School.

To get in touch as a parent, stakeholder or member of the Reading School community, please email headspa@reading-school.co.uk.

Mr AM Robson

Headmaster



Key information

All Years

End of term arrangements on Friday 16 December - reminder

Period 1 – 3

Lessons as normal, with junior period 3 starting at 10:00 rather than 10:15.

Tutor Time, Chapel and Break

	County	East	Laud	School	West
10:45	Chapel	Break	Tutor	Tutor	Tutor
11:00	Break	Chapel	Tutor	Tutor	Tutor
11:15	Tutor	Tutor	Chapel	Tutor	Tutor
11:30	Tutor	Tutor	Tutor	Chapel	Break
11:45	Tutor	Tutor	Break	Break	Chapel

Tutors from each House to supervise the refectory and outdoor spaces during their break time. No students to leave the site before 12:00. Food will be grab and go only. Boarding dismissal – 12:00 from each boarding house. *A polite staff request is made to not park vehicles outside of the boarding houses on the last day of term.*

Teaching & Learning Excellence

At Reading School, we are blessed with superb teachers - knowledgeable, highly qualified experts in their field. However, we are always learning. That is why this year our 'Continuous Professional Development' focus across the School is 'Making Students Effective Independent Learners'. This doesn't simply mean more independent work, but instead, students are likely to see more worked examples as staff talk them through how to put together an excellent answer, more thorough criteria and guidance on Teams for homework tasks, and more subject-specific advice on how best to revise for each subject. Our aim is to ensure all students are always thinking hard, and we welcome the support of parents in this aim.

A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols – reminder

We are looking forward to welcoming our school community to Reading School's annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, to be held in the Reading School Chapel on Monday 12 December 2022. This will be led by Junior, Senior and Chapel Choir, as well as a student organist, where there will be excellent traditional carols performed and also plenty of congregational carols to enjoy.

This event is free to attend, though tickets can be reserved on our website by clicking this link: [Service of Nine Lessons & Carols 2022](#). Please reserve your tickets so we can better gauge attendance and ensure there is space for all. Our chaplain, Revd Dr Chris Evans, will lead the service, which will start at 7:00pm and we ask that you are seated by 6:50pm. There will be parking available onsite for the event and please arrive no earlier than 6:15pm as the front gates will be closed beforehand. Director of Music, Mr Griffin looks forward to seeing pupils, parents, friends, relatives, governors and staff to share in this celebration of Christmas.

Year 10

A window into PSHE

Our Year 10 students this half term have been discussing financial decision-making, in particular the idea of risk in the context of gambling. We have explored what makes us take risks, what influences our perceptions of risk, as well as the role of the gambling industry in those perceptions. We have watched Walter Mischel's famous marshmallow test, dissected TV gambling adverts and discussed how much of a risk it was for Mr Fairchild to re-mortgage his house at the current time. We are now exploring how to identify when gambling becomes a problem, and where to get help.



Parents should be aware that gambling is proven to be a particularly male-dominated industry, and the advertising reflects that, hence why we raise awareness of it at Reading School. Parents should also be aware that young people's involvement in gambling is no longer likely to be at a bookmakers, but instead on video games via 'loot boxes' and 'skins' - we would encourage you to discuss the risks of these two phenomena with your child at home, and can recommend the following website that is specifically for parents: [Parent Hub](#)

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Programming Excellence

Year 12 students were recently asked to take part in an Object Oriented Programming Project led by Teacher of Computer Science, Mr McAllister. The goal for the class was to create a limited example of code to showcase different concepts, however Omar Floodgate (12C) went further to create a more fully fleshed out program. As well as making excellent use of the different ideas covered within the project, his text-based RPG battle simulator showed a huge amount of creativity and commitment. Omar was spoken to this week and shared:



Can you tell us more about what Object Oriented Programming is?

Object oriented programming is one of the programming paradigms, which is a way that programming can be written. Different languages have different paradigms. So we use Python in school, which has the object oriented paradigm. It involves using classes to create a lot of different instances of things rather than continuously writing them out, it saves a lot of time, and it's very useful to know. We were told to create a project, a text based RPG, we'd done a bit in class, but I'd been doing a bit more outside of school.

Where did your interest from programming stem from?

I love gaming. I played loads of games when I was younger and still do. I've always like creating games and it's something I want to do in the future as well. I love creating games. Ever since I've started school I just love coding. I love creating things because you just have so much free rein over what you make. It just feels great. So I just enjoy doing in my spare time.

What subjects are you currently studying?

Computer science, Maths, Further Maths and Classical Civilizations.

What do you hope want to go on to do?

I'd love to go on to game design. That's been my dream since I was younger, to be a game designer. But I think anything to do with computing coding would be really nice.

What advice would you have for those with a passion for programming?

Honestly, just pick up a gaming platform or software like Unity and just go for it. Just try things out. Search things up on YouTube, start small and don't go massive. And just do it. I didn't do enough of it when I was younger and I procrastinated a lot. When I did start it at one point, I tried something way too big. And it gets really hard and it just makes you feel like you don't want to do it. You start small, you get small things done and you feel great and then it keeps going from there.

And lastly, the most important question, what's your favourite game?

That's a tough one. I've always loved the Pokémon games and my project itself is slightly based off Pokémon as well. I played on the Gameboy to the latest versions on the Switch and I don't particularly have a favourite in the genre, but Pokémon is definitely up there.

Omar's text based simulator can be played by visiting the following link: <https://replit.com/@OFloodgate/OOP-Battle-Sim>

Community

Reading Family Aid – update



In November, we were asked to support [Reading Family Aid](#), a local charity helping disadvantaged children living in poverty. Reading Family Aid's Christmas Toy Appeal is a key annual event and this year was more important to them than ever due to the current cost-of-living crisis. By partnering with the charity, Reading School, as always, answered the call with parents and students donating pre-loved and new toys that would suit teenage boys – a category the charity sometimes struggles to collect for.

This week, Mrs A Taylor from Reading Family Aid came in to pick up the donated goods which will be prepared and wrapped in order to be collected by social workers, health visitors and other professionals in order to deliver to families in need and so that children have a present to open this Christmas Day 2022. During her visit to school this week, Mrs Taylor shared, *“Reading Family Aid has been helping local children living in poverty and with other disadvantages for over 40 years. Its Christmas Toy Appeal will distribute presents to nearly 3,000 children in the Reading area this month - kids and teens who would otherwise receive nothing this Christmas. Both myself, my colleague Anna Waite and the charity are so grateful to the Reading School community for supporting this and helping a child to feel seen and thought of this Christmas.”*



Careers

Planning to study Medicine?



[Information was shared](#) with Year 11 students earlier this week in relation to studying Medicine and the careers team will be hosting a virtual information meeting in January 2023 for Year 11s and their parents. The virtual meeting will be an opportunity for those interested in studying medicine to find out more along with hearing a first-hand account from a current medical student. Further details of the virtual information meeting will be shared in an upcoming Bulletin and via Teams.

LRC

The Reading School Book Award 2022

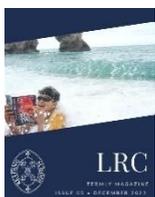
The Reading School Book Award is awarded annually for excellent, recently published Young Adult fiction. The shortlist is chosen by the Pupil Librarian Team and the winner is voted for by the students of Reading School. This year, Pupil Librarian Aden C co-ordinated the Book Award.

The 2022 Shortlist:

- Bloodline by Mark Walden
- The Champion by Tarun Matharu
- Daughter of the Deep by Rick Riordan
- Jet Skis, Swamps and Smugglers by Robert Muchamore
- You'll Be The Death Of Me by Karen McManus

Your child can now participate in the final vote. Which book should win the Reading School Book Award 2022? Students can cast their vote by [clicking this link](#).

Learning Resource Centre Termly Magazine – Issue 5



Our termly student-led magazine written and edited by the Pupil Librarian Team under the guidance of Mrs L Kesteven and Mrs A Jackson, is out now and can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

We would like to thank the team for their dedication and hard-work for producing high quality content that features; Empathy Action Month, Reading Week 2022, LRC Book Club Reviews, Comic Con Report, National Poetry Day and many student articles.

RSPA

Uniform Shop

The Uniform Shop will be open on:

Friday 9th December 2:30pm – 4:00pm & Saturday 10th December 10.30am – 12:30pm

Please come along to purchase blazers, trousers, shirts, base layers, rugby boots, trainers, outdoor coats and more at the Shop. We also have a small stock of donated GCSE and A level revision guides.

There will also be unnamed coats, shoes and miscellaneous items that have been handed into lost property this half-term. Come along and claim your lost items!

The shop is located at the back of the walled car-park (opposite the Chapel).

Please note:

On Friday 9th December, buyers are not allowed to drive onto the school site, access is via the pedestrian gates only. There is ample (paid) parking available on Erleigh Road, Addington Road and Alexandra Road.

On Saturday 10th buyers are allowed to drive onto site and parking is available on the right-hand side of the Walled car park or outside it.

Please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk for further information and we look forward to seeing you there.

Year 7 Disco & Welcome Event

The RSPA are delighted to invite all Year 7 students, parents and carers to a Welcome Event at the School on Friday 20th January 2023 from 7:00 - 8.30pm.

The children are invited to attend a disco being held in the Refectory (ticket link to follow) whilst parents and carers are invited to join the RSPA in Big School for refreshments.

Please save the date. It's a great social opportunity for Year 7 parents and carers to learn how they can be more involved with the School and meet other parents, while students enjoy the disco. We hope to see as many Year 7s there as possible and look forward to welcoming parents.

Summer Fayre

The RSPA are delighted to confirm that the Summer Fayre is back and is being held on Sunday 9th July 2023.

The last Summer Fayre held at Reading School was in 2019. Due to Covid restrictions it was not possible to hold the Fayre in subsequent years however is an event that welcomes all parents and students to a fun filled and activity packed day.

If you are interested in helping at the Fayre or have any suggestions please contact Nish Moody – Nmoody@readingschoolparents.co.uk.

We would like to wish you all a very Happy Weekend.

The RSPA Team



Michaelmas Term – Week 13

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

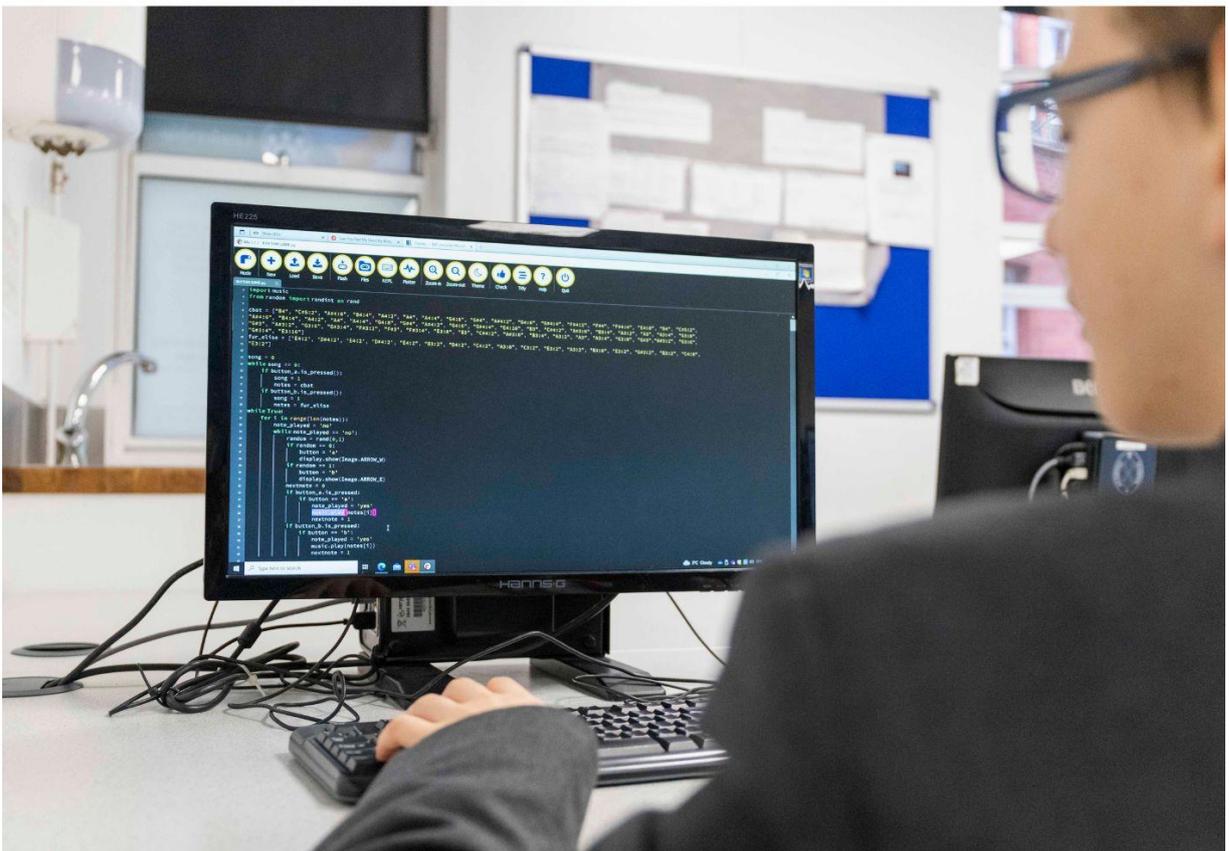


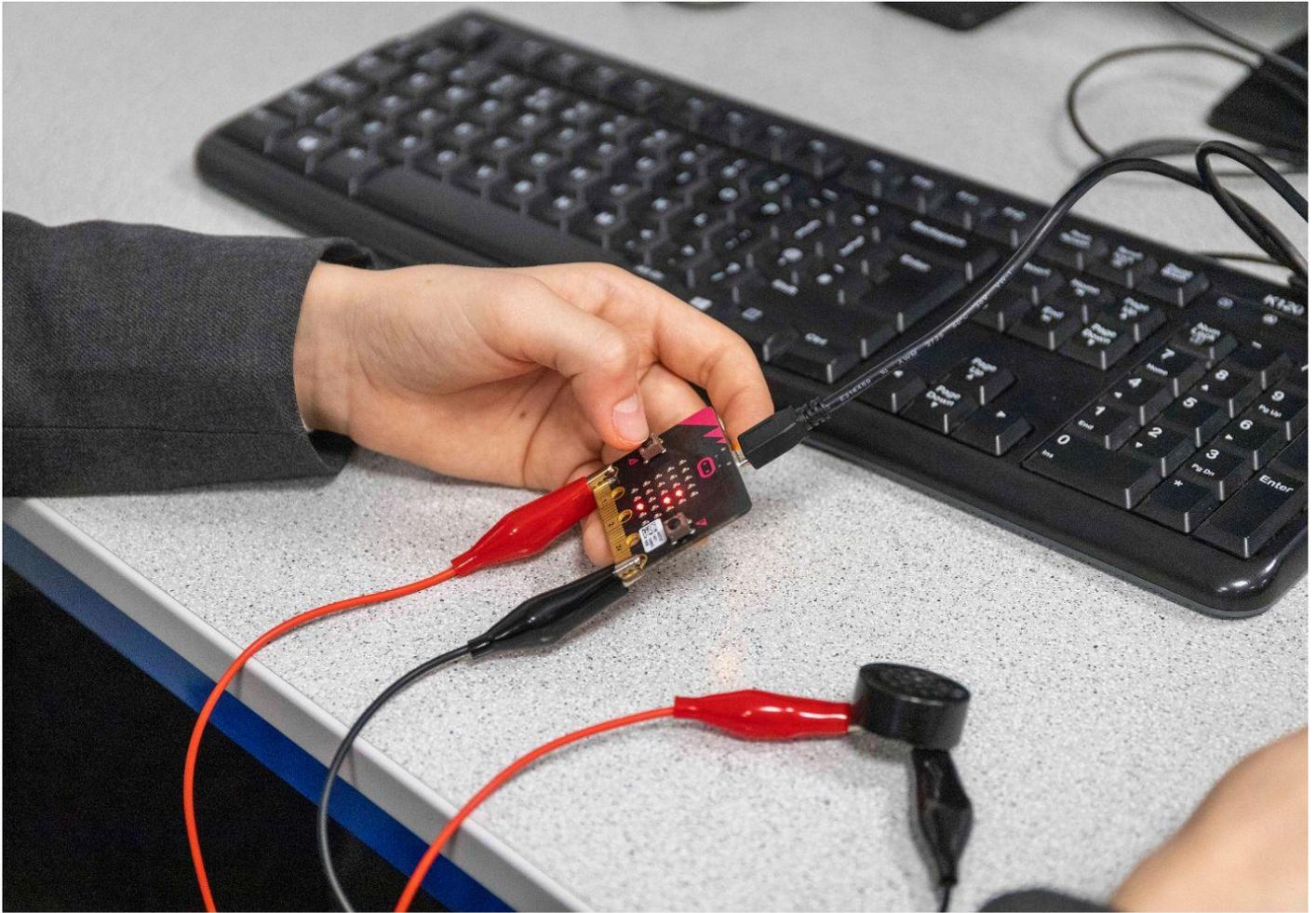
Teacher of Mandarin, Mr R Wu led Year 8s to a trip to a local authentic Chinese restaurant where they had the opportunity to practice their Mandarin speaking skills by ordering and speaking with the restaurant team. Please [click this link](#) to read student reviews and thank you to Mr Wu for his images of the trip.



Embedded Systems Coding Elective.

Students started by gaining an appreciation of microcontrollers, creating a simple circuit layout on a breadboard and uploading basic code to make an LED flash. This is the foundation of Embedded Systems, where the microcontroller/processor has a dedicated purpose. The students then moved on to a higher-level tool, called the Microbit, which can be programmed in Python and as shown in the image where Jonty C (9L) has a 5x5 LED display and when connected to a speaker, he has programmed in Python to make it play music.







Year 9 enrichment and lifeskills outside of the classroom.

Thank you to Mr Villaverde and Mrs Ayres for their images of the trip.



Climbing sessions with Year 11s



This is the second year running that the Reading School Parents Association has run the 'Teachers Amazon Wishlist'. All Departments and wider areas such as student support, the Learning Resource Centre, Sixth Form and Boarding are invited to participate. It is incredibly well received by the parent community who are keen to give back to the Departments who do so much for our children although it can get mildly hectic in points for the organisers, nothing beats the smiles on the teachers' faces when they receive their parcels.



“The Art department is absolutely delighted to once again be the beneficiary of the generosity of our parents, carers, and wider school community. So exciting to receive boxes and boxes of wonderful books! As a department we are keen to open students’ eyes to the breadth of possibility in regards diverse forms of art, craft, and design; the continued efforts of the RSPA are hugely appreciated in enabling us to support learners in this regard. Thank you.”

Mrs A Creegan, Head of Art

“Dear Kirsty, Jo and all of the parents of the RSPA,

On behalf of the Mathematics department I would like to say a massive thank you for all of the items we have received. The 3 posters are already up in classrooms and the textbooks are being used for planning exam style questions for our key stage 4 lessons. Your support is hugely appreciated and we wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.”

From Mrs S Parker, Head of Mathematics.

“Thank you all so much for your generosity in purchasing the English Grammar books for each our Ukrainian guest students, as well as the two reference books which are now available for them to use in the LRC. All the students were hugely grateful and touched to receive the books and I am sure they will prove invaluable to them going forward as they seek to try and continually improve their English to enable them to achieve as much as they can here.”

From Mr K Luteijn, Teacher of Geography and Ukrainian Support Lead

“The gift-wrapped donations and the handwritten card and chocolate that accompanied them were incredibly thoughtful. We would like to thank the RSPA for arranging the wish list and the school community for their generosity. The award-winning books will be available for students to borrow for the holidays.”

From Mrs L Kesteven, School Librarian

What's good for our students is good for our staff – Learn, Lead and Serve!











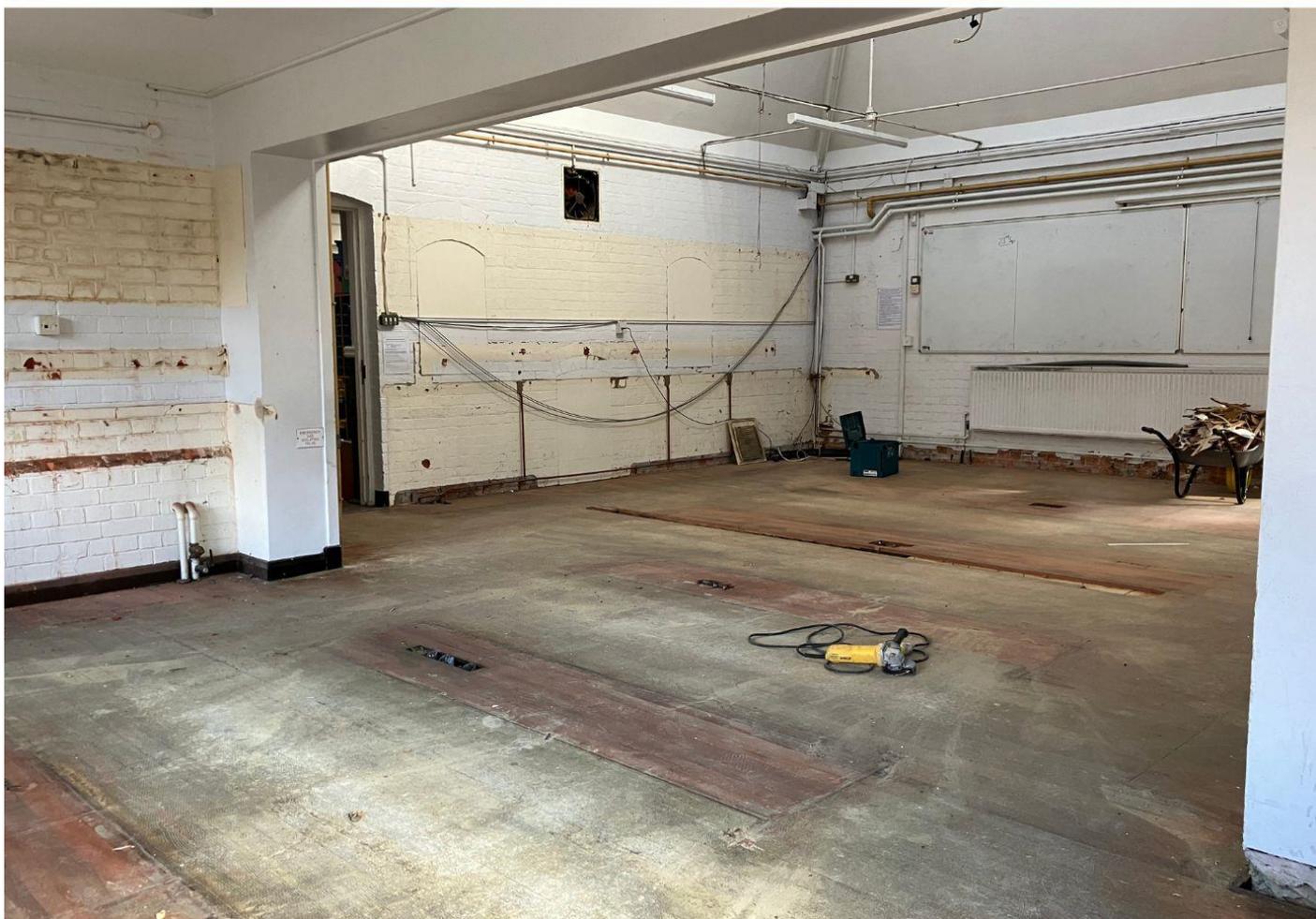






After securing funding from The Wolfson Foundation, for the major refurbishment of our school's historic physics laboratories the works have now been completed. Not only will current and future students benefit from the refurbishment, local primary school children who are a part of Reading School's social mobility programme, Future Stories, will also benefit by allowing Reading School to continue to invest in widening access and opportunity for students who face disadvantage in the local area.





Head of Physics, Data and Standards Lead & Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Mr P Stromdale shared this week, “It was a moral imperative as a school, where we provide a world leading education, to provide our students with updated facilities, especially when Physics is a core subject studied by all students up to Year 11 and our second most popular A level subject. I feel privileged as a Head of Department to have been able to work in collaboration with my colleagues, in order to reach our goal to secure funding in order to augment our facilities with state-of-the-art laboratories which brings parity with Chemistry and Biology and which will have a huge impact on student learning.”



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