



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

02 DECEMBER 2022



Contents

Introduction	3
Key information	5
Parent Governor Election Result	5
All Years	5
A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols	5
Attendance – reminders	5
Year 11 only	6
Mock Exams and Revision	6
Year 11 and 13	6
Year 13 only	6
Excellence, Belonging & Community	7
Excellence	7
Year 11 Biology Clinic	7
Community	7
Self-Defence Classes	7
LRC	7
Boost Your Empathy Challenge 2022	7
Junior Book Club	7
Careers	8
Investin Education	8
Bursary Applications for the 2021-22 Academic Year	8
Sports Fixtures	8
RSPA	9
Official School Hoodies	9
2nd Hand Uniform Shop	9
Michaelmas Term – Week 12	10

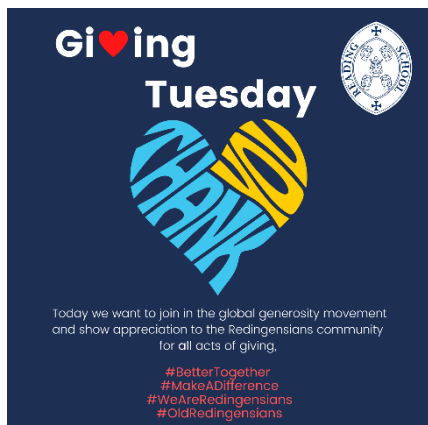
Introduction

As an organisation we are purpose driven and shaped by our core values. Excellence is not act, but a habit. Our daily actions and behaviours should shape our focus on healthy high performance, academic and character excellence. It is therefore important to raise awareness of the importance of demonstrating our culture of commitment. This week we have substantial evidence of our renewed commitment to:

- Building on a culture of giving
- Environmental, Social and Governance goals and
- Providing students from all backgrounds valuable opportunities to flourish

A Culture of Giving

As we enter the Season of Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas, it is only right and proper that we continue to focus on committing to the nurturing of a culture of generosity, philanthropy and giving which includes giving back.



Ten years ago, [Giving Tuesday](#) began with a simple idea – a day that encouraged people to do good. The movement has grown into a worldwide phenomenon, inspiring a multitude of generous acts and reimagining a world where generosity is a part of everyday life. Four years ago, Reading School decided to use this day to remind our current parents, our Redingensians community and friends, of how important support from our community makes a huge difference to our students and what is offered at Reading School. You should have received a letter from me on Tuesday setting out various ways in which you can support from volunteering your time, talent and treasures.

It is heartening to see new parents joining our giving community, committing to regular or one-off donations or offering volunteering expertise this week. Reading School has its own movement in making sure that our boys have the best opportunities available to them and you are vital in helping make this happen.

Commitment to ESG

Following on from our [Climate Youth Fair in September 2022](#), we are committed to investing in our school's journey towards our environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. This week saw local Reading based Social Enterprise; Design Nature CIC come to deliver a week-long set of exciting, interactive workshops for all our Year 8s. We would like to thank Erica Purvis and Mark Mason for sharing their engaging content which focused on exploring what renewable energy's role is in tackling climate change while giving our students the opportunity to work together collaboratively to imagine what the future can look like.

The added value that external opportunities can bring to the class cannot be underestimated and there is much that goes on behind the scenes in order to create and deliver these opportunities. I would like to thank Mrs Clara Heston and the Chemistry Department for facilitating this opportunity which we would like to develop further during our ESG journey.



Commitment to providing students from all backgrounds with opportunities to flourish

I recently attended a meeting of the Grammar School Heads Association (GSHA) which focused on Social Mobility. As a consequence, Reading School have been commissioned to author a paper explaining and analysing 'disadvantage' in the context of education.



Our 'Future Stories' initiatives will shape our response alongside research undertaken by Farmington Scholars such as the Headteacher of Henrietta Barnett School in North London.

In the Norwood Report published in 1943, reference was made to 'the mission of Grammar Schools to create a new aristocracy of intellect to replace the aristocracy of birth and wealth.' Currently, there are 163 fully selective grammar schools in England out of a total of 3448 state secondary schools. According to National data, grammar schools are educating a far lower percentage of disadvantaged students than other schools in England. Many of these schools were founded in order to provide an academic education from children from less advantaged backgrounds, thereby promoting social mobility in society and an emphasis on meritocracy.

It is important that we do not lose our way and we should respond to criticism that we need to widen access for disadvantaged students in a variety of ways. We consider that the following methods have positive impact:

- Provide additional support for the Entrance Test to disadvantaged students, for instance through FROG, a software company working with a range of individual schools
- Provide outreach opportunities for able disadvantaged students, including Future Stories that involves getting the young people on to the Reading School site and seeing the school for themselves, and subsequently encourage more disadvantaged students to apply
- Reduce the qualifying score or mark for disadvantaged students

According to Jerrim and Sims (2019) “Grammar Schools have failed to fulfil their meritocratic objectives of selecting and educating the highest-attaining pupils from all classes.”

In the Memorandum of Understanding with GSHA, the Department of Education sets out the shared aims of the two organisations namely:

- That more pupils from lower income backgrounds would apply for, and pass the test for, and be admitted to selective schools.
- That there should be increased partnerships between selective schools and non -selective primary and/or secondary schools, with a view to collaborating to improve outcomes for children across the area.

Currently 5% of children in England are being educated in one of England’s 163 Grammar Schools (Jerrim and Sims, 2019). Estimates show that between 3 and 7.5% of pupils in Grammar Schools are from disadvantaged backgrounds, whilst 17.5% of pupils overall from disadvantaged backgrounds attend English secondary schools. One hurdle or barrier that prevents disadvantaged children from attending grammar schools such as Reading School is that their parents do not enter them for the Entrance tests. According to Cribb (2013) there is some evidence to suggest that some parents from low socio-economic groups associate grammar schools with academic elitism, tradition and middle-class values, feeling that their children will not fit in with the other children, and thus they actively choose not to apply to these schools, even if they are aware that their child has significant academic potential.

In addition, Ball and Bowe argue that disadvantaged families are less able to cope with the cost of train tickets or bus passes. Furthermore, Jerrim and Sims (2019) maintain that lower income families can have different aspirations and expectations for their children. Because we are committed to widening access for disadvantaged children, we recognise that a disadvantaged child may be academically able but is less likely to pass the test and thus needs additional support to do so. Further, we are committed to working with families of students with high academic potential and encouraging them to apply. In addition, we are committed to working with teachers and headteachers in primary schools to help them identify able students and to encourage them to apply to Reading School.

According to the Sutton Trust, grammar schools should do more to ensure that they provide access to children of all backgrounds who can benefit from a grammar school education. We agree. This is why we are working with the Grammar School Heads Association to adopt a range of methods to widen access and opportunity. At Reading School, we are in the business of providing opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to flourish academically and in terms of their character. This is our purpose. Fairer tests, free test preparation for all applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds, outreach activities, directly linking admissions to pupil premium, helping with transport costs and working directly with primary schools are key methods recommended by the Sutton Trust.

I am proud to say that the Reading School team have undertaken all of these steps to broaden access and maximise opportunity. Our success has been due to employing a variety of methods that have had a positive impact. For instance, and in particular:

- Providing outreach opportunities for able disadvantaged students, especially that involve children on the Reading School site and seeing the school themselves
- Reducing the pass mark for the Entrance test for disadvantaged students
- Providing additional software for the test to disadvantaged students.

In closing, the staff and governing board are passionate about widening access and providing opportunities to flourish. Every single disadvantaged child who enters Reading School is more likely to get higher grades and have a fulfilling educational experience because of the opportunities we are committed to offering through the Reading Way, our inspirational curriculum and the Reading Promise.

Mr AM Robson

Headmaster



Key information

Parent Governor Election Result

The votes in the recent parent governor election were counted on 28 November 2022, and the outcomes were as follows:

Total ballots cast by 4pm on 25 November 2022: 134

The votes for each candidate were as follows:

- Saritha Arunkumar 29
- Pallavi Chube 24
- Shaifali Gaba 37
- Dozie Nnabuife 40

6 ballot papers were disqualified as not complying with the election rules.

Dozie Nnabuife was therefore duly elected as Parent Governor for the period 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2026.

All Years

A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

It is with great pleasure that we invite you 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 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 18:15 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.

For parents of Junior, Senior & Chapel choir members:

Your son's have been given a letter outlining more detail for the performers in the Carol Service. An online version of the letter can be found by [clicking here](#).

Please can you complete the online permission slip to confirm your son's attendance here: <https://forms.office.com/e/JQH3Z9cQY>

Attendance – reminders

We would like to kindly remind parents and students of the school policy with regard to notifying an absence from school. All student absences need to be reported (on each day of absence) by a parent by emailing attendance@reading-school.co.uk with a student's first and last name, year and form.

If a student arrives late to school, they are required to sign in with Student Services, which is located in the Cloisters area. If a student is leaving school early, they should go to the Student Services office to sign out.

In the event of a child vomiting or experiencing diarrhoea, they must stay off school for 48 hours after their last episode.

The Student Services office is manned from 8am – 4pm daily and in the unlikely event that there is not a member of staff in Student Services, they can go to the Medical Centre to sign out. Student Services aims to reply to all parent emails within 12 hours.

Year 11 only

Mock Exams and Revision

Year 11s will be sitting their mock exams in 10 days' time, please see the schedule by [clicking here](#). The mocks will be held from Monday 12 December – Friday 16 December, with just two exams scheduled in the previous week (Monday 5 and Friday 9). On Monday 5 and Friday 9 December the students will sit normal lessons Period 1 – 5, and then their mock in period 6 and 7. Year 11s only need to be in school when they have exams on Monday 12 – Thursday 15 December, but all students need to be in school on Friday 16 December. Year 11s have been sent their individual mock exam timetable, which just includes the subjects they study, and where they will be sitting their exams.

Heads of Department have kindly put together [the following document for parents \(and students\)](#), which summarises the content that will be covered in each subject's exam - this is designed to help parents support and guide their child in the revision process. Furthermore, we would once again suggest parents and students familiarise themselves with the Reading School Revision Guide, which [can be found here](#) and contains the evidence-backed strategies that will be most effective.

We wish students all the best, and encourage them to reach out to their form tutor in case of concerns or anxieties. Preparation now, and then acting on the feedback that staff give after Christmas, will be the most significant way to improve performance.

Year 11 and 13

The contingency days for the Summer 2023 exams have now been announced. Contingency days are designed to be used in the event of national or significant local disruption of examinations. All students sitting GCSEs and A levels need to be available on these dates, in case any of their exams are moved at the last minute.

The dates are: Thursday 8 June – Afternoon, Thursday 15 June – Afternoon, and Wednesday 28 June – All day. We strongly encourage families of GCSE or A Level Candidates to not book holidays that may clash with these sessions and thank you in advance for supporting the contingency days.

Year 13 only

Year 13 mock exams begin on Thursday 5 January, and finish on Wednesday 11 January. Please see the schedule by [clicking here](#). Students only need to be in school when they have exams. Normal lessons will resume for Year 13s on Thursday 12 January.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence

Year 11 Biology Clinic



A new Biology Clinic is available to attend for all aspiring Biologists every Monday lunchtime in B4 (Thomason Laboratory). The clinic is run by a team of A level Biologists and are drop in sessions available to all Year 11s and will provide opportunities for those wishing to revise for their upcoming Mock examinations. Questions can be asked on revision techniques as well as those thinking of studying A level Biology.

Community

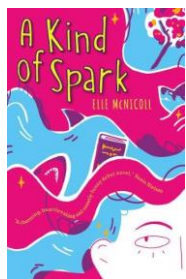
Self-Defence Classes

[Reading Youth Council](#) has partnered with [The Martial Arts School](#) in order to offer free self-defence sessions for young people aged between 11-18. The sessions are part of Reading Youth Council's Health and Wellbeing campaign whose goal is educate young people on staying both physically and mentally healthy. Dates of the free classes are: 06/12/2022, 13/12/2022, 20/12/2022, 03/01/2023 and 10/01/2023. To book, please scan the QR code or [click here](#).



LRC

Boost Your Empathy Challenge 2022



Empathy is the ability to imagine and understand other people's feelings and perspectives and is a skill that needs to be developed. Reading can be a fantastic way to develop empathy, so we would like to set you a challenge! Boost your empathy by reading at least one empathy boosting book before the 9th of December. You might like to try one from the LRC or you could choose your own title. All Year 8, 9 and 10s have recently been to the LRC for a special empathy reading lesson but all students from any year are encouraged to enter.

To enter our challenge competition, once you have read your book, complete the online form by [clicking here](#).

You can read as many books as you like and you should complete one form per book. The deadline for completing the online form is Friday 9th of December.

[KS3 Empathy Boosting Books](#)

[KS4/5 Empathy Boosting Books](#)

[Wellbeing Books](#)

Junior Book Club

Members of Junior Book Club (Years 7 - 9) were invited to read a book/s over the course of the recent Reading Week and to complete a book review.

Some chose to read their own book, whilst others picked a book from one of the suggested reading lists which were published across all school communications beforehand.

Fifteen pupils read nineteen books between them and wrote some inspiring reviews and these are now displayed upstairs in the LRC. All pupils who took part enjoyed the experience and hopefully their reviews will encourage the wider school community to pick up one of their books to read. Junior Book Club Leader, Mrs Jackson would like to thank everyone who took part.



Careers

Via the Reading School Students Teams channel, there is a sub-group “*Careers and additional opportunities*”. Students are reminded to visit this area to see career information and opportunities shared regularly. The majority of opportunities are free to attend with external providers such as ‘Speakers for School’ and ‘Young Professionals’ as well as those opportunities provided directly from organisations. There are also paid opportunities which can be expensive. We know that many of our students do attend these opportunities and therefore have created a partnership whereby our students can at least get a discounted price.

Investin Education



In partnership with [InvestIN Education](#), Reading School is offered a 10% discount on all the various opportunities available with the discount code **READING10**. In addition, students will gain exclusive access to InvestIN's platform AmbitionX, in which they will be able to register an unlimited number of Live Online experiences across all 28 careers.

In addition, InvestIN are offering 15% discount with discount code **SUMMER15 on bookings made before 31 December**. Please see link here to view opportunities [2023 Summer Experiences](#).

In 2021-2022, **45** of our students registered for an InvestIN programme, with average feedback scoring at 8.7/10.

Before confirming paid bookings with InvestIN, please complete the form below for any Spring/Summer opportunities so the School can keep track of bookings made with InvestIN Education as well as negotiate further discounts, if there is a large number of bookings:

[Investin Education Form - please complete BEFORE registering for a course](#). Please complete this form before 12 December 2022, so we can negotiate further discounts if a large number wish to undertake spring or summer experiences. Otherwise you can book before 31 December to take up the 15% discount on the summer experiences.

Bursary Applications for the 2021-22 Academic Year

We are aware that not every family can afford these costs. Another reason we opted to partner with InvestIN Education is because they offer, any pupil eligible for pupil premium or FSM can receive 12-months' free access to the AmbitionX platform and potentially an in-person experience. Applications for these are free-of-charge. We will also identify students who would benefit from this free resource and ask them to apply. Applications for the Spring programme where we have 10 bursary places for in-person opportunities will be released on 9 January 2023, therefore if your child is interested in taking up a place, please contact Mr T Evans at tevans@reading-school.co.uk or complete [this form](#) if you meet the criteria.

Please note that Bursaries are processed by InvestIN, every Thursday morning and once your son's name has been added by us he will receive an email direct to his school email account and shortly after upgraded to the **full access to virtual work experience and Ambition X platform for a 12-month period with unlimited access**. Parents can contact info@investin.org and +44 (0)203 488 5089 direct with any further queries.

Sports Fixtures

Monday 5 December – Yr8 Rugby vs Desborough 3.00 (home)

Tuesday 6 December

Yr9 B Football v John Hampden (home) 2.30

Yr7 5-a-side tournament at JMA 3.45

Wednesday 7 December - 2nd XI v Gordon's (home) 2.30

Thursday 8 Dec - Senior U18 Futsal tournament Reading University 2.30

Friday 9 Dec - Yr7 B football v Hampton (home) 2.30

Official School Hoodies



Thank you so much to everyone who has ordered a school hoodie. The last day for ordering hoodies this term is Friday 9 December. Ordering will resume at the start of next term.

The hoodies are available on line via the following link <https://www.readingschoolpa.org.uk/store/reading-school-navy-hoodie> and you will receive a notification as to when your child may collect their hoodie from student services.

Please can we reiterate the importance of labelling these hoodies as soon as you receive them. They are lost on a very regular basis and it is impossible to reunite them if we don't know to whom they belong.

2nd Hand Uniform Shop

The 2nd Hand Uniform Shop will be open on the following dates:

- Friday 9 December 2:30pm – 4:00pm
- Saturday 10 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.

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

Please note:

On Friday 9 December buyers are not allowed to drive onto site, access is via the pedestrian gates only.

On Saturday 10 December 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.

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

The RSPA Team



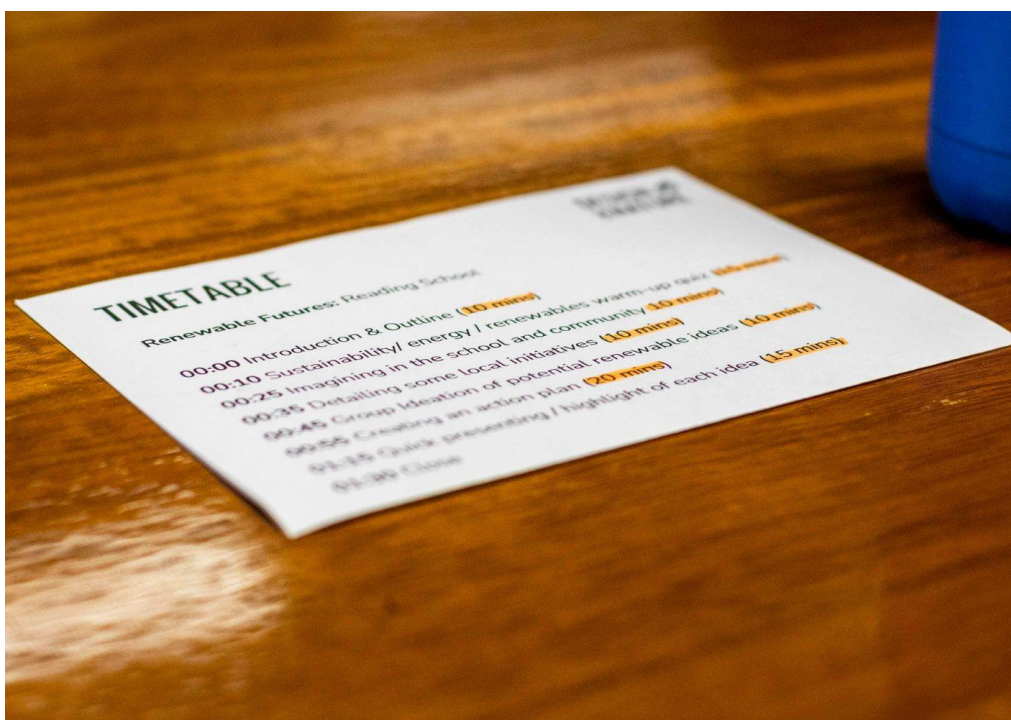
Michaelmas Term – Week 12

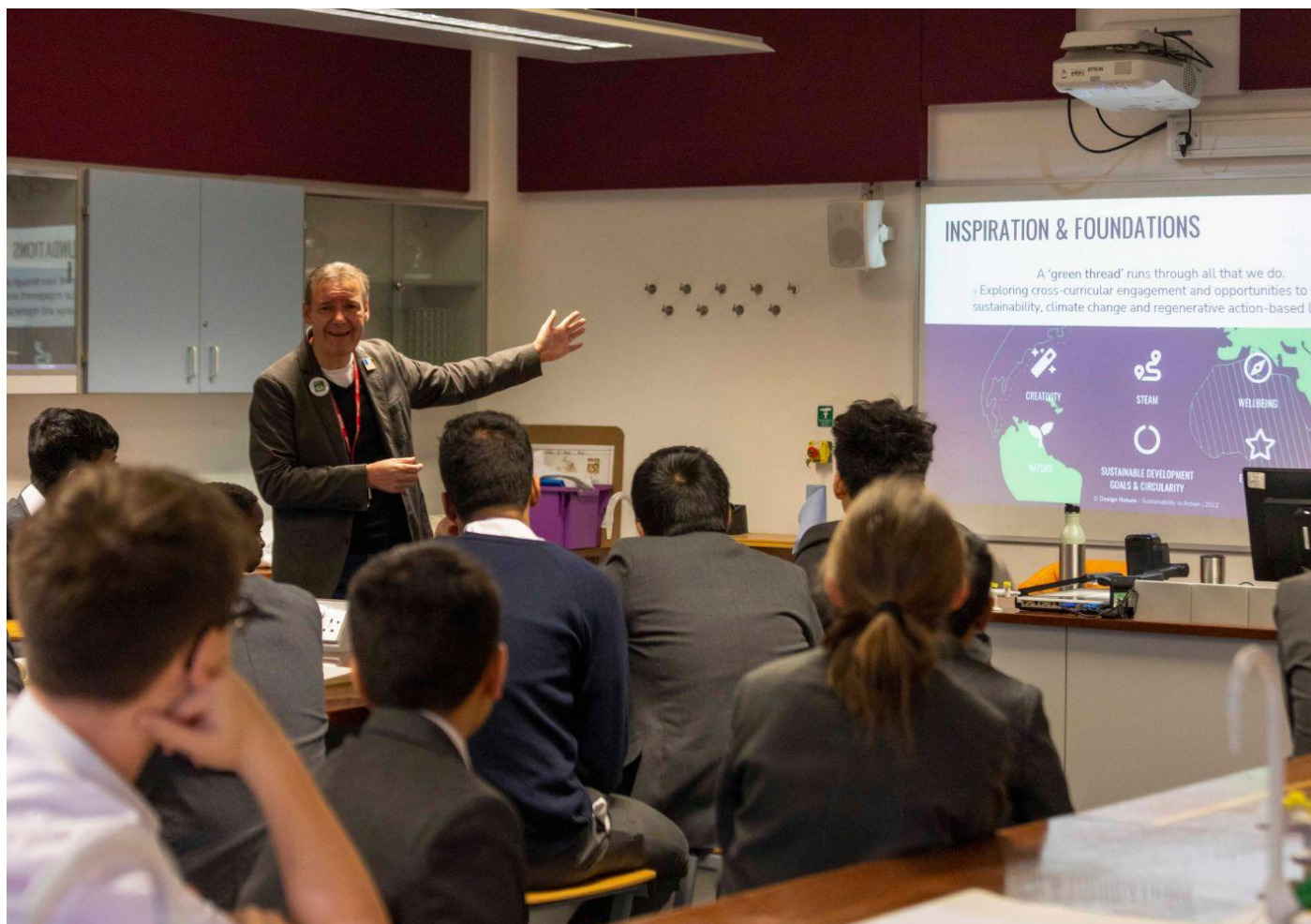
To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow and stay connected.



This week we welcomed Erica Purvis and Mark Mason from Reading based Social Enterprise, Design Nature CIC. Both Erica and Mark came to deliver STEM related design and innovation workshops exploring renewable energy and climate action. The workshops, 'Designing for Renewable Futures' allowed our Year 8s to explore the benefits of renewables as well as challenge them to come up with innovative ideas for school and community which aimed to foster a creative action-oriented and entrepreneurial approach.

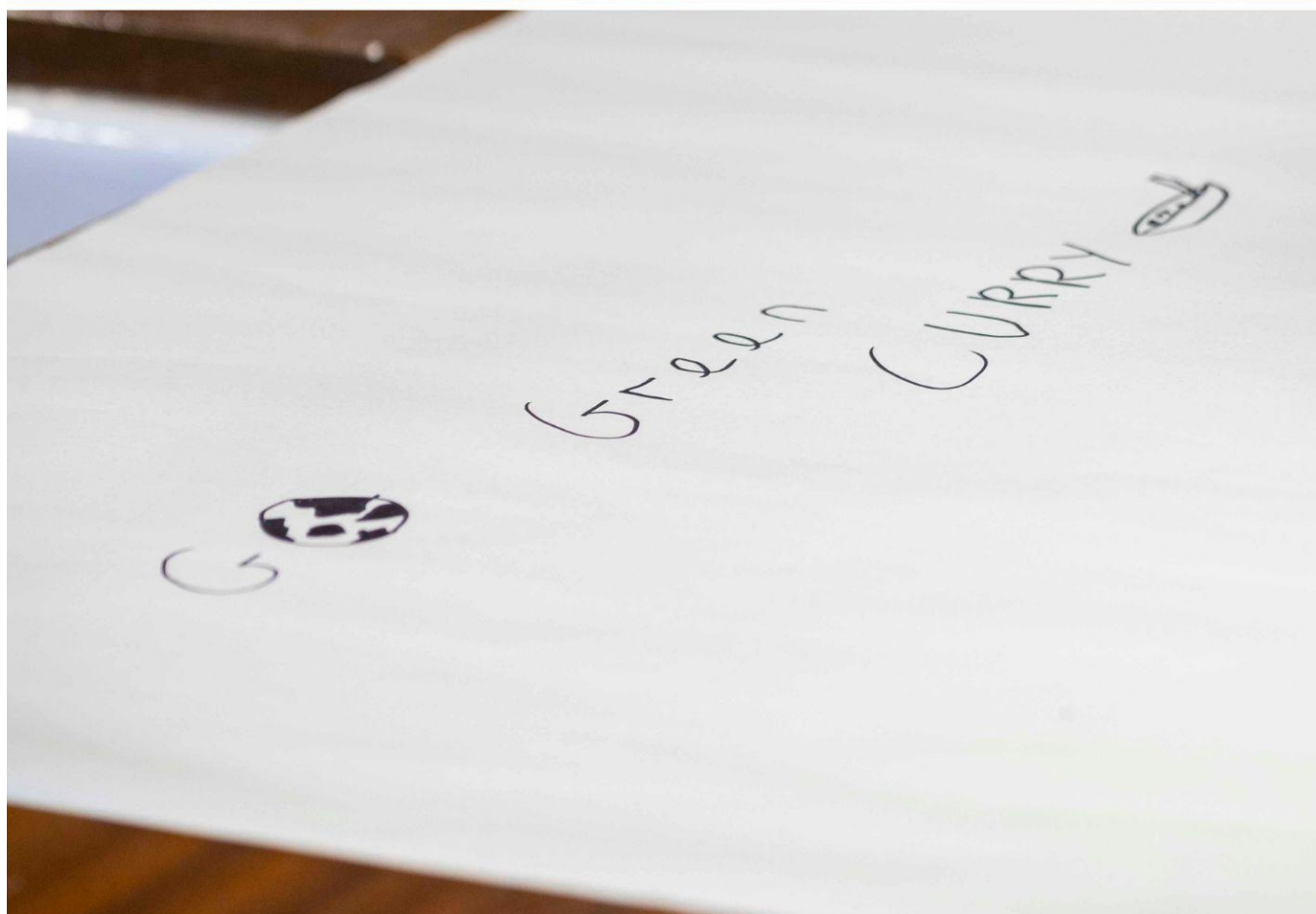
Thanks to Teachers of Chemistry, Mrs Heston, Ms Rosser-Evans and the whole Chemistry Department for supporting and facilitating this valuable opportunity for our students.







Teams asked to think of a team name for themselves with some novel suggestions.

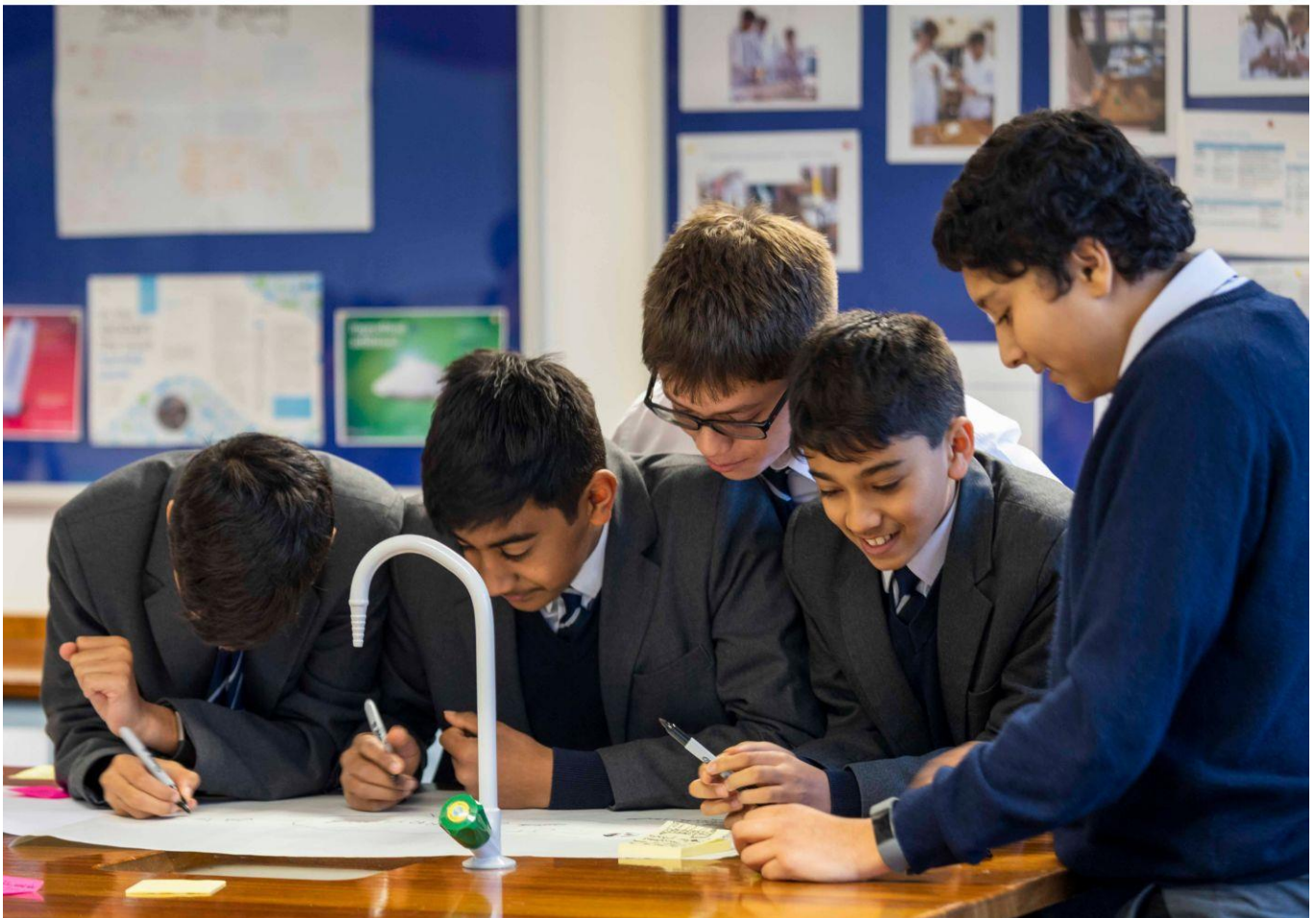


Bright young minds invited to imagine what a Renewable Future could look like





Time to get ideas down on paper











Teachers of Chemistry, Mrs Heston (left) and Ms Rosser-Evans (right)



Our first ever Indoor Curling competition hosted at JMA this Wednesday.
2 Reading School teams were entered who came 2nd and 5th respectively, after a long day of learning, tactics and fun.
Mr Robson also joined the team to share his coaching knowledge and advice.







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