



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

20 JANUARY 2023



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Introduction

I have recently highlighted that Reading School is in the business of creating opportunities and dreams for all our students and today's Bulletin provides ample evidence of what this looks like at Reading School.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development maintains that '*high performance and greater equity in educational opportunities and outcomes are not mutually exclusive.*' The purpose of Reading School is linked to excellence, high performance and equity of opportunity. We ensure that academically able students, regardless of background, receive inspirational opportunities that enable them to flourish. We must renew our commitment to making a difference and adding value. Providing opportunities for all our students is at the forefront of educational discourse for Reading School leaders and governors.

It is important to cultivate a model for developing people, which emphasises the nurturing of purpose, character and leadership. Our strategy and programmes are shaped by a purposeful approach that creates opportunity for young people to discover the best versions of themselves. As an educational beacon of excellence, we also have a moral duty to educate and protect vulnerable students and strive to promote equity, social mobility, inclusion, character and academic excellence. We can add value and inspire young people of all backgrounds to flourish and we must not limit aspiration, subdue dreams or suppress ambitions.

We believe that excellence can be found anywhere. None of us are born excellent. It is earned through disciplined effort and the building of character. It requires resilience, passion, integrity and commitment. We believe that with aptitude, talent and the right degree of support, excellence can emerge. It can be found in the classroom, on the pitch and beyond. It is important to dream that excellence is attainable and available to young people who come from all backgrounds.

In order to provide opportunities for positive future stories, we need to show enterprise and cast our net wide in the community for talented young people. Young people who will be enabled by our approach, values and methods, to express their ability, aptitude and potential. Indeed, we work with purpose and take a long-term view of the process of developing our young people. We contend that our students have the right to dream of a life of opportunities that enable personal and organisational flourishing. We believe in expanding dreams, not squashing them. This can be achieved if we work in partnership with students and parents to maximise engagement.

Crucially, strong and positive relationships should be at the heart of our culture as a community. If children and young people have consistent experiences of being safe, healthy, nurtured and respected, they will then develop knowledge, skills and resilience. We should seek to unlock talent and enable the fulfilling of potential. In a forthcoming National Report on Character Education and School Improvement, Mr B Miller, Character Lead at Reading School, maintains that "*At its core, character is about community. It is about learning how to fulfil your potential and play an active role as a good citizen in a diverse world.*" Indeed, at Reading School we seek opportunities to develop, role model, scaffold and promote character excellence in all its forms.

We are ambitious for our students and staff. We do not want them to be passive bystanders, or onlookers who do not take responsibility. We want to lift the barriers to participation and strive to develop our culture of commitment. This edition of the Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin illuminates the range, depth and quality of opportunities provided, inspired by committed staff, governors, parents and students.

We see Year 12 Inspire Lectures for future physicists, Geographical Association Worldwide quizzes and Inspire Lectures for students of Geography, Classics and cultural capital being brought alive for Year 9 Latin students, week-long celebrations to mark the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Rabbit, perspectives being widened through the 10th Anniversary of Reading Book Week (sponsored by the Old Redingensian Association) and social enterprise for the benefit of the local community being transformed from theory to practice. In closing, for evidence of what combining passions with a desire to give back to support others can look like, I would advise reading this week's interview with Siddarth S (13W).

Mr AM Robson

Headmaster



Key information

All years

Inspire Lecture – A Level Geography & beyond

On Tuesday 31 January between 15:30 and 16:30, we will be welcoming four of our past A Level students to Reading School to share their experiences of the value Geography had in their diverse careers. Students will have an opportunity to ask questions following the lectures in order to discover more about how Geography can be used at A Level and beyond. Please click the thumbnail to view poster.



All year groups are welcome and to register your interest, please [click here](#).

National Education Union (NEU) Industrial Action

As you may be aware, the NEU have balloted to go on strike and reached the numbers required to do so. They have announced that strike action will take place on the following days:

- 1 February 2023
- 2 March 2023
- 15 and 16 March 2023

We will communicate with parents and students regarding the impact of the strike on the operation of Reading School by NEU members scheduled for 1 February as soon as we are able.

Boarding will remain fully operational throughout the period of strikes and it is an expectation of the Department for Education that all reasonable steps are taken by the Headteacher, to keep the school open for as many students as possible.

Cancellation of 300B Bus Service from Bracknell, Wokingham & Winnersh

Horseman Coaches, who currently operate the 300B bus service travelling from Bracknell, Wokingham and Winnersh, have notified Reading School that the route will be cancelled with the last operating day on Friday 10 February 2023. Horseman Coaches have shared that passholder families will be contacted directly by them.

Years 9, 10 & 11 only

DofE 2023 - Bronze Award commencement and completion



All students in Year 9 and 10 taking up places on the DofE Bronze Award Scheme at Reading School have now been confirmed.

Students will be receiving their welcome packs next week, and have been invited to attend the first meeting on Friday 27 January.

For any parents that do not have a place on the school's program, we are now able to signpost you to another local provider, [Berkshire Youth](#), who are able to support students in registering for the award. Please contact sue.tabor@berkshireyouth.co.uk for more information or to register your interest.

Students in Year 11 and above, who may be thinking of starting the Silver Award need to complete their Bronze Award by Friday 10 February and should be aware that completion of the Bronze Award is a pre-requisite for starting Silver.

Years 7 & 8 only

Badminton Club

Parents of pupils who are part of Badminton Club should note that it will not be taking place this coming **Monday 23 January** due to the venue/courts not being available.

Current Vacancies

[Teacher of Mathematics](#) - deadline 9am, Monday 6 February

If you are interested in applying for any of our vacancies please complete the appropriate application form in the documents at the bottom of this page.

If you are unable to complete the online application form, a printable version of the form can be found here:

[Teaching Staff Application Form](#)

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in Sport

Siddarth S (13W) will be running in a [London Half Marathon in March 2023](#) in order to raise money for local charity [Sport in Mind](#). His goal is to raise money to contribute to improving the lives of children and young people experiencing mental health issues. Siddarth was interviewed earlier this week to find out more:

Can you tell us why you chose to run a half-marathon?



Sport and exercise have been huge parts of my life and I got into running recently, just because I wanted something new to do, something fresh. I also always had a goal to run some sort of event and I wanted to push myself, so chose a half marathon which seemed realistic and achievable, but also tough. Essentially, I found a race which I was interested in running in, and also a charity which I was really interested in raising money for.

Why did you choose Sport in Mind as your chosen charity?

Sport in Mind is a local mental health charity that has a mission to improve the lives of people experiencing poor mental health through sport and physical activity. They're based in Reading but their work takes place across a lot of the South of England. Their goal is something which I felt was really great because sport has helped me a lot with my own mental health, like playing cricket with other people, or working out regularly. Both cricket and working out has been a huge part of my life and I feel like by raising money, we can help people elsewhere. You know, we have so many sports in our school as well which is really positive. I think it's only fair that other people have access to lots of sports and activities as well.

You mention your mental health; can you share a little more about that?

Sure, everyone knows that this is a school which is prestigious and highly academic. Both are positive but it can be tough to balance, doing well in school with other things you're interested in. I think it's always great to have an outlet for times when you do feel stressed with exams or having to meet deadlines. It's important that you have a way of coping with that. And like I said, I think for me that's always been exercise and sport. Everyone who knows me, knows I'm constantly talking about sport or exercise, and it's a great way for people to cope I think.

What advice would you have for students across all years about coping with pressure?

I'd say it's really important to first of all, find something you enjoy doing. I remember in Year 8, I tried running and I absolutely hated it, but I tried it again a few months back and I started loving it. And the thing which works for one person doesn't work for everyone. So it's important that you try things out, to try new things. And you see, once you find that thing, you'll make time for it because you'll love it. You do what you enjoy.

I think growing up through Year 7, all the way up through the school, you have new things which keep coming about like exams GCSE's, A levels and applications...it doesn't really stop, but what also shouldn't stop is your ability to have a life outside of this to do things you enjoy, to be around people you enjoy and find that thing which helps you to cope.

Who supports you in your life?

I've been really fortunate to have supportive parents. They've really supported me with everything and let me do almost whatever I'm interested in...driving me for hours to cricket games, and I do appreciate that it's not easy, but also I say that a huge aspect is giving your child opportunities and my parents led me to try out cricket and to try badminton... different sports. And even, you know, during the times where I'm exercising, they're always concerned. That's bound to happen. They'll tell you don't do too much, but they never really stopped me from doing it. And that's something I really appreciate. My parents, my sister, they were all really supportive. If I were to give parents or siblings any advice, it's just talk to your children and siblings about what they enjoy. Why they enjoy it. Support them with their interests.

Finally, how are you preparing for the upcoming half marathon?

I am definitely preparing hard. The weather hasn't been kind but I'm making sure I'm running three, four times a week. Nice long runs on the weekend and just trying to build up my endurance throughout. Still keeping my strength training going on the side. But, you know, one thing I've really found is, if you enjoy it, it becomes easy. Get some tunes on, take it slow as well. It doesn't have to be fast when you're training and just enjoy the process.

We would like to thank Siddarth for sharing his experience and thoughts on finding outlets and passions to manage mental health or a challenging time. We wish him luck in March and should you wish to support Siddarth, please visit his GoFundMe page by [clicking here](#).



Sport In Mind

Community

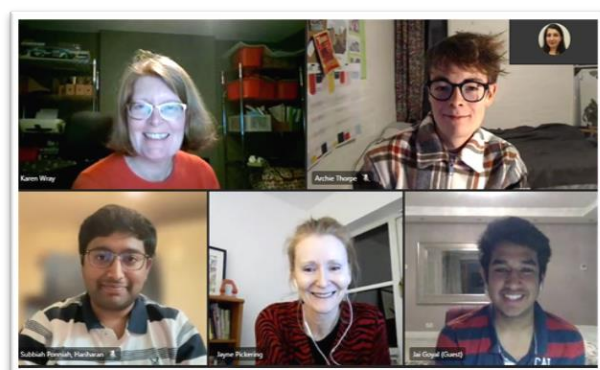
Concert Night

This year's [Classical & Acoustic Concert Night](#) event is back for 2023 on Wednesday 25 January from 19:00. Building on last year's event, 2023 will feature music from student soloists along with advanced guitar ensembles. Tickets are limited due to the capacity of the Music Department's Recital Hall so please book early by [clicking here](#) and using the QR code.

Chinese New Year 2023 – The Year of the Rabbit

2022 saw a week-long celebration of Chinese Year, led by Teacher of Mandarin, Mr R Wu and we look forward to celebrating again this year during the Year of the Rabbit. The Chinese New Year Culture Club will be providing New Year activities every lunch break from 11:50 – 12:35 from January 23 to Jan 31. The full schedule of events can be downloaded by [clicking here](#) and all are welcome.

Careers advice for Year 11s in medicine and medical related professions



Mrs K Wray (Careers Advisor) and Mrs J Pickering (Teacher of Biology, EPQ, Non-UK & Medical School Applications Coordinator) arranged and led on a Year 11 careers advice for students wishing to pursue medicine or medical related studies at Reading School earlier this week. We were delighted to be joined by Jai G (Y13 who was recently offered a place at University of Oxford), Archie Thorpe (OR 2022, 1st year at the University of Bristol), and Hariharan Subbiah Ponniah (OR 2018, 5th year at Imperial College London). All three were able to provide first-hand perspectives on their own experiences of going through the rigorous process and what support looks like when in sixth form. We are grateful to our ORs and parents who often volunteer their time to support the next generation.

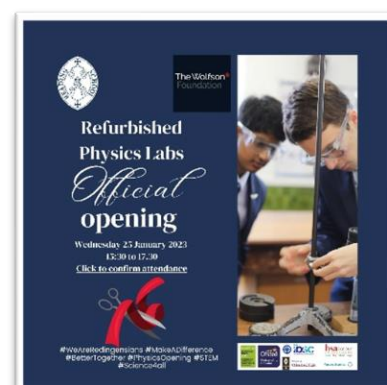
For those wishing to access the session, please [click here](#)

Opening of refurbished Physics Labs 2023

In July 2022, we were delighted to announce that Reading School had secured funding for the major refurbishment of our three historic Physics laboratories made possible by a generous grant of £100k from The Wolfson Foundation (and £50k from Reading School). We are pleased to announce that these works were completed on time and our students are now using these refurbished facilities as featured in the 9 December 2022 edition of the Bulletin.

To celebrate the official opening of the refurbished laboratories, we welcome you to join us on **Wednesday 25 January** from 15.45 to 17.30. You will be given the opportunity to view the Physics labs and see some experiments conducted by our Physics Teachers supported by our sixth formers. From 16.30 we will move on to Big School to hear from Dr Rebecca Harwin (Instrumental Development Scientist at RAL Space).

For more details of the event, please [click here](#).



Note: Unfortunately, due to capacity, spaces are limited and we request that only one parent per household attend and parents are requested to register their child whether they attend with them or not. If you have more than one child at the school and both would like to attend please register one and then email the events team at events@reading-school.co.uk

Physics equipment campaign 2023

We are hugely grateful to The Wolfson Foundation for funding the refurbishment of the Physics Labs, which enabled significant improvements, creating an environment in which our students are inspired to learn. We would also like to ensure we are fully equipped to deliver classroom, enrichment and extension activities to all students studying Physics as well as our wider community through our Future Stories programme.

Practical Physics lessons enhance students' scientific knowledge whilst giving insight into methods, scientific investigation and helping to develop their understanding of concepts in an engaging environment.

"Theory and research suggest that meaningful learning is possible in laboratory activities if all students are provided with opportunities to manipulate equipment and materials while working cooperatively with peers in an environment in which they are free to pursue solutions to problems that interest them."

Kenneth Tobin, Research on Science Laboratory Activities 2019.

To ensure our Physics Labs are equipped with equipment and crucial resources used for experiments throughout every year group, we invite you to support our **campaign to raise £13,500 for equipment** such as:

- Additional electric circuit components and cables
- Boyle's law demonstration equipment
- Motor-generator demonstration device
- Jolly's Bulb sets
- Black out blinds
- New signal generator
- Hydraulic press demonstration system

If 500 gifts were made in the sum of £27.00 we could successfully reach our target and make use of this equipment immediately. [Please click here to help us reach our goal.](#)

We thank you for your support. Every gift large or small, makes a huge difference to the learning of our students and we are grateful to our community for their continuous support of Reading School and its students.

Geographical Association Worldwide Quiz

On Monday 16 January, students from Reading School took part in the annual Worldwide Quiz in partnership with the [Geographical Association](#), organised and led by Teacher of Geography, Mr J Ginger and the Geography Department.



Students from Years 8, 9 and 10 represented Reading School in a University Challenge style competition, that put their geographical knowledge of flags, capitals, countries and much more to the ultimate test, against schools across Berkshire. It was fantastic to see such a great turnout from students and parents, and the Geography department were proud to see the wonderful geographical minds we have in the school at work.

Congratulations to Isaac L (10W – pictured centre), Martin W (9S – pictured far right) and Tobias L (8W – pictured far left) for collecting first place, and to Oscar Z (8W), Prayrit A (9S) and Akhilesh S (10W) for second place. Our third team made up of Pedram A (8C), Remi S (Year 9L) and Tony W (10C) also did exceptionally well, finishing in 5th place.

Next year we are looking forward to welcoming even more schools to participate, and we hope our school community enjoyed it as much as we did.

Year of Writing Book Festival 2023

This year marks our 10th annual Book Festival and our first Year of Writing. We are delighted to be able to celebrate this milestone with the following events:

Wednesday 23 to Friday 25 February	Scholastic Book Fair in the LRC	Pop-up book shop from Scholastic, curated especially for secondary school students.	All pupils
Monday 27 February	Chris Bradford Author Talk	Known for: The Young Samurai Series The BODYGUARD Series The Soul Series	All Year 7 and all Year 8 Pupils
Tuesday 28 February	Prof. Lewis Dartnell Talk and Workshops	Known for: The Knowledge, Origins and Life in the Universe	All Year 9 All Year 12 A level Geography Students FEH Year 12 biology students and a selection of sixth form physicists arranged by AE
Wednesday 1 March	Sarah Govett Author Talk on Dystopian Fiction	Known for: The Territory Series We Go on Forever	All Year 10 Pupils
Thursday 2 March	World Book Day Whole School Drop Everything and Read		The whole school
Friday 3 March	Will Burns, Writer in Residence Creative Writing Workshop	Known for: The Paper Lantern	A selection of students organised by SEG
Week beginning 6 March	Prof. Nicolas Tredell	"The Great Gatsby" and its place in the wider context of C20th American literature	A level English Literature Students

The authors will be signing books at the end of each talk. A selection of books is available by pre-ordering and paying in advance. Please see click the links below for further information.

[Sarah Govett Author Talk](#)

[Lewis Dartnell Author Talk](#)

[Chris Bradford Author Talk](#)

Please only pre-order books if your son is due to attend the talk or workshop. There will also be a small book sale on the day after each author event. We would like to thank the Old Redingensians for their continued support.

Financial Support

Students eligible for financial support provided by the Government (Pupil Premium) are entitled to one book for each author talk/workshop that they are due to attend, to be paid for by the school from our Pupil Premium finances; please email Mrs Kesteven kesteven@reading-school.co.uk with the title of the book(s) that your child would like to pre-order.

RSPA

Year 7 Disco / Parent Meet & Greet

The RSPA are delighted to invite all Year 7 students, parents and carers to a Welcome Event at the School on **Friday 20 January 2023** from 7:00pm – 8:30pm. Please could we ask that students bring cash on the night for the purchase of drinks, snacks and merchandise. Whilst the students are dancing away, we would love to meet their parents and carers in Big School for refreshments.

Here is another reminder of the details:

Date: Friday 20 January 2023

Time: 7:00pm to 8:30 pm

Location: Reading School (Refectory)

Ticket price: £6

Link to ticket: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/CBAT>

Please note: Belongings (including phones) are brought at students' own risk; the school does not take responsibility for any lost items.

Year 7 Disco Raffle

Thank you to parents who have donated raffle gifts and we would be grateful for any further donations for the Year 7 disco raffle to raise funds for the School. Do you have any unwanted and unused Christmas gifts? We would love to receive them to widen our prize selection. They can be dropped off to the School Reception marked, "Disco Raffle / RSPA" or brought with you on the night.

Official School Hoodies

Ordering has resumed this term and hoodies are available on line by [clicking this link](#). You will receive a notification as to when your child may collect their hoodie from student services and should you have any questions about your hoodie order, please get in touch with us at hoodies@readingschoolparents.co.uk

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 3 February 2:30pm – 4:00pm
- Saturday 4 February 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 email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk for further information and we look forward to seeing you there.

Membership and Ad Hoc Volunteering

There are a lot of ways you could get involved with the RSPA. This is not only a great opportunity to contribute to raising funds for the school but also to get to know other parents. Please contact our membership secretary memsec@readingschoolparents.co.uk for further information on membership to RSPA.

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

The RSPA Team



Lent Term – Week 3

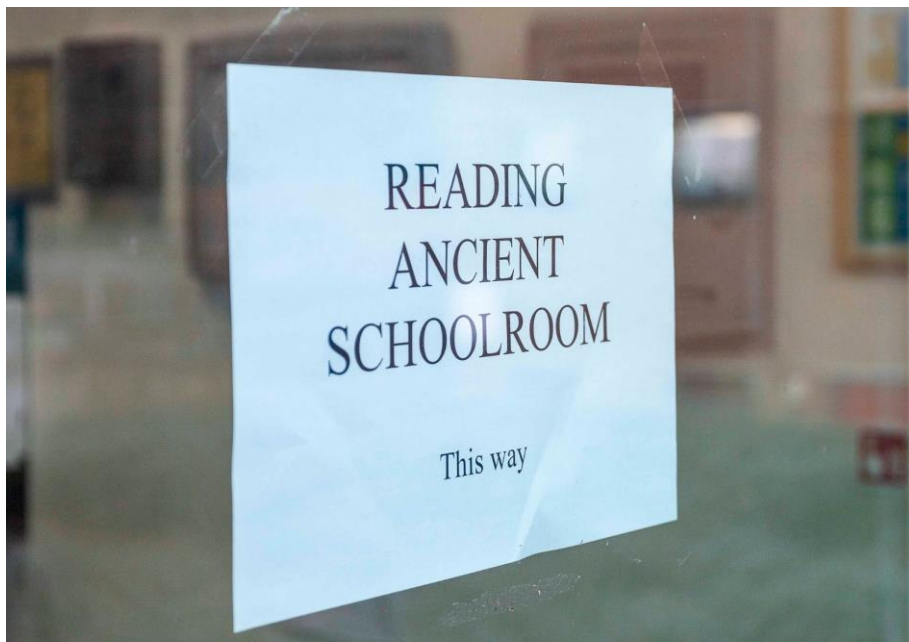
To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow and stay connected.



47 Year 9 students studying Latin, got a taste for what life would have looked and felt like, within an ancient classroom during a visit on Tuesday, to the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology at the University of Reading. The museum of Mediterranean archaeology from ancient Greek, Egyptian, Etruscan and Roman civilisations, contains one of the most important collections of ancient Greek pottery in the United Kingdom.

Based on research into schooling in the ancient world, the 'Reading ancient schoolroom' takes place in an immersive replica of an ancient classroom, in which all students and teachers wear Roman costumes and use replica ancient writing materials including wax tablets, styluses, reed pens, inkwells, ostraca, and papyrus.

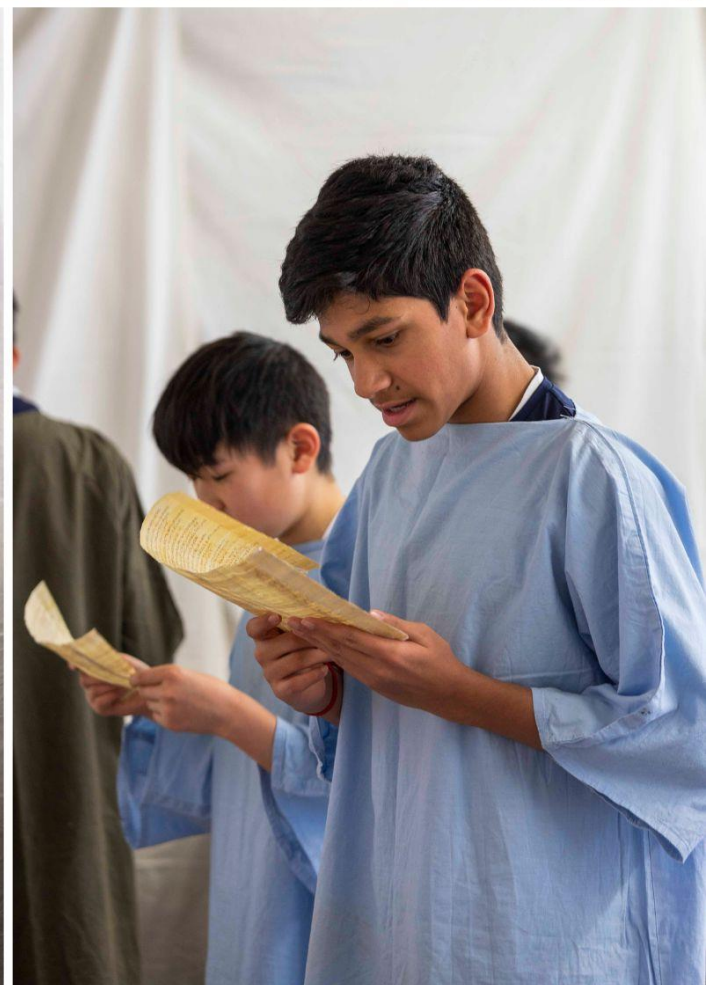
The trip was led by Teachers of Classics', Mrs G Haugvik and Mrs S Drummond, accompanied by Head of Classics & Modern Foreign Languages, Mr M Cooper.



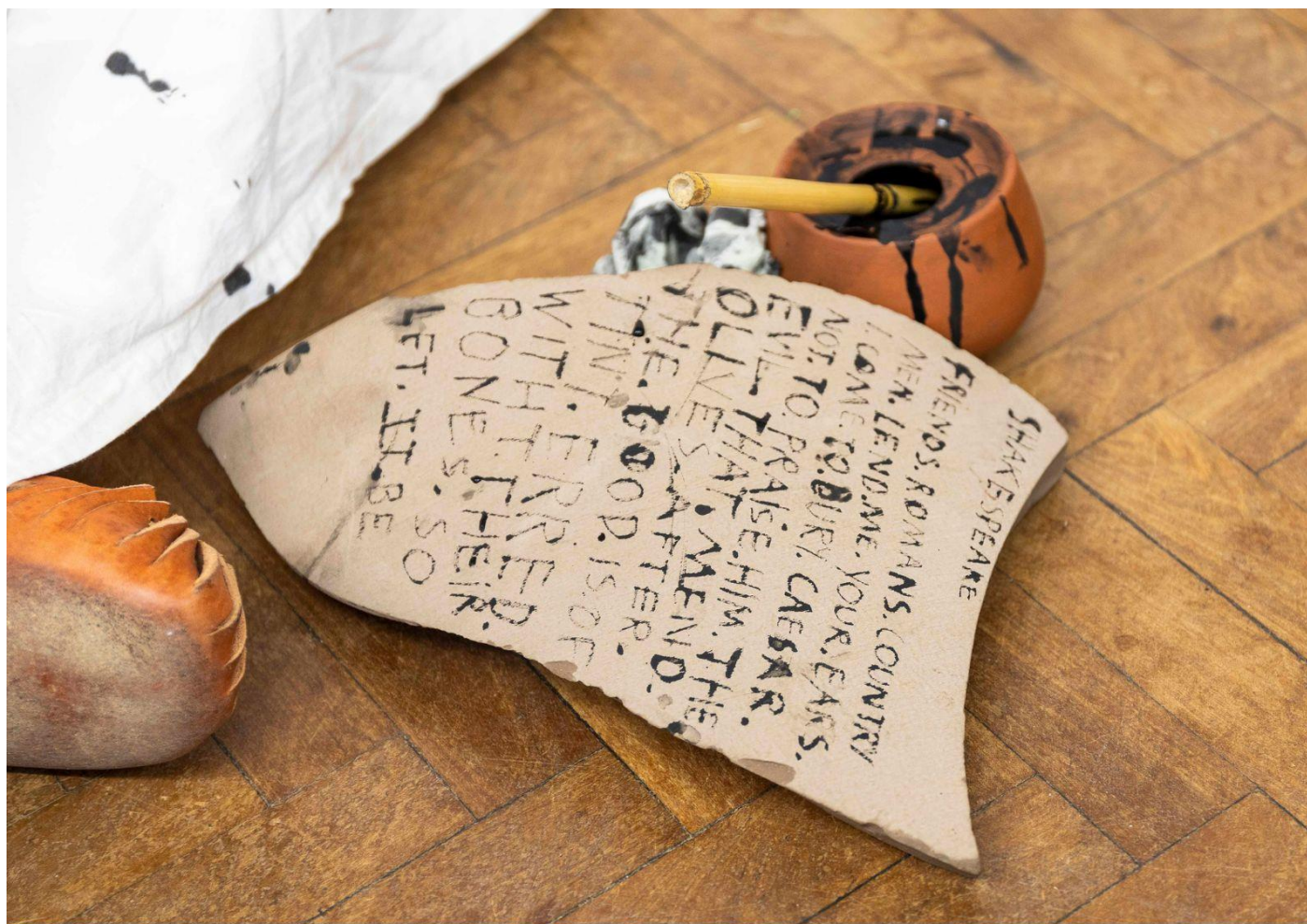














Practicing Hana (Egyptian graffiti)

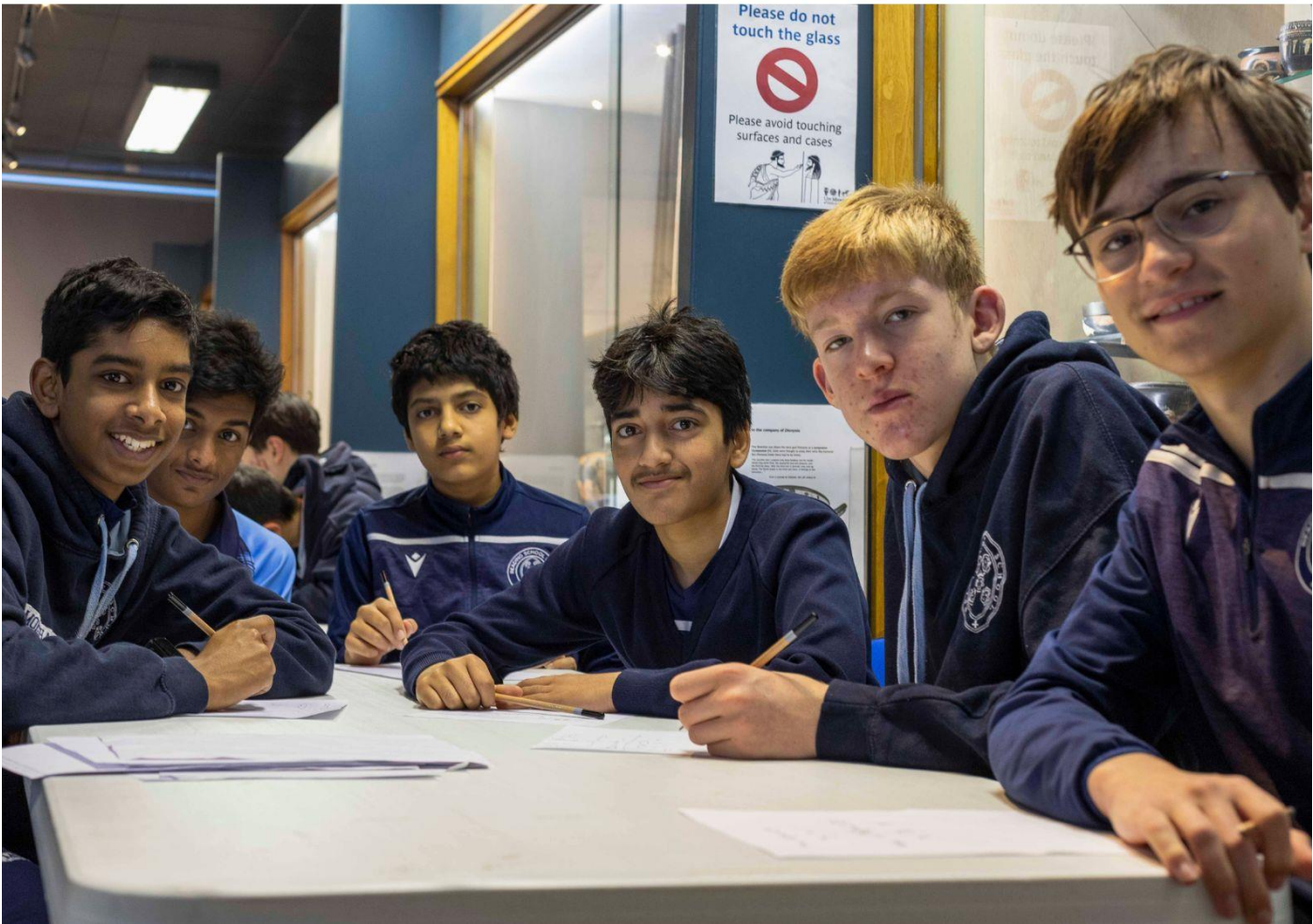




Year 9s get to test their skills in Roman maths (Jacinta)







Reading School Inspire Lecture – “*The Universe Exists Because of Identical Particles*”, presented by science educator, YouTuber, graduate of University of Cambridge and friend of Reading School, Parth G.



James B (12E) shared, "Parth's lecture was engaging and interesting throughout, expanding my knowledge of topics we have learnt about in class as well as teaching me some fascinating new things about quantum physics. After listening to Parth's lecture, I am keen to explore the topics he spoke about further. Thank you Parth for this excellent lecture!"





We were visited by the Department of Education this week who came to Reading School to see and hear more about our Future Stories programme, along with our work to support Ukrainian students and families. We also welcomed Moorlands Primary School who are the latest school to have joined the Future Stories Programme, in order for their primary school pupils to benefit from 1:1 tutoring support, delivered by our Sixth Form Future Stories Volunteer Team.



From left to right:

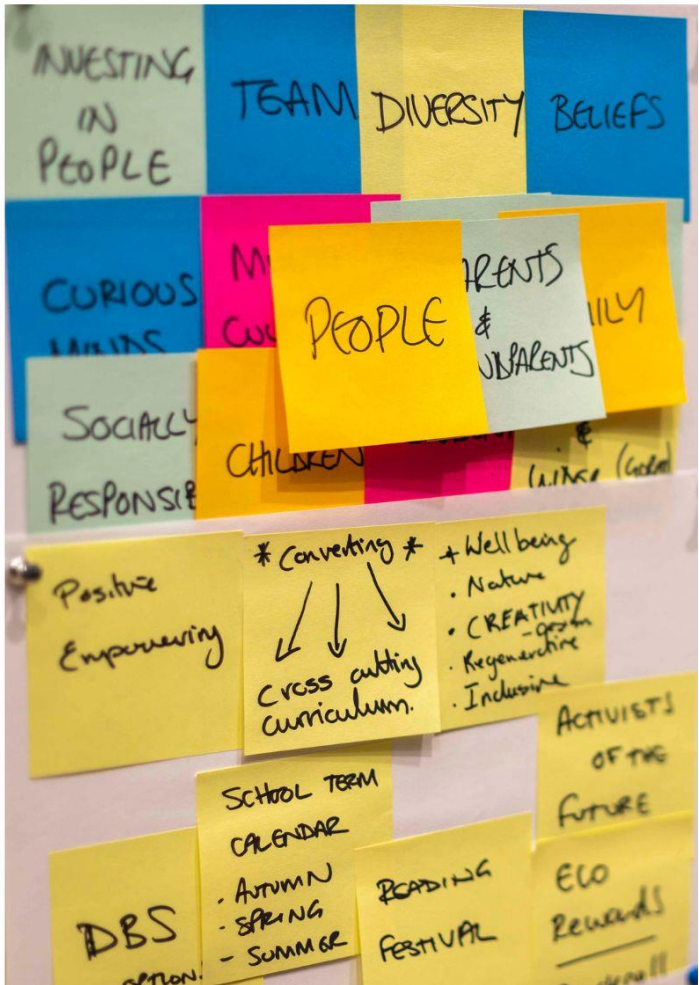
Mr T Evans (Assistant Head), Mrs A Clarke (Teaching Assistant, Moorlands Primary), Ms Shalyni Saravanan (DfE), Ms C Mole (Executive Assistant), Mrs Z Ferguson (Teacher, Moorlands Primary), Mrs L Dimmick (KS2-3 Transition Officer), Mrs C Heston (Teacher of Chemistry & Future Stories Mentoring Lead) and Mr J Rolstone (DfE)



A joint Social Enterprise project was launched in April 2022, led by The Abbey School in partnership with Henley Business School and Reading School. 12 sixth formers from each school, make up 6 teams of budding leaders, aiming to launch a social enterprise by May 2023, which will have a positive impact in the local Reading area.

This week on Monday saw the launch of Phase 2, where each team is being mentored by graduate students from Henley Business School, along with the founders of local Social Enterprise, Design-Nature CIC. Let the pitches begin.











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