



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

A Belonging Week Special

9 JUNE 2023

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Introduction

Belonging

Belonging week serves as compelling evidence that Reading School is dedicated to providing opportunities. As a purpose-driven organisation, we foster a positive culture that embodies our focus on "Learn, Lead, Serve" as part of the Reading Way. Belonging week highlights the importance of healthy high performance, compassion, and leadership through service. Whether it's our inspiring collaboration with Whitley Park Primary School or development of positive relationships, character development, and teamwork during Operation Encounter, these elements are vital to our educational approach.

Achieving high performance can take many guises. We strive for excellence in both our students and staff, emphasising the qualities of positivity, generosity, and trust. Belonging week involves challenges and support, requiring acts of generosity, selflessness, and, above all, trust. Teamwork is at the core of the collective spirit fostered during Belonging week, permeating through various activities such as a Year 7 campout, archery, river expeditions and history walks. Our poet Laureate, Rupert T (7C) was inspired to share a poem following this week's history walk around Reading:



An Adventure Through Time

As we depart from our ancient school ground,
My heart, with curiosity, starts to pound,
What a city to explore,
Clearly Reading hides so much more,
Than I otherwise ever would have found!

Led by the wonderful tour guide, 'Mrs J',
We discover great landmarks on our way,
From Hallowed Brook to the Abbey,
And Oscar Wilde's Land of Imprisonment (none too shabby!),
Royal Berkshire certainly has plenty to survey.

Now my desire to learn more has awoken,
About our neighbourhood otherwise rarely spoken,
Such a rich and varied history,
Surely no longer a mystery,
Here my pledge to delve further shall ne'er be broken!

Belonging week is not about seeking comfort or staying within familiar boundaries, but rather it focuses on building character, creativity, resilience, and a culture of inclusion.

Commitment & Collaboration



Our guiding principle of "*Learn, Lead, Serve*" ensures that our actions speak louder than words. During Belonging Week, students and staff explore acceptable behaviours and attitudes, fostering a culture of commitment and collaboration. Our approach to Belonging strengthens our connection and cooperation, creating a shared sense of purpose. Trust forms the bedrock of effective teamwork, enabling individuals to rely on their peers and colleagues for support. We promote an environment where positive energy, vulnerability, and mutual care are encouraged. Humour, rooted in love and unity, plays a unifying role, while self-awareness and not taking oneself too seriously contribute to the team's dynamics. Taking care of one another is as important as working together on shared activities, evident in the abundance of humour, joy, and teamwork displayed throughout Belonging week.

Belonging week also provides an opportunity to reflect on long-term success and the concept of a "Deep Win." Despite setbacks in activities like river expeditions, camping, presentations, and group exercises, students and staff have utilised these setbacks as chances for reflection, growth, and reframing. Valuable lessons have been learned, nurturing both team spirit and leadership skills. The week has presented substantial opportunities for personal growth and flourishing. We extend our gratitude to all staff, students, parents, and governors who have contributed to making Belonging Week 2023 an exemplar of opportunity and growth.



As an integral part of our operational priorities in 2023, we have been encouraged by governors to be more outward-facing and learn from other organisations in order to improve our practice. On Wednesday, we welcomed the visit of Senior Leaders from Colyton Grammar School, Devon, demonstrating our commitment to collaborate in order to add value to the educational ecosystem.

Culture

The essence of a successful team, group, or department lies in a shared sense of purpose and identity. Our organisational purpose, to provide opportunities for individuals to flourish, enables us to prioritise the well-being and growth of our community. Our purpose harmonises short-term and long-term thinking and guides decision-making, including recruitment. We expect all members of our community—students, staff, parents, and governors - to align with our core values and strategic priorities. Culture plays a paramount role in driving organisations towards not only survival but also flourishing, regardless of their size, location, or industry.

Hence, in the academic year 2023-2024, Reading School will encourage a growth mindset and foster a people-centric culture. Culture, from the Latin cultura (stemming from colere, meaning "to cultivate"), places people at the heart of our endeavours in a positive and compassionate manner. Culture must be ingrained in the DNA of the "Reading Way."

Partnerships

At Reading School, community outreach and engagement are fundamental aspects of our educational approach. Our goal is to ensure that our students develop a deep connection with the world around them, fostering a strong sense of belonging and a commitment to serving their local and broader communities. Through these experiences, our students become compassionate, well-rounded, and outward-looking young individuals.

We have established robust partnerships with seven local primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, charitable organisations, and professional institutions. Throughout the school year, we collaborate with these partners, sharing our facilities and engaging in various activities. During our recent Belonging weeks, we witnessed the active involvement of over 1,400 students from our partner primary schools in Future Stories initiatives, including music, sports, and science workshops where our staff provided exceptional support and our students have acted as role models. These partnerships exemplify our social responsibility and foster connections within our communities.



In addition, our students have also participated in adventurous activities, forging lifelong bonds and creating cherished memories whilst developing key competencies such as collaboration, problem solving, resilience and teamwork that they will use beyond Reading School. We have witnessed their growth in confidence as they stepped out of their comfort zones.



The importance of partnership and philanthropy was celebrated as Reading School was featured in the latest issue of FundEd magazine which shares best practice across state schools who receive limited government funding.

The current period marks an exciting time for partnership projects at Reading School. Our strategic approach revolves around cultivating sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships with a diverse range of local partners. This approach benefits not only our students but also the broader community. We have experienced first-hand the importance of effective communication, shared creativity, and the development of a collaborative culture.

Reading School actively seeks and builds exciting, impactful, and tailor-made partnerships with organisations that align with our core values and ethos. As we embark on the journey towards our 900th Anniversary celebrations in 2025, there are numerous opportunities for sponsorship of events and initiatives, naming rights, and support of corporate social

responsibility (CSR) and/or environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives. By partnering with us, you can contribute to the enrichment of our students' lives and expand their horizons. If you know an organisation or business that would be interested, please get in touch with Mrs Jas Chhokar (Society Manager) at development@reading-school.co.uk if you would like to support Reading School and join us on this exciting path.

Our thanks

We are incredibly grateful to have a dedicated community of alumni, parents, governors, Reading Foundation, ORA, RSPA and friends who deeply understand and appreciate the importance of Reading School. Despite the current time constraints and the impact of recent economic challenges, we are sincerely thankful to each and every one of you. Your selflessness in volunteering your time, sharing your expertise, and generously donating to support our students is truly commendable. From the bottom of our hearts, we extend a heartfelt thank you for your unwavering support.

Lastly, but certainly not least, we express our deepest gratitude to all our staff members. Their dedicated efforts have been instrumental in delivering a comprehensive program of events and activities for all our students. We extend special thanks to our exams team and invigilators who have worked diligently to oversee the entire examination process and ensure that students sitting both internal and external exams have everything they require. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our associate staff, who diligently keep things running smoothly behind the scenes. Your unwavering commitment and hard work are greatly appreciated. Thank you all.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Key information

Year 7 only

Grandparents Day 2023 – Tuesday 4 July

We are extending an invitation to our Year 7 families to attend an annual event that welcomes grandparents and extended family to join their children for a day to create a lasting memory. During 2022, Reading School welcomed over 65 relatives to experience three hours of lessons, alongside live music, sport, co-curricular activities and to hear an address from the Headmaster. It is an event that we especially look forward to in the annual school events calendar as it acknowledges and values extended family members and gives an opportunity to strengthen the bond between generations.

We would like to extend an invitation to parents of Year 7 pupils which can be accessed by [clicking this link](#).

Feedback from grandparents who enjoyed our 2022 event included:



"We would like to thank all involved in hosting 'Grandparents Day'. It was good to see our grandson in his school environment and how well he has settled in. We were particularly impressed by the courtesy and maturity of the older students who helped us find our way around. Having ourselves been teachers, we would also like to thank the staff for the preparation that went into planning the lessons. The school is clearly a caring environment, with aims and objectives that we wholeheartedly applaud."

"I would like to offer a huge vote of thanks to you and all of Reading School - staff and pupils - for a totally memorable and inspiring day last Monday. It exceeded all possible expectations and I had a wonderful time...the ethos of caring, comradeship, thoughtfulness and support permeated the atmosphere throughout the school and was evident in the way everyone - again, staff and pupils - interacted with each other."

The Year 10 ambassadors for our group were a case in point. They were delightful. Completely self-confident and self-assured, without being in the least bit arrogant. They were friendly and helpful and talked to all of us, and seemed genuinely concerned that we had had a good day. A credit to the school. I am grateful for all the time and effort and planning that went in to the day. A triumph!"

For any questions, please contact Miss Ayres by emailing layres@reading-school.co.uk

Years 7, 8, 9,10 and 12 only

Sports Day 2023 – Friday 23 June

We are excited to announce that Reading School's Sports Day 2023 will return to Palmer Park Stadium and be open for parents to attend to cheer on all years participating. Due to wanting to ensure that as many students as possible can participate in Sports Day, the seated area within the Stadium will be at capacity for students and we will be asking parents to use the grass areas outside of the track and to bring picnic chairs and/or blankets. Due to the limited capacity, parents are asked to only attend for the time slot for their child's year group (timings below).

In order to ensure an accurate count of spectators, we kindly ask parents to provide us with their names for sign-in at the entrance gate. There is 3 hours free parking at Palmer Park Stadium and 20 bike racks.

We are working as closely as possible to the timings below:

- Year 12 08:30 - 09:45 (Meeting directly at Palmer Park)
- Year 9 09:45 - 11:00 (walking with Head of House from Reading School and back)
- Year 8 11:00 - 12:45 (walking with Head of House from Reading School and back)
- Year 7 12:45 - 14:00 (walking with Head of House from Reading School and back)
- Year 10 14:00 - 15:15 (Meeting directly at Palmer Park)

Please click the [link here](#) to register attendance against your child's year group.

Current Vacancies

Site Controller - [click here](#) for more information.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Belonging Week Excellence

While some students engaged in adventurous activities like scaling towers and building rafts during Belonging Week, others dedicated their time to Reading School's Society Office. Aayan M (8C), Ryan D (8C), Tyron A (8C), Umar Q (8L) Kenjer A (9C) and Rohan C (9W) were all assigned tasks of planning and creating a community service project. Their astute plans saw carefully drafted concepts that included distributing food to the homeless and environmental solutions for the school site.

Furthermore, they put together excellent ideas for our 900th Anniversary celebrations in 2025, envisioning events from a student's perspective. Their suggestions included organising a cultural food festival along with historical walks of Reading that are linked to Reading School in order to raise funds for a new sixth form centre. Both teams perfected their communication after feedback and improved their articulation when presenting using visual aids and confidentially answering questions.

Kenjer A (9C) and Rohan C (9W) also represented Reading School supporting Mr S Allen (Head of PE) at the [Panathalon Challenge 2023](#) on Tuesday, 6 June. The event gives children and young people the opportunity to take part in competitive sport. As of 2023, Panathalon programmes have reached 52,476 participants while including 5,013 young leaders across 2,078 schools.

From left to right: Tyron A (8C), Ryan D (8C), Aayan M (8C), Umar Q (8L)



Kenjer A (9C) and Rohan C (9W)

Belonging & Community

The value of partnerships

Partnerships play a crucial role in secondary education and beyond and this week we have witnessed the benefits for not only our own students but those from neighbouring primary schools. Fostering collaboration between schools, organisations, parents, families, businesses and the community allows us to fulfil our aims and define who we are as individuals, a school, community and organisation.



This week we have seen enhanced enrichment opportunities for 60 children from Whitley Park Primary School as they took part in their first Year 6 Residential at Reading School. After visiting Reading School before half-term, they got to return and work with our partners from Level Up Outdoors who supported them to put up tee-pees and led on exciting and engaging activities including archery tag, fire-lighting and team building tasks. Later in the day they got to perform as a choir by singing a pre-rehearsed song with the support of Director of Music, Mr Griffin, who enabled all of the students to hit new heights of choral mastery before enjoying marshmallows around a campfire.

For some of the Whitley Park Primary School students in Year 6, it would have been the first time they have ever stayed away from their parents along with the first time they have had the opportunity to experience camping outdoors. It is also the first time Reading School have run a residential for a local primary school as part of our social mobility programme, Future Stories and is just another way we are supporting young people in the communities around our school access and engage with opportunities.

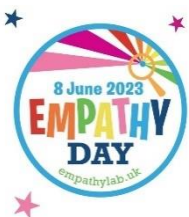


Head master of Whitley Park Primary School, Mr N Butler-Broad has previously shared, *"There is magic in the way Reading School mentors are able to make connections with our pupils and use this as a springboard to help further their learning and develop their confidence. This is skilfully engineered by the staff at Reading School. They show real care and ambition in advancing the prospects of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and make us feel welcome with their above and beyond approach to including us in their Future Stories programme."*

If you are a parent who works for an organisation that prioritises promoting social mobility and would like to explore partnership opportunities, please email fstories@reading-school.co.uk

LRC

Empathy Day 2023



Empathy Day was founded by social enterprise [EmpathyLab](https://empathylab.uk), in 2017. It aims to help us all understand each other better and spark a new national conversation about how to build a more empathetic society.

Empathy is a vital life-skill and research shows that empathy can be learnt. Books are a brilliant way of building empathy - when we read, we experience characters' feelings almost as if they are real – and this helps us feel empathy for people in the real world.

To mark Empathy day, our collection of empathy boosting books will be on display in the LRC. You can browse our collection by clicking the links below:

- [KS3](#)
- [KS4/5](#)

In addition to this, the LRC Team will also be running activities throughout June to give pupils the opportunity to explore empathy and to develop key skills such as empathetic communication, listening skills and perspective taking. If you would like to join in at home, Empathy Lab have produced a [Families Activity Pack](#). For more information, please contact Mrs L Kesteven by emailing lkesteven@reading-school.co.uk

Reading Youth Council elections



[Reading Youth Council](#) has opened applications for students from all schools in the Reading area to apply to become members of Reading Youth Council. The Youth Council is student led and they are a group of elected representatives, campaigning on issues that affect young people locally and nationally. Some of the opportunities available by becoming a member include:

- Taking part in planning, delivering and evaluating services for young people
- Consulting, meeting and influencing decision makers
- Promoting positive images of young people
- Campaigning for important issues for all young people in Reading

Applications require the completion of the form found by [clicking here](#) which includes providing information about the applicant's manifesto and interests. Joining the Reading Youth Council is a fantastic opportunity to have your say on issues that are important to you, develop personally and also enhance your CV or personal statement.

The application will close on **19 June 2023**. Successful applicants will be notified by the 23 June 2023, so that new council members are able to attend the inaugural new council meeting on the 27 June 2023.

Cost of living crisis support



United Learning is made up of a group of schools which aims to provide excellent education and improve the life chances of all children and young people it serves. The group includes schools in both the public and private sectors and works for mutual benefit. We would like to share information that they have provided to families who may

be facing financial pressures as a result of increased cost of living which includes general advice, fuel and utilities, finance, housing, food, health and wellbeing. To access the advice, [please click here](#).

RSPA

Summer Fayre 2023 – Sunday 9 July, 12pm – 3pm



The RSPA Summer Fayre is fast approaching, and in order for it to be a fun filled success, the RSPA needs your help!

We're raising funds for much needed outdoor seating benefitting students and the whole School community. We really hope this event will help to reach this goal.

There are lots of stalls and games planned and to make this all happen, we need a lot of help in the form of volunteers and donations.

- If you can volunteer to help us on the day, please fill in this form <https://forms.office.com/e/w9kj7LZLJ2>
- If you can donate anything on the Donations List below, please bring them in and drop off at school reception.
- If you can bake cakes for the cake stall, please email nmoody@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Donations List

- Bottles of wine
- Empty glass bottles
- Bottle gift bags
- Small prizes for the Tombola
- Prizes for the raffle
- Sweets
- Bottles of (any) drink - soft or alcohol

We really hope to see as many of you there as possible, and a huge thanks in advance for any help and support that you feel you can give.

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

The RSPA Team

Summer Term – Week 8

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



What did Belonging Week #2 look like?

3-day canoeing expedition led by Teacher of Chemistry & Head of House, Miss K Rosser-Evans and Head of Chemistry, Mr D Wheal. The expedition started from Clifton Hampden leading to Wallingford, Pangbourne and Wokingham Waterside Centre.



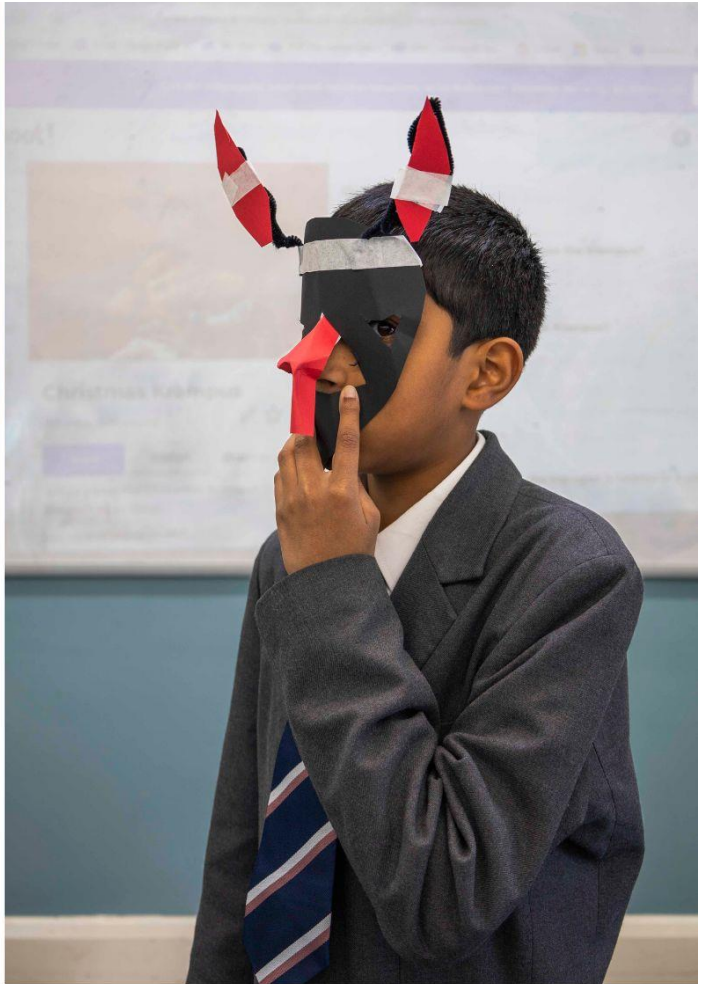






Festivals Day came to the Modern Foreign Languages Department and saw Teacher of German, Mrs S Senftlechner lead students through the folklore of St Nicholas and Krampus, a figure that is said to stretch back to pre-Christian Alpine traditions.







Festivals Day also saw Second in Department for Classics and MFL, Miss E Fondu lead students through the history of Bastille Day through the creation of paper lanterns (of 'lampion'). French people would often have a tour around a village or town during the night before watching fireworks on the night preceding Bastille Day which symbolised the French Revolution's rallying cry for liberty, equality and fraternity.



And lastly, Teacher of Mandarin, Mr Wu introduced Year 7s to Qu Yuan, poet and politician who killed himself by jumping into a river after the decline of his country during the Warring States. People who admired him would throw 'zongzi' (rice dumpling) into the river so that the fish would eat the dumplings instead of the poet's body. Mr Wu went onto share the significance of the Dragon Boat Festival.





Year 9 Great Tower Belonging Week Trip in the heart of the Lake District















Linocuts created by Year 7s based on the architecture and landscape of Reading School in preparation for the Belonging Festival 2023





Belonging Festival 2023

An annual event for Year 7s which allows each and every student being recognised as a valued member of the Reading School community.

We would like to thank all staff who played a part in creating an exciting and memorable event for all Year 7s.





















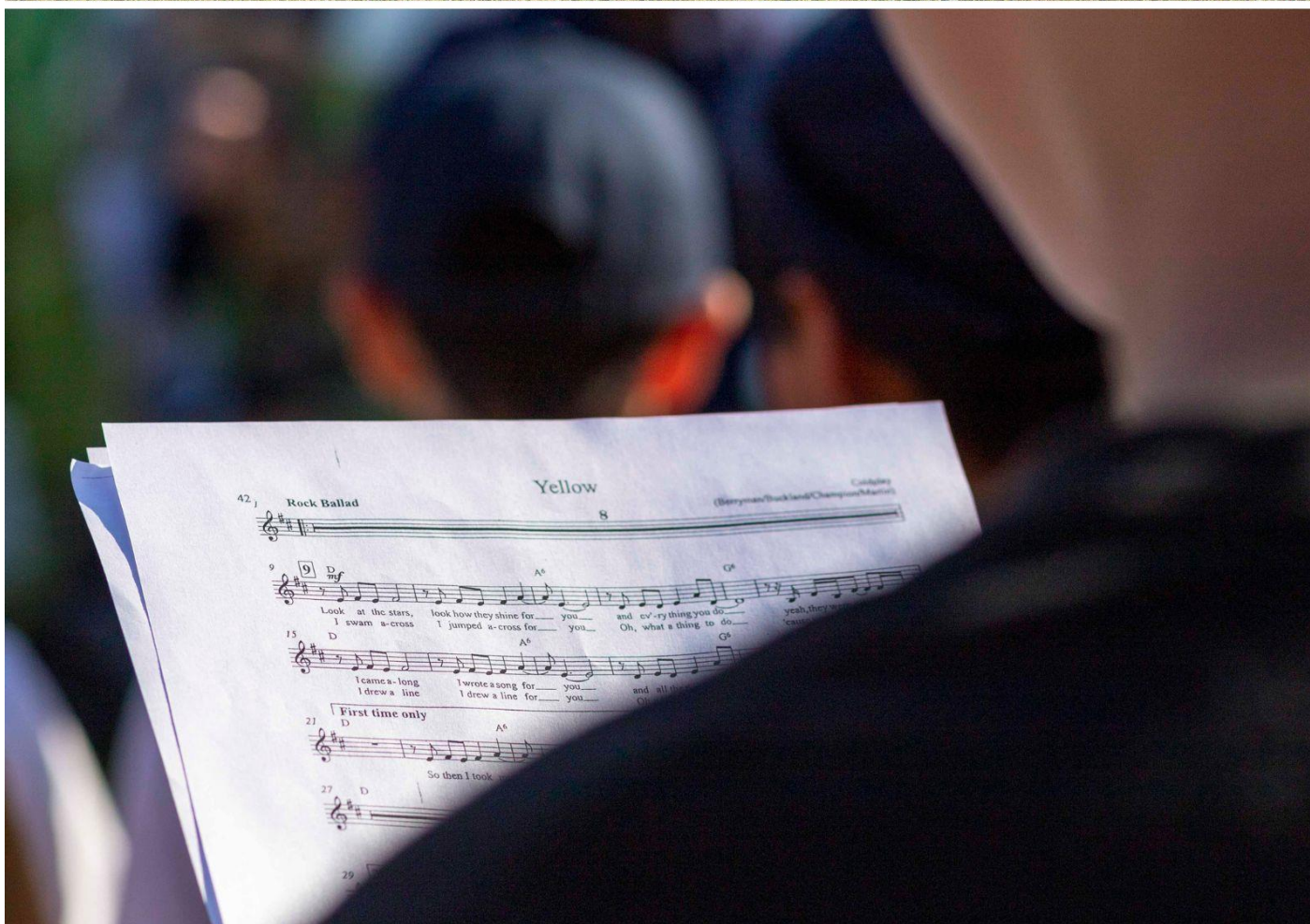








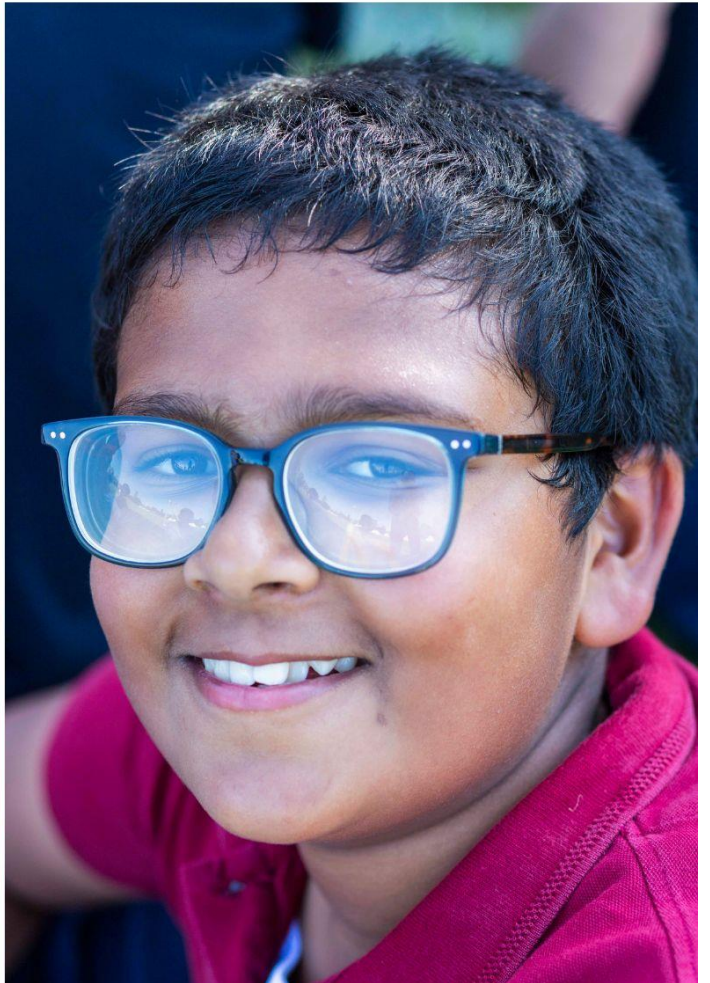






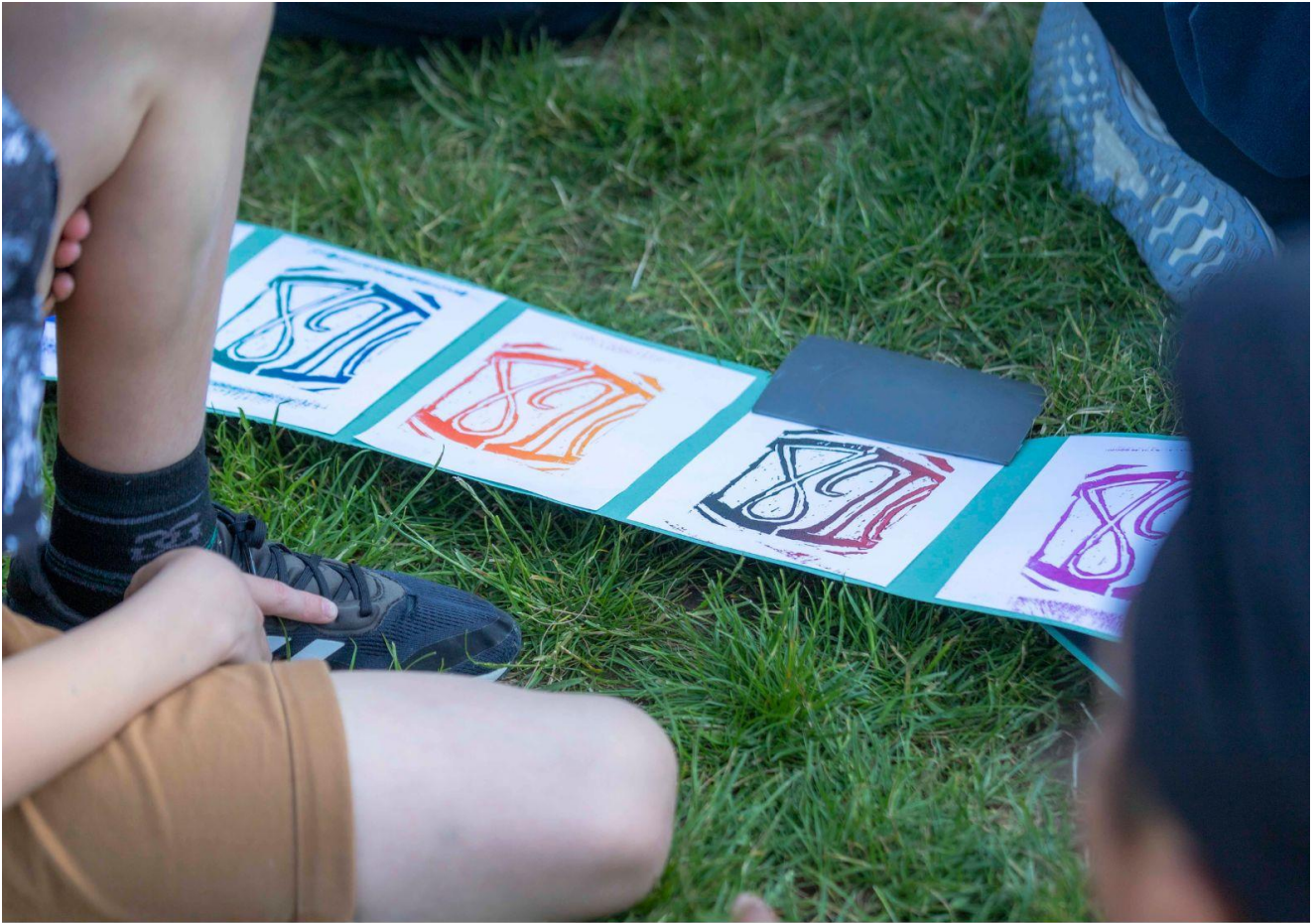












Feedback is important to us and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk