



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

07 OCTOBER 2022



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Introduction

Thoughts on belonging

Belonging is a condition required for human performance. When our need to belong to a team, a group, an organisation or a family is met, our energy and focus can pour into the shared purpose.

If we feel we belong, we feel that we are respected and that we matter. We feel included. We can be a positive teammate as our own identity and that of the team can effectively coexist. Consequently, we can focus in the legacy that we can jointly write.

An organisation where we belong enables us to be purpose driven and seek opportunities to strive to be the best versions of ourselves. We reject attitudes and actions that fail to meet our need to belong, resulting in the leaking of energy and a focus on unsafe environments and destructive relationships.

We need to ensure that we belong to positive groups and teams. WhatsApp groups that peddle uncharitable words, gossip, negativity and language that destroys, rather than builds community, must be rejected. Parents have a responsibility to monitor the use of social media by their children and we are committed to working with parents and students to promote positive communication.

It has been argued that *'If you own your memory – you can own your future.'* As an institution that is nearly 900 years, we are proud of our traditions. We have been at the centre of the town of Reading since 1125 and I am determined that we can create a positive legacy now, that builds on the richness of our traditions.



Our Commemoration Service held at the Minster Church is an important example of the importance of belonging and community. This year's preacher, at this important service, is an Old Redingensian, who is now a Dominican friar, Br Daniel Benedict Rowlands O.P. Daniel was one of the most impressive students academically at Reading School, gaining a PHD at Cambridge University before entering the Order of Preachers, also known as Dominicans, after their founder St Dominic. They are also known as Blackfriars because of the colour of their cape, over their white habits.

Clothing can be distinctive and can symbolise the importance of belonging. A striking recent example of a symbol of inclusion and belonging is the new Reading School Senior Rugby Union change kit, designed by one of our students. It incorporates the colours of the five houses as well as the School colour of French Navy. It is crucial that we develop a culture that takes pride in the symbols of being part of Reading School. This includes all aspects of the school uniform and we would appreciate parents ensuring that your child has the correct school uniform, including shoes.



In closing, we value our parents' support in the development of our students and a notable example of it can be evidenced from the thriving Reading School Parents Association. The RSPA is led by a committee of dedicated parents who care deeply about our children and young people and who want to enhance their education and environment. If you are a parent who would like to find out more about how you can personally contribute and make a difference, by volunteering a few hours a week, I would encourage you to contact them to arrange an informal chat by emailing contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk.

Thank you.

Mr AM Robson

Headmaster



Key information

All Years

Annual Commemoration Service 2022 on Friday 21 October 2022

Each year we celebrate the founding of Reading School and its historic ties with the Borough of Reading by holding a service at the Reading Minster of St. Mary-the-Virgin. Our service this year is more poignant, given that it will be the first in-person service in 2 years. This will take place on **Friday 21st October at 14:00**. The service should be finished by approximately 15:00. We regret that, due to space limitations, we are unable to accommodate parents or carers at the service. We would nevertheless value your co-operation in ensuring your son is in his smartest possible uniform for this occasion, and are pleased to inform you of the logistics of the event:

Year 7, 8, 9 & 12 and 13 students ONLY

- All students will have lessons as normal until Period 4
- Mr O Griffin (Head of Music) has notified musicians involved in the ceremony. These students need to be excused from Period 3 so that they can meet at Music School for 10:00 to be escorted to the Minster for rehearsals (this list will include Year 10 musicians who are participating).
- Lunch will be served from 11.55 to 12.30 and tutor registration for these year groups will take place at 12:35 in normal form rooms.
- After registration and form time, junior students will be escorted **to and from** the Minster by staff and senior students (Sixth Form Prefects and senior students assisting will be notified separately via Teams).
- All other sixth formers will be allowed to make their own way to the Minster with registration taking place at the Minster and will be dismissed from the Minster after the service.
- Students should be **smartly dressed in full school uniform**. If they have games that morning, they must bring their uniform to change into.
- **It should be noted that students are not permitted to take bags with them to the Minster as there is simply not enough space for bags to be stored safely. Therefore, bags should be left in lockers at School or in the Chapel (for those who do not have lockers).**
- **All students must return to school with staff and senior students after the service to collect their belongings before we begin half term.**
- Please note that there will be **no** lunchtime or after school clubs on this day.
- **Horseman coaches are booked** to depart from school, as usual, at **15:40** and **will not leave** without students.

Except for religious exemptions, all students in the year groups above will be participating in this event. However, if you do **not** wish your son to attend, arrangements have been made so that he will be supervised at school during the afternoon. If this is the case, please email events@reading-school.co.uk providing your **son's name and form** with your request **by no later than Friday 14th October**.

Year 10 and 11 ONLY

- Due to the capacity at the Minster, we are unable to have all the school attend, therefore, **Year 10 and 11 students will remain at school**.
- Year 10 and 11 students will then have their normal lessons up to Period 5 which will run from 11:55 to 12:35 for both year groups.
- Lunch for pupils in Years 10 & 11 will be served from 12.40 to 13.25.
- Year 10 students will be undertaking supervised HPQ work in the JKB or LRC. They should line up outside the LRC at 13:25. School will finish at 15:25 as usual.
- Year 11 students will be undertaking an English GCSE mock exam in Big School and other classrooms. They should line up outside on the terrace at 13:25. School will finish at 15:25 as usual.

Photography/videography will take place during this service for Reading School marketing purposes to be included on the website and school social media. If you do **not** wish for your son to be included, please email your son's name and form to events@reading-school.co.uk.

International Trips & Belonging Weeks

After half term we will be sending students on their first international trips for nearly 3 years; departing for the following destinations:

- Year 8 & 13 French Students to Chateau Le Bau
- Year 10 & 12 German Students to Rheinbach
- Year 9 German Markets trip to Munich

In the spring term students will be travelling to the following destinations:

- Year 7 & 8 Floreat trip to Finland
- Years 8 to 11 Tennis tour to South Africa
- Year 9 Spanish Students to Granada

We are also in discussions with providers, and hope to provide details of the following additional opportunities in the coming weeks:

- The Azores - Year 10 and 12 Geographers
- Cern - Year 12 Physicists
- The Vatican - Year 10 and 12 T&P Students

Please also be aware that dates for Belonging Weeks are as follows:

- **Years 8 & 10** will take place 22 - 26 May 2023
- **Years 7, 9 and 12** will take place 5 - 9 June 2023

More information about the range of opportunities available to students will be published after half term. Students in Years 7 & 9 will have the opportunity to take part in residentials.

Year 9 and 10 only

This half-term, students in Year Nine have been introduced to some of the key skills they will use in their Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) through completing a practice mini-project on one of the following questions:

- Should the voting age in the UK remain 18?
- Is there a "digital divide" in the UK?
- Is there a best approach for preventing knife crime?
- What is the fairest way for the UK to achieve net zero by 2050?

Students will be expected to be ready to show their 600-750-word, research-based report on one of those questions to their HPQ teachers in their first lesson after the break in November. In November, they will also deliver a short presentation on their mini-project to their HPQ teachers and class, as practice for the presentation which forms a core component of the HPQ.

During reading week, for HPQ, students should explore two or more ideas for their own, longer-form research project. Their teachers will explain in lessons how they can capture their reading and ideas for an independent research project, starting the supervised HPQ process in November.

In Year Ten, students have been given the afternoon of 21st October (during the annual Commemoration Service) to deliver their presentations in school. The HPQ presentation is one of the three required pieces of evidence for the qualification, together with students' project production log and their final 2000-word research report. Students will present to an audience comprising their Project Supervisor and their peers. Students who have already completed their projects will, therefore, be part of the audience or assisting Mr Miller and the project supervisor team with the logistics of the afternoon.

Years 11-13 only

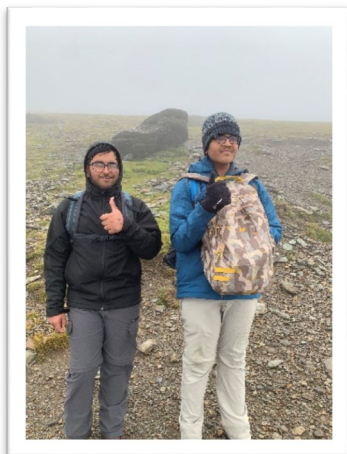
Parent survey: Use of digital devices to support Sixth Form study

As a school, we are exploring the greater integration of digital learning technologies and platforms to support students' learning, with a particular focus on Sixth Form.

As a parent or carer of a student in Years 11-13, we would welcome your opinions on the value of a range of ways of integrating digital learning activities and devices within lessons by completing this short (two-minute) survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/XWajSyW3jZ>

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in character



The variety and breadth of student and staff excellence never fails to surprise us and this week we were updated of the achievement of Avi S (10S) and Syon P (10S). Both were successful in scaling Mount Snowdon last Saturday as part of a mixed age and ability group of 18 climbers in challenging conditions. The feedback received from an observer and parent on the trip:

"Due to the harsh weather conditions and different levels of ability, some members of the group found the ascent quite challenging. Both boys voluntarily and without prompting took upon themselves to ensure that no one stayed behind and that everyone safely arrived at the summit. They offered their support through encouragement but also in physical ways, such as carrying the backpacks of those who struggled with the ascent and helping them navigate the more treacherous parts of the climb. They displayed courage and selfless service and they always did so with a smile on their face. I was mostly impressed with their maturity, leadership and integrity that I believe are qualities that Reading school aims to instil in their students."

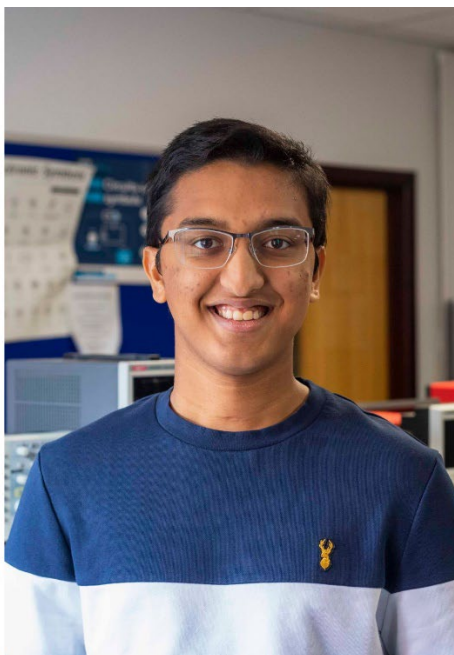
Avi S was asked about his experience of trekking up the highest mountain in Wales and England and he shared:

"...the hardest bit is the beginning which just goes super steep right at the start, which is really demotivating but honestly, it's a good warm up, because after that your lungs start getting used to it. You can really get out of breath from going uphill and it's sort of a long trail that doesn't go straight up a mountain but across several, I guess hills, not really mountains towards the top. The air does thin out because you get quite high, so you have to breathe a bit heavier, but throughout the entire trek, as long as you've got the right gear it's pretty good. Going up was four hours and going down was around three and a half...at the top of the summit you kind of get lost for words."



Excellence in Computer Science

Recent ORs (2022), Liam Devine (left) and Vaibhav Mahajan (right) have both been recognised as the top 50 AQA Computer Science A-level students in the UK and have been sent an invitation to a prize-winner event in Bath or London, where they will be awarded a prize along with getting to meet other prize-winners and high-performing Computer Science university students.



Excellence in sport

We would like to congratulate Prayrit A (9S) who was selected to represent England at the [World Table Tennis Tournament at Podgorica](#), Montenegro. Prayrit represented the under 13 and under 15 age groups. We look forward to speaking with him on his return from the tournament and wish him the very best of luck.

Excellence in poetry

On Thursday, the school marked [National Poetry Day](#) with a fantastic annual event run by the LRC: Poetry on The Stairs. We used this poetic extravaganza as an opportunity to announce the new school Poet Laureate. Students were asked to pen a poem on the theme of the environment as their application to the role. Entries from across the school demonstrated great skill, insight and creativity. The winning poem was shortlisted by staff, and selected by our Writer-In-Residence, Will Burns, and Headmaster Mr Robson.



It is our pleasure to announce that our Poet Laureate for 2022-2023 is Rupert T (7C). His appointment marks the first time a year 7 has taken up the post, and is a testament to his maturity and the originality of his poetic voice.

Reflecting on the shortlist and the winning poem, Will Burns commented: *"It was both an honour and a pleasure to read these shortlisted poems, all three of which, I thought, were worthy of the esteemed title of 'laureate', and pointed, I have no doubt, to the extreme high quality of all the entries. As such, it was tough to choose a single winner, but sadly that is the nature of these things and I eventually plumped for 'Autumn Alone', with its plain-spoken, rather stately melancholy and acute observational eye. In second place came 'Untitled' and this poem, along with 'Oh Mother Earth', I thought showed supreme skill across both the line and the handling of narrative. All three showcased a wonderful musicality, that rather slippery and definitively poetic quality. Well done to all the poets involved."*

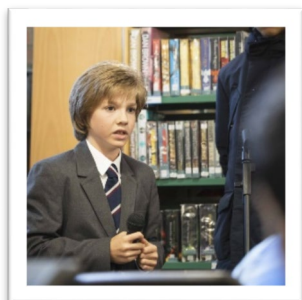
We also want to thank our outgoing Poet Laureate, Dan T. Throughout 2021 and 2022, as we emerged from the grips of the pandemic, Dan's poetic offerings perfectly captured the moments and moods of the school community. His experimentation with poetic form, delightful and oftentimes surprising turn of phrase, and always challenging perspective have been a gift to the school over the past year. Many thanks to Dan for sharing his poetry with us. For his final poem as Poet Laureate, Dan has also reflected on this year's National Poetry Day theme: the environment.

You can read the first poem from our new Poet Laureate, Rupert and the last from our outgoing Poet Laureate, Dan, T below:

Autumn Alone by Rupert T



The crunch beneath my feat is deafening,
And yet I am overwhelmed by an unnatural silence,
Nature is speaking,
In its autumnal vibrations, hues and scents,
I feel a void within and without.



I know this season well,
The rustling of the leaves,
The innumerable shades of burnt orange, red and brown,
It has a gentle courtesy,
As it politely clears the landscape of its blazing summer glory.



It is barely recognizable to me now,
My eyes are drawn skywards,
As a magpie cry fills the air,
The sun spies me through the thinning treetops,
Dappling my face with teardrops of light.

I feel the brittle leaves engulf me,
As I sit in my place of remembrance.

A Tree to Remember by Dan T

The soft sunlit brushstrokes of April appease
A tender young tendril searching the breeze.
Her shoots chase the sun while her roots lace below
Weaving a web made of gossamer snow.

She endures endless downpours and droughts undismayed
To transcend the treetops and rise from the shade.
Her foliage shimmers like emerald stars
And goldcrests and finches make nests in her arms.

She bears golden acorns that spread far and near
And peacefully prospers year upon year.
Her steady secureness and unsurpassed sureness
Are spread by the breadth of her boughs in their fullness.

But alas comes an end to the longest of reigns
In this age where our trees are all trampled for trains.
And she's mournfully missed by the jays and the owls –
They know such an oak's irreplaceable now.

Community

Friday 14th October - Wear It Green Day for Disasters Emergency Committee



The Charity Committee, led by Jai G (Year 13 – Charity Prefect) are holding a non-school uniform day to raise funds for [Disasters Emergency Committee](#) (DEC), a global charity that is currently on the ground providing food, shelter, bedding, and hygiene items to the 33 million people affected by the crisis.

DEC charities are already on the ground providing life-saving aid either directly or through local partners. Your donations will be key in furthering this effort. We will be wearing something green to support Pakistan because they urgently need more funds to reach more people. People urgently need help and we would welcome your support.

To participate, we encourage students to wear something green to create and increase awareness around the floods in Pakistan. *(You **do not have to buy** something specifically green to participate, you can come in your own clothes).*

The minimum suggested donation is £2.00 per student – please click the link to donate: [Reading School is fundraising for Disasters Emergency Committee \(justgiving.com\)](#)

Please include your son's **FULL name** and **FORM group** in the notes section when submitting a donation, so we can verify donations against students participating.

Unfortunately, we **CANNOT** accept any cash payments on the day.

Thank you to Jai G (Year 13 Charity Prefect) and Rahul G (Year 13) for leading with the support of the Society Office.

Key facts about Pakistan floods



Friday 14th October – Harvest Festival



In addition, the Charity committee will be supporting a local charity for this year's Harvest Festival. The charity of choice is [ReadiFood](#) – Reading's Food Bank. We would like to support our local community, who are most affected by the cost of living rising and energy price hikes by providing ReadiFood with priority food items listed below. If you are able to, we would welcome donations of food items listed below and these can be dropped off by students to Chapel on **Friday 14th October between 7.45am to 9am.**

Priority foods are:

Baked beans, chopped tomatoes, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, tinned/instant potatoes, tinned deserts, microwave rice, pot noodles, cuppa soups, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes and drinking squash.

Non-priority items:

Tinned ready meals, tinned fish, cereal bars, tinned meat, baby toiletries (not wipes), dried pulses, dried lentils, long life milk, squash, honey and cereal.

Please do not provide pasta unless it is gluten free.

ReadiFood cannot accept donations of baby milk. This is under UNICEF guidelines to foodbanks in the U.K and we thank you in advance for ensuring all food items are within their “use by date”.

We thank Jai G (Year 13 – Charity Prefect) and Rahul G (Year 13) for leading on this charitable initiative with the support of Miss A Coates (Administrator) and the Community Relations Office.

Sports Fixtures

Monday 10 October

1st XI football vs Denefield, 3.30pm Away (Mr Allen)

Tuesday 11 October

Yr7 Rugby vs Theale Green, 4pm Away (Snr Sanchez)

Yr11 Rugby vs Denefield, 4pm Away (Mr Tett)

Wednesday 12 October

Yr 8 Rugby vs Maiden Erlegh Reading & Willink, 4pm Home - Morgan Road (Mr Robertson)

Yr 10 Rugby vs Highdown & Piggott, 4pm Home – Morgan Road (Mr Tridgell)

1st XV Rugby vs Leighton Park 2:30pm Away (Mr Kearle)

2nd XV vs Forest School 2:30pm, Venue TBC (Mr Tett)

Yr9 County Football Trials, 4pm Front Field (Mr Allen)

Thursday 13 October

Yr 9 Vs Piggott School, 4pm Away (Mr Allen)

RSPA

Committee Meeting 06/10/22

We were very pleased to have so many people join us last night. It was great to have people interested in joining the committee and helping shape RSPA going forwards. If you would like to be part of this please do email contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk. We would love to hear from you.

Uniform Shop Opening

The next dates for the shop to be open are Friday 14 October 2:30pm – 4pm and Saturday 15 October 10:30-12:30pm.

If you have any uniform donations these can be sent, at any time, via pupils to student services in the cloisters.

We are also looking for people to assist at the shop openings. If you have any spare time please do email - shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk.

We wish you all a very happy weekend.

The RSPA Team

Michaelmas Term – Week 5

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



This week's Year 10 safeguarding assembly was delivered by AlterEgo Creative Solutions who performed their production of '*Unacceptable*', which raises the awareness of sexism, sexist behaviours, their effects and how to respond. Safeguarding assemblies provide the opportunity to provide for our students' PSHE education in an engaging and thought-provoking way.





Reading School Rugby Second XV vs Reading Blue Coat School
Final score 54-21 to Reading School.







Social Enterprise Project in partnership with The Abbey and Henley Business School.
A 7-month project featuring educational sessions that cover; the social business model, funding, marketing, strategic decision making, managing growth, social impact, managing a triple bottom line and guest talks from social entrepreneurs. The project will culminate with a judging panel and awards for the winning Social Enterprise/s.







'Round the World in 80 Games' Elective with Dr C Evans.

A mixed elective class of Year 7 and 8s were instructed in the sport was [Bo-Taoshi](#), the Japanese team sport of Pole Toppling. It was popularised by the Japanese Navy in the 1940s and normally has two teams of 150. It is the fourth international sport featured in the elective with previous sports including versions of Swiss [Hornussen](#), Bengali [Kabaddi](#) and Afghan [Buzkashi](#).



A Reading School Orchestra sectional string section rehearsal of Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet overture (which will be performed on tour in July).





[Thames Valley Air Ambulance](#) visit Reading School in order to meet with our Medical Society and Combined Cadet Force students during an afternoon question and answer session.









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