



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

1 DECEMBER 2023

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Introduction

I believe that Reading School's 'secret sauce' isn't secret at all, and there are no unique ingredients. Instead, there is an unrelenting sense of moral purpose which is readily converted into ambition. Leaders, teachers, associate staff, governors and our students know that outstanding outcomes are only achievable long term, if people know the end to which they work. Clear purpose is therefore at the heart of our success.

Furthermore, academic outcomes are a necessary, but not sufficient measure of education. Rather, building people of character should be viewed as an essential mark of our authenticity. Focus on the nurture of character, deeply respectful relationships between staff and students, the value of autonomy and the significance of curiosity, enables Reading School to achieve remarkable academic success, without ever making this our exclusive focus. When compassion, integrity and authenticity are priorities, then excellence follows.

Certainly, our students develop positive attributes so that they grow through the 'Learn, Lead, Serve' journey, gradually finding more and more ways to use their own talents for the benefit of others. As an example, 102 Year 12 students mentor primary school boys and girls every week through our nationally renowned 'Future Stories' initiative. Thus, service for others isn't a 'thing' that we do, it is integral to what we are. This is exemplified by our collaboration with Ukrainian families, and leadership of after school programmes for refugees which have resulted in gaining "School of Sanctuary" status in 2023. It is also clear in the partnership with the Local Authority which has seen Reading School take on the role of "School Games" organiser to champion sporting participation and competition for primary schools. Further, as a regional Character Hub, it is evident that we are fully committed to supporting others to flourish with compassion.

Clarity of purpose makes us restless to do more. Thus, the September 2024 Year 7 cohort will include students on the new Sports Pathway, supported by the Chair of Governors, Mr Bob Kenwick. This will include initiatives of international renown including Right to Dream and the True Athlete Project. We seek to harness the power and potential of sport to nurture compassionate, self-aware and responsible young people. Through emphasising joy and fun, we seek to promote excellence at sport and also becoming exemplary family members, friends and citizens.

I would encourage all members of the Reading School community to fear less and be braver. A fear based approach is not the optimum way to achieve success. We should seek greater freedom from claustrophobic thoughts and emotions. There is no place for harmful cultures that masquerade as high performance environments. Can we seek to be braver? To perform with more freedom and joy, driven by the love of the endeavour and challenge? A fear based approach is not the optimum way to achieve success. We should seek greater freedom from claustrophobic thoughts and emotions. When we feel pressure and are anxious this can impact our wellbeing on a personal level.

Essentially, I want all staff, students and parents to know that Reading School will support you to be brave and to fear less. We all should seek to cultivate a compassionate inner-dialogue so that the voice inside our head resembles a good friend and supportive coach rather than a harsh critic. Fear of not being good enough can hold us back and can show up as jealousy, perfectionism or self-criticism according to Dr Pippa Grange, author of 'Fear Less.' Fear can be like a thief. But it is never too late to change our story.

Be brave and fear less.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Key information

Admission Arrangements Notice

The Admissions Code sets out that schools wishing to amend their admissions arrangements must consult as widely as possible. Denefield School is carrying out a consultation in accordance with statutory requirements, on proposed changes to their admissions arrangements 2025/26. The Trustees of Denefield invite comments in writing on the proposed admission arrangements for admissions to the school for the 2025-2026 academic year. The changes made to their policy are regarding students with exceptional social or medical needs.

If you would like to comment on the admissions policy, please email consultation@denefield.org.uk stating the paragraph number and, if necessary, the subsection that you wish to comment on. To enable them to capture a wide variety of views, please indicate if you are:

- A parent with a child at Denefield
- A parent of a child considering Denefield
- A Headteacher
- A Teacher
- Governor/Trustee
- Local Authority
- Local Councillor
- Other (please specify)

Comments should reach Denefield School no later than noon on Monday 15 January 2024.

All years

Young carers

A young carer is defined by The Children's Society as, "*under the age of 18 and who looks after a family member... who has a physical or mental health condition, or misuses drugs or alcohol. They may also look after brothers, sisters or elderly relatives too.*"

If you would like to talk more about young carers, [or would like to access support](#), please contact one of Reading School's Safeguarding Team or a trusted adult at school.

Current Vacancies

Site Controller

Have you got the skills to help us provide a safe, well-maintained and positive space in which our students excel? We're looking for a reliable and enthusiastic Site Controller to contribute to the safety, security and day-to-day maintenance of the school premises and site. For more information, [click here](#). Deadline for applications is 9am on Wednesday 6 December.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in Philosophy



Reading School's foremost philosophy academic magazine is back and has a new look. Cogito is a place for rational expression of all things Philosophy; whether you are wrestling with a moral dilemma or intrigued by the metaphysical, writing for Cogito can be a great way to expand your philosophical understanding beyond the AS/A Level specification.

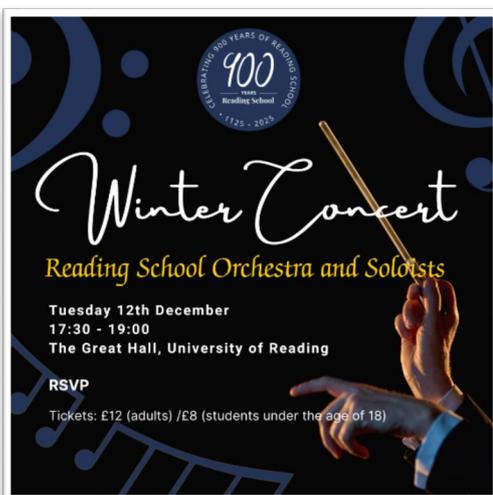
The editorial team encourage students, teachers and parents to have a read through the brand-new edition VI of Cogito, which delves into ancient Chinese Philosophy as well as exploring questions of identity and objective morality – there is sure to be something that will pique your interest and challenge your grasp on key philosophical concepts.

In advance of the Lent term, the Cogito team will also be looking for new senior students to take a leading role in the production of the magazine, so if that is something you can envision for yourself, get involved now and demonstrate your philosophical prowess by contacting the editorial team: Branson R (13EF), Joshua G (13MRC), Siddhant M (12ELA) and Chief Designer Adam M (13EF).

[Click here or the thumbnail to download Issue 6.](#)

Belonging & Community

A date for the diary - Reading School Winter Concert



Reading School's Director of Music, Mr Griffin invites all within our school community to share in a special winter concert featuring the Reading School Orchestra and Soloists on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at the University of Reading's Great Hall. Highlights of the concert will include:

Soloists

Paganini - Caprice 24 - Kyle R (13W)
Jacob - Viola Concerto No. 2 MVT II - Joseph M (13L)
Tchaikovsky - Dumka (Op. 59) - Avaneesh R (12W)
Ravel - Jeux d'eau - Ryan L (12L)
Handel - Variations on Angels from the Realms of Glory – Freddie S (13W)
Liszt - Rigoletto Paraphrase – Yash S (13E)

Reading School Orchestra

Overture to Romeo and Juliet – Tchaikovsky
Piano Concerto No. 2 Movement II – Rachmaninov Soloist: Yash S (13E)

Tickets for the concert are priced at £12 (adults) and £8 (under 18s). Please [click here to purchase tickets.](#)

Date: **Tuesday 12 December**

Time: **15:30 – 19:00**

Venue: **The Great Hall, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ**

German Christmas Market – a reminder



On Monday 4 December, a festive German Christmas market will be arriving at Reading School (and pitching up outside the LRC). The market is for students to experience a popular German cultural event with traditional German biscuits and other stalls selling festive items. Money raised will go to the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) to buy books students have wished for. So please do please send some cash in with your child. We will have the facility to take card payments however only for purchases over £5.

We are also inviting all members of the school community (students and staff) to consider baking some traditional (nut-free) biscuits in order to sell from the market. Recipes of traditional (nut-free) biscuits can be downloaded by [clicking here](#) and any baked goods can be dropped off to the LRC on the morning of Monday 4 December.

To get into the festive feel, the refectory will be selling 'Bratwurst' via the grab-and-go and Mr Jones, a parent of a Y11 student, has kindly donated non-alcoholic 'Glühwein', a mulled wine, which we will be selling. If you have any questions, please contact Teacher of German, Mrs Senftlechner by emailing ssenftlechner@reading-school.co.uk or School Librarian, Mrs Kesteven, by emailing kesteven@reading-school.co.uk.

Sports fixtures

Monday 4 December

Handball - Year 9 v Bohunt (away) 4pm

Tuesday 5 December

Football - Year 11 5-a-side tournament at Denefield 4pm

Wednesday 6 December

Football - Year 7 National Cup v Weydon (away) 3.30pm

Badminton - Year 7 at Maiden Erlegh 4pm

Rugby - 2ndXV v Blue Coat (away) 2.30

Rugby - Year 11 v Downs (home) 2.30

Thursday 7 December

Basketball - U14 v JMA (away) 4pm

Teachers' Amazon Wishlist 2023



We're delighted to return with another Teachers' Amazon Wishlist appeal – and we are now going LIVE for the third year running! As with previous years all departments have been given the opportunity to request items up to the value of £250. It is enormously appreciated by our teachers, knowing that these much-needed resources could be coming their way very soon! The list is underway, with more to follow, and can be viewed [by clicking here](#).

There are a wide range of requests and costs of items and hopefully something to suit everyone who wishes to contribute. However, if you can't make your mind up then Gift Vouchers are most welcome. Can we also kindly request that you set your account to 'EASYFUNDRAISING' and choose AMAZON as your retailer, when purchasing. This will raise further money for the pupils with no extra cost to you.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rspareadingpa>

We are also happy to accept cash donations, particularly if you would like to Gift Aid your donation. (If you require a form, please email: treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk)

Name: RSPA No. 2 Account, Sort Code: 60-17-21, Account No: 15309096

Please choose RPSA PARENT GIFTING WISHLIST TERRI LORRIMORE as the delivery address. The list will close on 8 December 2023. If you have any queries, please contact Jo Wyles by emailing jwyles@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Lottery Super Draw



The school lottery is running successfully and every week there are prizes to win. This time you can win a £3,000 Christmas Cash Bonus! In our festive Super Draw, one lucky person will win an amazing £3,000 Christmas Cash Bonus – you could hit the January sales in style, spread the joy by giving back to a cause that holds a special place in your heart, plan your dream holiday getaway, treat yourself to the latest tech and gadgets, spruce up your living space for the new year; the choice is yours!

Get your Super Draw tickets before Saturday 23 December to be in with a chance to win. Joining the lottery is very easy and one RSPA participant wins a guaranteed prize every Saturday night. Tickets cost £1 each can be bought as a one - off or on a regular basis and to enter, [simply click here](#) or on the thumbnail image.

Year 7 Disco – an update

The Year 7 Disco was a great success and we are delighted to share that **£1734** (and still counting) was raised.

Many thanks to the RSPA Team members for organising the event, our volunteers, parents, teachers and students who all have put in an effort to raise the funds and make the event a successful one.

Thank you and have a lovely 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



As part of our commitment to building people of integrity and character, Reading School is an accredited [White Ribbon](#) campaign organisation. Last Friday, our students, led by School Captain, Josha G (13MRC) affirmed their allyship of the commitment to #ChangeTheStory for women and girls, so that they live their lives free from the fear of violence.



Behind the scenes at the House Music Competition 2023









Let the performances begin











Congratulations Laud House – winners of the House Music Competition 2023



Enrichment activities can be valuable for students learning a language, as they provide opportunities to practice the language in a more engaging and practical way. An annual opportunity that takes place is a visit to Chinese restaurant 'Kung Fu Kitchen', led by Mr Wu. Students get an opportunity to practice their language skills by ordering food, discussing their chosen dishes and Chinese food culture in Mandarin in an enjoyable, engaging and positive way.



We are excited to announce that rowing is returning to Reading School as we work in partnership with Revd James Stevenson to relaunch a rowing program for our students and the wider community as part of our vision for our recently rebuilt boat house. In order to prepare students, a programme of training began last Friday as part of an Inter-House Rowing Competition.



We have also planned for a Primary School Rowing Competition on Wednesday 6 December, along with having a number of primary schools from Whitley and central Reading signed up for sessions which our Year 11 Future Stories volunteers will lead.



"Only the guy who isn't rowing has time to rock the boat."

Jean-Paul Sartre



In the months ahead, we will be working with a range of schools and partners while getting ready to have children and young people working together in teams and rowing on the Thames this summer 2024.



“If you could get all the people in the organisation rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time.”

Patrick Lencioni





Reading School CCF (Combined Cadet Force) had their Annual Dinner on Saturday 25 November, welcoming back recent Adult Volunteers for a formal dining out. The Guest of Honour was former Contingent Commander, Colonel Simon Donegan and his wife Mrs Clare Donegan BEM. The Contingent also said farewell and thank you to Capt David Morris and Flying Officer Katherine McDiarmid.

The evening was superbly supported by the [Band of the 3rd Battalion The Royal Welsh](#) and school catering team, under the direction of Catering Manager, Mr C Woodley.

Photo credits: Mr Ali Matthews (School Staff Instructor)



The Combined Cadet Force (CCF), formed in 1948, is an organisation in schools, colleges, and universities across the UK (Reading School's CCF is believed to be the oldest state school Cadet Force in the country having formed in 1900). It provides a program of military-themed training and activities for students aged 12 to 18 and aims to develop qualities such as leadership, self-discipline, teamwork, and resilience, while also fostering a sense of responsibility and community service.

The Contingent Commander for Reading School CCF is Lt Col J Flexman

It's important to note that while the CCF has a military theme and offers experiences related to the armed forces, it is not a recruitment tool for the military. Participation is voluntary, and the focus is on personal development and citizenship rather than preparing individuals for military service.



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