



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

15 DECEMBER 2023



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Introduction

Dear students, staff, parents and wider school community,

Today is not only the last Headmaster's Bulletin before the end of a productive and successful Michaelmas Term, it will also be my last introduction that I will share with you all in my role as Headmaster.

As many of you are aware through communication shared with you this week, there will be a restructuring of the Executive Leadership of Reading School which means that I will be stepping into a new role as Chief Executive Officer of Reading School, from this coming January 2024. This means being able to focus on the school's strategic development in order to continue to build on our collective success and be able to provide our students with more opportunities to flourish.

Today is not a bittersweet day for me as I will continue to play a role within this exceptional school and institution, just under a different guise. I have recently been reflecting on my 11 years as Headmaster and am filled with a deep sense of gratitude, and of having fulfilled a hugely rewarding, and at times, challenging responsibility.

I look to our whole school community and want to express my profound gratitude to you all for your unwavering support, dedication, and collaborative spirit throughout my time as Headmaster. Together, we have continued to build upon and adapt what makes Reading School a special institution, not only academically but also one that nurtures and empowers.

As I take on the role of CEO in January 2024, I am acutely aware of the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead. The landscape of education is ever evolving, and our commitment to excellence must evolve with it. I am excited about the prospect of leading our school into a future that is shaped by innovation, inclusivity, and a dedication to the holistic development of our students. I will seek to practice what I have preached by learning, leading and serving.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the inspirational staff body who have been the backbone of our school. Your passion for teaching, your commitment to our students, and your tireless efforts in fostering a love for learning have built upon the foundations of our collective success. I am confident that, under the more than capable hands of the new Headmaster, Rev. Dr Chris Evans and dedicated educators, our school will continue to thrive and flourish.

To the students, you are the heartbeat of our school. Your enthusiasm, intelligence, curiosity, and achievements have been a constant source of inspiration for me and I am sure our whole school community. As I transition into this new, exciting role, I carry with me the memories of your triumphs, your character, and the indomitable spirit that defines us.

To parents and carers, thank you for entrusting our staff with the education and well-being of your children. Your partnership has been invaluable, and I look forward to continuing this collaboration in my new capacity.

In closing, let us move forward with optimism, determination, and a shared commitment to continue to embody the values that define our school. Change is the one constant in life, there will be much to look forward to and I am confident that, together, we will write a new positive chapter in the history of Reading School as we approach our 900th Anniversary in 2025 - one that reflects who we are, our resilience, adaptability, and unwavering dedication to be people of character who care for ourselves and others.

Thank you for your trust, your support, and for being an integral part of the journey we have undertaken together. I believe that the future holds boundless possibilities for personal and organisational flourishing.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

**Front cover image of Mr Robson sitting in Mr Blackwell's office on the first floor of his bookstore in Broad Street, Oxford*

Key information

All years

End of Michaelmas Term 2023

Please find below structure for the last day of term on Wednesday 20 December:

AM Tutor Time and Period 1 – 3

Lessons as normal, with Junior Period 3 starting at 10:10 rather than 10:25, and period 3 ending for all classes at 10.40.

08:20	<i>Tutor Time</i>				
08:30	<i>Lesson 1</i>				
09:20	<i>Lesson 2</i>				
10:10	<i>Lesson 3</i>				
10:45	East Chapel	<i>Break</i>	<i>Tutor time</i>	<i>Tutor Time</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:05	<i>Tutor Time</i>	West Chapel	<i>Tutor time</i>	<i>Tutor Time</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:20	<i>Tutor Time</i>	<i>Tutor Time</i>	School Chapel	<i>Break</i>	<i>Tutor Time</i>
11:40	<i>Break</i>	<i>Tutor Time</i>	<i>Break</i>	Laud Chapel	<i>Tutor Time</i>
12:00	<i>Depart</i>	<i>Depart</i>	<i>Depart</i>	<i>Depart</i>	County Chapel
12:20					<i>Depart</i>

- Tutors from each House to supervise the refectory and outdoor spaces during their break time.
- No students to leave the site before 12:00.
- Food will be grab and go only.
- Boarding dismissal – 12:15 from each boarding house. Boarding Houses will be closed at 13.00.
- Parents who are picking up from boarding are kindly asked to refrain from entering the school site until all students and pedestrians have safely left. Permitted access will be no earlier than 12:15pm.

Start of Lent Term 2024

Reading School will recommence for Lent Term on Monday 8 January, 2024.

Boarders can be dropped back to school on either the morning of Monday 8 January as usual, or on the Sunday 7 January in the evening between 6pm and 8pm.

Christmas Jumper Day – DATE CHANGE - Wednesday 20 December 2023

Please note that the Christmas Jumper Day has changed from Monday to Wednesday, next week. Led by Yaman E (13EF), our committed Charity Prefect and supported by Mr Luteijn (Teacher of Geography), this year's annual Christmas Jumper Day will be in aid of the Refugee Support Group who have been helping refugees and people seeking asylum to rebuild their lives with advice, education and support for over 25 years. This event not only adds a festive touch to celebrate the end of the Michaelmas Term and 2023, but also extends a helping hand to those in need.

Additional details include:

- Students can wear Christmas jumpers and there is no need to wear School Uniform underneath.
- If students don't have a Christmas jumper, they are encouraged to wear something festive, especially with red or green elements, or get creative by adding Christmas decorations to the top.
- Students can wear their own clothes, but we would like to see a Christmas theme ideally.

If you would like to donate, please [click our JustGiving link here](#). Thank you to all those who have already made contributions.

Thank you for your continued support in fostering a sense of community and compassion within Reading School.



Careers*

**Please note that while we share supporting opportunities for our students, their endorsement by Reading School is not implied. The decision to pursue any shared opportunities rests with parents/carers, and not the school.*

Careers Convention – 1st February 2023

Calling all organizations to be part of our careers day! Your presence can shape the aspirations of our students and pave the way for their future success.

Would your organisation want to tap into the top talent at Reading School?

Further to my letter of 8th December, Our biennial Careers Convention is taking place on 1st February 2024.

If you would like to help inspire our students to ensure we offer advice and guidance in a broad range of careers and pathways, please do complete the delegate registration form here: [2024 Careers Convention Registration Form](#). Thank you to all those who have volunteered to support this evening. Please bear with us, as we will be in touch with further details in the new year.

If you have any queries in relation to being a delegate, keynote speaker, sponsorship or donations to support careers at Reading School, please contact Lizzie Ayres (Assistant Head), Jas Chhokar (Society Manager) or Piatrice Hutchinson (Society Co-ordinator) at Careerscon@reading-school.co.uk.

Year 10-13 Work Experience opportunities with Capgemini 2024

Capgemini offer both virtual (online) and hybrid (online and in office) work experience opportunities, so even if you can't easily commute to their offices, you can still get great quality corporate work experience.

Whether your focus is business or technology and you want to see how a digital transformation company works please click the link below for more details: <https://www.capgemini.com/gb-en/careers/capgemini-work-experience-2024/>

Applications **closes on 7th January 2024**.

Year 12 and 13 only - Economics and Oxbridge

The Marshall Society, the **official Economics society** at the **University of Cambridge** is holding its Annual Conference on **Sunday 3rd March 2024** at the **University of Cambridge**. The day will run from 10am to 5pm, with lunch at 12:30pm.

This will give students a real insight into what studying Economics at Cambridge is like and will be helpful for them in their UCAS applications, particularly if they are looking at going to Cambridge or Oxford. We also plan to have economics undergraduate students give some application advice and take part in a Q&A.

The theme of this conference is about the current turbulent macroeconomic climate with themes such as Development and Political Economics being discussed. We are hosting four speakers from a range of different specialisations who are excited to share their research and inspire students to pursue Economics at University! After every speaker's presentation, students will get an opportunity to ask them questions, and this will give them an opportunity to talk to some of the best economists in the country.

Please forward this email to students and ask them to **save the date** for the Conference! Please ask them to **submit their interest** with the **google form** link below (<https://forms.gle/kBJ2pKp79zCDftu26>). Tickets for the conference will be **available from January** and further communication with the link will be shared again.

Speakers for School

Students are reminded that they can visit the Video library previously known as Vtalks at the link below. This page is regularly updated with new videos and resources by Speakers for Schools on a broad range of careers from inspirational speakers: <https://www.speakersforschools.org/inspirational-talks-library/>

InvestIN

InvestIN has launched a new podcast and blog which can be found here: [Discover the 'Dear InvestIN' Podcast on Our Blog](#). In this episode, InvestIN, Programme Manager, Safia, and School Partnerships Manager, Lilly tackle students' submitted questions, shedding light on career exploration, employability skills and more. As co-hosts, they bring you their personal insights on various industries, offering a behind-the-scenes look at the career landscape. Drawing from their own experiences, they offer guidance that's both practical and inspiring.

As a partner school with InvestIN, Reading School benefits from discounted rates and bursary places for our students. InvestIN is currently running a promotion of 15% discount for their [Summer Experiences](#) via use of the code **SUMMER15A** that expires on **31st December**. After this date you can receive a discount of 10% by using the code **READING10**. Last year 16 students pursued these opportunities.

We recognise that these opportunities are very expensive and whilst we share this information there is **no** expectation or requirement to participate by the School. For further information you can reach out directly to InvestIN at info@investin.org.

InvestIN bursary places

As a Partner School we are entitled to 5 bursary places a term for Live Online one day masterclasses, on a first come first serve basis these can be upgraded to In Person places.

The next 2023/2024 bursary scheme placements will open for application for fully-funded bursaries on InvestIN's Spring run of programmes on **Monday 15th January 2024**. Reading School as a Partner School is able to apply for 5 fully-funded bursary places, either for in-person or Live Online weekend programmes. If you meet the criteria, you can apply by clicking the link here: [Bursary Application Form - Autumn 2023 \(google.com\)](#). Once completed please inform Mrs J Chhokar at careers@reading-school.co.uk that you have submitted a form. Please note eligible students can only apply for **one** experience.

Year 11 to 13 - Oxbridge - For students over 16

If you are over the age of 16, please click the link here to see useful resources recommended by Oxford to delve deeper in to subject areas and interests: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/increasing-access/ug-digital-resources/students-over-16>

Gresham College – Year 11 to 13

Gresham College was founded to offer free lectures to the general public. You can access a huge range of their lectures online. Many of their lectures are useful aids for study, degree choice, career development and personal statements. Click the link here: [Gresham College](#) to explore further.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in Music

Congratulations to Avaneesh R (12JP) who has recently won The Pro Musica Cup for Most Outstanding Senior Instrumentalist 2023. We spoke with Avaneesh this week about his achievement and experience:



Q: Please tell us more about the winning The Pro Musica Cup 2023.

A: The competition took place at the 58th Maidenhead Festival of Music & Dance and the award was for outstanding senior instrumentalist across multiple categories. I played three instruments, piano, violin and clarinet and taking part gives you a platform to perform in front of others. It's a lot different performing in front of others than just practising at home. There's much more pressure because of people watching you, but I feel it also makes you rise to the occasion. You're not thinking about where you're going to place your fingers, what you're going to do at the time, you just get absorbed into the piece. It's almost like you're one with the instrument and the piece. And that's an amazing feeling.

Q: What were the pieces you played?

A: On violin, I was playing my grade eight repertoire. For piano it new pieces I'd learned in preparation for my diploma. Clarinet was my third instrument and I was preparing for grade seven in that. I played all of my pieces that I needed for the adjudicator, who was Paul Harris. He's written quite a few books which I've read so it was a pleasure getting to meet with him.

Q: Do you have a favourite instrument?

A: Not a favourite instrument, but I've been playing piano since the age of five. And I started violin not long after that. So, I guess I'm more used to piano since it was my first instrument. And then I decided to start clarinet in Year 8. I enjoy all of my instruments thoroughly. They're all different. Piano, violin and clarinet. They're all totally different from each other, but the sense of music is constant throughout, which is what I love about music.

Q: Have you found that you've been able to take anything away from your music and apply it to other things at school?

A: In music you try and focus your mind on a piece. The first note of your piece, the first phrase of the piece, what you want to convey, what you want to show, and that relates to exams as well. You'd want to calm and prepare your mind before the exam starts. Think about what content you've revised for. You don't want to get distracted with other things that may be distraction.

Q: What's next for you?

A: I think it will be about furthering myself as a musician. Not just technically but overall, seeing how I progress, music and myself, rather than just going through pieces and going through the motion. I do love performing. So, I go to multiple music festivals, and it's very fun. It's very engaging. It also gives me a clear target, which I look forward to and which I need to prepare for which helps push me and I think performing in these music festivals is valuable. I'd recommend it, especially for younger children, even adults, it helps if you go out there and perform. Give it a go. It's never too late to give it a go. It's a great experience.

Belonging & Community

Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Our long-standing annual event took place on Monday 11 December which saw our school community come together to celebrate the Christmas season in a meaningful way. Revd Dr C Evans, opened the service with the Reading School Chapel choir leading hymns and carols. Order of service:

- Freddie S (Head Chorister) for reading the First Lesson
- Rupert T (Treble Chorister) for reading the Second Lesson
- Josha G (School Captain) for reading the Third Lesson
- Ms A Young (Parent) for reading the Fourth Lesson
- Sean A for reading the Fifth Lesson
- Mr J Clack (Teacher of Theology & Philosophy) for reading the Sixth Lesson
- Mr J Chadwick (ORA President) for reading the Seventh Lesson
- Mr B Kenwick (Chair of Governors) for reading the Eighth Lesson
- Mr A Robson (Headmaster) for reading the Ninth Lesson

We would like to thank Mr O Griffin (Director of Music), Mr J Newman (Teacher of Music) and Mr J Druce (Teacher of Music) along with Shaan S (Organist), Henry L (Organist), Avaneesh R (Organist) along with all students, parents, family, Governors and friends of Reading School.



5 mins with Mr Robson

We had the opportunity to sit and speak with Mr Robson before the Christmas break this week in order to reflect on his time as Headmaster:

Q: Are there any memorable moments you've had during your 11 years that come to mind?

A: There have been so many memorable moments since September 2012. Accompanying our Badminton team to the World School Championships in Pune, India is one I will remember fondly. We came fifth overall, losing only to the eventual winners. Our support for the building of a High School in Nakuru, Kenya also comes to mind. Closer to home, the inspirational work of our student mentors as part of our Future Stories programme is a memorable aspect of our recent work. Events and projects that have helped to shape our culture by providing opportunities to demonstrate excellence, as part of a team, for the purpose of something bigger than ourselves. Also, only this week, I witnessed brilliant work taking place between children and families seeking refuge and Paralympic rowers, linked to our partnership work with James Stephenson. There has always been something positive to reflect on at the end of every week.

Q: What's been your biggest surprise?

A: It never ceases to surprise me how much students develop between the ages of 11 and 18. What incredible progress they make intellectually, socially and physically in so many different ways!

Q: What's been your biggest challenge?

A: The challenges relating to Covid firstly. Secondly the challenges relating to preparing for Ofsted Inspections. In addition, the challenge of ensuring high academic standards are maintained over time.

Q: What's been your biggest learning and in what ways have you personally grown and developed during your time as headmaster? I've developed my understanding regarding the importance of character in both students and staff and also a greater appreciation of the value of creating high performing teams, such as the Senior Leadership Team. Additionally, the gaining of an MBA (International Educational Leadership) acted as a catalyst for furthering my learning. I've learned how complex leadership can be along with it being a continuous journey of growth and development.

Q: Is there something you'd want parents to know?

A: It is crucial that parents are aligned with the core values of Reading School and act in partnership with the school, so we can provide opportunities for all our students to flourish. Also, I would ask parents to please consider supporting the school in whatever ways you can as a number of our achievements for the benefit of students could not have been possible without the committed support of our parents.

Q: What legacy do you feel you leave behind?

A: A championing of a culture of character excellence as well as academic excellence, linked to sustained healthy, high performance. Perhaps with an emphasis on the value of nurturing an organisation that is purpose-driven and values-led. A legacy that prioritises the right for our students to dream through our manifesto commitments. Thank you to Dr Jacob Naish of FCN (Right to Dream) for providing expert advice regarding purpose and Laurence Halsted, (Olympian) for providing leadership support, linked to making the world a better, more compassionate place through positive social impact.

Q: If you could go back and give advice to your younger self when you first started as Headmaster, what would it be?

A: Give yourself time to reflect and think before making significant decisions, and also ensure you should seek advice, so you have a range of perspectives to consider. Linked to this, it is important to listen to the views of others, but you do not necessarily have to agree with them. In addition, it's better to die like a hammerhead shark rather than an octopus. Don't live in fear, rather study the features of great, enduring organisations and seek to nurture a 'stable core and a disruptive edge.' As suggested by Professor Alex Hill.

RSPA

Teachers' Amazon Wishlist 2023



We have been delighted to co-ordinate this Wishlist for its third successful year. Our thanks to everyone who has already contributed and also to Mr Robson for his supportive words, *“Your contribution, be it through specific items, gift vouchers, or even cash donations, holds immeasurable value and is immensely appreciated.”*

Gift Vouchers are especially welcome so that we can purchase some of the items that aren't currently available, which we will deliver once School re-opens in the New Year.

The remaining items on the list can be viewed [by clicking here](#).

Choose *RPSA PARENT GIFTING WISHLIST TERRI LORRIMORE* as the delivery address.

If you would like to Gift Aid a cash donation please email: treasurer@readingschoolparents.co.uk and send your gift to Name: RSPA No. 2 Account, Sort Code: 60-17-21, Account No: 15309096

If you have any queries, please do email Jo Wyles – jwyles@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Thank you all so much again, the gifts received so far have been amazing but please do offer your support if you haven't done so already and are in a position to do so, with continued thanks from all school departments and the RSPA.

The RSPA Team

Michaelmas Term – Week 15

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



“For it is in giving that we receive.” – Saint Francis of Assisi



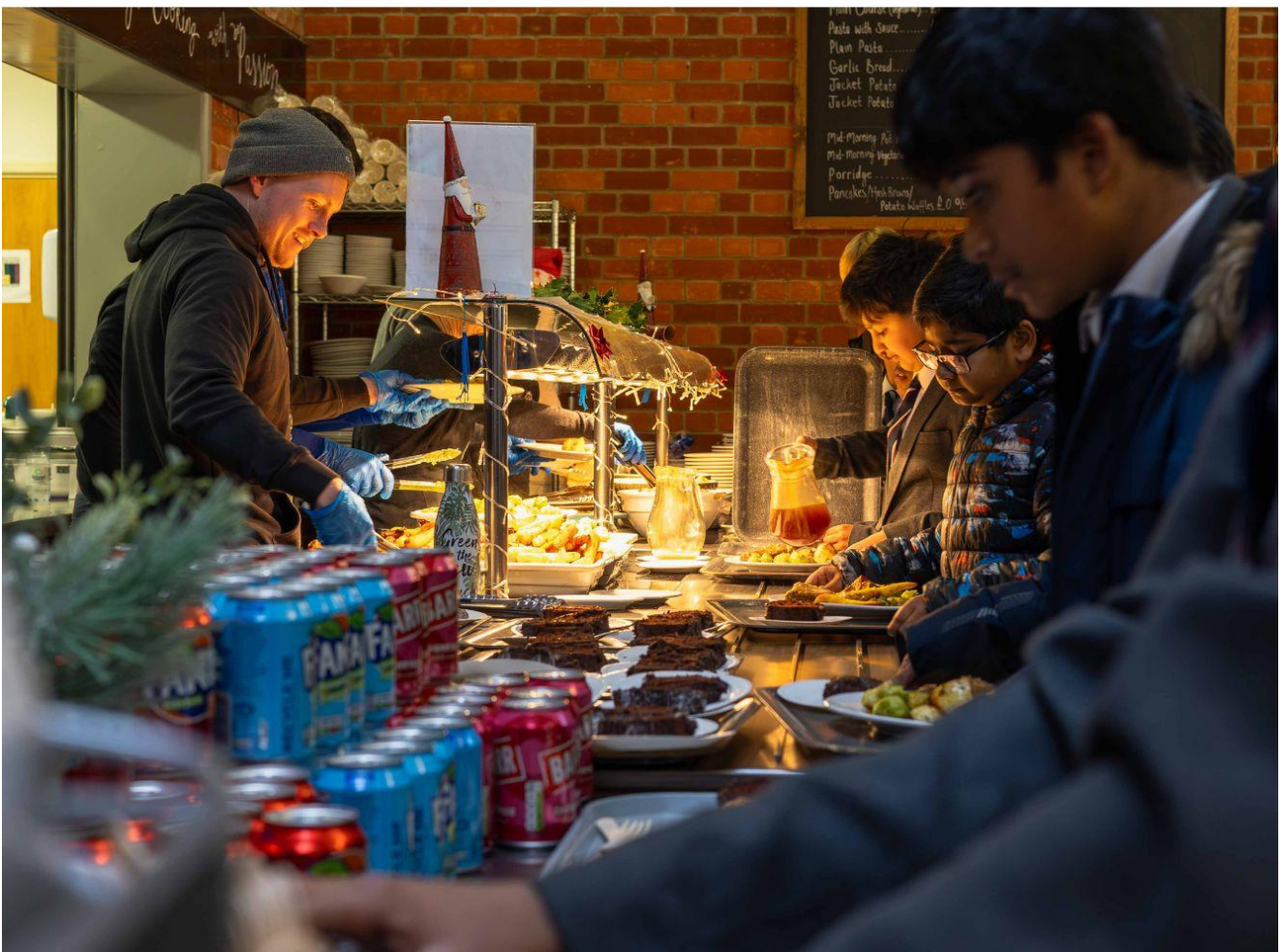


























Reading School 1st XV vs Forest School







A look back at the first day of Michaelmas Term 2023











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