



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

2 FEBRUARY 2024

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Introduction

Dear parents, carers, colleagues and students,

Over the past month I have come to realise that this bulletin runs the risk of reporting too much. There is so much taking place in school week to week, that it would be easy to desensitise you to the incredible range and quality of experiences on offer at Reading School.

I won't talk today about the Spanish Exchange, the sports fixtures, the Olympiads, or the debates. Instead, may I briefly allude to conversations we have had in Chapel and in our biannual Career's Convention.

Yesterday evening, over 60 delegates and speakers from global and national organisations attended the school's biannual careers evening, which was superbly organised by Mrs Chhokar, Ms Hutchison and Mrs Cheung. With our staff and prefects supporting the event, the convention was a superb showcase of the positive power of partnerships. I would like to personally express my thanks once again to sponsors, supporters, delegates and speakers. Moreover, to volunteers like Mr Follen, one of our governors, who managed car marshalling duties and ensured smooth logistics on the tarmac.

Speakers and delegates provided incredible wisdom and insight, and helped us to remember that our goal must always be more than academic progress. We educate for the future of society, and in the hope that the skills and character of our students prepare them for lives of leadership and service in whatever careers they find fulfilment. We also educate to provoke self-awareness. To nurture young people who can think for themselves as "free subjects rather than docile objects".

To this end, I spent the week in Chapel inviting students to reflect on the limits of their own knowledge. Being a "know all" is inexcusable. It inhibits curiosity, robs one of the joys of discovery, and impedes relationships. It is much better to nurture a spirit of adventure, to delight in asking questions and resolve to "never stop exploring". Each requires a humble spirit and protects yourself from hubris.

To illustrate the profound gaps in knowledge that we each carry, I asked students to name the part of the face between the eyebrows, the horizontal wrinkles we see on our wrists when we bend them, and the space between the forefinger and thumb. Each of these has a name. No-one in school has yet been able to label them, though many could name the smell of rain, the metal part of a pencil that holds a rubber in place, the back of a hammer, the name of the infinity symbol and the end of a shoelace.

I suggest that not knowing everything is ok. Indeed, it's a fundamental human experience.

Knowing what we don't know, accepting uncertainty, and recognising limitations may be even more important than remembering, recalling and defining.

Not knowing will rarely achieve a positive exam grade, but it may provoke a quest, spark a degree of self-awareness and invite a voyage towards the new.

As JRR Tolkien said, "True education is a kind of never-ending story — a matter of continual beginnings, of habitual fresh starts, of persistent newness.'

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

Safeguarding

Online Safety Newsletter

February's edition of our online safety newsletter is available to download by [clicking here](#). This month's edition shares information for students and parents about:

- Advice and guidance on how to set-up parental controls on your child's mobile
- Snapchat – what it is, new features and what parents should know
- EE Learn – resources on how to keep your child safe online

Safer Internet Day 2024



Tuesday 6 February marks [Safer Internet Day 2024](#), a day of learning based about the theme of, 'Inspiring change? Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online.' Reading School's Head of Computer Science, Mr Z McAllister and his Sixth Form Team have led and delivered sessions to all Year groups today which will include the things that can influence and change the way young people think, feel and act online.

Current Vacancies

Do you know a talented individual who would like to join and be part of an exciting and leading educational institution? Below is a selection of teaching and associate staff roles currently available:

Teacher Vacancies

Teacher of Mathematics - deadline extended: 9am, Monday 19 February 2024 - [click here](#) for further details.

All applicants must complete a Teacher Application Form which can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

Associate Staff Vacancies

Exam Invigilators - deadline for applications: 9am, Monday 19 February 2024 - [click here](#) for further details.

All applicants must complete an Associate Staff Application Form which can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

School Community News

School Community News

Placement Day Experience

During this week's inset day on Monday 29 February, Year 11s were encouraged to seek work experience at organisations of their choice and Alan T (11W) had the opportunity to complete his placement at Microsoft, Thames Valley Business Park in Reading. For the benefit of other students, Alan was spoken with earlier this week in order to explore what his experience was like and he shared:



'It was an incredible experience to spend a few hours at the Microsoft office with my family friend, who works at the office. First, I was introduced to a data science team. A typical team consists of the Project Manager, Solutions Architects, Consultants, and Coders. The team may have multiple customers, each customer with their own project. Projects vary from modernizing databases to reorganizing them.

A software development cycle was then explained to me. Before a project begins, a pre-sale is conducted. During this phase, the customer explains the issue/project, and key factors such as the magnitude (amount of data), time period, and price are noted. The first week of the project is known as the 'discovery' phase. During this phase, the finer details of the project are noted, and a potential draft solution is presented to the customer. The discovery period can last for multiple weeks if the project is of a larger scale. The rest of the project is split into 2-week blocks, called 'sprints', and targets are set for each. The final week is spent explaining the result to the customer and showing them how to use it.

In the past, the 'waterfall' method was used to deliver the project. This method detailed the final solution, and the team worked to complete it. However, due to technology constantly changing, the method would need to be altered often. As a result, the 'agile' method is used instead. A framework, or skeleton, is configured at the beginning of the project, and it is built on as the project goes on. This allows for flexibility. The team looks at past projects and checks if there is anything they used previously that would be helpful now. After the project is completed, the team reflects and notes what went well and what needs improvement for next time.

Finally, I was shown how Microsoft's AI, Copilot, is used in the workplace. Microsoft's employees are given a greater access to its features and it can create PowerPoints from scratch and answer questions about the contents of documents. The general public can only use it to answer basic enquiries. My first visit to a corporate office was eye-opening and gave me a good insight into the technology industry.'

School Lottery



Win the ultimate family entertainment experience when you support a good cause this February!

Unlock a world of excitement with our Mega Nintendo Switch Bundle: From intense fitness workouts to Mario Kart races and Zelda adventures, all on a dazzling 50" UltraHD Smart TV.

It's your all-in-one entertainment thrill. [Get your tickets before Saturday 24th February to be in with a chance to win!](#)

Donations to School Uniform Shop

Preloved uniforms can be donated to School Uniform Shop and we would welcome your donations. Parents, carers and students and simply come to the Uniform Shop when open (within the walled carpark) or drop to School Reception in a bag clearly marked 'Uniform Shop'. We thank you in advance for removing any names, labels, named buttons etc.

The Uniform Shop will be open on:

Friday 23 February from 3:30 – 5:00pm

Saturday 24 February from 10:30am - 12.30pm

Friday 22 March 3:30 – 5:00pm

Saturday 24 March 10:30am – 12:30pm

Please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk with any queries.

Thank you and have a lovely weekend.

The RSPA Team

Lent Term – Week 4

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



What is Spikeball? Apart from it being part of an elective introduced by Teacher of Mathematics, Dr L Dowle, it's an increasingly popular sport for four players who gather round a trampoline while wielding a bright yellow ball. The exciting two-vs-two game is broadly modelled on the skills and rules of volleyball where players 'spike' the ball down to win the point. The ball is hit by players onto the trampoline-like net acting as the changing of possession. When the ball bounces up, the Spikeballers will then have up to three passes in their duo to create an opportunity to spike the ball onto the net. The game then continues until either the ball misses the net, the rim is hit or the opposing team are not able to get to the ball.



The key to succeeding in Spikeball is the co-operation between the players; without this, the game not only loses its functionality as a two-player team sport, it equally loses the fun team dynamic that Spikeball when played correctly offers in abundance.



At Reading School, students experience the dynamic of playing with a teammate, learning the (rather difficult) challenge of directing a moving ball (sometimes at quite some speed) onto a small trampoline net and recognising the importance and necessity to work together.



A sport not for the faint-hearted, Spikeball is electric, fast-paced, spectacular and fun. With the inaugural house Spikeball competition happening later this year, there is no better time to start to practising your best serve.



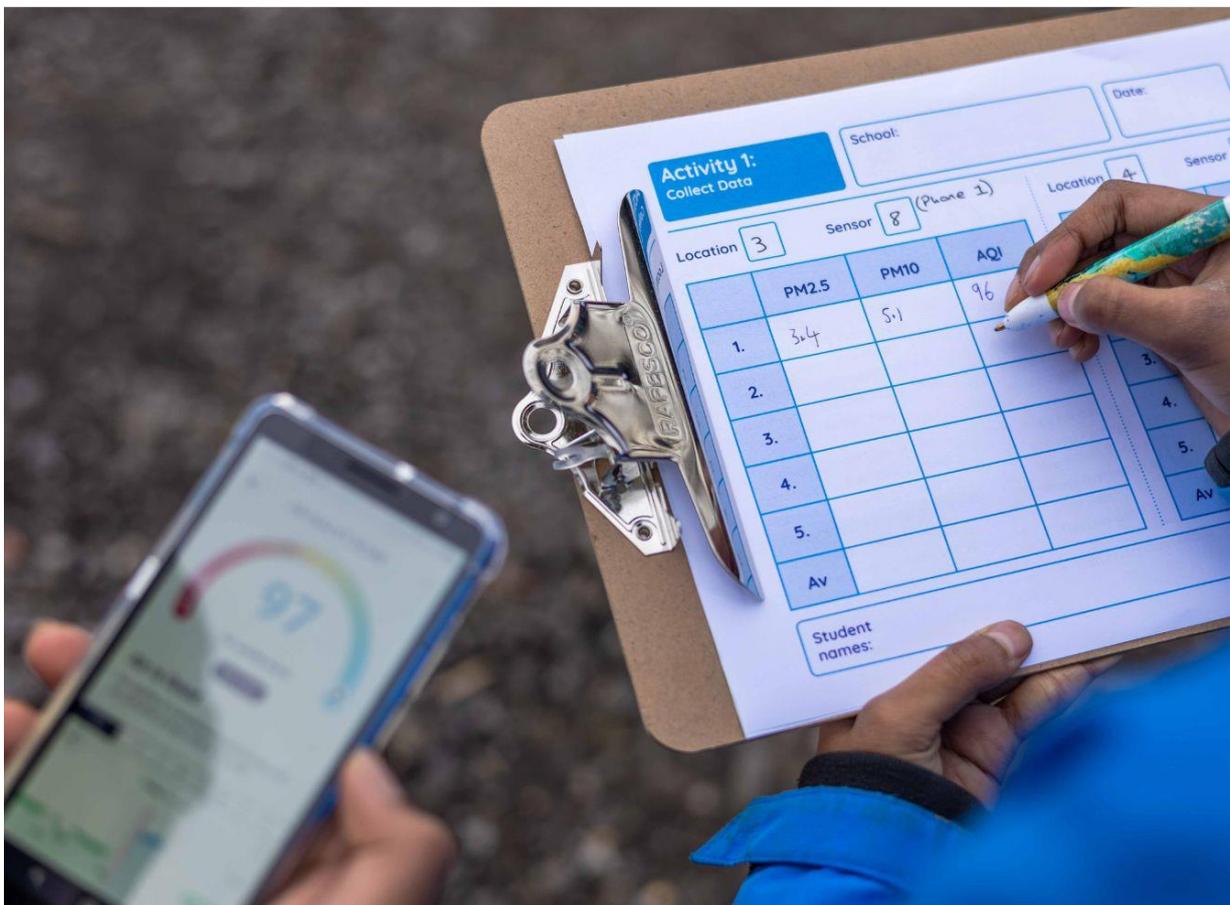
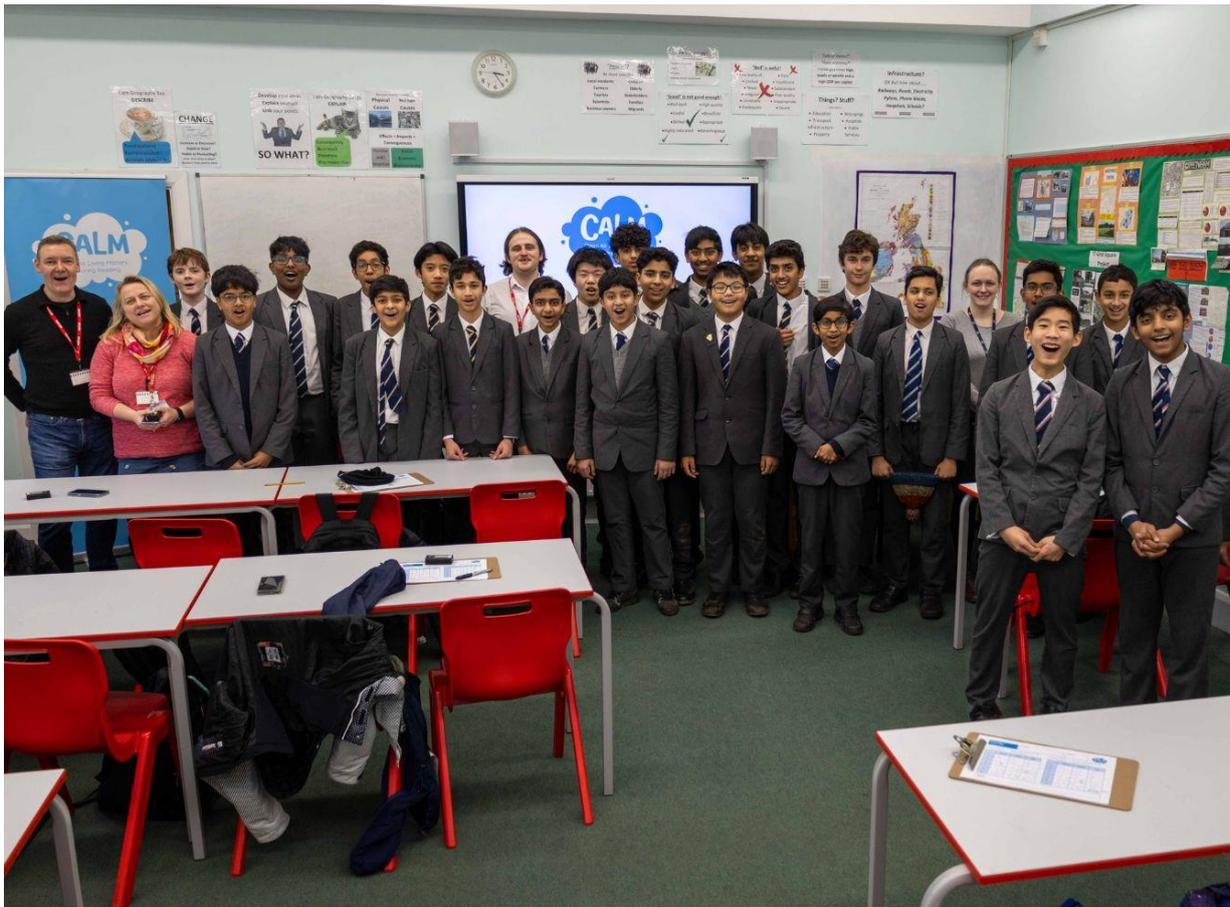
UK Maths Trust Challenge

A 60 minute Intermediate Mathematical Challenge which encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency took place this week for our students in Years 9-11. We have previously had students performing exceptionally well and going onto take part in International Maths Olympiads and we wish this years students the best of luck.





Clean Air Living Matters (CALM) is a collaboration between Reading Council, Design Nature CIC, University of Reading, Stantec and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which Reading School was proud to be associated with this week.



Design Nature led the session with 25 of our Year 9 Geography students, which offered the opportunity to explore air quality, feed their curiosity and give them the opportunity for an experiential hands-on exercise. The session was supported by Marta O'Brien from the School of Environmental Science and Meteorology and Jonathan Dodkins, Air Quality Consultant from Stantec.



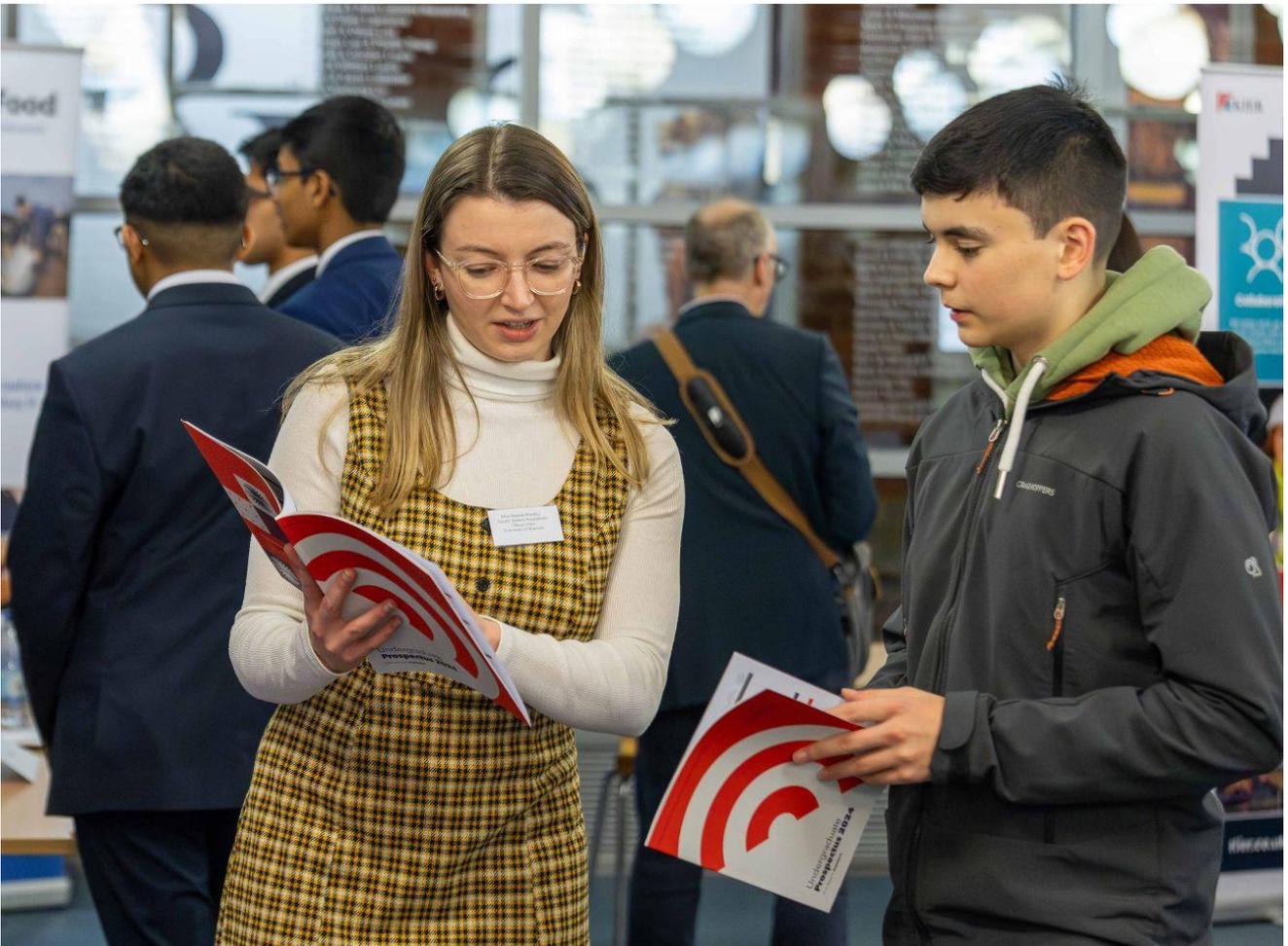
The two-year programme aims to increase knowledge of air quality and pollution, its causes, impact and solutions, with students and staff in schools across Reading. It also seeks to encourage behavioural change in activities that impact in poor air quality around schools by enabling students and staff to act.

From left to right: Marta O'Brien (School of Environmental Science and Meteorology), Mark Mason (Design Nature CIC) and Dr Kate Young (Head of Geography, Reading School)



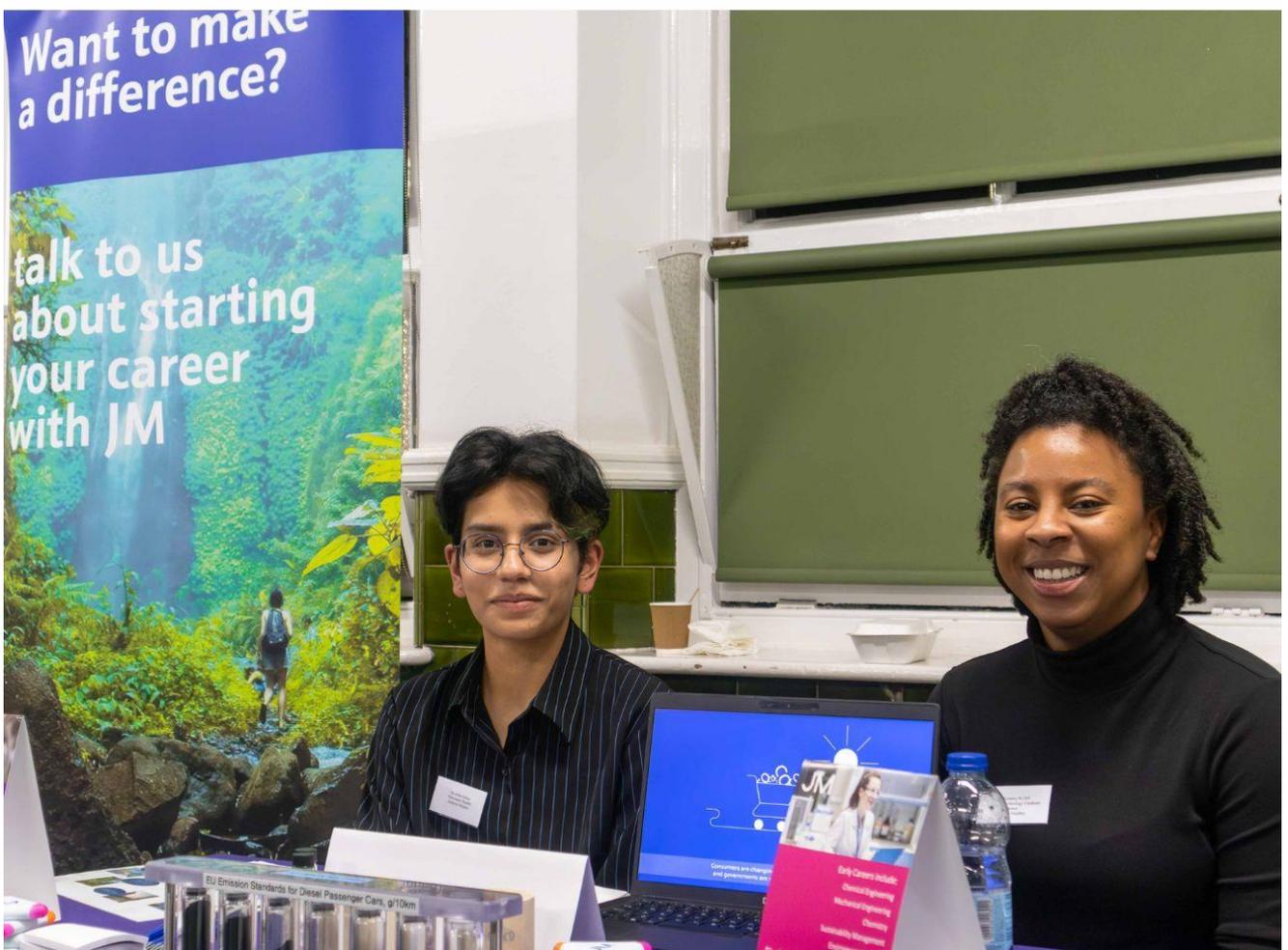
Careers Convention 2024 sponsored by [Leiper Gupta Family Lawyers](#), [Macron](#), [King Energy Heating & Plumbing](#) and [P-TEK](#).





A special mention is made for official student photographer Isaac H (11S)





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Virtual campus tours





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