



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

21 APRIL 2023

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Introduction

Preparing for the 'business end of the season'

In football terminology the business end of the season refers to the most important part of the season or the run in at the end of the football year, typically when teams are competing for the top positions or for qualification to playoffs or finals. It can be a time when pressure on teams and players is at its highest, as every result can have a significant impact on their final position in the league or competition. Teams may need to win crucial games to secure a top-four spot or avoid relegation, while players may be competing for individual awards such as the Golden Boot. In an educational setting, this is a time of external examinations for our Year 11 and 13 students, and internal tests for all other year groups at Reading School.

It is perfectly normal and expected to feel some element of stress when preparing for and sitting exams, whether internal or external. Crucially, with preparation, organisation and support, students will find the process less threatening and easier to manage. After all, a certain level of stress can sometimes be a helpful stimulus to complete daunting or cumbersome tasks. Students were recently invited to take part in practical support sessions with a science-based approach, delivered by experienced practitioners, which focussed on building a toolkit of useable strategies to reduce anxiety in the build up to exams.

Students may also wish to consider the following tips, observations and guidance:

- A useful exercise is to prepare a revision timetable. It is important to allow yourself to revise thoroughly and efficiently.
- Another way of coping with stress and reducing procrastination in order to focus on revision is to break down tasks into smaller ones which can help a subject area feel less overwhelming.
- For a fuller, more detailed guide in relation to revision, please [click here](#).
- In addition, you must also remember to allow time for exercise, fresh air and rest.

Always remember that you need to look after yourself. A healthy diet will give you energy and remember your brain needs water – so please hydrate. Sleep is just as valuable and important as water to your wellbeing. Furthermore, ensuring that you are punctual and have the right equipment, including a clear pencil case, helps to minimise stress. It is always better to be early than running late, especially for tests of any kind.

Crucially, parents and carers can play a valuable role during the business end of the season. It is necessary to acknowledge that being a parent is never easy and being a supportive one during exam season can be especially challenging. Parents and carers need to be supportive of their children which can include reassurance that you will be proud of them no matter the result. We want our students to be independent learners who are happy, healthy and able to self-regulate and it is vital for their wellbeing that we get the balance right. Perhaps a 'trust and verify' approach is best. You should believe your child when they say they are working, revising and increasing their knowledge and understanding. But it is also necessary to verify. Take an interest. Use praise so that they are encouraged. Take time to ask questions, be a sounding board, listen to them reading out essay introductions, or demonstrating knowledge of specialist vocab.

Be challenging, but be kind. Be tough on the issue but soft on the person.

The charity [YoungMinds](#) recommends a number of steps parents can undertake in order to help their child in the lead up to exams, including:

- Encourage your child to find what revision styles work for them
- Encourage your child to take revision breaks
- Facilitate your child finding a balance between studying and doing things they find relaxing and enjoyable
- Ensure your child is eating healthily and drinking at regular intervals
- Reassure your child by reinforcing that you want to support them to be the best version of themselves
- Remain positive and hopeful
- Let them know that some stress and anxiety is normal and valid, but also offer support and solutions where possible
- Encourage a good bedtime routine as anxiety can sometimes be more evident at night
- If anxiety and stress start impacting their day-to-day life, seek help from your GP.

External examinations, such as GCSE and A Levels, are a crucial part of your life. At Reading School, it is our ambition to make your exam experience as free from anxiety and successful as possible. It is important that we provide as much information, advice and guidance as necessary to help you be the best version of yourselves. Exams provide an opportunity to show what you know, understand and can do. Please be assured that candidates for external examinations will be provided with detailed briefings.

At Reading School, we are committed to ensuring that students and parents receive effective information relating to relevant internal and external assessments, so that students can achieve their full academic potential. With this in mind, our Exams Team recommends accessing the following resources:

- JCQ produce a useful poster which reminds students of what they need to know and do on exams day – including the equipment they must have for exams. It would be of value to students if they did this for internal exams too and get into good habits, so it is less for them to think about when they get to GCSE and A levels. Please [click here to access](#).
- GCSE and A level exam timetables have been emailed to students. They will receive an updated timetable which includes venue information, which will also be uploaded to MyChildAtSchool so parents can view them too. Students will also have a briefing before they go on study leave where we will cover all the relevant information, and they can ask questions.

In closing, I wish the very best for not only our students preparing for exams, but also our 1st XI Football team who have reached the Semi-Final of the Gibbs Cup and who play this afternoon. We are also very proud of our table tennis players who will be competing in the U19 and U16 National Table Tennis Championships in Wolverhampton this coming weekend. Bona fortuna.

Floreat Redingensis

This week, we were honoured by the visit of a distinguished Old Redingensian, Dr Ian Adamson (OR 1962-1965) and his wife of 52 years, Jackie Adamson. Ian has been an Associate Professor of Accounting for the past 36 years at Brock University in Canada and returned to visit his old school during a trip to the UK.

While touring the school, Ian took time to speak with students about their interests, along with sharing his experiences of a career within accountancy and his interests, which included sharing his bowling techniques with some students along the driveway during break time. Both Ian and his wife shared that the visit was an enjoyable one where, *“some things have changed and some things have stayed the same.”*

We welcome the return of ORs to the school throughout the year and it gives our Society Office the opportunity to share, first hand, the positive changes that have taken place that continue to contribute to the development of children and young people. It also allows us to share the ways in which Reading School has evolved over time, while still retaining some of our core values and traditions. Being able to meet with and hear about the lives of ORs can be very inspiring for current students, and can help them think about their own future paths. OR visits can be beneficial and memorable for both ORs and students.



For more information about staying in touch with Reading School, please email alumni@reading-school.co.uk

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Key information

Year 7 only

Year 7 students are required to attend school in their games kit on **Thursday 27 April** and **Tuesday 2 May**.

They will not need their exercise books and their schedule across these days will include Design Technology group tasks, Electives on Thursday 27 April and Floreat group tasks and Games on Tuesday 2 May.

A sign-up sheet for a slightly different schedule of elective options will be circulated to students by Monday 24 April.

Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 only

Rugby 7s

This coming May 2023, a Rugby 7s tournament for the following year groups will be taking place:

- Year 7 & Year 9: 16/05/23
- Year 8 & Year 10: 17/05/23

The squads will consist of 12 players each and the game will be full contact and selection for the squad will be based on ability. If your son is interested in being part of a squad, he should attend training in order to make himself eligible and prepare for the tournament.

Training for Year 7 and 8 students will take place on Mondays after school.

Training for Year 9 and 10 students will take place on Fridays after school.

If you have any questions please contact Mr Kearle by emailing mkearle@reading-school.co.uk

Current Vacancies

Teacher Vacancy

[Teacher of Biology](#) - starting September 2023. Deadline for applications: 9am, Friday 5 May.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Sporting Excellence

Taekwondo



We would like to congratulate Amine A (11E) who recently achieved 2 Gold medals in the International Taekwondo Federation English Open Championships 2023. We spoke to Amine this week where he shared more about the competition, his preparation for it and his thoughts on competing and excelling within a sport.

Q: *Tell us a little about the competition*

A: This was an English Open ITF competition open to anyone to enter from the UK. It was held in Guildford on the 13 of March and it was a very daunting event, especially because it was a combat sport. Daunting because there's hundreds of people watching you, and when you get on the mat, all eyes are on you so it's quite nerve-racking. But once you get into that zone, it just comes down to instinct and what you've trained for.

There are three events. One event is 'patterns'. They are demonstrating a pre-arranged set of patterns and you are assessed on the accuracy of your pattern and how well you perform and deliver it. I got gold in the 14 to 17 category. And similar to many other combat sports there's free flow...the use of any technique you desire and I managed to also achieve a gold in that category.

The highest belt is black belt and I am currently on a 'black tag'. So that's a red belt with a black tag, so I have one more grading until I become a black belt.

Q: *What runs through your mind while taking part in a competition?*

A: It's definitely a mental game. You have to combat negative thoughts as you're thinking about, 'what would happen if I lose?' or 'what if the opponent's much better than me?' The worst-case scenarios can come to mind. So, I have to calm my mind down, while getting a game plan ready, and deciding what to do and how to execute it.

Q: *Can you share more about how you manage your thoughts? What are your strategies?*

A: This might not be fool-proof, but what I like to do is to think, 'how good could my opponent possibly be?' Especially at a certain level, where you're not fighting a world champion. So, you have to think about the limits that are within each category. I like to think about how if it's down to skill and preparation, I've done as much as I possibly could have to prepare. I've trained as hard as I possibly can. And the outcome just depends on how focused I am so I should just solely focus on the game itself.

Q: *You sound like you know what strategies work for you. Do you find that your strategies for managing a challenging scenario work equally well at school? Or when it comes to exams? Is there any crossover there?*

A: I'd definitely say that there is when dealing with anxiety in general. I've liked the fact that I'm there in-person...I cannot do anything about the outcome and I can't change a situation...I can't do more revision, do more training. If I am there, I am there in the moment and I have to make the best of my situation after all my preparation.

Q: *How long have you been doing Taekwondo?*

A: I started in Year six so I've been doing it for around five years now. It's something I enjoy very dearly. And yes, I'm very passionate about it. But only recently I've started to become more competitive in the sport. I've started to train with the England squad, and I would like to become part of the squad very soon. In the next selection, I'd like to make that happen. What could that lead on to? The European Championships, which usually takes place in around March 2024.

Q: *If you had any advice or thoughts for anyone taking up a sport, what would you share?*

A: “Don't come in thinking you're going to be the best or a world champion. Take part and join because you genuinely enjoy the sport and your skills will grow from there.”

Badminton

We would like to congratulate James S (10C) who recently took part in the Badminton Europe U17 International Junior competition, held over three days in the Czech Republic. James achieved two gold medals in the men's doubles and mixed doubles categories and a bronze medal in the men's singles.

Furthermore, James has been selected to be part of the Badminton England squad that will take part in the YONEX France U17 Open competition next week. We wish him the very best of luck and look forward to his update.



Academic Excellence



Congratulations to all students who took part in the leading chemistry competition for secondary students across the UK, the [RSC Chemistry Olympiad 2023](#). According to the RSC, aspiring chemists are given the opportunity to develop critical problem-solving skills, to think more creatively and get a chance to test their knowledge in new, real-world situations.

Head of Chemistry, Mr D Wheal shared, “*The students sat a very challenging two hour written paper that stretched their knowledge far beyond the scope of the A level course. Well done to them all.*”



From left to right: Karthik D (13L), Kabinesh G (13W), Liam K (13L), Daniel T (13S) and Thomas S (13E)

Not pictured: Joshua C (13E), Ryan L (13L) and James M (13C)

House Excellence

Following a challenging selection process, we are proud to present the 2023/24 cohort of Senior School Prefects as listed below. School, House Captains and Prefects, play a significant role in the life of the school through demonstrating leadership as service and being ambassadors and role models.

| Leadership Team | Prefect |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| School Captain | Joshua G (12C) |
| Vice Captain – Projects and Community Team | Rio T (12C) |
| Vice Captain – Sixth Form | Yash S (12E) |
| Vice Captain – Student Body | Rajan D (12E) |
| Vice Captain – Events | Harry A (12S) |
| Projects and Community Team | |
| Charity Prefect | Yaman E (12S) |
| Community Service Prefect | Ben S-R (12L) |
| Future Stories Prefect | Benji F (12L) & Sam J (12S) |
| Environment Prefect | Joe M (12W) |
| Social Development Prefect | Dhian S (12W) |
| Equality Prefect | Adithya A V (12L) |
| Sixth Form Team | |
| Year 12 Integration Prefects | Bobson M (12L) & Nikolaos A (12S) |
| Legacy Prefect | Aadith C (12W) |
| Common Room Prefects | James F (12S) & Chanuka W (12L) |
| Careers Prefect | Adam M (12S) |
| Attendance Prefect | Aslan H (12L) |
| Student Body Team | |
| Sports Prefect | Kamran S (12C) |
| Junior Sports Prefect | Neilraj R (12L) |
| Student Voice Prefect | Henry B (12E) & Lloyd S (12L) |
| Mentoring Prefects | Alessandro M (12L) |
| Well-being Prefect | Harry C (12E) & Jonathan H (12C) |
| Electives Prefect | Shaan S (12W) |
| Fixtures Prefect | Maaz S (12E) |
| School Events Team | |
| External Relations Prefects | Declan C (12W) |
| School Events Prefect | Tom S-R (12S) & Freddie S (12W) |
| Junior Social Prefect | Harry L (12S) |
| Social Prefect | Ethan A (12W) |
| Community and Partnerships Prefect | Emek D (12S) |
| House Leadership Team | |
| County House Captain | Lucca K (12C) |
| County House Captain | Siddhanth T (12C) |

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| East House Captain | Joss H-B (12E) |
| Laud House Captain | Sean A (12L) |
| School House Captain | Branson R (12S) |
| School House Captain | Adam M (12S) |
| West House Captain | Manan K (12W) |
| Boarding Team | |
| East Wing | Harry A (12S) |
| South House | Oscar S- T (12L) |

Photos will be featured in next week's edition.

Community

Summer Events 2023

During the Summer Term, we look forward to celebrating the academic and extra-curricular achievements of our students. It is a busy term and we appreciate your patience. Please note the dates of the forthcoming events and further communication will follow shortly:

Senior Prize Giving and BBQ & Celebration of Class of 2022

Date: Friday, 30 June 2023

Time: 14:00 to 19:00

Venue: Reading School/University of Reading

Class of 2023 (Year 13 leavers) will be chosen to receive a range of prizes (sponsored by the Reading Foundation) based on their performance as a student overall (but not on A Level results). Class of 2022 (Year 14) will be invited back to collect A Level Certificates (if they have not already done so) and celebrate their achievements with teachers. Parents/carers will also be invited to attend this ceremony. The buffet is sponsored by the Reading Foundation and beverages are sponsored by the RSPA.

Communication to Year 13 students will be sent shortly to register places for themselves and their parents. Those nominated for prizes will receive separate communication as well.

Junior Prize Giving 2023

Date: Thursday, 13 July 2023

Time: 15:45 – 18:00

Location: Reading School

Prizes, kindly sponsored by the Reading Foundation, are presented to students in recognition of outstanding effort and achievement across the curriculum and in individual subjects. Parents and caregivers are invited to recognise the hard work and academic achievement of students in Year 7-11 on an invite only basis. If your child is nominated you will receive communication in the coming weeks. Buffet and refreshments are sponsored by the Reading Foundation.

Other Summer event dates to note:

- Friday, 30 June – Sports Day – Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 (is taking place the same day as Senior Prize Giving) 9am to 1pm at Palmer Park and more information regarding logistics will follow.
- Monday, 3rd July – Grandparents day – Year 7 only
- Wednesday, 5th July – Sports Awards – 4pm to 7pm (invite only)

Own Clothes Day for International Women's Day 2023 – final update

Following our school appeal and campaign in order to fundraise for a generator and essential supplies for women and children in Ukraine, we would like to confirm that father and son team, Luke H (12W) and his father Mr K Holland, drove to Poland during the Easter break to deliver the supplies in order for them to go onto make their way to Ukraine.

We spoke with Luke earlier this week who shared a diary of his journey and how the supplies that the school community fundraised for:

“On the Thursday of the last week of Lent term, my dad and I set out to drive supplies across Europe to Poland, where they would then be taken into Ukraine with the support of the Make A Difference foundation. Heading out of the school, my dad and I headed to Dover and crossed on the channel tunnel to France. We continued into Belgium and to Brussels where spent our first night, which completed the first 270 miles of our journey.



Once we had reached France, we continued our trip, but in the dark, and made it into Belgium, and then into Brussels, which is where we stayed the night, with the first 270 miles of our trip complete. The next day, we were up bright and early in order to get a head start on our next day of driving. We were again driving smoothly and, with a short trip through the Netherlands, we entered Germany, which was where most of our driving would be taking place.

The countryside throughout our trip through Germany was beautiful, with small villages hidden in the rolling hills, occasionally peeking out. This was our longest day, with us having to travel nearly 500 miles. Our destination that day was Dresden, which we had the opportunity to walk around when we arrived. It is an amazing city, having gone through a major reconstruction since the Reunification of Germany in the late 80's.



Some of the building still show the scars of the intense fire-bombing by the RAF and the USAF in 1944. The cathedral was rebuilt with a mixture of original fire-scarred blocks and modern-day replacements. The cross on the top of the cathedral was recreated using 18th century techniques, and was constructed by Alan Smith, whose father, Frank Smith, was a member of one of the aircrews that was involved in the bombing of Dresden. The cathedral was fully repaired and reconsecrated on the 30th of October, 2005.

We had a good night's sleep, and continued onwards towards our goal, just over 350 miles away, with one stop.

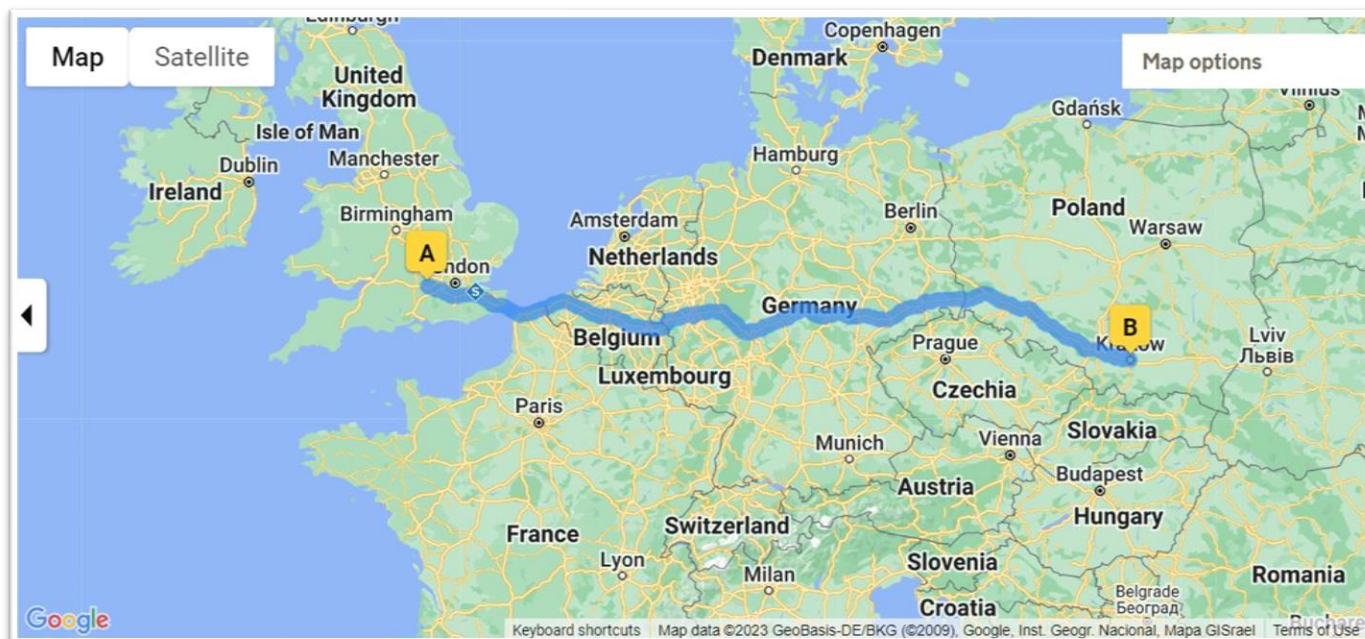
On our way through Poland, we left the motorway in order to visit former Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau where over 1.1m Jews were killed in the Holocaust, during the Second World War. The original Auschwitz camp started as a Polish Army barracks, which was then converted into prison for political prisoners. It contained many brick huts, mostly to hold prisoners, but two were for human experimentation and execution. It was heart-breaking to see all of the piles of people's belongings, like the huge stacks of suitcases, shoes, cups and bowls that people brought with them when they thought they were just being sent away to work and someday they'd be going home.



That night, we met my godfather Ted in Krakow at our hotel. We went out for a dinner to commemorate our trip out, and the next day Ted drove the car out to Ukraine to deliver the battery to the special school, Naguevysk.

He has since transported supplies around the country, and even saved a life by supplying needed medical equipment to someone who was bleeding out.”

Our collective thanks are shared with Luke H (12W), his family, Mr Ted Mizuhara and his team along with our school community who supported this relief effort.



LRC

Coronation bake sale



There will be a student led bake sale outside the LRC during lunchbreak on Friday 5 May to raise money for chess sets that pupils can borrow from the LRC to use during lunch breaks. The students would like to raise £150 from the sale of nut-free baked goods and if you would like to donate Coronation themed baked goods, such as cakes and cookies, your child can drop them off in the LRC before lessons start on Friday 5 May. Thank you in advance for your support.

Lent Term – Week 16

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



Our Year 10 and 12 students got to experience a week in the Azores during a Geography field trip and we thank James F (12S) for sharing his travelogue with the Reading School community:

“What better way to spend the holidays, than with a majestic geography trip to the sunny and soothing islands of the Azores? With great company, including the very best teachers, hilariously joyous classmates and even newfound unexpected friends! Our trip was certainly a difficult one to beat.”



"After a lively flight across, and a well-deserved rest at the hostel, our first day saw us trek along the course of a river valley to discover multiple points of interest - including a refreshing waterfall, dilapidated hydro-electric power plant, a village of friendly cats and an expansive grey-sand volcanic beach (with frightful man 'o' war jellyfish ashore!). Finishing our hike, a quick bus ride over to the refreshing and picturesque hot springs granted a welcome respite - matched only by the sweet sweet taste of Azorean pineapples at the later intriguing plantation, produced in jam, yogurt, juice, ice-cream and toastsies!"



"Later that night, after joining Mr Ginger in hiding behind a palm tree following an exciting treasure hunt and game of 'hide & seek' around town, I was lucky enough to find friends in one of the other schools present at the hostel! They were intrigued to hear of the differences between Reading School and their own in Portugal, describing ours as almost 'like Hogwarts'.

Our second day led us to the breath-taking Furnas lake, and we explored the effects of geological activity on the island at the information centre - even acquiring useful case study knowledge for our future essays. Following this, our journey past the strangely carbonated and sulphur-smelling hot spring taps & pools led us to the thermal pool at the Terra Nostra Botanical Gardens. This naturally heated, murky and oddly orange pool was a refreshing backdrop to engage in animated discussion, as well as a variety of water games with friends - using the opaque nature of the water to sneak away from being tagged!"



"After drying off (stained a slight orange), I enjoyed a breezy amble through the fantastical Botanical Gardens, the vibrant and diverse plants from all over the globe matched only by the melodical birdsong scattered across this ethereal experience. We then made our way over to the only tea plantation in Europe, exploring the inner workings whilst enjoying the exquisite ice cream and other locally made café delicacies on offer."



“Our final day of Azorean activities, despite our previous luck, began with a walk through torrential Atlantic downpour – obscuring our intentions to view the West coast with thick rain and fog stretching across the small island. Soon after however our luck turned for the better, and the clear skies returned in time for us to arrive at the South coast to visit both some coastal monuments such as old forts, Japanese dedicated rock arrangements and wartime gun emplacements, but also the impressive lava caves! Leading down into a seemingly unimportant building by a highway, we donned our helmets and descended into the geologically captivating caves. Here we were taught how the strange and unusual volcanic activity on the island formed such contrasting cave formations to those we were familiar with, and I was enthralled by the volcanic glass and near-dynamic positioning of the many distinct stalactites.”



“So, after packing, celebrating and ending the trip on a high, with jubilant spirits we journeyed to the airport – cheering an enthusiastic goodbye for our hilarious tour guide – and ended our travels lively and refreshed. It certainly was a trip to remember, and by far the best school trip I’ve ever been on! I hope in the years to come that many others can enjoy a school trip as fun, informative, picturesque and friendly as I did on my trip to the Azores!”



School trips would not be possible without the support of our staff. Thank you to our Head of Geography, Mrs K Young and Teachers of Geography Mr K Luteijn and Mr J Ginger.

The Berkshire Squash Junior County Closed Championships & Fun Tournament took place on March 25 2023 where several of our students competed in the under 17 division. Dan S (11E) showed his quality to be crowned champion, while Vighnesh U (10L) and Teo R (11E) came a well-deserved 2nd and 3rd. In the U13s, Abraham S (8C) and Maxim H (7S) produced impressive performances to come in 2nd and 4th respectively. It was a wonderful day of squash and we thank squash enthusiast and Teacher of Physics and Maths, Dr Lewis-Brown for leading on the trip.



Pictured from left to right:

Mr Craig Banyard (Head of Development, Berkshire Squash), Vignesh U (10L), Dan S (11E) and Teo R (11E)

"I really enjoyed the squash tournament because I made new friends, took part in a fun competition whilst getting the benefit of exercise. It was a non-pressured environment, and I learned a lot competing against players of different age groups and abilities. I look forward to my next tournament." Maxim

"I thoroughly enjoyed the tournament. It was a great opportunity to watch and play squash. Everyone got to play at least 5 matches, which I thought was better than having just knockouts, as there were players of different abilities. I have developed a profound interest in the game and have been to play on my own during the Easter break." Vihaan

"The tournament started at 10:00 am at the squash courts in Wellington college. When we arrived, we were split into two groups of 6, with each person playing every other in theirs. Each match was best of 3 games, each game played to 15 points. After the results had been counted up, we played a final and a 3rd and 4th playoff. Overall, it was a great experience with competitors of many different skill levels allowing everyone to have some closer matches. I would recommend this to anyone who plays squash as it happens every year." Abraham

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