



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

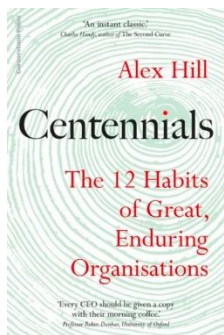
16 JUNE 2023

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Introduction

Culture & Purpose



I am currently reading 'Centennials: The 12 habits of great, enduring organisations' by Alex Hill. It deals with the strategies for maintaining the excellence and success of high-performing organisations such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the New Zealand All Blacks, NASA, Eton College and the Royal College of Art. Professor Hill analyses and evaluates their approach to finding the best people, analysing success and failure and how they cultivate innovation.

One of the crucial elements of his extensive research is that lasting success can only come from maintaining a core culture whilst also driving innovation, change and improvement at the edge. At a school like Reading School, that is undoubtedly covered by the phrase centennial (referring to an organisation that has lasted for at least 100 years), we should focus on purpose, stewardship and openness.

Thus, we need to ensure that we are moving forward, but not off track. Our work with the inspirational Right to Dream organisation has provided an impetus to our emphasis on being a purpose-driven school. Significantly, we should be stable but also radical, focusing on continuity and change. We must not stray from our long-term purpose to meet short-term goals. Our manifesto will be a document that goes back to purpose and check that it is right and that we are still on track.

However, it is evident that establishing an overall goal is not, in itself, sufficient. Purpose becomes an integral part of the DNA of an institution through influencing thinking and behaviour, leading to sustainable improvement. We should seek to model the beliefs and behaviours we are trying to shape. Thus, when goals, values and impacts align, the consequences can be substantial. It is important that we strike a nuanced balance between emphasising innovation, change and positive disruption and demonstrating effective stewardship while emphasising stability.

Reading School has been changing to meet the needs of the modern world (while respecting its past) and its children and young people. Examples of change include emphasising the importance of improving sports facilities, cultural change, for instance, through being more outward facing, prioritising safeguarding, supporting student's wellbeing and people-centric change, such as meeting student and staff's changing needs, increasing our transition support for new students and attracting a diverse pool of new staff. We are responding to contemporary challenges by continuing to identify opportunities to flourish, keeping an open mind, celebrating current successes and reducing the risk of stagnating.

School of Sanctuary

Our emphasis on Reading School being a place of safety for all members of our community is illustrated in our partnership work with our Ukrainian friends. Under the inspirational leadership of Mr K Luteijn, we are seeking to be successful in our drive to achieve 'School of Sanctuary' status. As George Makari states, '*The fear of outsiders is one of the wildest threats against democracy and human kindness.*' We look forward to hosting the Mayor of Reading, Cllr Page, on Monday 19 June who will view our [Refugee Week art exhibition](#), celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. The free art exhibition will be open to all (including members of the public) on Tuesday, 20 June, from 6:00pm – 7:30pm.

Grammar Schools Head Association Annual Conference 2023

On Wednesday, 14 June, at the Grammar School Heads Association annual conference held in London, the Schools Minister, Mr Nick Gibb, referred to Reading School's Future Stories programme as being a beacon of best national practice regarding social mobility. I would like to show my gratitude to Mr G Fairchild, who marketed the Future Stories Community Enterprise (FSCE) to a national audience.

School of Character

We also continue to host and welcome visitors who wish to learn more about our approaches to providing opportunities for flourishing through our work as a hub for character excellence, in partnership with the Jubilee Centre, University of Birmingham. Thank you to Mr B Miller and Mr T Evans for representing Reading School at the National Conference of the National Character Association in Birmingham. Thank you also to all staff involved in the delivery of our flagship programmes that enable our community to be outward-facing and committed to excellence.

A plethora of events

The quality and range of opportunities to flourish as part of the community in the forthcoming week include new parent welcome evenings, a 1st XI cricket match versus the MCC and a return to Athletics Sports Day at Palmer Park on Friday, 23 June. Furthermore, the excellent work of the RSPA, as illustrated by the welcome return of the RSPA Summer Fayre which takes place on Sunday, 9 July. I hope that as many families as possible can support the RSPA in their event which sees our school community come together as one.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster



Key information

All years

Allergies - reminder

We would like to remind parents and students to be mindful in relation to allergies and what food students bring to school. Although we are not a 'nut free' school, we would like to raise awareness of the impact that bringing nuts into school can have on students and staff who may have allergies. Packaged nuts, peanut butter, chocolate spreads containing nuts, cereal, granola, chocolate bars containing nuts, cakes or biscuits containing nuts. Peanut-based sauces (like satay) and any food made with sesame seeds can cause severe allergic reactions for those affected by allergens. This list is not exhaustive.

Both children and adults with severe nut allergies can suffer from life-threatening reactions if they eat, smell, or touch any foods containing nuts. We are therefore grateful for your cooperation in helping to keep our pupils and staff safe.

[Allergy UK](#) is a nationwide charity for people living with an allergy and has resources for parents to access.

Reading School Summer Music Festival

Director of Music, Mr O Griffin, invites families to attend our Summer Music Festival on the afternoon of **Monday 3rd July**. This will commence at 4pm - earlier than other music events in order to take advantage of the (hopefully beautiful) summer evening.

In a bid to capture some of the 'festival' spirit, we intend to host an outdoor stage (weather permitting!) complemented by a BBQ with meat/vegetarian option provided by our Reading School catering team. Please bring your family, a picnic blanket, snacks and settle in for the evening!

Performers will include an array of school ensembles; Junior, Senior and Chapel Choir, Big Band, Junior Jazz Band and Orchestra, with some talented soloists and premier performances from student ensembles. The evening will end with a 'scratch orchestra' performance in true BBC Proms style and, to this end, musicians amongst you are encouraged to bring along your instrument to join in. No practice prior to the event is required – music will be provided and I promise it won't be too challenging! For those of you without instruments, your voices will be most welcome! It will be a literal case of 'the more the merrier'.

The Summer Music Festival is a ticketed event (tickets releasing next week) as follows:

Ticket	Ticket type	Ticket Price
Ticket with (BBQ burger/sausage/veggie burger)	Adults	£15.00
Ticket with (BBQ burger/sausage/veggie burger)	Child	£8.00
Ticket only (no food)	Adults	£10.00
Ticket only (no food)	Child	£3.00
Performers only (BBQ burger/sausage/veggie burger)	Child	£5.00

Tickets will **open on Tuesday, 20 June** and close on by **Tuesday, 27 June** so that we may, in turn, ensure we have the correct amount of food. **Please note that performers will also need to order any BBQ requests in advance.**

Performers are expected to stay in school but may change into smart-casual summer wear at the end of the school day. The event is expected to last around 2 hours, though some individual performances are still being confirmed.

I look forward to welcoming you on Monday, 3 July to our final Music evening of this academic year.

The use of artificial intelligence at Reading School

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has recently published guidance for schools on protecting the integrity of qualifications in relation to the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence). Highlights from the guidance share that the misuse of AI is malpractice and that chatbots such as ChatGPT, "*may pose significant risks if used by students completing assessments.*" However, the guidance also shares that AI tools can be used when the conditions of an assessment

permit the use of the internet, where, “*students are able to demonstrate the final submission is their own independent work and independent thinking.*”

Reading School has produced [this guide for students and parents](#) in relation to the what, how and why of AI at Reading School, which we would encourage our community to read in order to remain fully informed.

Associate Staff Vacancies

Site Controller

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.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Adjutant

We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced administrator to join our team as CCF Adjutant. Our ideal candidate will have either Cadet Forces experience or an interest to join our Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

Click [here](#) for more information.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence within the Combined Cadet Force

The Champion Cadet Competition is an annual selective event bringing together cadets from regions across the UK to compete against each other in a range of challenging activities which include physical and mental challenges. Cadets are judged on their teamwork, communication, physical fitness and problem-solving abilities. Skills and qualities that can serve young people in their chosen future careers and personal lives.

We would like to congratulate Benji F (12L) who came second in the Champion Cadet Competition after representing Reading School's Combined Cadet Force.

During an interview with Benji earlier this week he shared:

Can you tell us more about the competition? 38 cadets took part at the National Cadet Training Centre at Frimley Park for the week of events. We gathered on a Tuesday morning, where we settled into our rooms and headed for a briefing. We were straight into the competition that afternoon, with a personal first-aid scenario followed by a physical challenge: approximately 2km across boggy and demanding terrain around the outskirts of Frimley Park. After dragging myself and my webbing around the various obstacles in knee-deep mud, my group of 4 was rewarded with a surprise 40-meter finale carrying two full jerry cans. Drenched and shattered, I'd managed to win the event in my group. To finish the day, everyone had a five-minute presentation on "*How have the Cadet Forces benefited you as an individual?*" to deliver, in which I had the pleasure of presenting to former Reading School CCF instructor, Captain Morris, and two more adults from Frimley Park. I based my presentation around the topic of "*Confidence Through Leadership*".

What was your highlight of the competition? Probably during the drill competition. In pairs, we memorised and executed a drill sequence with one person commanding and one person executing, before switching over. This may have been my strongest performance of the week, as I recalled the sequence with no mistakes. After everyone was done, I was taken to the side with five other cadets for an extra interview. The top staff from Frimley Park, including the chief instructor, were there to talk to us individually. The results and debrief followed, in which I found out I had come second in the CCF competition. This was an honour and an amazing end to the week.

Would you have any words of advice for your peers or those starting out within Reading School's CCF? I would recommend any cadet with the right experience and drive to sign up for the event, as this truly was the highlight of my time among the cadets. I met many inspirational people from across the UK, including my amazing roommate from Scotland. I was proud to represent the school for the first time and prove to myself that I was capable of what I put my mind to. My next goal is to achieve Master Cadet status and return to CTC Frimley Park. I will use these experiences to help teach and lead younger cadets, and to inspire them to pursue some of the amazing opportunities the cadet forces can offer.



Excellence in Charity



Aaryan Amrite (10L) recently completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, a 24-mile round trip route ascending to 52,000ft across the Pennine range in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Walking for around 12 hours, Aaryan completed his walk for the charity [SewaUK](#), a not-for-profit registered charity established in 1989 with the aim to serve humanity irrespective of race, religion, gender or nationality. It's current three areas of focus include Health & Wellbeing, Humanitarian Disaster Relief and Sustainability.

We spoke with Aaryan this week about his achievement and he shared:

When did your interest in walking start? *I think it started with my parents. I've been walking a lot from a young age and it's felt like I've never stopped.*

What are some of the benefits of walking? *It's a good way of staying healthy and you also get to see a lot more nature around you. When you complete a challenge like this you also gain a huge sense of achievement and satisfaction. Also, after a long period of revision I find it can be a relaxing way to unwind. If you're thinking about taking on a challenge, it can seem like a huge task in front of you that you've got to do but after the first few steps it gets easier and you find yourself pushing on and eventually it stops feeling like work and you relax into the challenge. I find a sense of peace.*

What's your next challenge? *I would love to take on the National Three Peaks Challenge at some point. That involves climbing the three highest peaks of Scotland, England and Wales within 24 hour and it includes Ben Nevis.*

Well done on your achievement Aaryan and in the words of John Muir, "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

Belonging & Community

Reading School & The Abbey School Year 12 Quiz Night

Today, Friday, 16 June, is the last chance to purchase tickets to the first ever joint quiz night between Reading School and The Abbey School. The event is taking place on Tuesday, 20 June in the Refectory from 6:30pm – 21:00pm with refreshments available throughout the evening.

The House Captaincy Team encourages all Year 12s to come along to get involved with the ever-growing inter-school community and the evening offers a great way to meet with others. Tickets can be bought by [clicking this link](#) and they will be available for purchase until 11:30pm tonight, Friday, 13 June.

Please note, photography may take place during the event to assist with marketing and promotional materials used for the school communications. If you are attending and do not wish to be photographed, please let an attending staff member know.



Aerospace Engineering Experience



Two Year 10 students recently took part in an exciting and interactive experience during May half-term in order to broaden their horizons. Siddhant D (10L) and Rujul N (10S) got to immerse themselves with students from other others in an aerospace engineering course run by The Smallpeice Trust in partnership with Virgin Atlantic Foundation. Both Siddhant and Rujul got to immerse themselves in the areas of aircraft flight, the principles of lightweight structural design and efficient propulsion systems. They also got to test designs within a wind tunnel along with experience a flight simulator during the week-long experience held at the University of Kingston.

While speaking with Rujul earlier this week he shared:

"I got to learn a lot about the physics of flight and also gained other skills, like presenting in front of an audience. I felt a bit nervous when doing the presentation as I hadn't done much public speaking to an audience before. I also learnt about the engineering process (Plan, Design, Build, Test), which we used when we were making gliders. After testing, we went back to the Plan phase to improve the model. I reinforced what I had learnt about forces on a glider, and also learnt more on those topics. For example, how to calculate lift and drag coefficients, and how different factors affect the

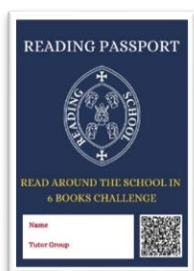
accuracy of a wind tunnel test. We also had the opportunity to experience the flight simulator at Kingston University, and see some of the other equipment they have in the department, including a £160,000 3D printer!"

It is positive to see students making the most of opportunities that develop their interests and passions along with getting to hear from professionals about their experiences within industries. One of our recent alumni, Karan B left Reading School in 2022 after securing a place to study Aerospace Engineering at the University of Southern California, USA. It is evidence that personal goals can be reached through passion and diligence.

We also spoke with Siddhant this week about his experience of the course and he shared:

"I agree with Rujul and felt I gained lots from my experience there. In part, I learnt about Virgin Atlantic, the experiences of the members of their community, and what it is like to be an aerospace engineer. As well as this, I gained knowledge about the basic principles of aviation, applying it by creating gliders in groups of four. We also had the chance to give a presentation on the process of building our aircraft, a challenge that my group achieved 1st prize in."

LRC – Summer Reading Challenge 2023



One of the best ways to discover great books is through recommendations from others. Findings from a national project underway in Australia, *Discovering a "Good Read": Pathways to Reading for Australian Teens*, led by Michael Dezuanni, indicate that the lack of close reading role-models could be a factor impacting the number of teenagers who read for pleasure.

This year we have been very lucky to have been given lots of recommendations from staff through our Recommended Reads posters and Reading Week book lists shared with all our school community. Over the next few weeks, all pupils in Years 7 to 10 will be invited to the LRC to browse staff recommendations and to recommend books to each other.

To accompany these visits and to give extra motivation to keep reading over the summer, we are running a whole school reading challenge called "Read Around the School in 6 Books" challenge. The challenge runs from Monday, 12 June to Monday, 11 of September and celebrates all of our reader role models. An information booklet can be [found here](#) and some additional summer reading recommendations from staff [can be found here](#).

Pupils can complete the challenge by filling out this online form for each book they read during the challenge period. Non-fiction books can be borrowed over the summer from Friday, 16 of June.

RSPA

Summer Fayre 2023

The RSPA are so excited to be able to host the 2023 Summer Fayre.

We are long overdue this wonderful opportunity to be able to come together with our families to celebrate our school and its community.

We still really need volunteers and would encourage any parents with a few hours to spare to get in contact as it's vital that we enlist as many parents as possible. You can sign up for an hour-long slot, or any time that you can give, if you want to bring family or friends to help you or keep you company just let us know, the more the merrier!

- If you can volunteer to help us on the day, please fill in this short form: <https://forms.office.com/e/w9kj7LZLJ2>
- If you can donate anything on the Donations List below, please bring them in and drop off at school reception.
- If you can bake cakes for the cake stall, please email nmoody@readingschoolparents.co.uk

We have a really fun day planned and can't wait to see you all.

We would like to wish you all a very happy weekend.

The RSPA Team



Summer Term – Week 9

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



Outside of the classroom, Assistant Head, Mr G Fairchild leads an elective on bicycle repair which includes basic and essential bike repair skills that every young person can benefit from having in their life-skills toolkit. Preceding weeks were spent critiquing the evolution of the design principles of bicycles.











The Champion Cadet Competition 2023

Benji F (12L), 3rd from right, middle row

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