

READING SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES & GOVERNORS ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS 2022/23



ACE School of
CHARACTER



ACE
Regional
Character Hub
School

Word from the Chair



We exercise strategic leadership regarding all aspects of safeguarding for both the Day School and Boarding, promote the welfare of students and ensure that the education Reading School provides has a positive impact on its students.

MR BOB KENWRICK

Chair of Governors

The governors of Reading School have several key responsibilities, including defining the school's vision and direction, holding the Headmaster accountable for educational performance, overseeing the quality of education, and managing the organisation's finances.

They also play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting student welfare. The Annual Report for 2022-2023 outlines the appointment of governors, governance processes, risk management, committee meeting attendance, and performance monitoring, including achievements in that year.

The report aims to inform parents about the school's plans and progress. Evidence of this includes being awarded The Sunday Times South East Secondary School of the Year for Academic Excellence in 2023, School of Sanctuary status, and becoming a Regional Hub for character excellence.



This is the eleventh Annual Report to parents by the Governors since the School converted to academy status in 2011.

The School publishes these regular Annual Reports to parents each October, reporting on the previous School year.

The report includes some background information on the Academy Trust and the Governing Body, as well as reporting on achievements and events in the 2022/23 School year and on the challenges the School faces in the years ahead.

How are governors appointed?



- To ensure a proper representation of parents, four places on the Governing Body/Trust are reserved for parent governors.
- These places are filled by election, following notification of vacancies and invitation of nominations.
- All parents and carers of students at the School are eligible to stand, and the electorate comprises all parents and carers.
- Mr Hudson's term of office as a parent governor ended in October 2022 (when he became a Trust-appointed governor).
- This meant that a parent governor vacancy was filled via an election in the Michaelmas term of 2022.
- Mr Nnabuife was duly elected and took office from 1st December 2022.

There are two places on the Governing Body/Trust reserved for staff members, and these are filled by election, the electorate comprising all teaching and associate staff. The staff governors at the start of 2022/23 were Mr Tuggey and Ms Pravda. Ms Pravda resigned in October 2022, and was replaced by Mr Sellwood, who was appointed from 11th November 2022.

- Two places on the Governing Body/Trust are reserved for representatives of the Reading Foundation. Dr Bowen and Mr Huggins were the Foundation representatives at the start of 2022/23.
- Dr Bowen resigned at the end of March 2023, and the Foundation appointed Mr Follen and her successor. Mr Huggins resigned at the end of July 2023, and the Foundation appointed Mr Hudson as his successor.



- Appointments to the remaining places on the Governing Body/Trust are made by the Academy members.
- From the start of the 2023/24 school year, there will be six such governors (with the appointment of Mr Johnson and Mrs Wakelin).
- Most Academy-appointed governors will be drawn from the local community and/or will have shown an interest in the wellbeing of the School and its students.
- In appointing new governors, there are also procedures for reviewing the mix of skills that should be available to the Governing Body.
- Potential new governors are required to submit a letter of interest and a CV, and are interviewed by the Chair of Governors, supported by the Clerk.
- A recommendation for appointment is presented to a meeting of the Academy Members.

At the end of their initial term of service, all governors are eligible for re-appointment for a further term (or re-election as parent governors if they have a student at the School, or re-election as staff governors if they remain eligible).

- New governors receive information packs and undertake a tailor-made induction programme, including a meeting with the Headmaster (if required), a site visit and induction training from the Chair and Clerk and from external agencies.
- New governors are given an opportunity to attend all Governing Body Committees as observers, before being appointed to one or two Committees.

Governor training is an important issue for the Governing Body, and is a specific responsibility of one of its Committees (the External Relations and Pastoral Care Committee). This Committee, supported by the Clerk, was responsible for monitoring the extent and appropriateness of training offered to governors in 2022/23. A record of the training undertaken by all governors is kept by the Clerk.

The Chair, Vice Chair, other members of the Governing Body and the Clerk attend regular briefings on governance and educational matters provided by Reading Borough Council and the Reading Governors Association.

The Governing Body also seeks to maximise the use of online training and subscribes to the National Governance Association, Modern Governor and The Link, which offer a range of online briefings and training courses for governors.



The current governing body as at 1st September 2023

Emma Fallon *
Mark Faulkner
David Fisher
Terry Follen ~
Dave Hudson ~
Nick Johnson
Bob Kenwick
Dozie Nnabuife *
Oliver Pilkington *
Ashley Robson #
Karen Ross MBE
Gareth Sellwood +
Sanjay Shahi *
Tim Tuggey +
Lesley Wakelin

~Governor appointed by the Reading Foundation;
*Elected parent governor; + Elected staff governor;
#Headmaster and ex officio governor.

More details of each Governor's background and areas of interest are available on the School's website.

How do the governors operate?

The Academy Trust Members and the Trustees/governors have responsibility for setting and monitoring the overall strategic direction of the Charitable Company and the School, including approving decisions reserved to governors and the appointment of key members of staff.

The Academy Trust members meet at least annually, at an AGM in September or October, and as required during the year.



The Governing Body meets at least six times each year, including an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM normally takes place in July, and appoints the Chair, Vice Chair, Committees etc. for the school year which starts in the following September. In 2022/23, the Governing Body met on 8 occasions (including the AGM).

Governor committees have also been established to consider detailed matters. In 2022/23, there were the following four main committees, each of which met four times in the course of the year, except the Finance Committee, which met five times:

- Curriculum and Standards
- External Relations and Pastoral Care
- Finance
- Property and Projects

Additionally, a Staff Pay and Performance Committee has been established to consider personnel matters, and it met twice in the course of 2022/23.

There are also governors' committees established to hear and adjudicate complaints from parents (and others) and appeals against disciplinary decisions (relating to staff and students). These committees were not required to meet in 2022/23

An Admissions Committee is responsible for considering and recommending the school's Admissions Policies and related matters. This Committee met on two occasions in 2022/23.

A committee of governors (with the participation of an external advisor) undertakes the annual performance review of the Headmaster and monitors his performance and achievements against targets. This Committee met on three occasions in 2022/23.

Ad hoc groups of governors are also established as and when required to consider specific issues and make recommendations to the Governing Body. In 2022/23, one such group has been considering matters relating to sustainability, including climate change issues, the suitability of the School's site and buildings to meet its needs in the longer term, and long-term strategic issues.



The majority of the decisions reserved to the governors (including all major expenditure decisions) are taken by the Governing Body as a whole, on the recommendation of a committee or in relation to reports submitted by senior management team members. Committees have delegated powers to deal with certain matters (for example, the approval of policies relevant to their remit).

The Headmaster, the Deputy Headmaster, the Finance Director, the Chief Operations Officer and other members of staff attend committee meetings to present reports on their areas of responsibility, for example curriculum development and special educational needs.

One impact of the Coronavirus pandemic was that a number of Governing Body and Committee meetings were held on-line in 2021/22, but the Governing Body reverted to face to face meetings in 2022/23.

The Chair of Governors and the Headmaster meet regularly to monitor decision implementation and to review matters affecting staff and students and other issues affecting the School.

In recent years (including 2022/23) individual governors (known as link governors) have been allocated to academic subjects within the School. They have visited departments, and reported back to the relevant Committees on the outcomes of their visit. Other link governors have assumed responsibility in particular areas of School life, for example health and safety, Pupil Premium, safeguarding, the Prevent strategy, careers, special educational needs, information technology, the CCF, facilities management, sporting activities, boarding etc.

The link governor system has paid dividends in terms of governor understanding, overall performance and enhanced staff/governor relationships, but a decision has been made to change the system for 2023/24. The new system will feature lead governors for key areas, like boarding, safeguarding, health & safety, SEND etc and an annual governance day, when all governors will visit the school for a programme of activities designed to ensure governor engagement.

The Headmaster is the School's Accounting Officer and works closely with both the other governors and the senior staff of Reading School.

The day to day management of Reading School rests with the Headmaster, who has overall responsibility for the School. The Headmaster is responsible for establishing a senior management or leadership team (referred to as the SLT), which, in 2022/23, comprised the Deputy Headmaster, the five Assistant Headteachers, the Finance Director, the Chief Operations Officer and the Director of People.

All aspects of the management of the School and the conduct of the Governing Body are based on openness, accessibility and accountability. Governors are encouraged to participate fully in the work of committees and the Governing Body, and are encouraged to bring matters of concern before governors and to raise any queries with the Headmaster. Annually, after the publication of public examination results, governors undertake a thorough review of the outcomes, and consider implications for the curriculum and pastoral activities within the School.

The School has established two subsidiary trading companies:

1) The Reading School Overseas Partnership Company Ltd, which was established in June 2018, facilitates the School's involvement with Lunhua Education in Suzhou, China, assisting with education development. The Board of this company consists of the Chair of Governors, the School's Deputy Headmaster and the Chair of the Reading Foundation. It has no employees, but School staff undertake its day-to-day operation.

2) Future Stories Community Enterprise Ltd, established in April 2022 with aims to establish wraparound care, English language summer schools, summer holiday activities, and an on-site nursery and to market the School's admissions tests to other schools. The company's focus in the short term is on marketing the admissions tests.

The Board of the company consists of a Governor (Mr Faulkner), the Headmaster and a person independent of the School (Mr Toel Koyithara, a barrister with a government background). The company does not have any employees at present, with all services being provided and recharged by Reading School under the terms of a service agreement.

The detailed administrative work of the governors is undertaken by the Clerk to Governors, reporting to the Chair of Governors. Mr Steve Vale has continued to fulfil the role of Clerk throughout 2022/23.

Reading School has a close working relationship with The Reading Foundation (Registered Charity number 294640) which is landlord of the School's main site and has as its own charitable purpose "to advance the education of the public, and in particular, to endow Reading School". The Headmaster is a trustee of The Reading Foundation. Mr Follen, Mr Faulkner and Mr Hudson represented the Governing Body on the Reading Foundation Council for most of 2022/23. In 2023-2024, the Governing Body's representatives will be Mr Faulkner, Mrs Fallon and Mr Nnabuife.

The School also co-operates on a regular basis with the Old Redingensians Association, which comprises alumni of the School, and seeks to support the School in appropriate ways. It also works closely with the Reading School Parents Association, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Risk Management

Risk management is an important element of the work of governors, and the governors have a robust attitude to risk management. The risk register defines and considers risk under the headings of Strategic and Reputational Risks and Operational Risks.

The register was subject to continuous updating by governors through a rolling review process in 2022/23, and this will continue in 2023/24.



All governors have received up-to-date training in safeguarding, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have undertaken required training in Safer Recruitment, and the Chair is the designated Governor with responsibility for child protection.

Governors receive regular reports from staff, the School's Health and Safety Committee and the Health and Safety link governor.

A number of policies have been adopted by the Governing Body, covering risk and health and safety matters. These are reviewed regularly, including annual reviews of the following policies:

- Accident Policy
- Child Protection
- Health and Safety Statement and Policy
- Infection control
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Register of Risks (rolling review)

Key policies of this type are published on the School's website, as per DfE requirements.

The Governors are also responsible for ensuring that proper accounting records are kept and that these disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Academy Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Acts 2006. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and for taking steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Governors' attendance in 2022/23

The following table shows total attendances by governors at all main Committees (i.e., Curriculum & Standards, External Relations & Pastoral Care, Finance, Property & Projects) and at Governing Body meetings in the 2022/23 school year:

Governor	Possible	Actual	%
S Bowen	8	5	63%
E Fallon	16	13	81%
M Faulkner	25	13	52%
D Fisher	13	6	46%
T Follen	17	17	100%
D Hudson	16	13	81%
R Huggins	12	10	83%
B Kenwick	25	22	88%
D Nnbufe	11	9	82%
O Pilkington	17	9	53%
G Pravda	3	3	100%
A Robson	25	22	88%
K Ross	16	14	87.5%
G Sellwood	11	11	100%
S Shahi	17	10	59%
T Tuggey	17	17	100%

Monitoring Performance

The primary measures used by the governors to assess the success of the activities of the School are a medium-term strategic plan, together with a series of annual Operational Plans.

A revised and updated strategic plan for 2020 to 2025 was approved by the Governing Body in July 2020, superseding the previous 2018 to 2025 plan. The Operational Plan for 2022/23 was approved by the Governing Body on 11th July 2022, and a further Operational Plan for 2023/24 was approved on 10th July 2023.



The School last updated its Master Plan in 2018, and this sets out key priorities for the development of facilities at the School, such as a new Sports Hall. The updating of the Master Plan is currently under consideration (September 2023) and includes a Sixth Form centre.

The strategic and operational plans focus on 4 key strategic objectives of:

- Academic excellence
- Integrity and the building of character and a sense of community
- Leadership, fostering a culture of leadership and accountability across pupils and staff
- Community, with the building of effective local, national and global partnerships and a focus on social mobility and the building of cultural capital

These plans continue to place student and staff wellbeing and development at the heart of the School's vision, supported by a robust programme of Continuous Professional Development, as well as a system of peer reviews of the various departments.

The Operational Plan for the year is monitored as a standing agenda item at each Committee meeting, and the Headmaster is required to report to the governors regularly at Committee and Governing Body meetings on progress in meeting the targets set out in the Operational Plan, on any corrective actions required in pursuit of the Plan, as well as on Academy performance, personnel matters, university entrance and staff training.

More information about these targets, and the successes and challenges in meeting them in 2022/23, are set out in the Achievements and Performance section, below:

In addition:

- Regular budget monitoring reports are submitted to each meeting of the Finance Committee, the Governing Body and (for the property budgets) to the Property and Projects Committees;
- Monthly management accounts are sent to the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Finance committee;
- The Curriculum and Standards Committee receives a detailed report on performance in external examinations each year, and commissions appropriate actions as a result, including looking at comparative data for other schools and undertaking self-assessment of school performance;
- All policies are reviewed by the relevant Committees at appropriate intervals, in accordance with a schedule agreed by the governing body, including consideration of their value and effectiveness in delivering the aims of the Academy.
- Committees receive regular reports on fundraising, partnership activities, quality assurance, measures to support social mobility, safeguarding, health and safety compliance, staffing and the School's Pupil Premium and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategies.

Self-assessment

The Governing Body is now actively engaged in the regular self-evaluation of governance, with self-assessments of the effectiveness of the Governing Body undertaken regularly, as well as a skills audits and 360° appraisals of the Chair. The Governing Body keeps a record of all training undertaken by governors. All these measures are designed to improve and sustain its effectiveness.

Conclusion

The board of trustees has a duty to promote the success of the School and has sought to fulfil this in 2022/23 through:

- careful oversight of its finances,
- further development of the School's curriculum and timetable, and improved monitoring of compliance,
- further explorations of the scope for increasing the School's income and the development of its facilities.

Governors have played a key role in ensuring that Boarding has recovered from the difficulties caused by the Covid 19 lockdown. They are fully supportive of fundraising efforts, and have provided leadership on some key projects, notably the plans for the future use of the Morgan Road site. They have also continued working to develop and improve the School's admission arrangements, and to look more systematically at long-term plans to ensure the sustainability and suitability of its premises.

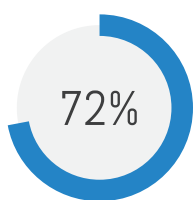
Achievements & Performance 2022/23

Set out below are details of:

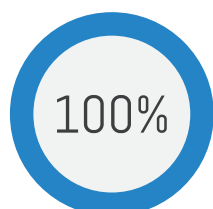
- a) The School's examination results performance in 2022 and 2023;
- b) Details of progress and achievements during 2022/23, under the Governing Body Committee primarily responsible for their achievement
- c) Key Performance Indicators

2022 Examination Results

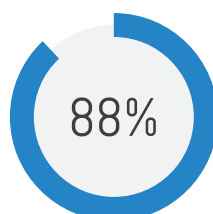
The return to GCSE examinations in 2022 saw the School achieve an outstanding set of examination results, notwithstanding the expected slight reduction in grades awarded compared to teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021.



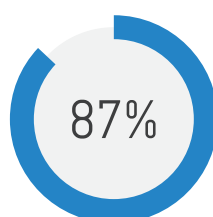
72% of entries achieved grades 9-8 and 88.4% of entries were awarded grades 9-7.



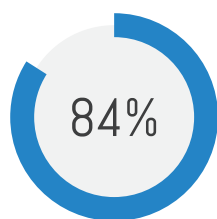
100% of candidates achieved the English Baccalaureate.



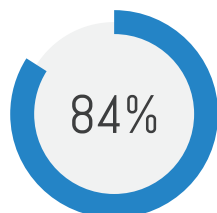
88% of pupils achieved grade 9-8 in Chemistry



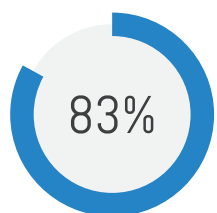
87% achieved grade 9-8 in Physics



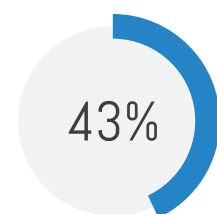
84% of pupils gained grades 9-8 in Computer Science



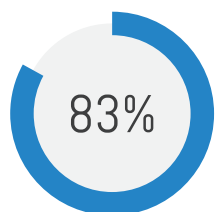
84% achieved a grade 9-8 in Drama



83% gained grades 9-8 in Mathematics

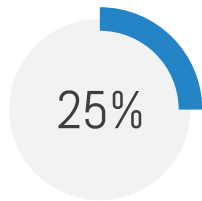


43% of entries were awarded a grade 9 in Ancient History,
Modern Foreign Languages and Physical Education

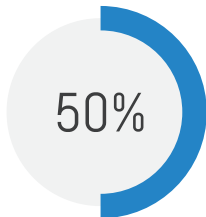


83% gained grades 9-8 in Mathematics

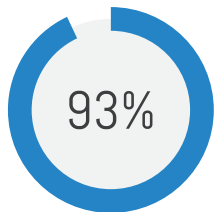
At A-level, students at Reading School once again achieved truly outstanding A Level results:



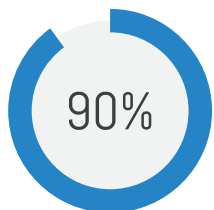
25% of the cohort attaining A* grades in all their subjects



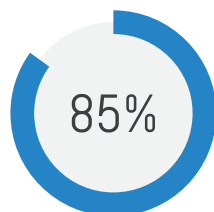
50% of all grades awarded being A*, an increase on the 2021 figure



93.3% of all entries were awarded A*-B grades

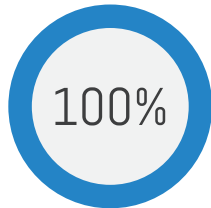


In contrast to national headlines about students being disappointed with university admissions this year, 90% of our students met or exceeded their entry requirements for one of their two chosen courses

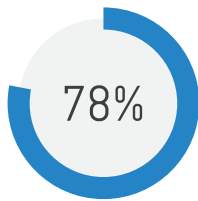


85% of these attaining their requirements for their first-choice university

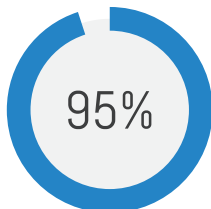
Whilst the School's enviable reputation for STEM (science, technology, economics and maths) subjects was reflected in its 2022 results, it also continued to excel in the arts, humanities and languages.



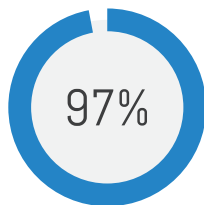
100% of Art and Music students achieved A* grades



78% of Drama grades were A*



95% of Spanish, French and German grades were A* or A



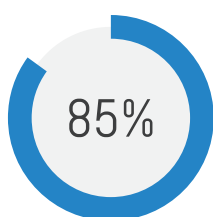
97.1% of History grades were A*-B and 100% of English Literature students achieved A*-B

Impressively, 57% of Mathematics grades, 53% of Further Mathematics, 51% of Physics, 51% of Economics and 50% of Computer Science candidates also achieved A* grades.

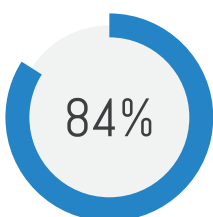
2023 Examination Results

In 2023, 43.1% of all GCSE entries were awarded the highest '9' grade, a considerable achievement, given the challenges this group of students had faced. These students had only had one full year of 'normal' secondary school before the first lockdown.

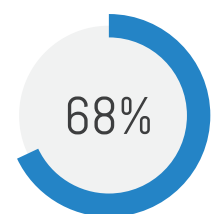
In addition, the start of their GCSE studies in Year 9 was once again disrupted by subsequent lockdowns. The School is proud of the way in which students continued to excel simultaneously in a wide variety of subjects, as demonstrated by the fact that 92% of students studied for 10 or more different qualifications, with 26 students studying for 12 different qualifications.



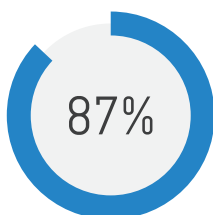
Over 85% of English Literature students gained grades 9-7



Mathematics continues to excel with 83.9% of students achieving the top grades 9-8



It was particularly pleasing to see students succeeding in Electronics, following its reintroduction 3 years ago, with 68% of students achieving a grade 9 or 8

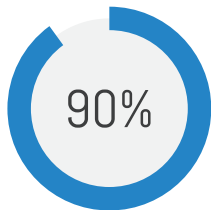


87% achieved grade 9-8 in Physics

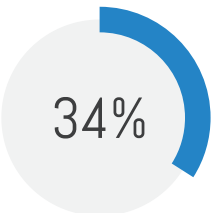
2023 also saw a strong set of A-level results, marking a triumphant sustaining of pre-pandemic performance levels. In the face of unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this cohort of students has displayed remarkable resilience and determination.

Their academic journey was marked by the disruption caused by the pandemic, including lock-downs, remote learning, and health-related interruptions. Yet, they persevered, adapted, and emerged stronger than ever.

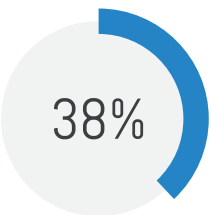
Of 171 students sitting A-level exams:



90.2% achieved A*-B grades overall

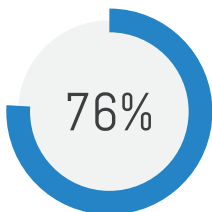


34% of entries achieved grade A*

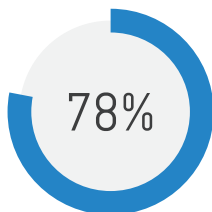


38% of entries achieving grade A

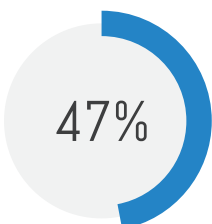
Our exceptional teaching staff played a pivotal role in guiding our students through the challenges of recent years, resulting in strong results across all subjects.



76% of students achieved A*-A in Computer Science



78% achieving A*-A in Economics



47% of all Mathematics candidates were awarded A* grades

Committee Progress 2022/2023

Admissions

The impact of the change to admissions policies (implemented in September 2020) which provided for a modified pass mark for applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds was carefully monitored to ensure that it delivered on the aim of encouraging greater social mobility.



In addition:

- A total of 17 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted in September 2022. In September 2023, 22 Pupil/Service Premium students were admitted.
- The School continues to manage its admissions process directly, including setting its own entrance examination. This has enabled the School to improve the process, particularly with regard to SEND applicants.
- It has also enabled a new creative writing paper to be added into the entrance examination, which has improved the quality of the selection process.
- The School agreed a small adjustment to its catchment area, which applied from September 2022 onwards.
- Only minor adjustments were made to the September 2023 admission arrangements, but a further change has been agreed for admissions in September 2024, with 10% of admissions (a maximum of 15 places) reserved for applicants who have passed a sporting aptitude test, as well as achieving the pass mark.
- The School has worked in partnership with Go Perform to administer these sporting aptitude tests as part of the September 2023 entrance examination process.

Curriculum & Standards

Major achievements this year included a thorough and detailed analysis of the 2022 and 2023 GCSE and A-level outcomes, in order to pinpoint their implications for future years in terms of expected outcomes, student subject choices, teaching resources, and plans for future examinations.

In addition:

- 22 students entering Oxford or Cambridge University in September 2022 and 23 in September 2023, with high numbers gaining admission to Warwick and Bath universities and to UCL.
- The development of The Reading Way curriculum, which has been designed to provide a stable curriculum and timetable structure up to at least the end of the 2023/24 school year.
- The endorsement of a Reading Way Curriculum Statement and the retention of a timetable structure based on seven 45-minute lessons per day, allowing flexibility for choice and electives, with the freedom to provide structured academic support to individual students. This also allowed for staggered starts, breaks and lunchtimes and for later starts for 6th form students.
- Signification emphasis on monitoring the quality of education offered through the Electives and Floreat programmes
- Plans for water-based sports activities, based at the new Boat House.
- The introduction of a Reading Week in October 2022, which will be repeated on October 2023.
- The preservation of the breadth of the School's curriculum, through its 2-year Key Stage 3, its broad offer in Key Stages 4 and 5, and its approach to languages, so that a very high proportion of students attain the EBacc (92% in 2023).
- The endorsement of a medium term Digital Learning Strategy.
- Approval of the School's 2022/23 Pupil Premium Strategy, in support of the School's key priority of supporting more students from disadvantaged backgrounds and promoting social mobility.
- Continued operation of the Link Governor Scheme in respect of academic subjects in 2022/23, and the initiation of revised governor engagement arrangements on 2023/24, including a proposed governance day.
- Continued focus on quality assurance and self-assessment.
- Endorsed major efforts to reinvigorate the School's partnerships at local, national and international level, following the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

External Relations and Pastoral Care

In the course of 2022/23, the Committee:

- Continued to review progress on issues relating to social mobility at every meeting.
- Approved the pastoral elements of the School's 2022/23 Pupil Premium Strategy.
- Worked with Student Representatives, securing their input to many of the issues considered by the Committee and supporting them in strengthening the student voice and making it more effective.
- Monitored the implementation of the concept of belonging, which was one of the School's key objectives for 2022/23.
- Agreed recommendations to further revive and develop the School's educational visits programme.
- Monitored behaviour, attitudes and attendance amongst students, with a particular focus on restoring attendance to pre-Covid levels.
- Undertook a further self-evaluation of the governing body's performance.
- Continued to work on Governor Training, including keeping a record of all training undertaken.
- Reviewed the School's Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and the School's SEND Policy, focusing on the student support provided.
- Agreed an updated PREVENT strategy and policy.
- Reviewed and updated numerous school policies relating to safeguarding, student welfare, discipline, complaints etc.
- Continued to monitor the School's boarding provision and its recovery following the Coronavirus restrictions, through self-assessment and measurement against national standards for boarding.
- Supported the School's response to the Ukraine crisis (supporting both Ukrainian guests within the School and those in the local community).

Finance

Achievements in 2022/23 included:



- Successful completion of the 2021/22 audited accounts, with an unqualified auditors' opinion.
- Careful monitoring of 2022/23 income and expenditure, in a tight financial environment.
- Responding to minor recommendations of the internal auditors to improve financial control and compliance.
- Continuing to review and update the School's Risk Register, through a rolling review programme.
- Setting a balanced consolidated budget for 2023/24, which, notwithstanding a challenging financial environment, continues to provide for a pro-active approach to repairs and refurbishments.
- Amending the School's banking arrangements to as to improve efficiency and interest paid on cash balances.
- Undertaking benchmarking of key financial indicators against other schools
- Overseeing, from the School's perspective, the joint fundraising initiative with the Reading Foundation, and monitoring the work of the Society Office.
- Overseeing the performance of the Future Stories Community Enterprise Ltd.
- Ensuring the School's full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Property & Projects

Key developments in 2022/23 included:



- Reaching an agreement for the development of the Morgan Road site in a way which will potentially deliver maximum improvement of the School's facilities, particularly sports facilities on the School's main site and at Morgan Road itself.
- Enabling the successful rebuilding of the School's Boat House, following the fire in 2019. The contents of the Boat House will also be replaced, and the Boat House will be fully operational from September 2023.
- A successful bid to the Condition Improvement Fund for grant aid towards the improvement of electrical and fire safety services, with works to be undertaken in 2023/24.
- Authorising the refurbishment of the Physics Department, following a successful bid to The Wolfson Foundation for grant aid.
- Careful monitoring and planning of the use of the property maintenance budget and of the budget for health and safety compliance works, working with the Reading Foundation to ensure that maintenance and refurbishment priorities were identified systematically and tackled in the most cost-efficient manner, taking account of expenditure constraints.
- Reviewing and updating of Health and Safety and related policies, including a new Accessibility Plan for 2022 to 2025.
- Updating of the School's Business Continuity Plan.
- Enabling and authorising the refurbishment of the School's gate house.

The Committee has also embedded a new reporting system which has greatly improved its ability to monitor the condition of School buildings and their compliance with statutory regulations. This supports a more systematic and planned approach to maintenance in the future.

Enrichment Visits & Belonging Week

As well as its academic excellence, the School is proud of its record in encouraging its students to achieve their potential in sport, music, cultural and other enrichment activities. A major feature of 2022/23 was the restoration of the School's educational visits programme, which had inevitably declined in the last few Covid-hit years.

In 2022-23, key goals for the programme were linked to both operational and strategic plans and sought to reinforce the "Learn – Lead – Serve" priorities. In particular extensive service opportunities for students were provided during belonging week and through weekly football, canoeing and mentoring sessions.



The aim to provide opportunities for all staff and students was exemplified through the high-quality alternative provision offered to the 5 students in Years 8 and 9 who could not join residential programs, through the breadth and depth of the wider trip program and through the inclusion of associate staff members in the leadership of trips.

The programme included continued efforts to develop partnerships with activity providers, local delivery partners and partner primary schools, demonstrated through the hosting of Whitley Park primary students for a residential programme, the delivery of the Science and Me program and the transportation around 1000 students from local primary schools to activities in the space of 5 days.

In 2022/23, the School ran 207 trips, with over 6,000 student places on trips in total.

Belonging Week, in June 2023, enabled 600 students in Years 7-10 and around 50 staff to take part in a range of activities and visits planned to support the Reading Way character framework and designed to develop a sense of belonging for staff and students. Programs designed to ensure that additional support is in place for students with specific SEN and other needs. Pupil Premium students and Ukrainian Exchange Students were fully funded to participate and additional support was available to students from other disadvantaged backgrounds. This produced 100% sign up and participation.

Review of Sport 2022-2023

In Rugby, under the Director of Rugby, Mr M Kearle, there were 45 fixtures including Reading Schools league and County cup and Festivals. 180 players represented school and 4 students representing Berkshire. Whilst on the football field in 2022-2023, there were 75 football fixtures including Reading Schools league, County cups and National cups. In total 230 students represented the school and 2 students represented Berkshire.



Historically, cricket at Reading School has been a central feature of the school sporting calendar. As a team sport a sense of teamship and collaboration is encouraged by the Head Coach, Mr A Robertson. An enthusiastic culture of commitment and sporting character has led to significant progress in 2023. As a consequence, the following achievements should be noted:

- 1XI Toby Radford Trophy Winners
- Year 7 Berkshire League Winners
- Year 8 Berkshire League Winners
- Year 8 National Cup participants
- Year 9 Berkshire League Winners
- Year 10 Berkshire League Finalists

On an individual achievement level, one student scored 101 not out in Toby Radford Trophy Final. A total of 55 fixtures were played in Reading Schools league, County cups and National cups. The MCC were also hosted. An impressive 20 students represented Berkshire or Hampshire.

One of the major sporting achievements was in the U16 National Table Tennis Championships held in Wolverhampton in April 2023. Following victories at county and regional level we were placed third nationally. There this potential for sustained success as we build on our partnership with Kingfisher Table Tennis Club. An important feature in the successful cup run, including county and regional finals, was the support of parents, which is greatly valued by the school.

The wide-ranging sporting offer also includes cross country where there were 4 matches with 64 students representing and two students reaching the Nationals. In addition, our Ultimate Frisbee teams participated in national competitions. In Badminton a Year 11 student was selected for England National Squad and in Power lifting A Year 13 student is the current U18 regional record holder. His passion for the sport was initiated through strength and conditioning through the PE curriculum and access to the Huggins Fitness suite).

In Judo, a Year 12 student was selected for the England National squad. Regarding water sports, under the leadership of Mr Tridgell, we have worked with our partners to provide opportunities to flourish on the River Thames. Following the building of a new Reading School Boathouse there is the potential for re-introducing rowing and perhaps even dragon boat racing. This will need a collaborative approach with potential local partners.



The value of sport is understood and supported by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. Sport can help to create a more compassionate, vibrant and peaceful world and we have been working with the True Athlete Project (TAP) to encourage the path of training mind, body and spirit so that our athletes are aware athletes, scholar athletes and compassionate athletes. The support of the Governing Body for the development of the Sports Aptitude Test has enabled planning to be undertaken for the introduction of the Kenwick Sport Pathway. The KSP will be a unique pathway for 15 scholar athletes per cohort and provide them with opportunities to flourish.

Our Scholar Athletes have also impressed in the sphere of public examinations with 100% A*-B at A Level and 100% grades 9-6 at GCSE. This is evidence of knowledge and understanding of theory and practice of sport. We provide inspirational opportunities for our students to flourish in the sphere of sport. This is despite the fact that current indoor sporting facilities at Reading School are lacking. The commitment of the Governing Body to providing a sports hall and a 4G MUGA is a significant strategic approach, which will raise the bar.

If travel broadens the mind, so can sport. The Tennis Tour to Cape Town in February 2023, led by Capetonian Mr C Betteridge, was a success as it helped to develop a culture of teamwork, an emphasis on resilience and potential for further collaboration for other sports tours in South Africa. Another successful Tour was the Year 7 and Year 8 Football Tour to Oswestry, near the North Wales border, in July. Winning a penalty shoot out to gain third place was no mean achievement for the Year 8 team, who had improved significantly since Year 7. The Head of Sport and PE has ambitious plans to increase the quality and quantity of sports tours, leading up to 2025.



One of the characteristics of our sporting offer is the opportunity to experience high performance. The following are examples of opportunities to nurture a culture of commitment to excellence and collaboration:

- Basketball - London Lions Olympic Park, 70 students from all years watching BBL match
- 1stXI Football - Squad went to watch Carabao Cup match Chelsea U21 v Cheltenham Town
- Academic PE - GCSE and A-level PE students to sports science labs at Bath University
- Belonging Week - Yr 10 went to St George's Park for coaching experience
- Football Tour - Yr 7 and 8 teams went to 4-day tournament HD SPORTZ in Shrewsbury
- Rugby Tour - Senior preseason 4-day training camp in Swansea

Sporting achievement would not possible without the professionalism and support of the staff, led by Mr S Allen. In addition, the support of the RSPA and parents as a whole must be acknowledged as collaboration and partnership are key elements to sport participation, progress and achievement.

Through our existing partnership with Right to Dream and working collaboratively with Dr Jacob Naish, on our Manifesto commitments, we are looking to create a sporting culture that champions participation, progress and achievement. This includes a focus on fun and enjoyment. Sport can help young people develop compassion, live with integrity, acknowledge and embrace responsibility and grow awareness of what really matters in sport and in life. This has been evidenced through Reading School's approach to Sport in 2022-2023.



Other activities:

- The House Music Competition was in its 87th year and, after a two-year hiatus, returned to Reading's Hexagon Theatre on Sunday 20th November 2022.
- A team of five sixth formers entered the Ethics Cup in January 2023. The Cup gives students the opportunity to discuss topical issues and the team won the regional final which took place at the University of the West of England in Bristol, which led them to the finals at the University of St Andrews in May. After preparing for the final for three months and competing in a day-long tournament, the Reading School Team went on to win the Ethics Cup 2023.
- During February 2023, a team of Year 8 students entered the OurEcho International Competition and made it through as UK finalists, going on to secure second place and securing a cash grant of £2,500 which they will use to take their project further and make it into a reality.
- Reading School has become the very first School of Sanctuary in Reading, as a result of its ability to offer meaningful support, care and compassion for children and young people seeking sanctuary from around the world.

Conclusions

The academic and other successes in 2022/23, and the School's continued excellent recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic, show that Reading School continues to be one of the highest performing state schools in the country. We are continuing with our aim to continue to develop it to be a 'World Class School', which nurtures integrity and academic excellence through the development of leadership potential, and which measures up to international benchmarks. We pride ourselves on our commitment to sustaining a high academic tradition and a willingness to embrace change in the interests of our students.

We regularly attract over 1,000 applications for day places at the School at Year 7 and a further 60-70 applications for boarding places, also at Year 7. For 2024 entry, we have received over 1,200 direct Year 7 applications for day and boarding. The range of our feeder schools is diverse geographically. Our student population is ethnically and socially diverse. Most Year 13 leavers gain admission to leading Universities.

We were again honoured to be listed as the Top State Secondary School in the Southeast as published in [Parent Power: The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2023](#). This survey identifies the 2,000 highest-achieving schools in the UK, ranked by their recent examination results. In our Strategic and Operational Plans, and in identifying the other challenges we face, we recognise that sustained success depends on continuous improvement, effective leadership, strong partnerships and effective learning environments.

Excellence in the classroom and development of the whole person in students is crucial. We are committed to serving our local community and to playing a role in increasing social mobility, as demonstrated by the Future Stories Project, through which the school encourages and supports admission applications from disadvantaged students, and the further changes to admission policies proposed for the future, which will prioritise the admission of such students without, however, compromising academic standards. Importantly, the School has also recognised the importance of supporting such students as they entered the School in greater numbers from September 2021 onwards.

Key Performance Indicators 2022/23

Attendance & Behaviour

Governors are committed to ensuring that Reading School is a safe environment for all our students. There have been some improvements regarding numbers of fixed term exclusions and school attendance, however there must be no sense of complacency in relation to racist incidents and bullying. There is no room for either at Reading School.

- Number of permanent exclusions: 0
- Number of fixed term exclusions - 4
- Number of racist incidents - 9
- Number of incidents of bullying - 6
- Overall school attendance (Years 7 to 11) – 95.3%
- Pupil Lateness – 1.19%

Looking ahead

The Operational Plan for 2023/24 was approved by the Governing Body on 10th July 2023, and is too detailed to set out in full here. The following summarises the over-riding aims and commitments behind the key priorities in the plan:

Purpose

The plan focuses on the ambitious common purpose of flourishing through developing academic excellence and building people of character.

2023 – 2024 Operational Priorities

Character: focusing on character and values in order to enable human flourishing. We develop in our people habits of integrity and courage and we support students to practise humility, curiosity and gratitude.

Culture: a strong, positive, commitment culture ensures our people act in the best interests of the organisation and feel fulfilled within it.

Collaboration: collaboration enables innovation and improvement. It is shaped by our community and local, national and international collaborations.

Key elements of the plan:

Excellence

The School aims high and develops ambitions that enable dreams to be achieved. It commits to pursuing excellence, and strives to be the best it can. Targets in this element focus on the quality of the curriculum and teaching and on high levels of examination performance.

Integrity

The School builds young people of principle and character. It seeks to safeguard all, so they remain happy, healthy and safe. It strives to be respectful, honest and accountable. Targets in this element focus on the Reading Way, character and personal development, wellbeing and safeguarding.

Leadership

The School leads with passion, purpose and authenticity. It views leadership as service and puts people first so they can make a difference. It builds an organisational culture of commitment and compassion. Targets in this element focus on social mobility, opportunity, and leadership models, and on delivery in all aspects of the School and its sustainability (governance and financial).

Community

The School builds and maintains local, national and global partnerships. It focuses on social mobility and on building cultural capital. It champions collaboration and teamwork. Targets in this element focus on the wider school community, and the development of a network of partners, at local national and international level.

The School's long-term strategy covers the period 2020-25. This is available on the School's website, at [download.asp\(reading-school.co.uk\)](https://www.reading-school.co.uk/download.asp).

The Governing Body continues to make progress towards the development of the School's facilities over the next few years. This is a challenge both in the logistical sense (i.e. designing and building new facilities within a confined site which includes listed buildings) and in a financial sense, since, realistically, major developments will need to be funded from funds obtained through grant aid or funds raised by the School itself.



As noted above, the School's Master Plan was updated in 2018, and identifies the main facilities which will be required to deliver the curriculum, pastoral care and the associated support facilities which are at the heart of the school's strategic vision and operational priorities.

In order to fund the major facilities outlined in the Master Plan, the fundraising partnership with the Reading Foundation, the initiatives led by the Society Manager and the imaginative use of existing assets are crucial. In particular, a successful conclusion to the proposals for the Morgan Road site (currently subject to planning approval by the local authority) will transform the sports facilities at the School.

Other key challenges faced by the School include:

- Sustaining the breadth of the curriculum in the face of current student preferences and of financial constraints which mean that subjects are viable only if a sufficiently large cohort of students opt for them.
- Meeting the challenge of future revenue funding in the face of a growing gap between anticipated income and increasing costs. This has been a challenge for many years, but is becoming more acute, as many of the measures to address the gap have already been taken.
- Continuing to develop the skills and effectiveness of governors, so that the ethos of Excellence and Leadership is strengthened in the School.
- Maintaining a programme of priority repairs and refurbishments, working in partnership with the Reading Foundation, and sustaining a more planned approach which prioritises compliance with high standards.
- Associated with the previous point, maximising funds available to improve and maintain buildings and facilities through successful grant applications to external bodies – e.g. CIF bids and bids to the other organisations, such as the Wolfson Foundation.
- Dealing with the implications of changing government policy on education and school structures. As a highly successful single-academy trust, the School's future needs to remain within its own control whatever transpires in terms of overall governance structure. The school will need to work carefully with key players in education at local and national level to ensure that such control is retained.

Fundraising

Despite the effects of the pandemic and the unknown variables Reading School has continued to prioritise community relations and look into alternative funding streams. The priority remains to continually create strong and productive relationships with all the School's supporters, and especially the key constituencies of alumni and parents (past, current and future). The Reading School Society exists to foster and manage these relationships and increase engagement with the Reading School community.



The work of the Society Office is led by the Senior Leadership Team with oversight by the Foundation Trustees and School Governors. This has been enabled by annual grants from The Reading Foundation.

The School's strategy is to encourage all its supporters to give back to Reading School. While fundraising is an obvious and the most flexible form of giving (and the School has benefited in recent years from donations from parents and alumni, as well as major grant-making Trusts), other ways of contributing are encouraged and valued. Our younger alumni provide students of the School with valuable feedback about universities and career steps that will directly benefit our Sixth Formers. Parents and alumni are speakers at our lectures and can offer their professional wisdom and experience as governors and volunteers, or introduce us to their own networks to help widen the School's reach. In addition, the Society Office has launched 'Voices of ORs' inviting our ORs to share their life experiences, challenges and successes with our community providing a meaningful way to connect with our current pupils.

Reading School's social media presence has grown substantially with targeted approaches through LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and all Reading School connections are invited to join it. In addition, in May 2020 the Society Office launched the Reading School Alumni Society which is growing significantly and has attracted new members globally. This is to provide a platform for Old Redingensians to share opportunities with like-minded individuals i.e., graduate opportunities as well as provide mentoring to current and undergraduate alumni. The platform also enables the creation of local OR groups in various regions and countries around the world. The new feature recently added is the business directory and jobs board.

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The Society Office's strategy which encompasses: communications via social media; events - whole school key events; alumni relations and development are all paramount to the development and fundraising to the future of the school as we widen access to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, provide enhanced wellbeing support to staff and students, provide co-curricular activities beyond the classroom and support careers and mentoring advice for all, as well as improve the school's utilities and maintain the fabric of the School.

The School continues to nurture its relationships with its key stakeholders; The Reading Foundation; Reading School Parents Association (RSPA); and the Old Redingensians Association (ORA) and indeed all parents and ORs who partake in supporting Reading School.

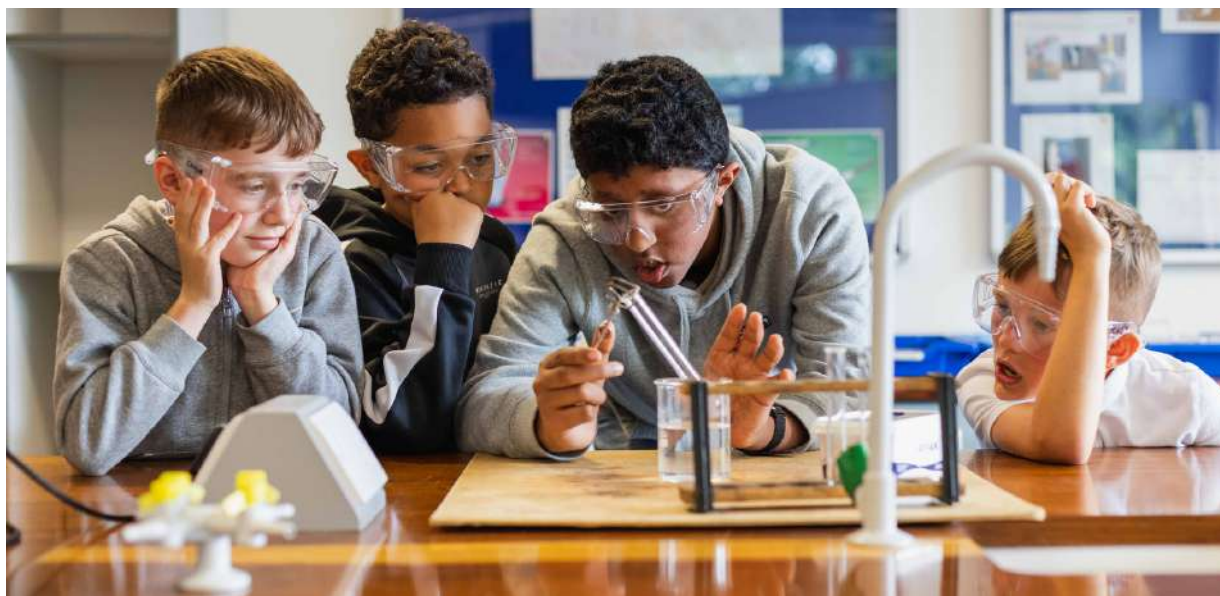
We are most grateful for grants from the Reading School Parents' Association (RSPA) used for various School projects and initiatives in 2022/23. The RSPA continued the highly successful Christmas Amazon departmental wish list. This year again, they invited every department to create a wish list, which parents donated to - either buying specific items, vouchers. We've had wonderful feedback from departments who received their items, directly and positively impacting our student's learning. The RSPA, a membership association, open to all parents, kindly sponsored and served drinks at the Leavers BBQ & Senior Prize Giving ceremony and the sponsorship of 22 Reading School hoodies for pupil premium students. They also provided drinks to purchase at our annual Sports Personality of the Year event.

This year also saw the return of the RSPA Summer Fayre. It was a wonderful event bringing the School community together. The students were able to provide charity stalls and the RSPA invited the new incoming Year 7 families to welcome them to our School.

They are integral in providing volunteering support at the Careers Convention and other events throughout the year. The RSPA raises money through events, Membership Subscription and other fundraising initiatives, to enable the school to pay for equipment and sponsor events outside the normal school budget which will enrich the life of our pupils. The RSPA run a mix of virtual and in person events to help raise funds.

In the last few years, this has enabled the purchase of gym equipment, Christmas tree and decorations and the refurbishment of the 6th form common room. The fundraising target this year is to purchase outdoor seating in various locations on our estate. This will significantly enhance the experience of students and our wider school community when we hold outdoor events.

The fundraising has been possible through a Year 7 school disco event, cake sales, Just Giving Page, RSPA lottery, Bags2School collection and nearly new Uniform shop and hoodies, parental corporate matching and ongoing online fundraising platforms such as Giving Machine and Easy Fundraising.



The Society Office promotes legacy donations to ensure that Reading School will continue the ethos of 'learn, lead and serve' as well as increase engagement with the Reading School community, through whole school events such as Senior and Junior Prize Giving, reunions for our alumni, Inspire Lectures to benefit the pupils, and continued engagement via social media to ensure the building of alumni relations and the whole school community.

The Society Office works to successfully secure corporate sponsorships for events such as the Careers Convention, Sports Awards and the Grand Reunions, building partnership with local businesses who share the same ethos and values of Reading School. The joint partnership with Johnson Matthey & Co has seen the second year of the Science & Me and Future Stories project deliver Science workshops to over 5 local primary schools widening STEM access for primary school students situated in disadvantaged local areas.

Reading School has developed truly collaborative approach with local partnerships as a part of our Future Stories to provide sports and coaching activities to local primary schools in disadvantaged areas with Reading School student mentors such as Berkshire County Cricket Club, Reading Football Academy Club and Get Berkshire Active as well as the maths, English, science and sports mentoring that takes place through the academic year. This has been led by Mr T Evans, Assistant Head.

In addition, as we move towards the 900th Anniversary celebrations in 2025 the Reading Foundation is keen to support the maintenance programme which is required to preserve the Grade II listed buildings. To this end the Reading Foundation kindly provide grants for renovation and upkeep of our buildings. Reading Foundation also annually support Future Stories, together with OR donors, who provide bursaries to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Mary Bursary now provides additional support to 15 students, running in its second year and doubling the number of recipients. Four donors are making an impactful and meaningful difference to these students providing the recipients of the Mary Bursary to take full advantage of the opportunities available at Reading School. In addition, one student is supported by the James Scholarship beyond Reading School for 3 years. Reading School has worked through its flagship Future Stories social mobility programme to increase the socio-economic diversity of its intake which has seen an increase in the numbers of families who fit the criteria of pupil premium requiring further financial aid.



The Society Office successfully launched a Physics Equipment campaign in February 2023 and thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we exceeded our target of £13,500 for Physics equipment appeal in less than 1 month, following our successful lab-refurbishment opening event in late January. This contributed towards the purchase of black-out blinds for science labs to provide an optimal room darkening for experiments, help fund the purchase of 2 sets of motor-generator demonstration device, a new signal generator with display screen, a new hydraulic press demonstration system, 8 sets of Jolly Bulbs, as well as some more crucial equipment and necessities like Boyle's law demonstration equipment, high-resolution mass balance, 7 sets of coulombmeters, 15 sets of thermal conductivity apparatus and over 100 additional electric circuit components and cables - integral to being able to undertake hands-on experiments in Physics.

We are grateful for the encouraging comments and feedback we received on the importance of supporting the Physics equipment appeal and our students in getting the best educational experience.

This year, the Community Relations Manager has led on the school increasing its lettings capacity in order to generate income through the academic year, holidays and weekends by lettings the school's facilities. Reading School hosts computer and activity workshops for children and organises catered events including wedding and wedding receptions, conferences, team meetings, private parties, charity events and a film location. This year we have arranged guided tours of our Alfred Waterhouse Building working with the local Reading Heritage group.

The Executive Assistant, has led on Future Stories Community Enterprise Ltd (FSCE), a subsidiary of Reading School, which has developed a new entrance test specifically for Grammar Schools, working alongside Sue Stothard (Stothard Education Ltd), we have developed and rolled out a test which is designed to be both rigorous yet accessible to both disadvantaged and visually impaired children. This is designed to break down barriers, promote social mobility and generate income.

Reading School has also secured a CIF bid for extensive Health and Safety and electrical works to be undertaken over the next year.

As a member of the Institute of Development Professional in Education, Reading School is committed to following best practice in all its development and fundraising activities. The Society Manager is also the Vice President of the South West Regional Area sharing best practice with independent and state schools in the local area. All fundraising activities and approaches to constituents for funds meet the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission, GDPR and PECR legislation. The Society Office coordinates all fundraising activities.



The majority of these activities are controlled by the Society Office. Those that are not (such as pupils collecting for charity days) have been risk assessed to ensure that they are suitable. We would never attempt to solicit from the vulnerable, nor be intrusive.

Fundraising approaches should always be respectful and tailored to prospects' individual wishes as far as possible. Donations come from fruitful relationships with our supporters, companies who wish to be our partners, and appropriate grant-making trusts.

We would rarely seek gifts from the wider public, except for the conservation of our Grade II heritage buildings.

We have received no complaints about our fundraising in the past year.

Risks & Challenges

The School has an excellent record in meeting its challenges, and the governors recognise the key role of talented and dedicated staff in this. Currently, the principal risks and uncertainties are:

- Major efforts made to bridge the funding gap caused by reductions to revenue funding will need to continue. Revenue expenditure has been progressively reduced to the minimum level compatible with sustaining academic standards and meeting all the ambitions set out in the Strategic and Annual plans.
- Given this position, and the fact that there are elements of costs which the School cannot control (e.g. pension contributions), it is vital that the School sustains and (if possible) increases its level of revenue income in future years. In the past, the main means of doing so has been through increased pupil numbers, but the School has now increased student numbers in Year 7 and the Sixth Form to maximum capacity.
- The School's funding position is such that subjects which few students opt for, particularly at A-level, cannot be offered economically. This poses a potential threat to the breadth of the curriculum. Governors will continue to monitor the position, whilst recognising that it is ultimately difficult and undesirable to attempt to control or unduly influence student choices. Annual Operational Plans will continue to include actions aimed at sustaining curriculum breadth.
- The School needs to be able to raise additional funds at local level to support major improvements to its facilities, particularly sports facilities. The position on fundraising and the use of funds raised is regularly and closely monitored by governors in Committee meetings and the generation of substantial funds for capital projects is one of the major future challenges facing the School. The Sustainability Working Group referred to above has been created to address this need in a systematic way.
- Given the nature of the School site and buildings, the risk of unforeseen and expensive repair work is substantial and can lead to urgent funding needs, as recent experience shows. The Governing Body is seeking to reduce this risk by identifying the highest priorities and tackling them pro-actively, so as to minimise the extent of unexpected problems – in this context, governors acknowledge the contributions made by the Reading Foundation. This issue is another that is being addressed by the Sustainability Working Group.
- The nature of the School site and buildings also puts an emphasis on monitoring and upgrading building services and facilities. In the past three years, governors have increased monitoring activities designed to ensure that the School is safe, well maintained and complies with relevant regulations, particularly through improved reporting to the Property & Projects Committee.
- The listed status of much of the School's buildings creates additional complications, as it can make the obtaining of consents for repairs to the fabric of buildings more complicated and expensive.
- Like most organisations, the School is potentially vulnerable to cyber attacks, and will continually seek to better its protection against such attacks in the future.
- There is an issue over government expectations that the membership of the Trust should be separate from the membership of the Governing Body. The School sought DfE approval for revised articles of association which aligned with this expectation in April 2022, but has yet to receive such approval.

Financial Review

Most of the Academy's revenue income comes from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of recurrent grants. These grants and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities. The School has sought to ensure that absolute revenue funding levels remain constant, with funding cuts being offset by increases in pupil numbers, following decisions a few years ago to increase entry numbers at Year 7 and in the sixth form.



The Academy also received a small annual devolved formula capital grant in 2022/23, which has been applied to general refurbishment work and redecorations.

The consolidated budget for 2022/23, set in July 2022, showed a small surplus of just over £115,000, before accounting adjustments. The final consolidated accounts for 2022/23 are likely to show an improvement on this projected out-turn.

For accounting purposes the Boarding department is fully integrated within the Academy Financial Statements, whereas at operational level Boarding is run entirely separately from the School. Boarding numbers have increased in 2022/23 to the maximum capacity.

As at 31 August 2022 the net book value of fixed assets was £12,866,240. The figure for 31st August 2023 will be available in the final accounts for 2022/23 when they are published in December 2023.

Reserves Policy

The governors' policy is to generate reserves to provide funds to continue to enhance the educational and boarding facilities and to fund future development projects. The School had set a near-balanced budget for 2022/23. In setting the budget, the governors recognised that the uncertainties facing the School meant that all elements of the budget, including the use of reserves, would be subject to continuous review during the course of the year.



Boarding reserves have been restored to healthy levels, and a 6% increase in fees for 2023/24 will ensure that they remain so.

The governors review the reserves policy annually, but governors have concluded that there is limited scope for longer-term investment, since the School's plans are to spend monies, rather than invest them. Currently, there is no real desire to invest in markets with elements of risk, and the focus needs to be on achieving best value in low-risk investments. Governors have therefore agreed to invest sums in savings in fixed term accounts for up to 3 months, dependent on cashflow.

At the date of the 2022 balance sheet, the Charitable Company had free reserves of £955,693. The figure for 2023 will be available in the final accounts for 2022/23 when they are published in December 2023.

Investments

The governors' investment powers are set down in the Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, which permit the investment of monies of the Charitable Company that are not immediately required for its purposes in such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit subject to any restrictions which may from time to time be imposed or required by law. The Charitable Company's current policy (as set out in the School's Financial Procedures Manual) is to invest surplus funds in short term cash deposits, and that the governors will only authorise investment in other than short term cash deposits where this is deemed to be in the best interests of the School in the future. This policy was applied throughout 2022/23, and, with higher interest rates, resulted in the generation of additional income to the School.

This report was prepared on behalf of the Governing Body of Reading School by the Clerk to Governors, Mr Steve Vale.