



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

24 May 2024 – A Belonging Week Special

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# Introduction

Dear Students, Parents, Carers and Colleagues,

After having returned from a fruitful seven-city tour visiting Old Redingensians in the USA and Canada, I returned this week and was welcomed by the sight of Belonging Week in full swing. I make no apology for this week's Bulletin being 47 pages long (!) as it details the excitement and meaningful experiences and connections that have been built between students, staff and our partners within schools across the Reading area this week.

These two special weeks are dedicated to fostering a deeper sense of belonging, community, growth, and inclusion. It is also a unique opportunity for us all to engage, reflect and grow together.

Belonging Week is not merely a series of events but a meaningful celebration of our unique and ambitious approach to learning, curiosity and enrichment. Throughout this week, students from Years 8 and 10 participated in a wide variety of trips and activities designed to strengthen bonds, promote understanding, and cultivate a sense of belonging. It is astounding to step back and see the number of trips made to locations across the UK, through to visits made to primary schools across Reading, alongside a daily carousel of activities at Reading School, which have all promoted learning, fun, opportunities for growth and reflective discussions. Each trip and activity have been steps towards building a more cohesive and supportive school environment where children, young people and staff step out of their comfort zones and embrace new challenges with support, trust and encouragement.

As Belonging Week continues to evolve and develop with the support of our whole school, I encourage each of you to participate fully, embrace the opportunities presented, and reflect on the importance of community in your own lives. Let us remember that the relationships we build, the empathy we share, and the understanding we cultivate are the true markers of our success and fulfilment.

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated team of teachers and staff who have worked tirelessly to organise this week and the week after the half-term, for the benefit of our students. This includes staff who have been integral to organising, planning and invigilating both internal and external exams. You have all contributed in different ways to creating a memorable and transformative experience for all and if there are any questions about the power Belonging Week has, I would invite you to glance at the images contained within this week's Bulletin.

Wishing you all a restful half-term.

**Chris Evans**  
**Headmaster**



# Key information

## Safeguarding – a reminder

The Headmaster's Bulletin dated 26 April 2024 featured a safeguarding notice making the school community aware of an adult male approaching students outside the Craven Road exit to ask for money and use of their mobile phones. Advice was shared with students to remain particularly vigilant in the area, wherever possible to walk in pairs or a group, and should they spot the male, to report it to a member of staff.

Staff members are maintaining a presence at school exits wherever possible and the matter has been reported to Thames Valley Police.

## Current Vacancies

We currently do not have any vacancies available at Reading School. Please [visit our careers page](#) to join our talent pool and we will review your application.

# School Community News

## Belonging Week

While students in Years 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13 undertook exams, Years 8 and 10 got to take part in Week One of Belonging Week. Students get to experience a wide variety of exciting and enriching opportunities, underpinned by Reading School's 'learn, lead and serve' philosophy. Taking place over two weeks, Belonging Week promotes and fosters a sense of community, inclusion and challenge for students, as well as promoting the development of emotional, social, academic and long-term personal development.

We spoke with Belonging Week lead, Mr T Evans (Assistant Head):

### **In your own words, how would you describe Belonging Week?**

The two weeks are a time when students and staff get time off the timetable, and where we intentionally create space to focus on character growth and work together as collaborators in groups for positive outcomes. Students have time to reflect on who they are, what they believe, and to work purposefully towards contributing to the school and its community. Belonging Week is a key moment in the school year when we get to see students who've learned skills since Year 7 and then take the lead in applying them and using them to serve the local community. Students in Year 8 start to look beyond their normal peer groups and stretch themselves to learn new things in new environments, learning from each other while staff highlight a narrative of positive contributions, integrity and service, which will benefit them in school, at home and in future endeavours.



## What is the value in taking part for students?

We want our students to be able to contribute to the life of the school and to understand that leadership and service go hand in hand. We want to help them understand that leadership is not about shouting and bossing people around, it's about being in the heart of a team, being prepared to sacrifice and give of themselves to serve others. We are developing skills and a mindset that will benefit them now and into the future.

We're incredibly proud of the way that our students already contribute and work together. Year 10s have had an extraordinary week, and we've seen our young men building relationships, stepping out of their comfort zones, passing on skills and encouraging others. It's been a privilege to witness. Perhaps even more so than in the past, we have seen our students engage with community service and social impact projects in a transformational way. Our students should have a real sense of pride in what they're offering, and we are so grateful for the work of our incredible staff team to enable this.



## Can you share some of the impact of Week One?

We've had about 1300 primary school students access Belonging Week, whether it's here on the school site, at the Reading School boathouse or out within our partner primary schools in Reading. For example, we've seen our best musicians in Year 10 take instruments to St Marys & Allsaints Primary School and share their love of music with young children. We saw Year 10s coach children who had never held a violin or trombone before. Yes, it was noisy and a bit of a

cacophony, but the joy created was quantifiable. Our students, supported by Mr Griffin and Mr Newman, really threw themselves into the approach of coaching and sharing skills.



**You mentioned a variety of activities throughout the week – please paint us a picture.**



In the science labs this week, we've seen our incredible Science and Computer Science Teachers and 37 Year 10 mentors share their passion for science and technology. Our Year 10s, who love science, sat down face-to-face with Year 4 primary school students from different primary schools every day. We've seen young children's faces lighting up with excitement as they get to see chromatography at work or as they create a chemical reaction in milk or as they fix a circuit. It's just been brilliant seeing how our boys support and coach children while also demonstrating their in-depth knowledge.

This is really what Belonging Week is about...it's a purposeful and meaningful opportunity for our boys to lead and serve while bringing out the best in others, and they make for brilliant teachers!

**Any other examples that you'd like to share?**

Outside of the classroom, we've had 30 students from primary schools daily at the boathouse taking part in canoeing and teambuilding sessions; again, our students showed up demonstrating compassion and empathy in enabling numbers of young people who have never been in a canoe before to embrace a new challenge.

Staff and students have supported primary school children to make bread during daily cooking sessions. I don't know where else in schools you would find Year 10 students preparing dough,

lighting fires (safely), and supporting 8-year olds to cook on camping stoves in a pop-up bakery! Being able to make dough is a simple and essential life skill to learn and it's been brilliant again seeing how young men like Olti K and Filip D, enabled by Ms Creegan, Mrs Senftlechner and Mrs Majorossy, have been able to get to know primary school children and teach them to make garlic bread.

The PE team has been super busy too, with 6 tournaments hosted across Reading and daily coaching sessions in Football, Cricket and Rugby. Mr Allen, Mr Sanchez, Mr Robertson, Mr Dawes, Mr Kearle and Mr Tett have all covered every corner of Whitley, Coley and West Reading with our student coaches who have advocated and been tremendous role models demonstrating the joy of team sports and helped young people to engage with a range of sporting activities.

### **Is there anyone you'd like to thank?**

Our students and staff have been out day after day, come rain or shine during Week One. It's been a tough ask and we've seen some tired young people, but they've turned up, shown the best of themselves and have grown together. They have done an exceptional job of passing on their skills to young people, opening up conversations and building relationships. This idea that in looking beyond ourselves, we can develop a sense of purpose whilst building stronger communities and contributing to society is central to our vision for our school and students.

We are so proud of our students and all our staff members and we are really grateful to have this opportunity each year as we get to share and take part in activities we love building deeper connections together as staff and students. The thread of who we are, what we are capable of and a willingness to go the extra mile ties our school community together. This extends to our parent community who have bought into Belonging Week and I encourage you to talk about the trips and activities that have taken place over the dinner table. Talk about what your children have found challenging, what their contribution has been and where they have been able to bring out the best in others. Perhaps even ask them what they will do next with the skills and behaviours they have developed!

### **Free event for young people – a reminder**

As part of the Reading Climate Festival (8 – 21 June 2024), Reading School will be hosting a Youth Mobilisation Day on **Saturday 15 June from 9:30am – 5:30pm**. The event, organised by and for young people in Reading, will be a day of future visioning and where young people can develop their campaign and filmmaking skills along with connecting with like-minded people with interests in politics, the climate and sustainability.



The day will also allow people to connect with a range of organisations in order to find out more about future careers. [Entry is free](#) and to book a free ticket, [please click here](#).

## Agenda:

9:45 -10:00: Welcome and introductions

10:00 -12:30: **Creative Horizons for Climate** and **Nature with Dialogue Matters**. This interactive session will help you express your vision for the future of Reading through various creative media. These creative visions will feed into Reading's Year of Climate Engagement, a series of events that will help shape our town's next Climate Emergency Strategy for 2025 - 2030.

12:30 - 1:30: Lunch Break. During the lunch break we will also have a chance to watch **Our Green Stories**, some amazing short films made by young people about climate change and biodiversity loss and the positive actions we can all take. Presented by the **Museums Partnership of Reading Youth Panel**.

1:30 - 2:00: **Young Voices for Nature** with **World Pencil**. Watch a nature film made by over 200 young people for young people and hear how the film came to life.

2:00-3:15: Creative campaigning with **UK Youth for Nature**, **Jelly** and **World Pencil**. Find out what campaigning is and learn how to run your own effective, creative campaigns. Hear about a real-world Poster Campaign Challenge and brainstorm ideas for taking part in it.

3:15 - 4:15: How to use your voice for good with **Reading Youth Council** and **WWF**. Learn how to successfully engage with politics and use your voice to bring positive change.

4:15 - 4:30: Break

4:30 - 5:30: **Careers panel**. Gain insights from five inspiring individuals and have the opportunity to ask your burning questions about careers that positively impact the climate.

## Obituary

We are saddened to announce the passing of Commander Nigel David "Sharkey" MacCartan-Ward, DSC, AFC (1943-2024), a distinguished alumnus of [Reading School](#). Born Nigel David Ward, he was a retired British Royal Navy officer renowned for his pivotal role in introducing the Sea Harrier Fighter, Reconnaissance, Strike aircraft to service and commanding the 801 Naval Air Squadron during the Falklands War. He earned the nickname "Mr. Sea Harrier" for his exceptional contributions.

Nigel's journey began at Reading School, where he attended as a boarder from 1954 to 1962. He excelled academically and athletically, becoming Head Boy and Captain of the 1st XV Rugby Team, and was a South of England Rugby Trialist. His passion for flying started early; in 1959, he received an RAF Flying Scholarship, allowing him to earn his Private Pilot's Licence in the Tiger Moth.

Commander MacCartan-Ward's legacy will be remembered by his fellow alumni and the wider community for his dedication, leadership, and pioneering spirit. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family and friends during this difficult time. Rest in peace, Mr. Sea Harrier.

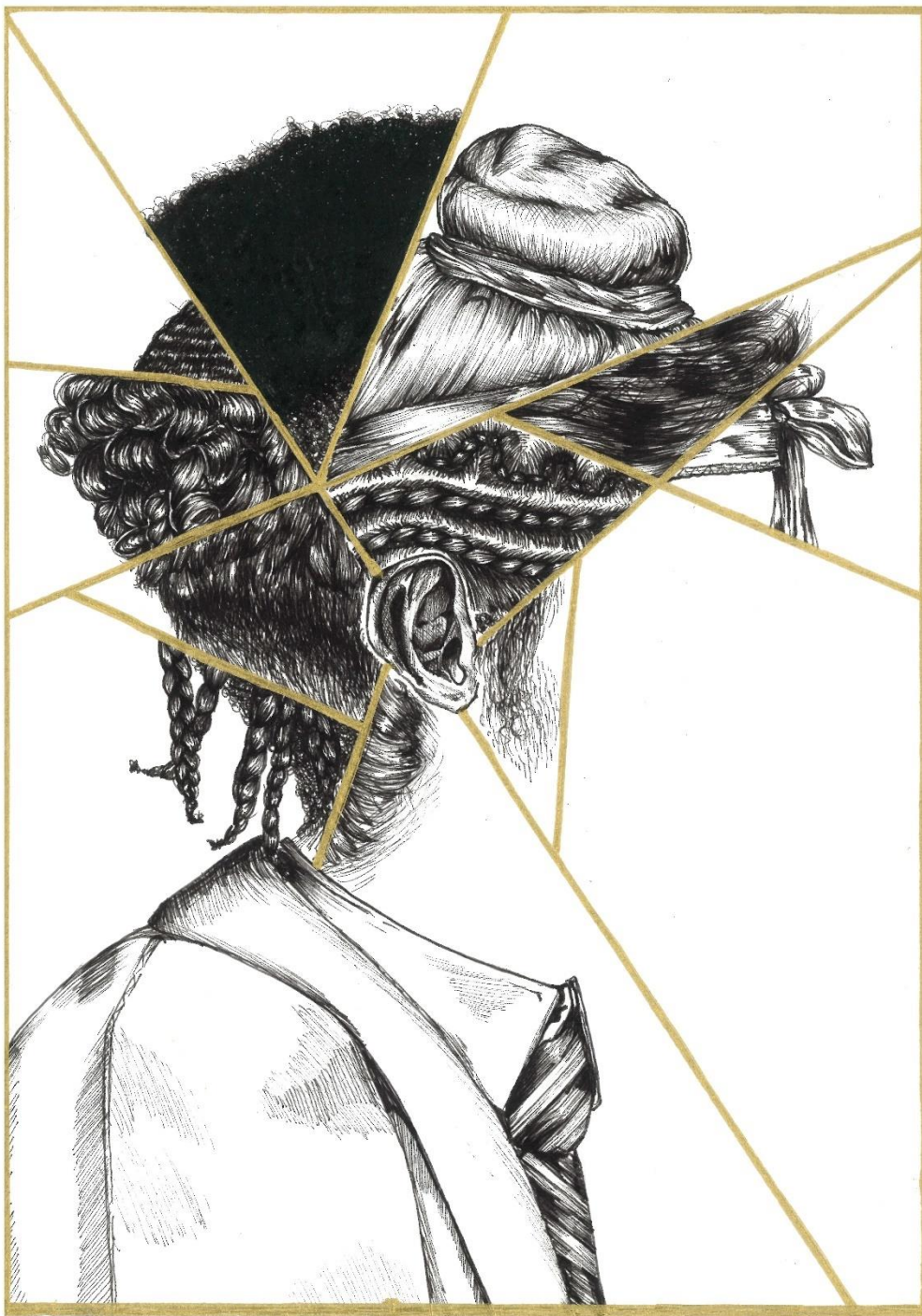


## Art & Belonging

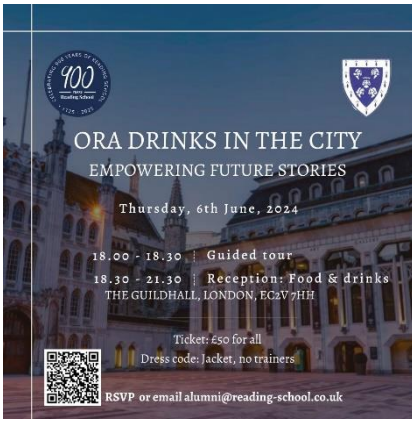
We are sharing a creative piece created by Jamie R (12MJK) titled, 'Crown' (fineliner and paint pen on watercolour paper) which ties into our Belonging Week. Jamie's work represents the cultural, racial and ethnic diversity of Reading School through different hairstyles and headdresses which he sees every day. The hairstyles reflect both young people's own personal styles and their broader cultural identity.

According to Jamie, *'the work is a development on a previous piece exploring the beauty of Black hair, inspired by the work of Gerrel AK Saunders, but now with a focus on my school community. In the fracturing of the hair you will find box braids, cornrows, mid tapers, curly hair, straight hair, waves, durags and Sikh patkas. The gold highlights the beauty of hair and self-expression through it.'*

Comments on the artwork can be emailed to [community-relations@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:community-relations@reading-school.co.uk)



## An invitation to parents and alumni



The Old Redingensians Association is kindly hosting an event at The Guildhall Hall in London and extend the following invitation:

Step into history and celebrate with us at The Guildhall in London. Experience a captivating guided tour of this iconic landmark, steeped in centuries of rich heritage. Following the tour, join our reception, where you can mingle with fellow Old Redingensians and current and former parents in the elegant ambiance of The Guildhall's private dining rooms. Tickets are limited so book before **Wednesday 29 May**.

But what truly sets this event apart? It's our commitment to making a difference. You will learn more about how Reading School's flagship Social Mobility programme, Future Stories, is dedicated to nurturing the potential of talented students from diverse backgrounds.

We extend a warm invitation to all alumni, current and former parents to join us for this meaningful evening. Tickets are priced at £50 for all attendees. As we come together, let's also mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, a poignant reminder of our shared history and values.

Reserve your spot now. RSVP at <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/event/ora-drinks-in-the-city-future-stories> and we eagerly anticipate welcoming you at the main reception.

If you have any queries please Jas Chhokar or Esther Chong at [events@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:events@reading-school.co.uk)

# RSPA

## Fund-raising success for school sport equipment

We were off to a flying start for our sports camera fundraiser, as a group of parents and children added their support as Marshalls at the Goring Gap event last weekend on the 18 and 19 May. It was an early start for some of our volunteers and the weather held as we took our positions to wave and cheer the participants on. Those manning the support stations were especially busy!

Our special thanks to: Indira & Rutwik, Mahesha & Surangi, Katy & Jonah, Alagu, Vinny, Edyta & Kacper, Anoop, Jay, Jaco, Yongzhou, Hao with Angela & Ethan, Clare & Kasper, with little sister Catherine. Thank you for creating the handmade signs and your time given which is valued and contribute to all students benefitting from new equipment.

Also, many thanks to the additional parents that offered back up support. Special mention to Shyama, Xiaoxiao and Olga. We welcome all volunteers for next year when we will hopefully secure even more slots!

A donation of **£1,080** has been awarded to the RSPA from the event organisers together with their appreciation, and great feedback from the runners for our enthusiastic encouragement.

To add your own support to this fundraiser, look out for the donation buckets and sum-up machines at the annual school 'Sports Person of the Year' event, taking place this year on 11 July 2024. Or transfer to our account, Reading School Parents Association, Sort Code: 60-17-21, Account Number: 04619919, Reference "SPORT" and your name.

If you wish to claim Gift Aid on your donation we recommend that a bank transfer is best. Please also then email our Treasurer on [tlorrimore@readingschoolparents.co.uk](mailto:tlorrimore@readingschoolparents.co.uk) to confirm your Gift Aid status.

In total, the sports camera and specialist software that Reading Schools PE Department have requested costs over £5,000. The aim of the investment is to revolutionise how the students engage with and learn from their athletic pursuits, by allowing PE Department staff to provide in-depth insights into individual and team performance with personalised feedback in order to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment for our students. It can even significantly contribute to students' chances of securing college placements or sports scholarships.

## Preloved Uniform shop

The opening dates of the Pre-loved Uniform Shop for this term are:

- Friday 5 July, 3:30pm to 5:00pm
- Saturday 6 July, 10:30am to 12.30pm

No parking is available on site on Fridays and the Pre-loved Uniform Shop can be found at the back of the Walled Carpark.

## Good Luck to all Year 11 and Year 13 students

We continue to share our best wishes and good luck to all our Year 11 and Year 13 students during their exams. We know you have worked hard, are very proud of you and regardless of the outcome, your effort and resilience are commendable and will serve you well in your futures. We believe in your ability to succeed.

Many thanks and have a lovely half term holiday. The RSPA Team

# Summer Term – Week 6

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



## A Belonging Week Special

Team Music at St Mary & Allsaints Primary School

























*“Belonging Week is a great way to interact with your peers outside of the school environment and it’s a new way of finding out more about them...you find different sides to them and it’s really interesting from that point of view. During Year 8 and 9 we got to go on trips and do different activities and Year 10 has been about mentoring others which has been really enriching.” Daniel P (10L)*



*"It feels like a 'de-tox' from school, it's either side of exam week so it can just help with a feeling of reset before half-term. I think it's important to build these relationships with primary school children, a lot of who haven't had a chance to go out on the water in canoes...I feel really good about that." Tom A (10W)*







*"I think mentoring is a really, really good thing because we haven't done it in previous Belonging Weeks and it's been different this year. I think at first I wasn't sure about it but over the last 2 days it's been such a good thing because I've developed skills and turned a groups of children into a team." George G (10L)*











Team Bakers at Reading School with Battle Primary School









Team Science - Over 120 year 4 pupils from Future Stories partnership primary schools working with 37 Year 10 mentors over four days in order to share a love of Science and Computer Science.

*"I think the Year 4s learnt a lot from these sessions as the students were able to explore subjects, they usually would not have enough time to experience. What I learnt from this experience is that the most crucial point to keep in mind when teaching is to let them experiment and figure things out themselves. By doing so the Y4s become more invested in the activity because they are doing the work and will feel more satisfied with their own creation."* Brahmjot S A (10L)



*“This wasn’t just an opportunity for the primary school kids to develop their skills and knowledge. As a year 10 student, I feel I have not only developed patience, but an understanding of the fact that diversity is nowhere near skin deep. Each child has their own pace when it comes to different subjects, and each child understood the material at different speeds and to different extents. If anything, every aspect of a person has diversity, including factors such as personality and pace. I would never have found this out if it was not for belonging week introducing me to the challenges and pleasures of teaching.” Rayan A (10S)*



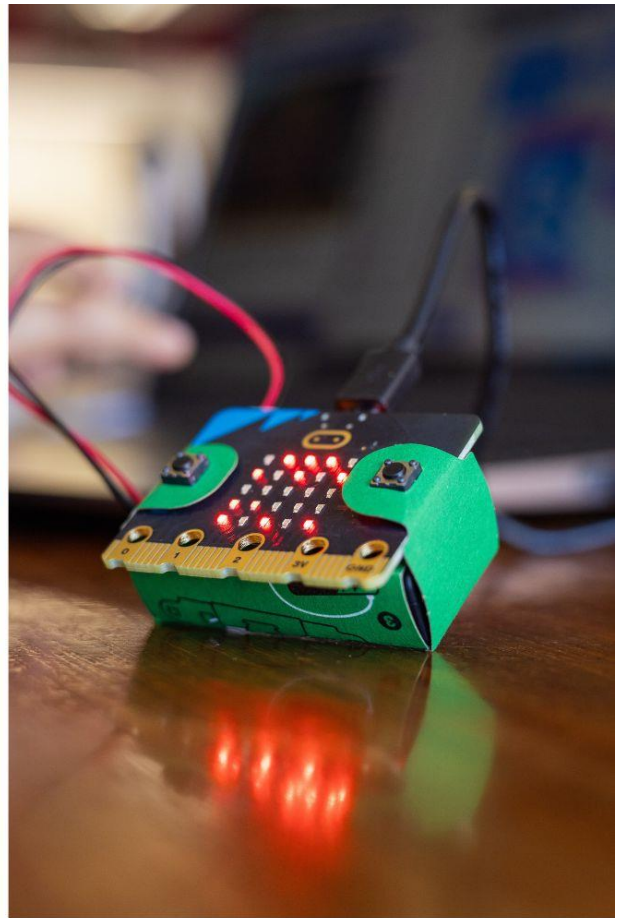
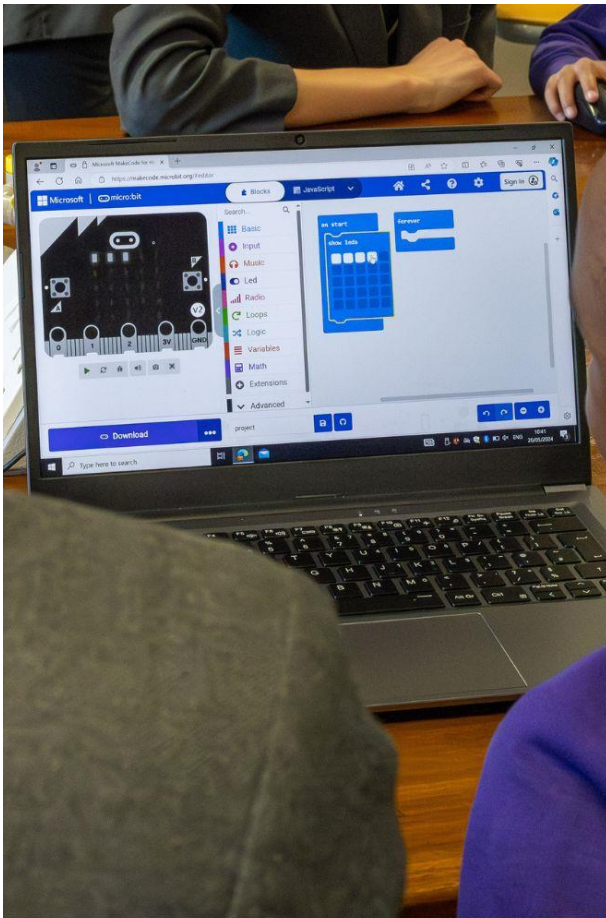
*“During Belonging Week this year, the Year 4 visitors were able to experience a taster of life in secondary school, while still remaining in their comfort zone. Additionally, they were able to learn new things about the sciences, like how parallel and series circuits work. I also found it fun to educate them, and thought it was interesting to experience the life of a teacher.” Isaac S-B (10C)*



*"I think that the most valuable thing that the Year 4s gained from attending the Science sessions is curiosity. Doing Chemistry experiments, programming Morse code, and making series and parallel circuits, made their faces light up. They were excited about the world of Science that they could start to explore. Above all I learnt how difficult teaching is, particularly when students don't understand what a teacher is trying to make them understand. Teachers aren't omniscient people who can read minds, so it's difficult for them to explain something to someone who doesn't see what they are envisioning in their heads."* Mojtaba C (10E)



*"I feel that everyone here received new experiences which can help them be leaders in many future scenarios. This opportunity has also given me the chance to understand and empathise with the younger generation which has also helped with my communication skills and ability to teach."* Ishaan I (10L)



*“During Belonging Week this year, I believe that the Year 4 visitors have been able to experience an exemplar of life in secondary school as well as a rough idea of what science related subjects involve. The Year 4s have also been able to experience some interesting practical science such as making parallel and series circuits as well as paper chromatography. Personally, I found it interesting to change roles and teach a student as well as finding ways to express myself whilst educating others.” Jamie D (10E)*



Year 10 Team Science: Prayrit A (10S), Ahmad A S (10E), Amogh R (10L), Ashraf R (10S), Aulakh B (10L), Michael B (10W), Anshul C (10S), Mojtaba C (10E), Jamie D (10E), Ritvik G (10L), Adhrit G (10L), Riyansh G H (10L), Ashish G (10S), Ishaan I (10L), Alvin J (10S), Jaden Le (10C), Yicheng L (10S), Siddharth M (10L), Ben M (10E), Takumi P-K (10S), Sukirthan R (10S), Sumiktsal S (10W), Varad S (10S), Ben S (10S), Shaurya (10E), Nabhya S (10C), Rushil S (10C), Akshaiyan S (10S), Isaac S-B (10C), Sameer T (10W), Adhvay V (10W), William W (10C), Richard W (10W), Adrian W (10E), William W (10S), Theodore Y (10E), Amanuel Y (10C)

Staff Team: Mrs C Heston, Mr O Thomas, Mr Z McAllister, Dr S Hu, Ms S Peoples and Mrs M Ivanova

Team Rugby with Battle Primary School







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