



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

7 June 2024 – A Belonging Week Special

Contents

Introduction	3
Key information	4
All Years	4
Expectations	4
Staff Gratitude	5
Safeguarding	5
Current Vacancies	5
School Community News	6
Belonging Week	6
Sporting Excellence	6
After-school Table Tennis Club	7
Reading School Inaugural Premier League Fantasy Football Winner	7
RSPA	8
Sports Camera Fundraiser – an update	8
Preloved Uniform Shop	9
Good Luck to all Year 11 and Year 13 students	9
Summer Term – Week 7	10
A Belonging Week Special	10
Belonging Week - Design & Technology Challenge	10
Belonging Week - Dinton Pastures	17

Introduction

Dear Students,

80 years ago, on June 11th 1944, Captain John Nicholson Wheatley died in Northern France. He was an Old Redingensian (East House 1929 - 1938) and had become a Captain of the Royal Ulster Rifles Regiment (8th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry). He served in France, Egypt, North Africa and Sicily. He landed on Gold Beach on D Day, amongst the first waves of allied soldiers to begin the liberation of Europe. Five days later, he was killed in action at the battle of St Pierre, 12 miles inland; the division having fought to gain ground inch by inch, and yard by yard. He was 24 years old.

I would invite you all to pause and reflect on the life and sacrifice of John Wheatley. Belonging Week has very much been about the golden thread that connects us all. A thread that weaves itself across generations and time. Whether you are aware of it or not, you are all young people who are continuing a tradition and following in the footsteps of ORs who have demonstrated immense courage and sacrifice. Men like Captain John Nicholson Wheatley and many, many others.

Consider that you belong to something bigger than yourselves. Being part of our school's history, heritage and culture contributes to shaping you as young people. Each one of you is contributing to its continual evolution, and we respect the past while shaping its future. Belonging to the Reading School community should provide you with a deeper sense of purpose as you pursue your academic and personal goals. Therefore, the next time you find yourself questioning your time here, think back to men like Captain John Nicholson Wheatley and ask yourselves what your contribution is, whether that be through your attention, achievements, involvement, or leadership roles. Attending Reading School is not just about receiving an education but also about becoming part of a grand and enduring legacy.

Thank you all, for all you have given to others during these Belonging Weeks. Thank you for trying your best in exams, and for throwing yourselves into coaching others. Thank you for adding your own efforts to our adventures in residential settings, on the Thames and in physical challenges. Thank you for being our ambassadors in work experience placements and in primary schools. It has been a privilege to witness your spirit and endeavours during this fortnight.

In the words of Alan Johnson (OR 1940-1949) while sharing his memories of being at Reading School during the war, "One never really leaves Reading School. Over the years, I have often asked myself whether I was living up to the standards set by the school."

Chris Evans
Headmaster



Key information

All Years

Expectations

Having been out of 'routine' for three weeks now, it is important for all students to remember that usual behaviour expectations apply again from Monday until the end of term. We would like to thank all students for their commitment to Belonging Week and exams, and we want you all to keep up the positive momentum that has been created and built. For those who have taken exams, your teachers are working hard to ensure any gaps identified in your assessments will be narrowed as you continue to work hard on consolidating your learning.

Some helpful reminders:

- Punctuality: don't press snooze, get the earlier bus, walk that bit faster to ensure you are not late.
- Uniform: we will let you know if and when the weather is warm enough to not bring blazers, but for now, it is black leather shoes, dark socks, shirts tucked in, ties done up and blazers on. Mobile phones remain switched off.
- Learning: you will have seven weeks off during summer. Teachers will not stop teaching and the next six weeks are as important as the six weeks before your exams, so continue focussing and trying hard.
- Kindness: exam results and being out of routine might make some of your classmates feel more vulnerable; use kind words, be compassionate, be a friend.

End of Year Exam Results:

- Teachers have begun marking the end of year exam papers, but this process will not yet be complete, especially as some have been leading amazing Belonging Week activities for you, so please don't pester your teacher. You will get your results back in good time. Use this as an opportunity to practice your patience!
- When your teachers are ready, do not expect to get your result straight away. These exams are not the 'end', but an opportunity to learn, so your teachers will expect you to listen carefully to the feedback, show you how to create excellent answers and expect you to demonstrate that you understand how to answer questions excellently next time. Then they might give you your results back next lesson, or the lesson after that, or the lesson after that...
- When you get your result, be honest with yourself and look beyond the exam - rather than desperately looking for adding up errors by your teacher or blaming 'exam technique' (it doesn't exist!), think about the feedback that your teacher has shared; how much of that applies to you? Think about the preparation and learning you did throughout the year; was it as thorough as it could have been? What is really behind this result?
- Don't ask what the class average was! Teachers are most interested in your improvement, not your performance relative to your classmates - an average is an arbitrary score determined by other people. Instead focus on your own qualities and actions. It may give you a sense of pride knowing that you are better than the average, but it may also lull you into a false sense of confidence based on outliers. Just because it is average doesn't mean it is adequate.
- End of Year reports will be published on MCAS in year groups - please read and focus on the insightful and personal comments from teachers rather than obsessing over progress

colours and percentages. Year 9 on 28 June, Years 7 and 12 on 5 July, Year 10 on 12 July and Year 8 on 19 July (subject to change).

Staff Gratitude

Expressing gratitude to teachers and staff in schools is of significant value as all staff play crucial roles in shaping the lives of students and the overall effectiveness of schools. From a cleaner who will ensure classrooms and the refectory are clean and hygienic, to teachers who go the extra mile for their students and others. At Reading School, we pride ourselves on creating and maintaining a positive school culture, where appreciation and respect for others is integral to who we are. With this in mind, consider passing on your thanks to a member of staff, whether you are a student, parent, carer or member of the wider community, [by clicking this link](#).

Safeguarding

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

- Social network app KIK and what you need to be aware of
- Age ratings and what you can do to keep your child safe while online
- Tips to promote positive body image

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

Our aim was to intentionally create time, space and opportunities for our students to focus on growth of character while working together in exciting ways in order to produce positive outcomes. Judging by the feedback from our students, parents and teachers, Belonging Week 2024 has been a resounding success.

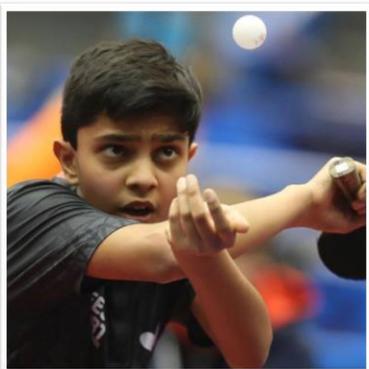
Assistant Head and Belonging Week Lead, Mr T Evans spoke with Pedram A (9C) this week, who shared his highlights, which were being able to go away with his friends and peers and take part in activities he's never tried before, activities that he was reluctant to do at first. Because of the support from his friends and peers, he pushed himself out of his comfort zone and challenged himself. His takeaway was being able to trust his friends who supported him in having the confidence to try new things and connect with others. Pedram's snapshot is illustrative of the aims of Belonging Week – seeing young people growing in confidence, knowing themselves better and growing together.

Furthermore, Year 10s were involved in an incredible range of social action projects on and off the school site, working in partnership with local primary schools in purposeful and rewarding ways. They demonstrated the importance of purpose and taking part in activities that enable a sense of belonging and inclusion while making a meaningful contribution to others. The leadership shown by the Year 10s was highly commendable and Mr T Evans shared, *'I left Reading Boathouse at the end of the day feeling incredibly proud that I could trust our students with the lives of others while on the water, in a safe way – it was phenomenal.'*

Belonging Week is underpinned by the commitment of all Reading School staff as they are the 'golden thread' that connects and binds all the activities (and exams) that take place. We would like to thank each and every staff member for their care and time in supporting our students' experience a rewarding two weeks, from enabling primary school children to try a musical instrument for the first time to canoeing and camping along the Thames. From camping out with our Year 7s to invigilating internal and external exams.

We would ask our community to reflect on Belonging Week being a representation of who we are as a school. We get to celebrate not only our culture but also identity as a school, which puts young people's character, development and service to others at the heart of what we do.

Sporting Excellence



The National Cup is a prestigious annual competition on the English Junior Table Tennis calendar where the top 10 high-ranking players in the country face off against each other in a round-robin format across a weekend of intense matches. Prayrit A (10S) was invited to play in the event, thanks to his top 10 ranking in the country and after being seeded ninth at the start of the tournament, Prayrit had a number of very close matches, with some of them going to the full 5 sets before a winner could be decided. Prayrit ended with 3 wins and finished 7th overall but more importantly – gained a lot of experience of playing in a tournament that requires a high level of focus, stamina and ability to remain balanced between victory and defeat.

Prayrit's father shared, "Overall, it was a great event, full of friendship and camaraderie between the competitors as well as high quality match-ups on every table. This was a great experience for

Prayrit, plenty to learn from and carry the friendship and memories with him as he continues his journey in the next season!"

After-school Table Tennis Club



Kingfisher Table Tennis Club is offering an after-school club for Reading School students every Thursday during term time. The club is open to all students 11-16 years old and welcomes players of all levels.

Time: Thursdays from 3:30pm to 4:30pm

Location: School gymnasium

Cost: £40 per month

To sign up, please [click here](#).

The after-school club is not run by Reading School and is provided by Kingfisher Table Tennis Club.

Reading School Inaugural Premier League Fantasy Football Winner



After a gruelling 38 game weeks, the first ever winner of the Reading School Fantasy Football League is Henry Robson (9E), with an excellent final tally of 2477 points for his team, delightfully dubbed "Paquetá Chips" in reference to West Ham's Brazilian midfielder, Lucas Paqueta.

We spoke with Henry earlier this week to share what Fantasy Football is all about:

'It's a game where you use player's performances in football to score points for yourself, so it's a game of strategy. And it involves using a lot of logic actually, which might be surprising, but you just have to look at the statistics to know what's going to happen a lot of the time. What does it take to win? A lot of time! It was time spent in a fun and interesting way and winning was the icing on the cake!'

Henry will be back next year to defend his title after beating out 152 other competitors from the school community this year.

RSPA

Sports Camera Fundraiser – an update

Following the success of our fundraising at the Goring Gap race event, we received a surprise invite during half-term to act as volunteers at another event, the [Reading 10k](#). We quickly pulled together some kind parents and students to volunteer on Sunday 2 June, helping to organise the runners kit bags, and distribute the medals and prizes at the finish line.

Added to our list of original volunteers from 18 & 19 May, we also send our thanks to Xiaoxiao & Andi, Levon, Annaliza, Edyta & Kacper, and Katy. Some of whom have helped twice!

These events are fun with a lot of good cheer and smiles on the day, as photos from our volunteers show. Our thanks go out again to: Indira & Rutwik, Mahesha & Surangi, Jonah, Alagu, Vinny, Anoop, Jay, Jaco, Yongzhou, Hao with Angela & Ethan, Clare & Kasper and Catherine.

A further donation of £250 has been added to the initial £1,080 previously awarded.



To donate to our account: **Reading School Parents Association 60-17-21, 04619919**, please use reference “SPORT” and your name to claim Gift Aid on your donation, and email our Treasurer on lorrimore@readingschoolparents.co.uk to confirm your Gift Aid status.

The sports camera and specialist software costs over £5,000 and aims to revolutionise how students engage with and learn from their athletic pursuits. Providing in-depth insight into individual & team performance with personalised feedback, and dynamic interactive learning.

Please do add your continued support if you can! With many thanks from all at the RSPA

Preloved Uniform Shop

The opening dates of the Preloved Uniform Shop for this term are:

- Friday 5 July, 3:30pm to 5:00pm
- Saturday 6 July, 10:30am to 12:30pm

There is no parking onsite on Friday openings.

Location: The Preloved Uniform Shop can be found at the back of the Walled Carpark.

Good Luck to all Year 11 and Year 13 students

Our best wishes and good luck continue to be shared with all our Year 11 and Year 13 students for their exams.

We know they have worked hard for so many years and they will come out with flying colours. We are very proud of them.

Good luck!

Many thanks and have a lovely weekend.

RSPA Team

Summer Term – Week 7

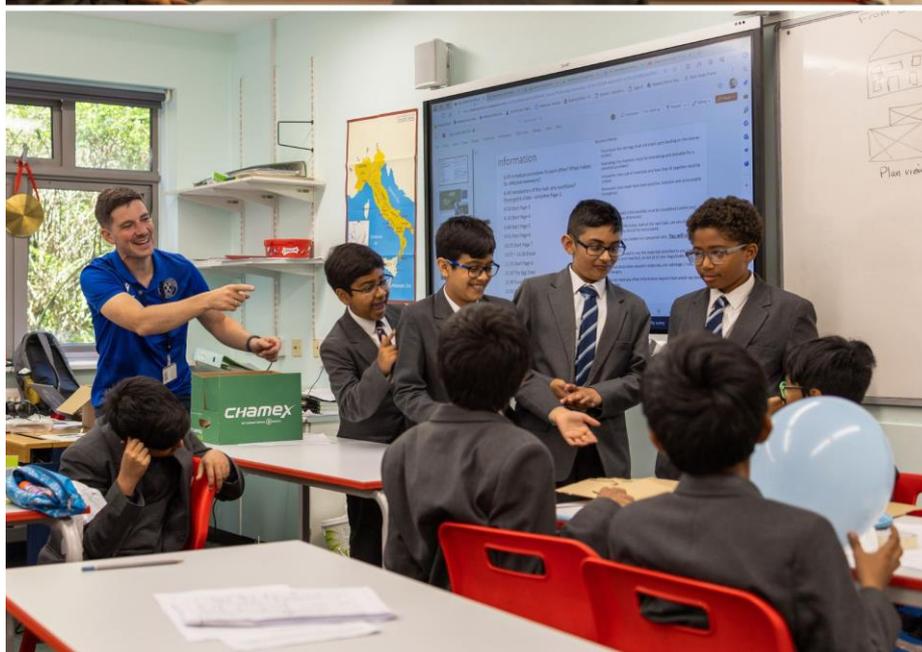
To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow, be part of and stay connected with the Reading School community.



A Belonging Week Special

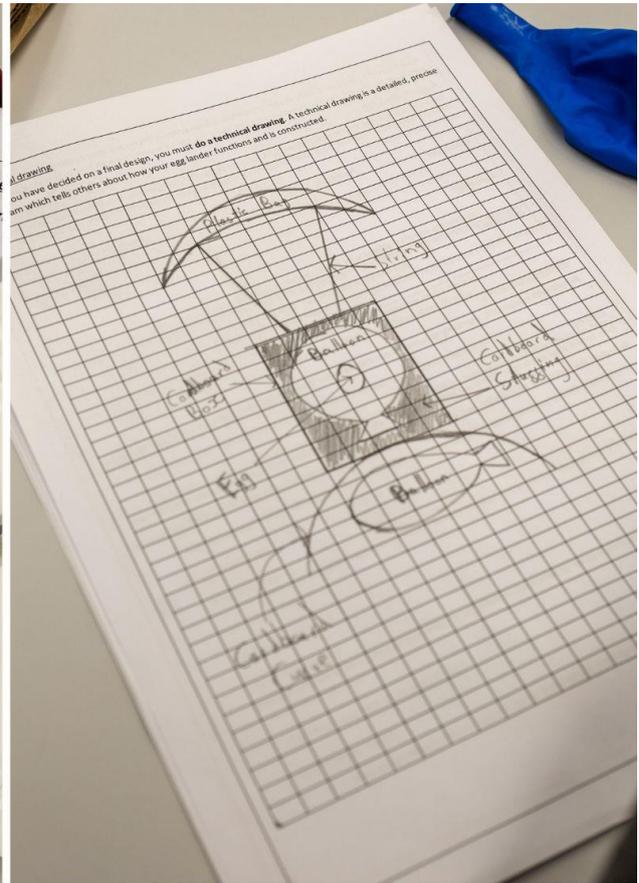
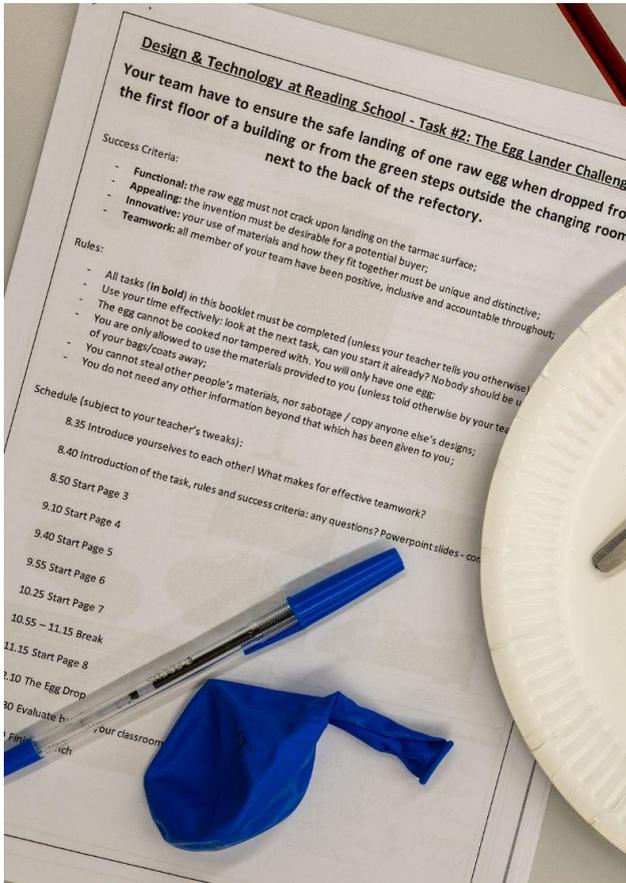
Belonging Week - Design & Technology Challenge

The next generation of designers and engineers came together this week in order to work in teams during a structured exercise where they were tasked with hatching plans that would safely land one raw egg when dropped from the first floor of a building.



Students eggsplored ideas in teams and had to work towards a four-part success criterion:

- 1) The egg must not crack upon landing, 2) the invention must be desirable to a potential buyer, 3) the use of materials and how they fit together must be unique and distinctive, 4) all members of the team have to demonstrate positivity, inclusivity and be accountable.



The teams were asked to draw inspiration from existing designs of objects which have landed safely and asked to consider what the designs all have in common, what it is about the design that makes it work so well, what aspects would be kept for their inventions and what aspects would they improve and why?



The team's egg-citing inventions were put to the test...









Belonging Week - Dinton Pastures

Year 7s also got to experience paddle boarding, climbing and raft building this week during a trip to Dinton Pastures Activity Centre.





Split into Red and Yellow Team, Year 7s were asked to work together in order to build a raft.

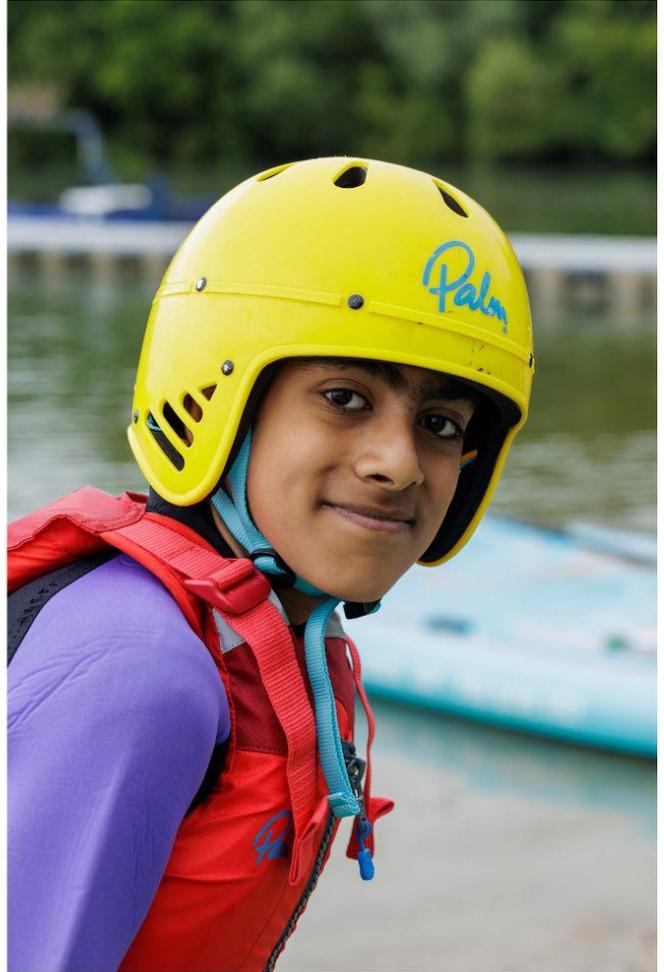




There were leaders on show as well as implementers, shapers, finishers and specialists.

















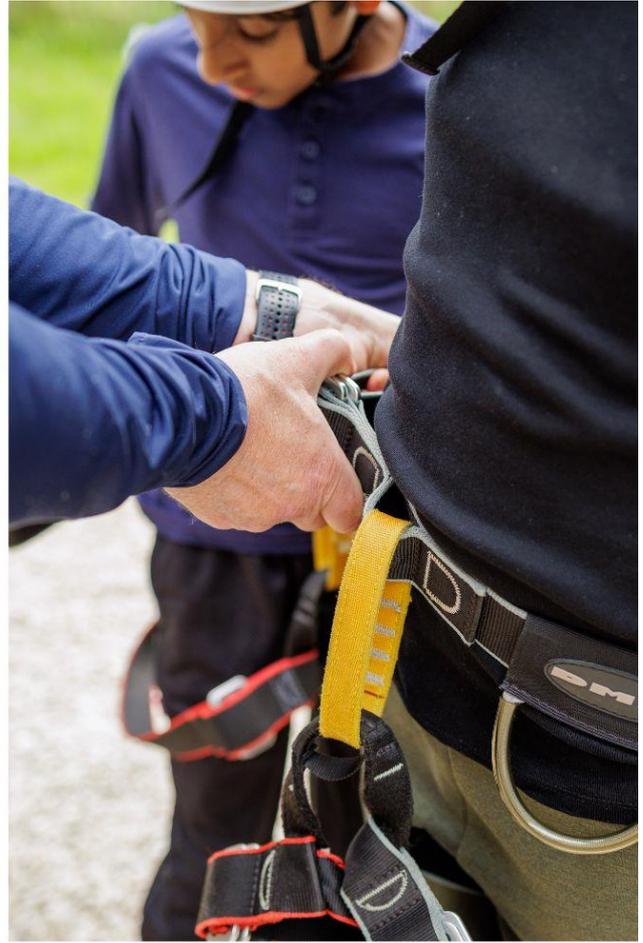
Teamwork, challenges, support and friendship



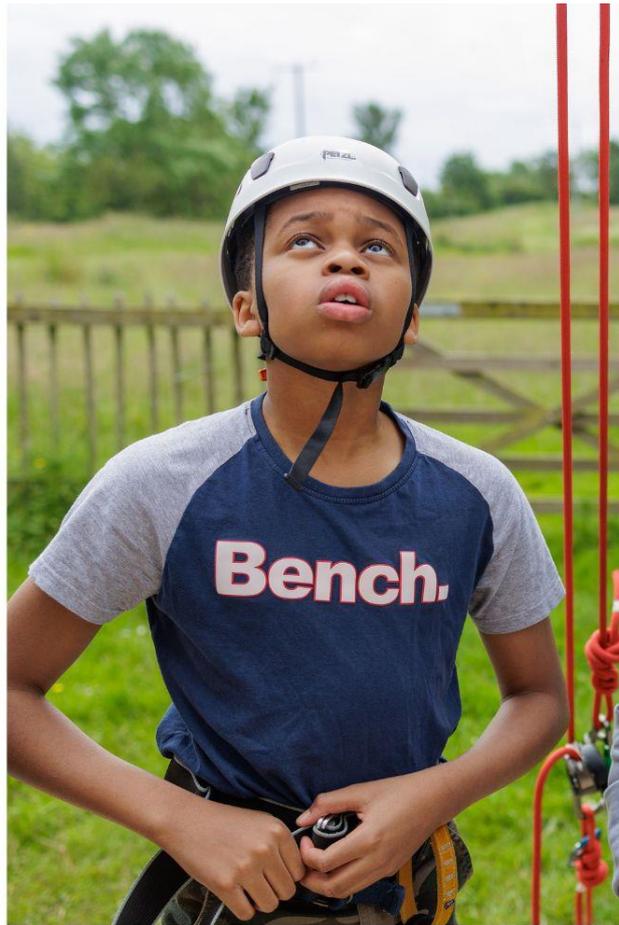
Climbing is a multifaceted activity that develops a wide range of skills and attributes, both physical and mental.



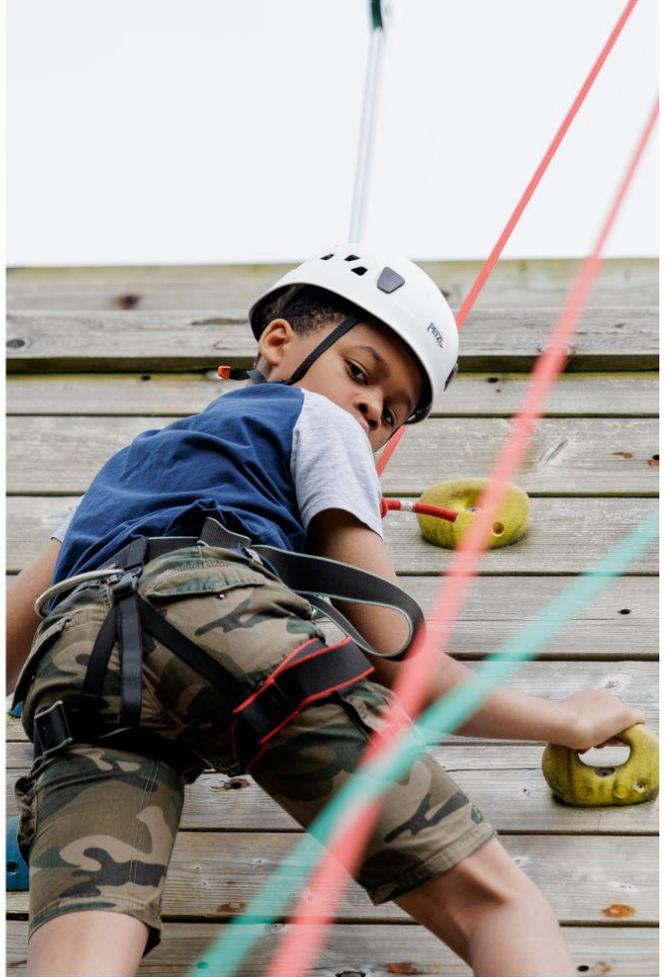
Safety first



Strength, endurance, balance, coordination, problem solving, focus, concentration, mental toughness, confidence and teamwork was all on display during the afternoon.







Belonging Week – Team Reach

(led by Mr Hu, Miss Hooker, Miss Rosser-Evans, Miss Batty and Mr Allen)





Belonging Week – Team Canoeing & Camping (led by Mr Wheal & Mr Thomas)



Belonging Week – Team How Stean ([click here to watch a video clip](#))
(led by Mr Till, Mrs Haugvik, Mr Tett, Mr McAllister, Miss Stratford and Mr Henry)



Belonging Week – Team Copenhagen

(led by Mr Evans, Mr Tridgell, Mr Robson and Mr Stephenson)





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.