



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

13 OCTOBER 2023

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Introduction

Reading is the golden key to accessing not only the school curriculum but also lifetime opportunities. At Reading School, we are committed to supporting the school community to promote the importance of reading. I would also urge every family to promote reading and discuss what you are reading together. We aim to break the cycle of faltering language skills nationally and have an ambition to promote the value, importance, fun and joy of reading.

Steven Pinker maintains that whilst every human understands language, print is an optimal accessory that needs to be bolted on. Part of our strategy is to track reading ages in Year 7-11 in what Roy Blatchford terms, 'a joyfully obsessional manner.' Not data for data's sake, but because reading is of such fundamental importance. We make no apology for being 'joyously obsessive' about reading. The promotion of reading interests is a key element of our second annual Reading Week. Voluntary reading for pleasure, reading for information and developing a passion for particular subjects are all elements of our approach.

Further to my previous messages about the importance of reading, we are getting excited about our second annual Reading Week (Monday 30 October to Friday 3 November). On Monday 16 October we will announce final details regarding our Second Reading Week aims and challenges for each year group. Our staff have put together excellent curated reading lists for each subject and each year group. Posters for these can be found by [clicking here](#).

For reference previous iterations of reading lists can be found here on the website: [Reading School - Reading Week \(reading-school.co.uk\)](#)

In addition, we have a superb online bookstore called 'Oliver' that students can access at any time and questions about the platform can be directed to Mrs L Kesteven by emailing lkesteven@reading-school.co.uk

The links that take you directly to Oliver for each year group's reading list:

[Year 7](#)

[Year 11](#)

[Year 8](#)

[Year 12](#)

[Year 9](#)

[Year 13](#)

[Year 10](#)

We are also excited about welcoming some fantastic authors to our Book Festival 2024, and encourage students to access their books in particular ahead of their talk.

Years 7 and 8: [Ross Welford](#)

Year 11: [Simon Singh](#)

Year 9: [Lewis Dartnell](#)

Year 12: [Simon Singh](#)

Year 10: [Sarah Govett](#)

Our whole school strategy for reading includes the following three strands:

- 1) Culture (Learning Resources Centre, Reading Week, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Events)
- 2) Disciplinary Reading (embedded high-quality texts in our teaching)
- 3) Intervention with relatively weak readers reported through the introduction of Literacy Flags

Crucially, our approach to the quality of education is shaped by the needs of our students, the concept of choice, the value of both depth and breadth. In addition, the importance of reading cannot be overestimated at Reading School. The work of the Learning Resources Team is significant in this respect. Whether it be through Book Week in March 2024, Drop Everything and Read, the forthcoming Summer Reads activity or the substantial Reading Week in October 2023, reading for pleasure and disciplinary reading are high priorities.

We are committed to prioritising reading, including through external funding streams. The importance of reviewing practice, for instance, through utilising consultants and external experts to unpick success and failure is evident. Significantly, it enables the avoidance of complacency and ensure that we continue to move forward.

This week, Roy Blatchford CBE ensured that we are challenged to celebrate positive characteristics but also seek to root our complacency or negative motivation. He is passionate regarding student voice and agency. He has experienced teaching and learning environments in schools around the world including recently in Dubai (with lessons taught in French, English and Arabic), maths mastery in Shanghai, along with reading initiatives in East Sussex and Essex. When Roy speaks, we need to listen and reflect. He has challenged us to make language more explicit. The final findings of his report will be shared after it has been considered by staff and the governing body.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Key information

All years

Medical emergency on school site

On Wednesday 11 October, during a sporting fixture between Holyport College and Reading School, a Holyport player experienced a serious medical incident during the game.

Reading School staff were quick to act and ensured that emergency services were called immediately, who attended within minutes. We are pleased to relate that the Holyport player has now been discharged from Royal Berkshire Hospital and is recovering well at home.

The Headmaster of Holyport College has asked Reading School to thank staff and students who acted with sensitivity and compassion. Players on field at the time have been supported by our Wellbeing Team and Headmaster.

School Behaviour Policy

Please click [this link](#) to view the school's Student Behaviour Policy.

Years 7, 8, 10, 12 and 13

Our traditional and annual Commemoration Service will take place on Friday 20 October at 14.00pm and should be finished by approximately 15.00. Except for religious exemptions, all students from Years 7, 8, 10, 12 and 13 will be participating in this event.

However, if you do not wish your child to attend, arrangements have been made so that they will be supervised at school during the afternoon. If this is the case, please email events@reading-school.co.uk providing your son's name and form with your request by no later than Tuesday 17 October.

Current Vacancies

Teacher Vacancies

Teacher of Mathematics - [click here](#) for further details.

Associate Staff Vacancies

Finance Officer - [click here](#) for further details.

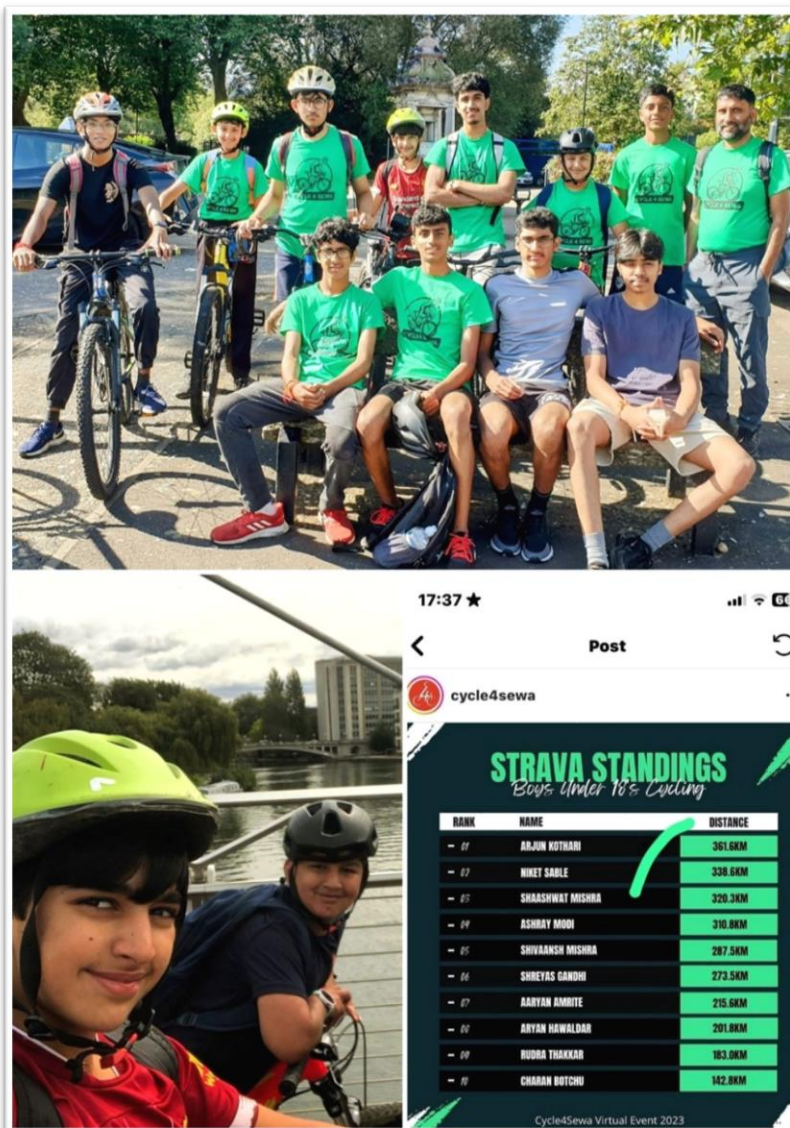
Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in Charity

Arjun K (7C) was inspired to get involved in a charity initiative in order to make a meaningful impact alongside his friends, Arjun K (7C) and Shreyas G (8C). They teamed up for the charity challenge, '[Cycle4Sewa](#)' which saw them collectively cycle over 600km across the Reading, Caversham and Henley on Thames areas. During the last 55km, the group, led by older students, cycled from Reading to Abingdon with the older students acting as chaperones and demonstrating Reading School values.

Cycle4Sewa (Charity number:1135425) brings people of all ages from across the UK to enjoy cycling while participating in service and charity. The money raised goes towards UK based charity projects that benefit people with disabilities as well as humanitarian disaster relief projects such as Ukrainian refugee support.

We hope their achievements, teamwork and dedication may inspire and uplift others in considering making an impact through community and charity initiatives.



From left to right: Shreyas G (8C) and Arjun K (7C)

Excellence in Writing



We would like to congratulate Tony C (13W) who won first prize in the Write on Art 2023 competition run by Yale University's Paul Mellon Centre for the Study of British Art.

Write on Art is an annual national writing competition sponsored by Art UK and the Paul Mellon Centre and it aims to encourage an interest in art history among young people.

We would encourage you to read [Tony's winning entry by clicking here](#).

Belonging & Community

Unlocking the Power of Independent Academic Research



Independent academic research is a key aspect of a culture that facilitates scholarship. We are committed to supporting this through provision of the Higher Project Qualification for Year 9 students, excellently led by Mr J Clack (Teacher of Theology & Philosophy) and Mr J Ginger (Teacher of Geography).

In today's rapidly evolving and competitive world, it has become increasingly important for students to go beyond the boundaries of traditional education and embrace opportunities that foster independent thinking and academic exploration. The Higher Project Qualification (HPQ), a unique program taken by Year 9 students at Reading School, empowers students to undertake independent research projects and develop invaluable skills for their future endeavours.

This unique course of self-directed learning, encourages students to delve into a subject of their choice, conduct rigorous research, and present their findings in a structured and concise manner. By embarking on this journey, students not only enhance their critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management skills, but also develop a deep understanding of the chosen subject matter. This academic freedom allows them to pursue their passions and interests, fostering a love for learning that can extend far beyond the confines of the classroom.

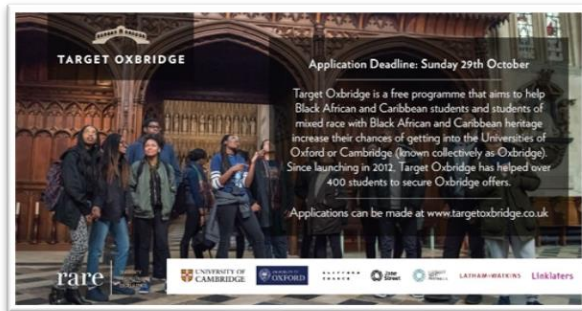
One of the key benefits of the HPQ is that it equips students with essential skills that are highly sought after in today's competitive job market. Independent academic research demonstrates a candidate's ability to work autonomously, think critically, and communicate complex ideas effectively. These qualities are invaluable in any field or industry, as they indicate a capacity for innovation, adaptability, and intellectual curiosity.

Furthermore, the HPQ gives students a taste of the challenges they may encounter in higher education or professional settings. It is no wonder that by 2026, many universities and employers will favour those with the HPQ, showing evidence of essential skills, such as data gathering, analysis, and synthesis, fundamental in academic and professional environments. In learning to navigate vast amounts of information, evaluate sources, and present their findings in a compelling and persuasive manner, students enrich their educational journey whilst being prepared for the demands of a rapidly changing world.

As educators and parents, it is crucial that we recognise the value of independent academic research in shaping the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and leaders. The HPQ provides a platform for students to unleash their potential, explore their interests, and make a meaningful contribution to their chosen field. As a whole school community, we must support and encourage

our students to embrace the power of independent research and equip them with the tools to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Target Oxbridge



We believe in providing opportunities for students from all backgrounds to flourish and encourage all to aim high and therefore we are highlighting a valuable programme called Target Oxbridge. UK-based Year 12 students of Black African and Caribbean heritage, including mixed race students, can now apply for a two-year programme of free, personalised application support. Apply by Sunday 29 October to maximise your chances of being interviewed for a place.

The programme has helped over 400 students of Black African and Caribbean heritage to secure Oxbridge

Applications can be made at www.targetoxbridge.co.uk

Sporting Fixtures

Monday 16 October

Football – Year 7 Trial & Training 3.30pm

Football - Senior Trial & Training 3.30pm

Tuesday 17 October

Cross Country - Year 7 - 9 Match 3 at Piggott School, 4pm

Rugby - Year 7B v Emmbrook (away) 4pm

Rugby - Year 7A v Maiden Erleigh (away), 4pm

Rugby - Year 11 v Willink / Piggott (home)

Football - 2nd XI National Cup v Bradfield (away), 2.30pm

Wednesday 18 October

Rugby – Year 8 v Waingel's (away), 4pm (A and B combined squad)

Rugby – Year 10 v Highdown (home), 4pm

Rugby - 2nd XV v Oratory (away), 2:30pm

Thursday 19 October

Rugby - Year 8 Festival at Blue Coat (all day)

Rugby - Year 9 v Holme Grange (away), 4pm

Football – Year 7 National Cup v Emmbrook (home), 4pm

Football - 1st XI v Sherfield (away), 4pm

Reading School Parents' Association AGM

The AGM will take place on **Wednesday 18 October**. Please arrive at 7pm as the meeting will start at 7.10pm in The Refectory. Cold drinks and snacks will be available, and we expect that the meeting will last for approximately one hour. If you wish to attend, please do let us know by emailing contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk in order that we may provide sufficient seating and refreshments to go around. We are delighted that so many people have shown an interest in supporting the RSPA, and the nominations received are as follows:

Chair - Nish Moody
Treasurer - Terri Lorrimore
Uniform Shop Manager - Julie Bellingham
Engagement Manager - Veena Baggley
Secretary - Deval Gujrati
Digital Manager - Anup Dholakia
Hoodie Manager - Jayne Sturk
School Lottery Manager - Jaideep Das
Communications Manager - Rohini Luthra
Membership Administration Manager - Pallavi Chube
Events Coordinator - Menaka Murthy
Lost Property Manager - Helen Sturk

We are grateful that so many people are also choosing to remain on the committee for another year!

We are also taking nominations for "committee fundraisers" to officially join our team and will be delighted to share further news with you in due course. At present we do have three people in mind from their amazing fundraising works since their time with the School, but are also looking for any other parents as to ideas that you may have to raise funds.

Please do get in touch on contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk if you have any comments or wish to approach us with your own fundraising initiatives.

2nd Hand Uniform Shop

Pre-loved uniform will be available from the RSPA run Uniform Shop this Friday and Saturday:

- Friday 13 October 3.30 – 5.00pm
- Saturday 14 October 10.30am - 12.30pm

Please come along to purchase blazers, trousers, shirts, base layers, rugby boots, trainers, outdoor coats and more at the Shop. The shop is located at the back of the walled car-park (opposite the Chapel).

The shop will now open later, at 3.30pm on the Friday. Buyers will not be admitted onto site before the end of school.

- On Friday 13 October, buyers are not allowed to drive onto site, access is via the pedestrian gates only.
- On Saturday 14 October, buyers are allowed to drive onto site and parking is available on the right-hand side of the walled car-park or outside it.

Please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk for further information.

Year 7 Disco



Get ready to put on your dancing shoes and let the good times roll! The Reading School Parents Association is thrilled to welcome our newest members of [Year 7 to a spectacular Disco Night](#). But that's not all - we're taking it up a notch! We're excited to share that we've extended a special invitation to the Year 7 girls from Kendrick School. They're just as eager as our own students to hit the dance floor and make this night unforgettable.

Details for the Evening:

Date: 17 November 2023

Time: 7pm to 8.30 pm

Location: Reading School, Refectory

For our Reading School Year 7 Parents (only), drop-offs will be at the refectory. From there, we'll lead you to our Meet and Greet event - a specially planned event for new year 7 parents where you'll have the chance to connect with current parents, share experiences, and forge new friendships. And of course, there will be refreshments to keep the conversations flowing.

This evening promises to be filled with laughter, new connections, and a whole lot of fun. Let's come together as a community to create memories that will be cherished for years to come.

We wish you all a lovely weekend!

The RSPA team

Michaelmas Term – Week 6

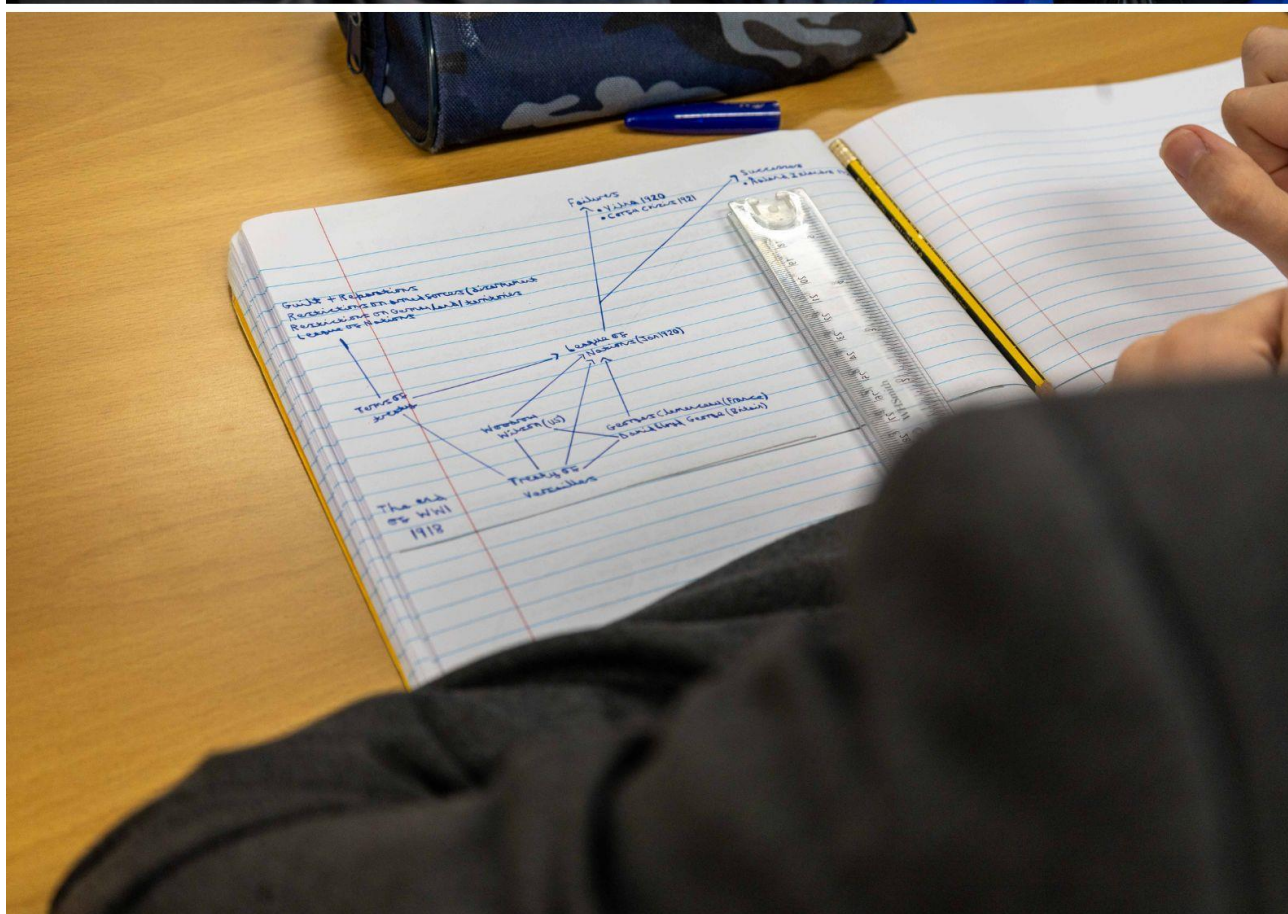
To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow and stay connected



Roy Blatchford CBE is the founder of Blinks Education and was the Founding Director of the National Education Trust (2006-16). He works with schools, colleges and universities in the UK and internationally and we had the pleasure of hosting Roy this week in order to conduct a review of our language strategy.



During the visit, Roy considered 3 strands: whole school language culture, disciplinary language and language intervention. His time was spent sitting in on lessons and speaking with students during English and Humanities lessons.





Roy's visit concluded with two student focus groups where he got to speak with a variety of students to hear more of their experiences in order to inform his report.

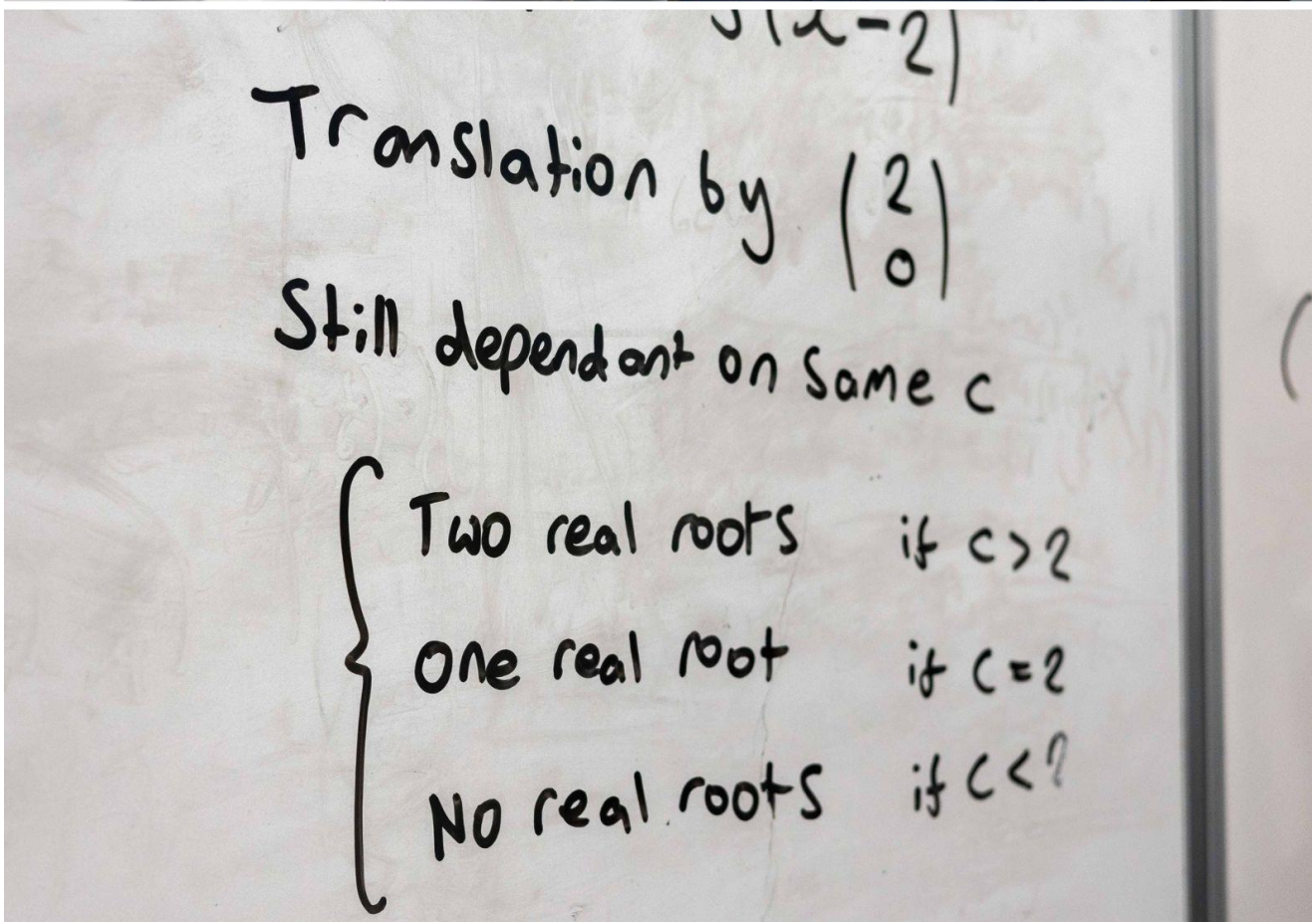
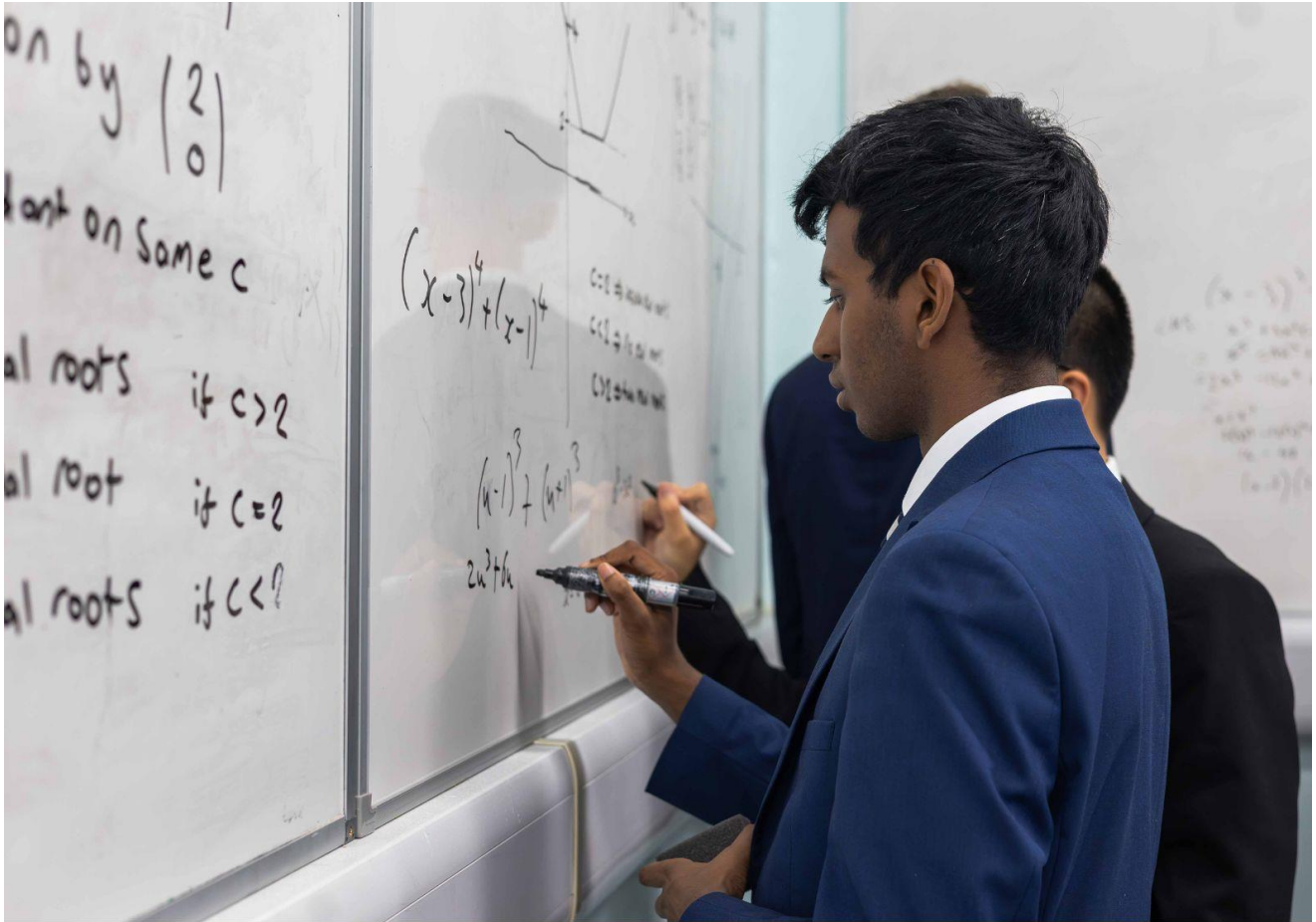


Many Year 13 students will soon be taking entrance tests for university. Several of these tests centre on mathematical problem-solving and, since the beginning of the school year, Dr Lewis-Brown (Teacher of Maths & Physics), has been running sessions focused on developing problem-solving skills.

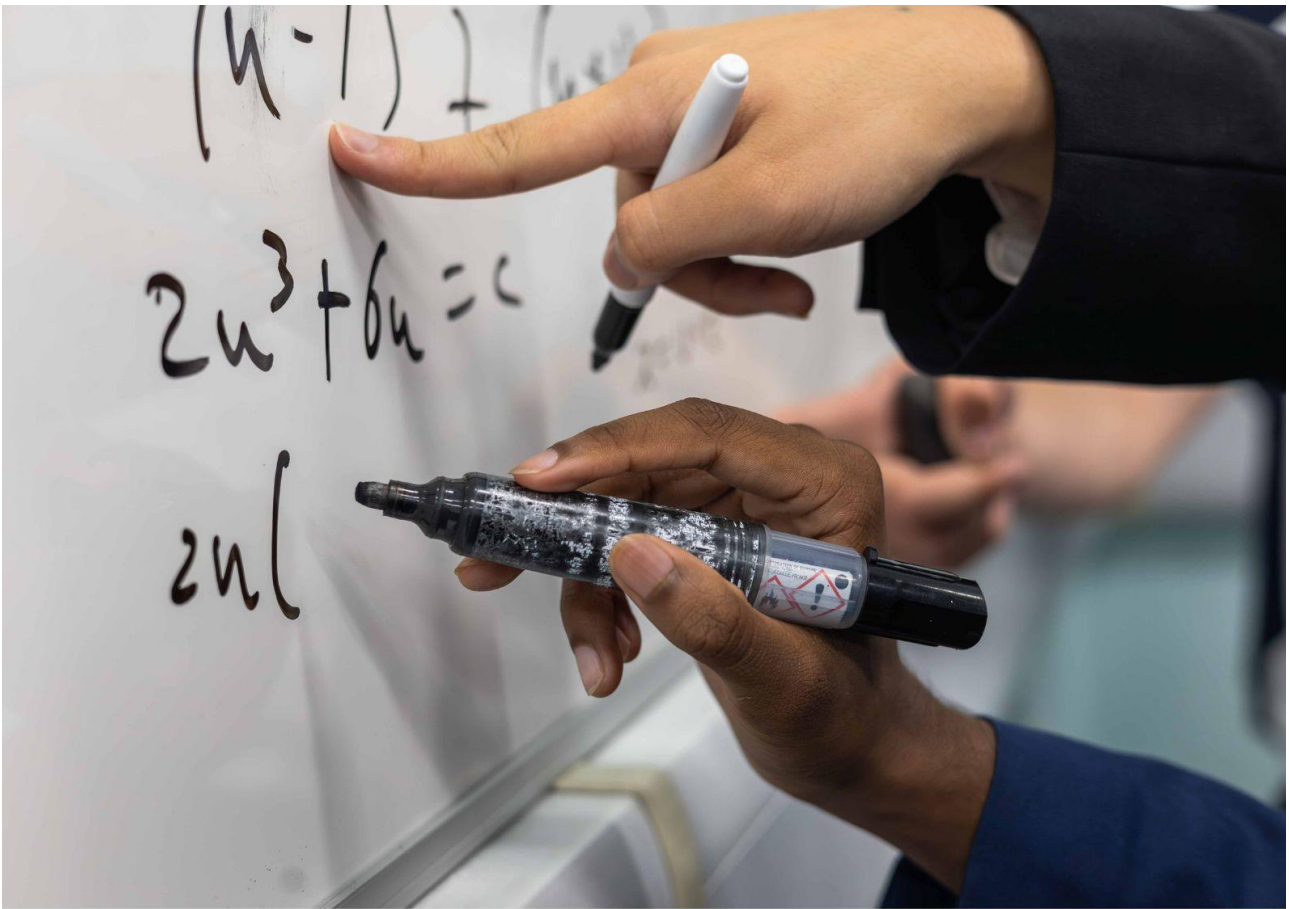
Rather than focus on any particular area of the curriculum, these sessions have looked at how to think through a problem, with lots of time devoted to students using whiteboards to work collaboratively on difficult problems.



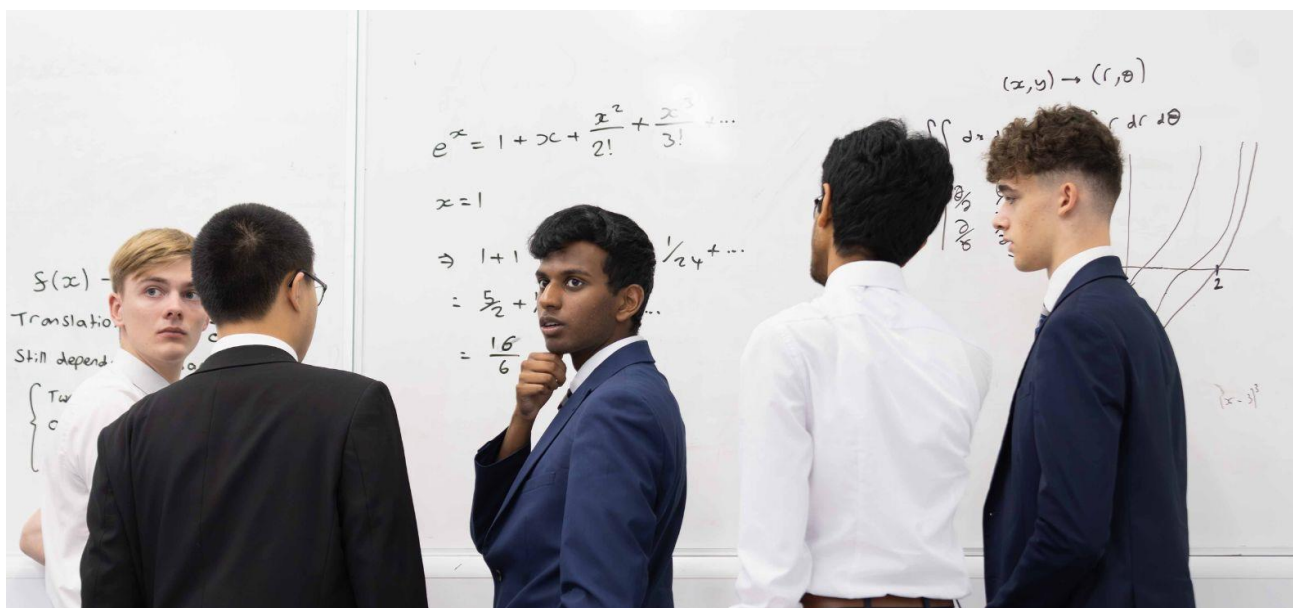
"I've always enjoyed mathematics. It is the most precise and concise way of expressing an idea."
N.R. Narayana Murthy



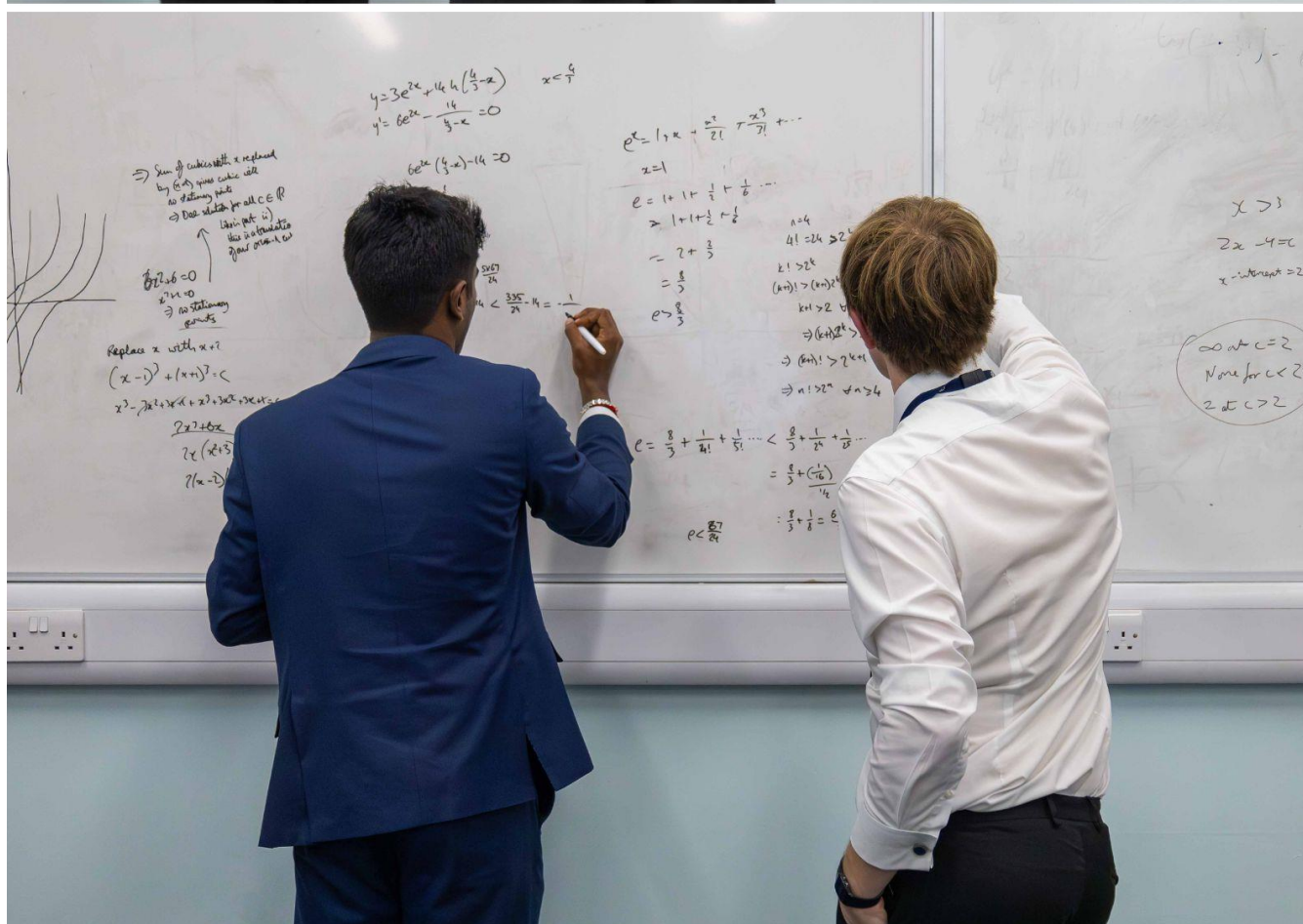
"We will always have STEM with us. Some things will drop out of the public eye and go away, but there will always be science, engineering, and technology. And there will always, always be mathematics."
Katherine Johnson



Mathematical problem solving offers a wide range of benefits that extend beyond just mathematical proficiency: Critical thinking skills, creativity, persistence and patience, increasing confidence, real-world applications, enrichment and enjoyment.



Mathematics. It's all fun and games until someone divides by zero.



Year 7 James Bond themed concert on Thursday 12 October





Jeremy Young & Helga Majorossy-Young
Haoran Zhang & Yingzi Wu



The 'Around the World in 80 Games' elective has travelled from India to Japan and Thursday afternoon's unexpected sport was...Snail racing (using the Norfolk rules). There was tense competition observed amongst the sluggish speedsters during a slimy showdown between a wide variety of garden snails. For the avoidance of any doubt, no snails were harmed during the elective and all returned to their natural habitat.









A Year 10 Floreat session led by Assistant Head, Mr G Fairchild, where students explore how their awareness of personality affects how they work with others to achieve a task (in this case, crossing a 'wide raging river' using a limited number of 'magic stepping stones'). By critically considering personality 'type' (using ['The Big Five'](#) measure), self-awareness can be improved and therefore aim to both be a more effective member of a team and be a better teammate to others.





On Sunday 1 October, Shivaansh M (12W) and Shaashwat M (9W) participated in the [Kho Kho National Championship 2023](#), respectively winning a Bronze and Gold medal. Kho Kho is a traditional Indian sport dating back to at least the fourth century BC and the second-most popular tag style game after 'kabaddi'.

Photo credits: M Mishra



Feedback is important to us and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk