



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

12 July 2024

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# Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Colleagues,

We approach the end of our Summer Term 2024 after what has felt like a remarkable time of individual and collective achievements across all subjects, sports, trips, the arts and other areas. These achievements are a clear sign and evidence of your endeavour, commitment and resilience and I hope you will use this summer to reflect on all you have achieved for yourselves and others around you.

I would like to thank all students for your dedication towards academic curiosity and your commitment to demonstrating our school values and culture. Your acts do not go unnoticed, and they contribute to the fabric of Reading School, making it a place that visitors describe as 'special' and 'warm'. I look forward to being able to recognise and celebrate some of your achievements during next Wednesday's Junior Prize Giving event, which will be a source of pride for your parents and families alike.

To our valued staff, thank you for your commitment and care to supporting and nurturing our students and each other. As next week's student-led 'Teacher Appreciation' event will demonstrate, you are respected, valued and mean a great deal to our students. Your care in creating exceptional learning environments and opportunities, in and out of the classroom, has been instrumental in our collective success.

Parents and carers, your support is also valued. Your attendance and involvement in school activities like this week's Sports Award Event, along with your encouragement and support of your children at home also play a crucial role in the development and flourishing of our students. I feel the hashtag #ReadingSchoolCommunity, which is often used across our social media platforms, is an authentic and meaningful one.

As we look forward to the Michaelmas Term 2024, let us pause to reflect on all we have achieved, the lessons we have learned, the friendships forged, and the goals met. Our commitment to excellence, integrity, leadership and community will continue to guide us as we find new ways to demonstrate them.

In closing, I would like to share key school dates for your 2024/25 calendars, which can be accessed by [clicking here](#). I wish you all a restful and enjoyable break. May this time be filled with joy, relaxation, and moments with loved ones. Let us return refreshed and ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities of Michaelmas Term 2024.

Warm regards,

**Chris Evans**  
**Headmaster**



# Key information

## All Years

### Non-uniform Day – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July

Charity Prefect Saad Ahmad (12SA) and the School Prefect Team have organised a non-school uniform day to support the [Motor Neurone Disease Association](#) (MNDA). The Association focuses on improving access to care, research and campaigning for those people living with or affected by MND in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Students are invited to wear blue and orange and contribute the minimum suggested donation of £2.00 to the fundraiser. [To donate, please click here](#). Please include your son's full name and form group in the notes section when submitting a donation for verification purposes.

Every contribution counts towards making a difference in the lives of those affected by motor neurone disease and your support is invaluable in helping individuals and families impacted by this condition.

### Option Choices and Elective Choices

Timetables are now in the process of being prepared for the next academic year. While you may see some elements appearing on MCAS/Bromcom, these are likely to change as final tweaks are made, so please do not take lessons, rooms or teachers as final until the first few days of September.

We were able to provide 92% of Year 8 students with their first choice of GCSE subjects, with a small handful using their 'reserve' subjects and only two students needing to change choices due to timetabling and staffing logistics. Conversations have been had with these latter students. This success is testament to the hard work of the Year 8 Tutors and Timetable Lead, Mr Pedlow, to create such fantastic pathways. A gentle reminder that all students study such a broad and rich curriculum at Reading School (details of which are permanently [published here](#)) that no career pathway is prevented by these option choices.

Elective choices are made by students directly through Microsoft Forms rather than via parents, and we believe this to be an important part of students taking responsibility for their journey at secondary school. The same goes for students finding out and communicating to their parents any changes to start/end times, locations or clothing for that particular elective (unless permissions are needed via Evolve, in which case parents must respond promptly). Parents can see what the timetable code on MCAS/Bromcom refers to by looking at the Elective List which is updated termly on the same link above. Some of these change on a half-termly basis, others termly and some are year-long.

Please [click this link](#) for our Electives presentation 2024 for Years 7-9.

### Parental Survey 2024

We would like to thank all parents who have so far taken the time to complete the Parental Survey 2024 shared over the last two weeks. There has been a wide variety of views shared and your feedback is proving invaluable in discussions within the Senior Leadership Team, especially as it will contribute to improving how we deliver our subjects and communicate with parents. By listening to your views and making changes wherever possible, we can ensure that our students receive the best possible education and opportunities for growth. An example of real change

already implemented within the curriculum is through the introduction of Design & Technology electives in 2023.

These electives are now a core part of our offer at for Years 9 &10, with students this week finishing their Woodwork elective using files, rasps, chisels and planes, whilst the 'Wheels etc.' elective built prototype vehicles, having designed them on Computer Aided Design (CAD) during the previous week. We thank the Reading School Parents Association for their generous support of this burgeoning area of our curriculum. As a parent or carer, if you have any woodwork tools to donate or D&T ideas, please contact Assistant Head (Quality of Education), Mr Fairchild by emailing [gfairchild@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:gfairchild@reading-school.co.uk).

With this in mind and in order to collate as many views as possible, we require more responses from parents in order for the questionnaire to be sufficiently large to present the entire parent and carer population. Please can parents and carers who have not completed the questionnaire, take the opportunity to complete the short Reading School Survey 2024 by [clicking this link](#).

## Safeguarding

### Support during the summer holidays

As we reach the end of the Summer Term 2024, safeguarding all our students remains, as always, our top priority. With this in mind, [please click this link](#) to access a student safeguarding flowchart that highlights support, how to get in touch with the safeguarding team during the holiday period and ways to access support outside of the school. We would encourage all students and parents to familiarise themselves with the flowchart and support available if needed, during the summer holidays. The Reading School safeguarding email inbox will be monitored Monday to Friday 8am – 4pm during the summer break.

### Parent Workshop

[Stay True to You](#) is a website developed by the Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership in association with The Ben Kinsella Trust, and takes a deliberately positive approach to empowering young people and those who work to support them, whether as their parent, other family member or carer.

There is a free online workshop available to dial into on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July from 6:30pm – 8:30pm with topics including; the current stresses for young people, online harms, how to have meaningful conversations with children and ways in which to empower them to stay safe.

To book a space, [please click this link](#).

## Current Vacancies

Do you know a talented individual who would like to join and be part of an exciting and leading educational institution? Below is a selection of teaching and associate staff roles currently available:

**Teacher of PE and Head of Cricket** – for more details [please click here](#).

**Teacher of PE** – for more details please [click here](#).

# School Community News

## Institute of Economic Affairs' Budget Challenge



THE IEA Challenge is an annual national competition open to Economics students where four of our students represented Reading School and came second. Achintha R (12SA), Nathan W (12JTE), Ranjeev S (12ZMC) and San C (12DAW) all took part in the challenge and for the first stage of the competition, the team submitted an essay which discussed the current macroeconomic conditions and likely outlook of the UK, along with a proposed budget, clearly setting out taxes and other sources of revenue.

On the strength of their essay, the four made it to the semi-finals at The Vinson Centre in Buckingham. Here, they had to deliver a 10-minute presentation to a panel of economists, justifying the policies outlined in the essay. Again, the team put in a great performance and made it to the finals, which were held at the IEA Headquarters.

After a very close competition, the team finished 2nd overall; it was a bittersweet result, but definitely an impressive one. The experience was deeply enriching for all four of them, giving them an opportunity to apply their A-level knowledge to real-world policymaking and challenging each of them to consider ideas beyond the curriculum.

## University of Reading Year 12 Stock Market Challenge



On the 3rd of July 2024, four Year 12 economists: Aarush V (12ELA), Jago K (12DAW), Shan S (12ZMC) and Shlok K (12VGG) represented Reading School at the annual Stock Market Challenge held at the ICMA Centre of the University of Reading. Year 12 students from various schools had the opportunity to learn about the stock market and then work in pairs as day traders in a simulated economy.

Aarush V shared, *'This was an incredibly fun challenge which simulated the life of a trader very well; it taught us how to rapidly analyse events that happened in the economy and make quick judgements to make a profit. Furthermore, it developed our*

*negotiation skills as we had to buy or short stocks from the other traders taking part in the challenge. It was a very frantic and competitive environment as we were making deals or having deals brought to us constantly all while having to monitor the market.'*

Our two teams narrowly missed out on making it to the top of the profit's leader board, but it was an enjoyable experience for all.

Shlok K said, *'The market would fluctuate rapidly, meaning time was one of the most important factors within the challenge - taking too long for a deal could easily mean it would not be viable anymore. Overall it was a very enjoyable experience, and we all greatly appreciated the opportunity to be able to compete in such an event. I hope to be able to do something like this again, and urge anyone else interested to also enter the competition next year.'*

## Future Stories – end of term update

Future Stories prefects Oliver B (12RW) and Krish M (12EF) have contributed this final update on our social mobility programme for the academic year:

As the year comes to an end, we would like to highlight the amazing success of the Future Stories mentoring programme. We also look forward to contributing to the project as prefects in the next academic year and hope that the prospective Year 12s will enjoy it as much as we did.

Future Stories Maths Mentoring has taken place on Monday and Tuesday afternoons since October. Sessions were led by Year 12 students working with pupils from local primary schools; English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Katesgrove Primary School, Geoffrey Field Junior School, Battle Primary Academy, Whitley Park Primary School and Moorlands Primary School. These sessions have been both in-person and online.



Over 60 Year 12 students have committed to leading these Maths mentor sessions on a weekly basis. We would like to thank the following Year 12 students for their time and hard work:

### **English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School**

Jude A, Max B, Thomas K, Aryan H, Harith R, George R, Ryan L, Jago K, Daniel B, David N, Aarush V, Ammar I and Zyaire L.

### **Katesgrove Primary School**

Imtiyaz B, Jihan M, Mofe A, Rishi S, Rohit L, Salih A, Shameer A and Yusef Z.

### **Geoffrey Fields Junior School**

Aarav A, Amine A, Edison W, Ellias M, Ethan L, Harry P, Keshanth R, Krish M and Tony L.

### **Battle Primary School**

Thinula P, Alexandru P, Antony C, Mitansh N, Nathan K, Siddharth D, Soham A, Xavier C, Oliver B, Matthew O, Bharat J, Ojas J

## Whitley Park Primary School

Tom D, Owen R, Ajay V, Anirudh V, San C, Shivam K, Mohammed A, Benjamin H, Hugo W, Srisht C and William A.

## Moorland's Primary School

Aden C, Daniel L, Ethan L, Ezra S, Gaurav K, Hammad Q, James G, John K and Saad A.



In addition, thank you to the teaching and catering staff involved in the organisation and delivery of the Future Stories mentor sessions. Without their time and hard work, these sessions would not be possible. Thank you to Mrs C Heston, Mrs L Dimmick, Mr T Evans, Mrs M Thompson, Mrs E Lawrence, Mr C Woodley and Miss H Talbot.

We would also like to highlight the 2-day Future Stories Summer Camp which will be taking place at Reading School on the 29th and 30th of August. Mentors from Years 10, 11 and 12 will be working with Year 5 pupils from local primary schools. This will include sessions on Maths, English, sports and team building. We are sure that the Summer Camp will be great fun and are grateful to everyone who has volunteered their time to help out.

Finally, we are looking forward to continuing our roles as Future Stories Prefects into the next academic year. We have many ideas for the future, and hope that next year will bring even more opportunities for Future Stories to support our local community.

To access a copy of the Future Stories brochure, please [click here](#).

## Going the extra mile

The Headmaster's Bulletin looks forward to sharing the news of student achievements and this week we would like to turn our lens onto the achievement of our Head of Operations & Projects, Mr Warren Symonds. On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Mr Symonds embarked on a 3592km journey of cycling across 21 stages and four countries during [Ride Le Loop](#), an event which allows amateur cyclists to ride the official Tour de France route seven days ahead of the professionals while raising funds for the [William Wates Memorial Trust](#). The charity supports projects that encourage young people

experiencing severe disadvantage to keep away from anti-social behaviour and criminal activity while enabling them to fulfil their potential.

As of Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July, Mr Symonds has just three stages remaining with the last two being especially challenging. He has kept the school updated of his progress and his latest detailed update is shared with all as below:

### Le Loop Stages - 16,17 & 18

Stage 16 - Gruissan → Nîmes - 192km

Stage 17 - Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux → SuperDévoluy - 184km

Stage 18 - Gap → Barcelonnette 184km



Another three stages ticked off, all very different in their own right. Stage 16, was flat & windy albeit still very lumpy whereas 17 & 18 were 2 of 4 stages in the Alps. Both were circa 3000 meter climbing

day whereas 19 & 20 are 4500+ metres. They are huge stages for many reasons, more so because the last day is a time trial. The weather for all 3 stages has been fantastic although rain is forecast for the coming few days.

People often ask how's the body holding up and I have to say very good. The two biggest issues have been saddle sores plus hot foot (a condition affecting one or both feet, otherwise known as Metatarsalgia, Hot foot can be debilitating, excruciatingly painful and can turn a long ride into a miserable experience). There are many reasons why it happens and just needs to be managed on a daily basis.

People also ask how is a climb categorised and legend has it that the classifications were originally decided back in 1933 with a Citroën 2CV car, with the climb's category judged to be the same as the gear necessary to motor up it. First gear, Cat 1, Second gear Cat 2 etc. How true this is I'm unsure and the rule of thumb is as follows:

<b>Category 4</b>	2-4km @ 6%	<b>Category 1</b>
2km or so @ 6%	4-6km @ 4%	5-10km @ >8%
4km or so @ < 4%	<b>Category 2</b>	10-15km @ 6%
<b>Category 3</b>	5-10km @ 5-7%	
2-3km @ 8%	10+km @ 3-5%	

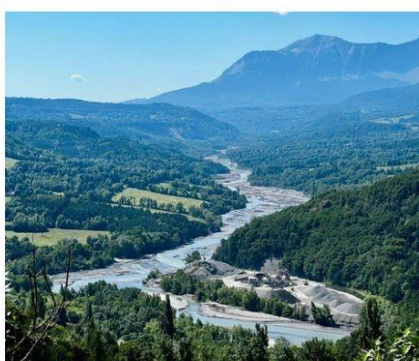
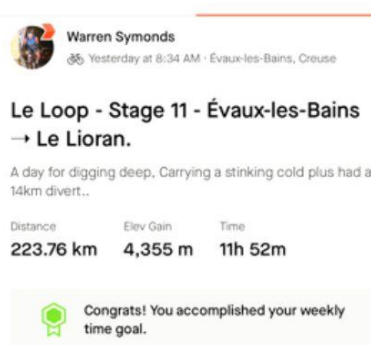
**Tunes of the day**

Stage 15 – ‘Crucify your Mind’ - Rodriguez

Stage 16 – ‘Boy with the Arab Strap’ - Belle & Sebastian

Stage 17 – ‘We will become Silhouettes’ - Postal Service.

Uncle Ricco's wise words - *“Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime. Teach a man to cycle and he will realise fishing is stupid and boring.”*



## More cycling for charity news

Although the distances are not comparable, Kaushal N (7S) has recently completed an impressive cycle ride from Reading to Guildford, covering approximately 35 miles. His efforts raised £500 which will be donated to providing healthcare and supporting orphanages for those in need. Well done Kaushal and who knows, will Ride le Loop be a future goal?

## Don't cry because it's over...

...smile because it happened. We say a fond farewell at the end of this term to a well loved and respected member of staff, Library Assistant, Mrs Alison Jackson who has been with Reading School for over 12 years. We sat down with Mrs Jackson earlier this week to ask her to reflect on her time at the school:



### ***When did you join Reading school and what has your role looked like?***

I started here in June 2011, so just over 13 years ago as a Library Assistant. My eldest son was already attending Reading School, my youngest son was about to leave primary school and I was feeling like I needed something to do to keep me busy. I've always helped in schools, or done various things like supporting PTA, going on school trips and helping in classrooms. I remember attending a Reading School event and asking whether there is a role for a parent wanting to help and the reaction was shock at the time! I started off helping on some school trips, I led an earlier version of the annual Heritage Walk around Reading for students, and then the Library Assistant role came up and the rest is history.

### ***Has Reading School changed over your 13 years of working here? If so, how?***

I remember when the school day was made up of only four double lessons a day so the school day was completely different. The Refectory hadn't been built and the staff room was always busy.

### ***What does a typical day look like for you?***

I'm primarily here to support the School Librarian, Mrs Kesteven, especially around our busiest times of the school calendar year, including our very successful annual Book Festival. I'm responsible for the annual displays that go up in the library, around 15 to 20 a year. I also help catalogue books, tidy up and maintain the careers section in our LRC. I also run the school Book Club which is been a joy to run. I'll miss the various characters I've met over the years! So, as you can see, no two days are the same.



### ***Can you share a little more about the Book Club for parents who may not be aware of it?***

Book Club had been run by the previous Library Assistant. I had never run a Book Club before, so I read up on it and found my own individual way of leading it. I decided that I wanted it to be a weekly space for students who enjoyed reading or wanted to read more, to meet in their lunchtime. I wanted it to be a fun club with a family feel. There's always been a real mix of Year groups and the older boys would look out for the younger ones.

The club was and still is a space for students who may not particularly enjoy alternative clubs during lunchtimes. I was led by them, and we tapped into their competitive nature and used reading and quizzes to build a structure for the club. The students created a weekly quiz based on an individual book, author or a series of books and they'd try and outdo each other and absolutely love it.



We also shadow the local and national book awards which students participated in, like the Berkshire Book Award and the national Yoto Carnegie Book Award. During February and March when we hold our annual Book Festival, there's usually an exclusive meet and greet with an author, which they really enjoy. There's always a little treat for them like a free book or signed posters and a talk with the author where they get to ask questions in a small group which really works for those not confident in speaking in front of others in a large group.

So, Book Club has been great, a real family and I'm proud that it's grown over the years and been popular with so many students. I've had students join from Year 7 and then go onto lead the group in their free periods when they've reached Year 12 because they wanted to give back. That or maybe it was just the free biscuits?

### ***Outside of book club, what's your favourite part of your job?***

I've enjoyed creating annual displays and most people know that my passion is history. So historical displays have been my favourites, particularly those involving the centenary of the First World War, Armistice Day and commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day in January and not to forget the hugely important Remembrance Day which our school CCF and OR's help commemorate on an annual basis. I've always enjoyed history and working at Reading School means you're surrounded by it. Did you know the school was founded less than sixty years after the Battle of Hastings – it's amazing.

I'd also like to thank Ken Brown, the Old Redingensian Association's Archivist, who has been a tremendous support over the years with my historical research projects.

### ***What's will you not miss about your role?***

I had a career in International and Treasury banking in the City of London before I had a family. I'm lucky to have a supportive line manager here at school, so I never had the pressure I was under in London. On the whole I've really enjoyed my time here and there's nothing that comes to mind. And you know, part of me will always be here.

### ***Is there anyone you'd like to thank or who you will remember fondly?***



My friend Margaret Nash, who's since retired. We went out walking together every lunchtime especially during the lockdowns, she kept me sane. My 'lunchtime walking buddies', our wonderful English Department and of course Kathy Roberts.

Everyone's been brilliant, but Margaret and Loralie Kesteven, the school librarian, has been incredibly supportive over the years and I wish her well for the future.

***If you have any advice for someone joining Reading School as a staff member what would some of that advice include?***

Be open to anything.

Don't necessarily say 'no'.

Make the most of any opportunities that come your way.

Enjoy your time here. Time goes very quickly, especially in a school setting.

***Any parting words?***

I will miss you all. I want to thank my family who are all connected in some way to the school and have always been supportive and encouraging. The final thanks go to past and current members of Book Club, you are amazing. Never give up reading.

I hope this is not goodbye, I hope to be back at some point in the future in a history related role!  
Thank you.



**Sports Award**

Shaashwat M (9W) was recently awarded a Sports Award by the IDUK (Indian Diaspora in UK) organisation to celebrate children and young people's achievements in sport. Shaashwat has shared, *'I was thrilled when I was nominated for the sports award which was for my performance in the Kho Kho National Championship where my team won the Gold medal.'*

# RSPA

## Sports Awards Celebration 2024

A huge thank you to Menaka Murthy, Kerry O'Brien–Kingston, Pallavi Chube, Sarika and the wonderful students and staff that helped us at this week's Sports Awards Celebration event (front cover image), to raise funds for the sports camera.

We appreciate your time and efforts which has allowed for funds to be raised for sports camera equipment for the Sports & PE Department.

## Preloved Uniform Shop

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

- Saturday 27th July - 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Saturday 31st August - 10.30am to 12.30pm

Location: The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop can be found at the back of the Walled Carpark.

## Year 10 Photo collection

The Year 10 Tutor Group Photos have been a great success and ordered prints can be collected from School Reception.

Photos are available for just £10 for a 6" by 8" print or £20 for an A4 sized print (matt finish). They are lovely pictures taken with the school in the background and sample images are available on request. For further information, please email [kerryobrien2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kerryobrien2004@yahoo.co.uk).

Funds from the prints go to providing equipment which is most in need for the benefit of students.

## Thank you from the RSPA Team

Another year has passed, and your support and presence mean a lot to us. A huge thanks to everyone that has supported the RSPA this year and we hope that all the students and their families have a lovely summer. We will see you next year with lots of exciting events and news!

Thank you and stay safe,

The RSPA Team

# Summer Term – Week 12

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.



## How it started

September 2023

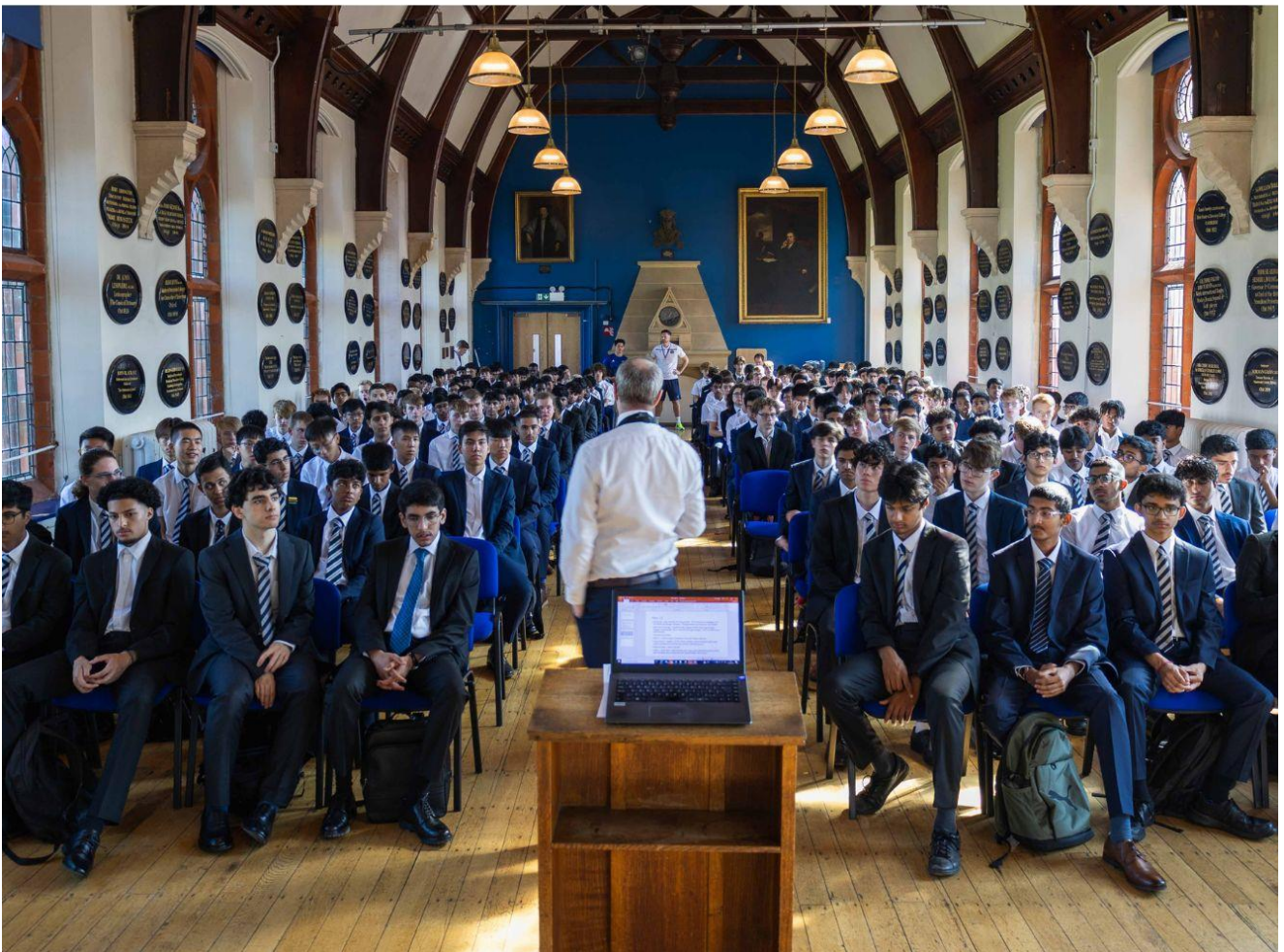














## How its going

National School Championships Badminton Cup Presentation during the Sports Awards Celebration 2024 on Wednesday 10th July.





















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).