



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

10 NOVEMBER 2023

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Introduction

The purpose of education is to teach us to be fully human, flourishing in all domains of our lives. This can only happen if we work together and hold each other to account. It is important to strive to be the best version of ourselves. Across all year groups, we should renew our commitments to abhor and challenge bullying, along with name-calling and the use of derogatory, sexist, racist or homophobic language.

I want to make it clear that demeaning language and lack of respect for staff and amongst students has no place at Reading School. Such words and actions are in direct contradiction and contravention of our values and our Manifesto commitments. Our core values are non-negotiable. Our commitment to promoting healthy, respectful relationships is non-negotiable.

We put human flourishing at the heart of all we do. We always seek to put people before system. Education is never merely a matter of just learning and intelligence on its own is not sufficient. Intelligence plus character is the goal of education and it also involves care for the person as well. Therefore, we must care for standards but never forget the person. Our role is not just to help our students gain knowledge and achieve good qualifications, but also to develop positive attributes in order to be people of substance and character. Character is foundational to our educational ethos as is flourishing with compassion and nurturing a purpose-driven culture so we can continue to build sustainable excellence.

With character in mind, we were honoured to host the Association for Character Education Annual Conference 2023 at Reading School on Friday 3 November. In addressing the delegates at the opening of the Conference, I had the opportunity to highlight some of the main features of our roadmap and character journey, which we have termed as the 'Reading Way', since 2018. Our journey was brought to life by School Captain, Josha G, who delivered a keynote speech to an audience of over 80 professionals which resonated hugely, judging by their resounding applause. Further praise was shared by delegates on the day following their interaction with some of our Prefect Team (pictured on the front cover) who acted as key members of the events team as well as ambassadors for Reading School.

We still have a long way to go, but I am proud of our commitment to character education so far.

Our approach to character is not only enhanced by our work as a Regional Hub for the National Character Association, but also through being a member of the International Boys' School Coalition (IBSC). On Wednesday 8 November I had the opportunity to participate in a meeting of Girls' and Boys' schools from USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand regarding the theme of Healthy Relationships. Key topics considered included:

- How do we best promote the cultivation of healthy relationships in girls' and boys' school settings?
- What support is needed for women staff in boys' schools?
- What can we do to foster healthy relationships between students and within and across gender groups?
- What are the best practices and experiences evident across schools?
- What do we wish was working better?

I look forward to sharing some key learnings from the valuable meeting. We must always have an open mind and learn from practice around the world while being mindful of our context.

In closing, we want our students to make the right choices. We want to redouble our focus on being a place of safety, belonging and hope. As part of our work with Professor Alex Hill in 2023/24, we are undertaking significant work on renewing our codes of conduct and acceptable behaviours in line with our character focus. As part of this process, we will curate a series of portraits of the Reading Way – stories and images that provide clear examples of how it plays out in the lives of students, graduates, teachers and other members of the Reading School community.

Mr A M Robson
Headmaster

Key information

All years

Reading Week 2023

In a year when Reading School staff are focussed on improving students' purposeful encounters with language, we want to thank parents and staff for your encouragement of student's engagement with the reading lists and role modelling of reading during Reading Week 2023.

The biggest thanks undoubtedly go to the amazing LRC team and their cohort of student librarians for enabling so many book loans and answering so many queries. We've had more than 500 book reviews plus 45 creative interpretations of their reading (mainly poems, art and video) and 21 x 500-word accounts of student reading journeys over time.

Adding to this, 45 staff generously shared their experiences of Reading Week publicly with students on Teams. This is going to make a fantastic publication to inspire students to read broadly and deeply. Reading doesn't stop here, however, with the [reading lists available all year round](#) and students can access [e-magazines from home here](#) and reserve/browse the LRC's books using [Oliver](#).

Feedback, parental book reviews and ideas are welcome on the [Parent's Reading Week Form](#).

Security Lockdown Drill

We will be carrying out a security lockdown drill (similar to a fire drill) this coming week, in order to maintain our levels of safety for our students and staff. A letter for parents and carers with more information about the drill can be accessed by [clicking here](#) and slides used during student assemblies can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

House Music Competition 2023 – Sunday 26 November

Reading School's House Music Competition is now in its 88th year and remains one of the most significant events in our annual calendar. This year, the competition is scheduled to take place on Sunday 26 November from 15:00 to 19:30 at The Hexagon, Queens Walk, RG1 7QF.

The competition will showcase an array of outstanding performances from our five houses. Ensemble acts will include both large and small ensembles performing music from films. Solo acts will feature Senior Soloists (students in Years 11 - 13) and Junior Soloists (students in Years 7 - 10).

The first phase of tickets is now on sale, with the second phase for Balcony seats scheduled to begin next Monday.

Phases	Hexagon seating area	Price ^{1, 2}
First phase	Arena Centre, Arena Left, and Arena Right	£22 adults; £14 children
	Stalls Centre	£24 (no concession available)
Second phase from Monday 13 November	Balcony Centre	£18 adults; £12 children

Notes:

1. Students performing do not need to purchase tickets.
2. The ticket price includes a £2.00 booking fee, which is imposed by the venue.
3. Please be aware that there is no lift to the balcony.
4. We are aware of the financial challenges faced by many families, especially with the additional costs associated with attending events. If your family is in receipt of Pupil Premium, we are able to offer two discounted tickets for seats in the Arena Centre, Arena Left, or Arena Right. This offer allows you to attend the House Music Competition at a reduced rate. For more details, please contact us at events@reading-school.co.uk

Tickets are expected to sell out quickly and we thank you in advance for confirming your child's participation before purchasing tickets, as they are non-refundable. To purchase tickets, please click here: [House Music Competition Nov 2023](#).

Year 11 only

Careers Interview appointments

Over the coming weeks, we are inviting Y11 students to a careers appointment to discuss their next steps and future options. Please ensure your child is regularly checking their email for their invitation so that they do not miss their appointment. They must also log onto the UniFrog platform and complete the skills quizzes (personality, interests, work environment, skills). This will enable a good foundation for the interview discussion.

If you have any queries, please contact Lizzie Ayres, Careers Lead by emailing layres@reading-school.co.uk.

Parent Governor Election 2023

A reminder that the ballot to elect a new parent governor will be held next week. There will be an electronic ballot which will be open from 10am on Monday 13 November until 4pm on Friday 17 November 2023.

Instructions for voting will be sent to all parents and carers in a separate e-mail on Monday morning.

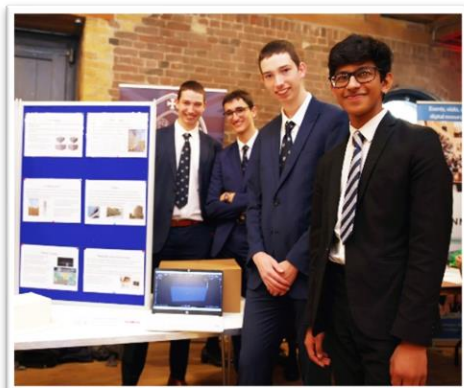
The candidates nominated are listed below:

- Sanjay Desai
- Shaifali Gaba
- Neil Holmes
- Ben White

Supporting statements from the candidates have already been circulated (with last Friday's e-mail) but will be re-circulated with the instructions for voting. The results of the poll will be announced to the candidates on 21 November, via e-mail, and to all parents on 24 November.

Excellence, Belonging & Community

Excellence in STEM



In June 2023, we shared that four Year 13 students had recently entered the '[Greening Cities, Sustaining Lives](#)' competition launched by the British International Education Association (BIEA). The BIEA 2023 Youth STEAM Competition aimed to develop solutions for sustainable cities and gives young people an opportunity to envision a future and use their creative skills to help come up with ideas to ensure that those living in the future can live in harmony with their environment and planet.

'Team Hedge' recently got to attend a BIEA event where winning teams had the opportunity to showcase their ideas and after speaking with Ben S-R earlier this week, he shared:

"Having completed our submission in June, and receiving the results in August, our team attended the London showcase for the competition. On top of the report we created for the competition, we also made several models to visually display our idea. First was a larger cardboard model and second was a smaller, more detailed balsa wood model. We also displayed our computer model of the building in order to complete our display stand.



The day started at 9:30 when we had half an hour to set up our stand at the London Docklands Museum. We also had a chance to chat with some of the other teams before the public was let in for the general showcase. The next few hours were spent talking to other students, teachers and members of the public who were interested in our design. One team that particularly stood out was a team from TED Ankara College in Turkey. Their design was particularly interesting because their region had been hit by several severe earthquakes recently so the project was particularly well thought out.

After the showcase was a panel discussion with 2 experts on climate change and what young people can do to help improve the situation. This was split into 2 general categories of making changes to our lives and supporting larger decisions that would help both the local climate and the national climate. The day finished with the awards ceremony when we got to collect our second prize. Overall, the day was an amazing experience and we learnt so much throughout the day. We would highly recommend the 2024 competition to students throughout the school as a great opportunity to showcase their STEM skills."



Team Hedge: Ben S-R (12L), Saikrishnan D (12S), Sidh G (12S), Samuel J (12S) and Tom S-R (12S).

Excellence in Medicine



MediSphere Journal is a jointly led publication focussing on the field of Medicine which has been created and launched by an editorial team from Reading and Kendrick School. Thirteen writers from both schools have contributed to producing a selection of insightful articles that showcase both passion and dedication for medicine. The articles explore a diverse range of topics, from breakthrough medical treatments like Bacteriophages, to the recent Cough Syrup Crisis in Africa. The Editors would also like to thank both teachers and students from Reading School and Kendrick School for making this possible.

To access the first issue, please visit www.medisphere-journal.co.uk/issue-one

Excellence in Charity

In June 2023, we featured news that Kanishk K (12C) would be travelling to Nepal during half-term in order to lead a fundraising initiative during a challenging hike to Everest Base Camp. We are pleased to share that Kanishk completed the challenge alongside his parents and after speaking with them earlier this week, they shared:

“Over the course of a demanding journey, Kanishk exhibited an extraordinary level of determination, resilience, and compassion. The Everest Base Camp Challenge is renowned for its physically and mentally demanding nature, with participants trekking for 8-10 hours daily, often contending with challenging weather conditions and high altitudes. It tested all our mental and physical limits daily through the steep climbs, frigid pre-dawn wake-up calls, and freezing nights in our sleeping bags. The Himalayan vistas were breath-taking and although the trek was arduous, every step was worthwhile. We'll never forget watching the sun rise over Everest's peak - truly magical!



In the evenings, Kanishk bonded with fellow trekkers while playing cards and sipping hot lemon tea around cosy fires. During the return, Kanishk embodied the sustainability commitments by carrying extra two kilos of waste in addition to his 8+kg bag pack on a 20km+ trek to Lukla from Namche, where the waste can be recycled. This gesture has impacted us profoundly.

We feel proud that Kanishk immersed himself in the culture of the Sherpas, the indigenous people of Nepal. He delved deep into the daily trials and tribulations faced by the local community by spending time with them and their families. This immersive experience allowed Kanishk to develop a genuine connection with the people of Nepal and gain an insightful understanding of their way of life.

Kanishk's journey raised £2400 for an orphanage in Nepal along with broadening our understanding of the profound impact of individual action and philanthropy. The mountain trek has inspired Kanishk to summit Everest with his new Sherpa friends someday. Our eyes are open to future challenges and adventures that await. As parents, we are profoundly grateful for the support and encouragement our school community has provided to Kanishk on this journey.”

Belonging & Community

Old Redingensian Remembrance Day Service 2023



Our annual Remembrance Day event is to remember the service and sacrifice of all those that have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life. Especially those fallen Old Redingensians. We remember the Armed Forces, and their families, from Britain and the Commonwealth, the vital role played by the emergency services and those that have lost their lives as a result of conflict or terrorism.

The service will take place in the Reading School Chapel from 10.45am and will be led by:

- ORA Chaplain, Rev Clive Windebank (OR 1952-1959)
- The sermon will be delivered by the Rev Stuart Robinson (OR 1964-1971).
- The Lesson will be read by the President of The Old Redingensians Association, Jeremy Chadwick (OR 1979-1986).
- The Act of Remembrance will be read by Ken Brown (OR 1955-1963) ORA Archivist.

The laying of wreaths in the Chapel on the 1914-18 War Memorial, the 1939-45 War Memorial and the Kendrick Boys School War Memorial (Reading School was absorbed by Reading School in 1916). The

wreaths will be laid by Jeremy Chadwick, David Downs OR (1952-59) and Christine Kattirtzi, the current Headteacher of Kendrick School.

Light refreshments will be served after the service in the School Refectory at 11:30 to 13.00.

Thank you to Chris Widdows (OR 1955-1962) Membership Secretary, Old Redingensians Association, for organising this important event.

Click here to reserve your seat: <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/event/remembrance-day-service-2023>

Library Assistant, Mrs Jackson invites all students and staff to visit the LRC in order to view the annual Remembrance Day display which features information and a number of curated books which share the importance of remembrance.

German Christmas Market



On Monday 4 December, a festive German Christmas market will be arriving at Reading School (and pitching up outside the LRC). The market is for students to experience a popular German cultural event with traditional German biscuits and other stalls selling festive items. Money raised will go to the LRC to buy books students have wished for.

We are also inviting all members of the school community (students and staff) to consider baking some traditional (nut-free) biscuits in order to sell from the market. Recipes of traditional (nut-free) biscuits can be [downloaded by clicking here](#) and any baked goods can be dropped off to the LRC on the morning of Monday 4 December.

If you have any questions, please contact Teacher of German, Mrs Senftlechner (ssenftlechner@reading-school.co.uk) or Mrs Kesteven (lkesteven@reading-school.co.uk).

Natural Science Competition

Open to all students from Years 9 – 13, the University of Exeter's Natural Sciences competition is inviting A-Level and GCSE students in any subject to submit an essay based on one of three questions for the chance to win Amazon vouchers. For more information and to enter, please [click here](#).

National Language Competition

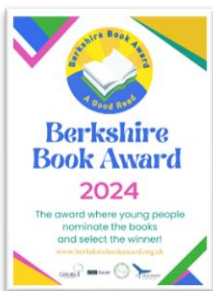
Our Year 9 students have been taking part in an exciting competition launched by GCHQ with the aim of promoting languages. GCHQ is a world-leading intelligence, cyber and security agency with a mission to keep the UK safe and they are running a [National Language Competition](#) from Monday 6 November - Friday 10 November 2023 aimed at Year 9 students in England. Students compete in teams of up to four pupils over the course of five days and will score points by tackling a variety of fun, immersive, language-themed challenges hosted on a virtual platform. These will range from easy to difficult, and will involve a mix of different languages, and even made-up languages.

The winning team with the most points at the end of the competition will be invited to GCHQ's Headquarters in Cheltenham and will be presented with their trophy. Our students have been enjoying coming together at lunch times this week and taking part in the competition and we look forward to keeping you updated on their progress.

Berkshire Book Award 2024

The Berkshire Children's Book Award was launched in 2004 for the best, recently published book written for young people. This Award is the first of its kind in Berkshire and differs from similar Award schemes by

enabling young people to both nominate the titles and select the winner. Thousands of young people from over 90 Berkshire schools and public libraries have taken part.



The Aim of the Berkshire Book Award is to contribute to young people's achievement by encouraging them to develop a love of reading to become lifelong readers and encouraging social inclusion by organising events and activities for young people.

Research has shown that a love of reading is more important to young peoples' educational success than either their family's wealth or social class. Supporting young people to take part in the Award is one way in which school and public libraries can encourage young people to read more, improving their educational opportunities and encouraging social responsibility by giving them a major say in running the Award.

Participation in the award is open to all young teens living or studying in Berkshire through secondary schools and public libraries.

To find out more and to make a nomination, view the links below:

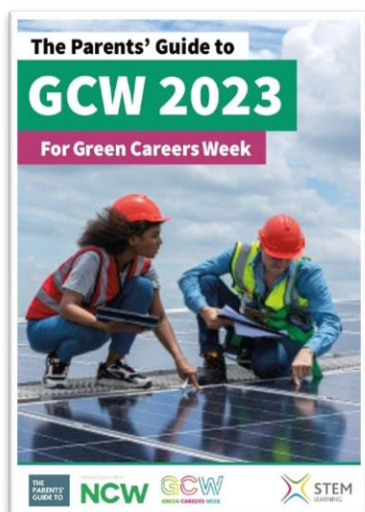
Year 7-9: <https://www.berkshirebookaward.org.uk/nominate-bba>

Year 10+: <https://www.berkshirebookaward.org.uk/nominate-bba-ya>

Nominations close on Wednesday 15 November.

Finally, the Junior Book Club, run by Mrs Jackson, actively participate in this fantastic award. If you would like to mix with pupils from other years; chat about books and take part in book quizzes, please come along. It is every Tuesday, at Junior lunch in G2. You can just turn up and you can bring your lunch.

Green Careers Week



This week is Green Careers Week (GCW) which is an exciting event that raises awareness, supports diversity, challenges stereotypes, and promotes real opportunities for young people to have a career that will genuinely make a difference.

A green career can be any job, role or occupation that contributes to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet. It can be any industry, not just those seen as 'green.' Green skills are abilities, attributes, values, attitudes, knowledge, and technical skills needed to adapt services, processes and procedures to support climate change.

This week, links have been shared with all students via Teams to highlight information about the growing number of green jobs with top employers such as The Met Office, The Natural History Museum, UK Space Agency and the NHS. They have also been signposted to GCW's online careers fair and further information about the skills required for these jobs.

The organisers of Green Careers Week 2023 have also produced a parents' guide to introduce you to a range of green careers, explain the possible entry pathways and provide guidance on how to discuss future careers with your child - [The Parents' Guide to GCW 2023](#).

Award winning local language classes

BilinguaSing are passionate about young children (0-4 years) being introduced to a second language from birth, or as early as possible. Music, movement and sensory experiences are fundamental to children's development and BilinguaSing harnesses the power of music and engaging props to make language learning active and fun. French and Spanish mixed age family sessions are available to join in the Woodley and Charvil areas and to book a trial class please contact Fleur by emailing fleur@bilinguasing.com or visit www.bilinguasing.com/find-a-class/reading-twford-earley/.

Year 7 Disco



Only one week to go and we're putting in place the final touches for our Year 7 disco night!

Date: Friday 17 November 2023

Time: 7.00pm 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.

We would also like to hear from parents who are able to volunteer an hour or two of their time on the night to ensure the event runs smoothly. Please email [rspa-](mailto:rspa-secretary@readingschoolparents.co.uk)

[secretary@readingschoolparents.co.uk](mailto:rspa-secretary@readingschoolparents.co.uk) if you would like to volunteer.

Reading School hoodies will also be available at the Year 7 disco and with the winter weather settling in, now may be the perfect time to consider purchasing one. Should you wish to pre-order a hoodie to collect on the night, [please visit the RSPA website](#).

We wish you all a lovely weekend.

The RSPA Team

Michaelmas Term – Week 9

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



A cross curriculum (Music and Spanish) school trip to Barcelona, Spain.

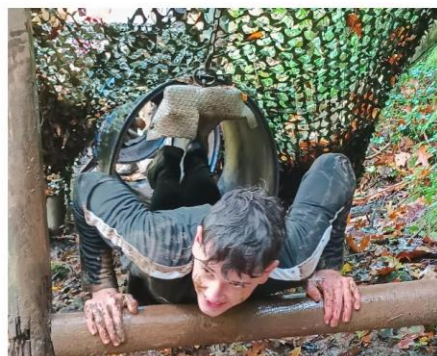
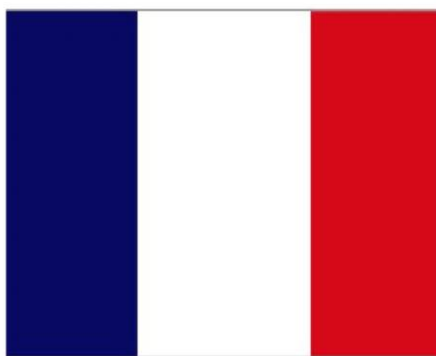


The trip allowed students to immerse themselves in Spain, it's language, history and culture.



During Reading Week 2023, our Year 8 and Year 11 students embarked on an exciting week to the chateau de la Boutonnière in Normandy, France. There, they followed an energetic programme of various activities from bread making to a commando-style assault course, and everything at the chateau is done through the medium of French. This immersive residential trip allows students to develop their skills so that they hear, see and use French throughout their stay in an authentic setting. All staff (les animateurs) deliver the experience of adventure activities, language lessons, excursions, mealtimes and evening entertainment in French in a fun and supportive environment.

Thank you to all the animateurs at the chateau as well as all the teachers who gave their time to run this trip: Ms Head, Mrs Haugvik, Mrs McAllister, Mr McAllister, Mr Till, and Mme Fondou.



"My favourite activity was either aeroball, or the assault course, as I found it especially funny watching my friends get soaked. However, I found every activity very good, and even the French lesson was engaging. The Mont Saint-Michel was very interesting to see as well. I feel my listening improved especially, along with my speaking. It was a good refresher to some GCSE vocabulary such as school and food words, as well as learning other new words such as "animateur" for activities instructor."

Ryan C

"I really enjoyed the French trip. The food was all amazing but I especially liked the cheese (and the snails). My favourite activity was visiting Mont St Michel, which was beautiful. The trip has made me much more confident in my French speaking ability, thanks to the support of the enthusiastic animateurs at the chateau. In particular, I learnt many French idioms, such as mettre sa main au feu, literally meaning set your hand on fire but being used to express absolute certainty. C'est cool, non?"

Dylan B

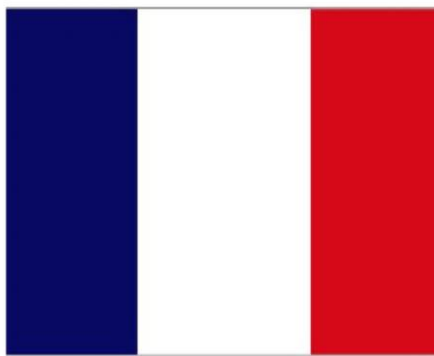


"This experience was really fun as it allowed me to practise speaking French and make it as natural as possible instead of feeling forced, something that will definitely be useful in my exams. The animateurs were extremely friendly and led the various activities really well; my favourite was Aeroball which was something I was glad to have the opportunity to try for the first time!"

James C

"I really enjoyed the trip and felt it really helped me understand what it was like being French for a few days. I particularly enjoyed the bread making and the assault course because it was enjoyable and helped me understand a lot of new French words which I didn't know before in a really fun way. Overall, the trip was amazing and I really enjoyed it."

Abdullah A



"I wanted to say a huge thank you to you and your team for the trip to France and for keeping our boys safe albeit the weather. A massive thanks also for marking Kene's birthday. He had a really good time away."

Year 8 Parent

"This adventure to Finland was incredible, from learning how to cook a freeze dried meal to walking through knee-deep snow, I learnt many new things on this trip. The main idea of this trip was for character building and that is something that I think everyone who went can agree on, although we did the practical side of things we also regularly took a break and thought about the world around us. I recommend this trip to anyone who gets the opportunity in the future as it is a way to build a lot of character while also having loads of fun. My favourite part of this trip was the big walk in Riisitunturi National Park as for the whole day we were walking through many different terrains and even got to slide down this really steep hill!"



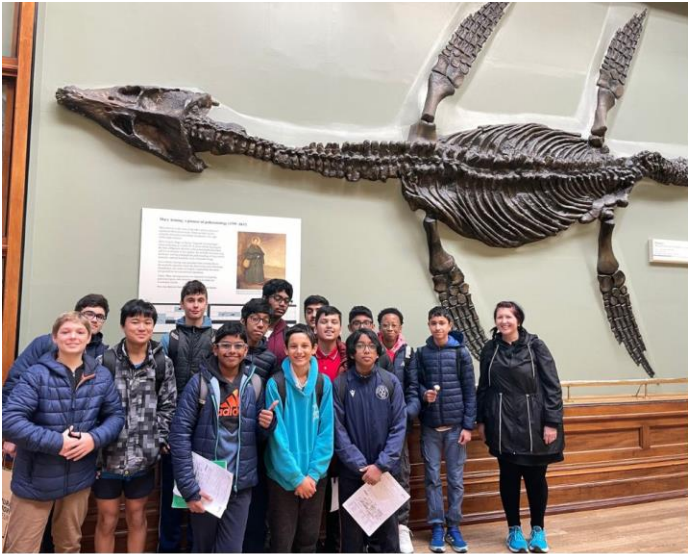
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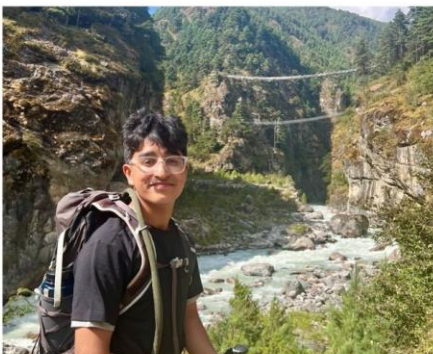
14 Year 9s, led by Dr Young and Mrs Kesteven had the opportunity to visit the Natural History Museum as part of their Geology elective during Reading Week 2023. The elective has focussed on geological history of the earth, tectonics and how rocks form. During the visit, students visited exhibitions which consolidated their classroom learning and allowed them to see a variety of different rocks and minerals up close, including some from the moon and meteorites. Students also got to see how Earth's processes change rocks and minerals over time and how humans have harnessed geological resources.



Kanishk K's hike to Everest Base Camp in aid of charity

For more information please [click here](#)

Do you have an inspiring story to share? Please email communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk



The GCHQ National Language Competition 2023



Assistant Head, Mr McGall, with the support of the Heads of House Team, led a Year 7 Group Assembly this week to remind and continue to embed our core values of Excellence, Integrity, Leadership and Community.

Relatable real-world examples were used in order to bring alive what the four values can look like. Furthermore, data was shared with Year 7s that evidenced an increase of positive events logged against student records from 2022 – 2023.

The character education journey at Reading School is a seven-year one beginning in Year 7.



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