



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

11th October 2024

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Introduction

Dear Colleagues, Carers, Students and Parents,

Many things this week have made me proud of our school. For example: The exceptional generosity of families in contributing to our Harvest Festival Foodbank collection and the team spirit of the Year 10 students who volunteered to sort donated goods; the commencement of our partnership with the Royal Berkshire Charity, as our Charity of the Year; refereeing hard fought Year 10 House Rugby fixtures with so many outstanding team performances; hosting collaborative Economic debates with students from Winchester College; congratulating James D (10E) for developing mind, body and spirit and achieving a black belt; and seeing so many of our ORs wanting to return to school in order to share their knowledge and wisdom with current students.

Even more delightful though, has been reading the subject references on students' University applications. Perhaps I can illustrate with a few brief anonymised excerpts:

'X is an exceptional thinker: his thought patterns are evident in the deep questions he asks in all of his subjects. Those questions thrill his teachers, indicating the depth and creativity of his thinking. Sometimes they have never been asked in the classroom setting before and X's teachers are often left wondering why that is the case. Examination results are not always his priority, thinking and the joy it entails is what motivates him. The next stage of his education needs to capture his imagination. He truly has the potential to make a real difference in the world.'

'Z is one of the most gifted computer scientists I have had the pleasure to teach, whose expertise in the subject is underpinned by an intuitive mathematical understanding. He is a passionate and extremely able mathematician who delights in the abstract, the unusual and the undiscovered, but is still able to apply his mastery of concepts to real world problems. Z is creative and has great insight, often considering approaches to problems that others have not. He is an incredibly proficient programmer, having programmed a demonstration of every searching and sorting algorithm I can think of before starting the A-level and writes the most disciplined Python code I have seen from a student.'

'Rarely does a student come along with the humility, capability, resilience and diligence that A possesses. Within a few minutes of knowing A, you will soon see why. Within the competitive environment of Reading School, he has stood out as one of our best Chemistry students, consistently achieving about 90% in every assessment and averaging 96% overall at the end of Year 12, whilst still striving to improve on his knowledge and understanding beyond the course requirements. A excels in every aspect of the course which he demonstrated by achieving a gold award in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge. Regardless of the topic area, A's calm and persistent approach allows him to solve even the most complex problems, whether it be determining organic synthetic pathways or tackling the mathematical and physical aspects of the course.'

'B is one of the most self-motivated yet humble students I have encountered at Reading School. Whether it is in his studies, playing football or doing karate, singing in his church choir, or coaching youth community football, B brings passion and positivity to whatever he does. He would be a fantastic addition to a challenging undergraduate programme and I recommend him in the highest terms to your university.'

'C is an exceptional student and young man. Capable of tremendous focus and precision over extended problems, he is one of our best A-Level mathematicians, with an average over 90% in all Maths assessments, including almost full marks at GCSE. C delights in new ideas and absorbs techniques with alacrity, but is equally adept at applying his Maths. He excels in calculus, particularly differential equations, where his insight enables him to see the optimal approach swiftly. In Mechanics, he can handle multibody problems comfortably, modelling situations with due regard to the subtleties of language and making excellent use of Newton's laws in order to reach sensible conclusions, considered for context... C was also the only student in his year group to be awarded the Arkwright Engineering Scholarship at the end of Year 11, which was for his lacrosse goal-line scoring sensor and accuracy analysis project.'

'In Theatre Studies, D's writing is particularly remarkable. He consistently produces sophisticated essays, supported by extensive research beyond the course specifications. His understanding of the social, cultural, and historical implications of the material contributes to his success in the subject. His analysis of 'The Golden

Legend' within Jez Butterworth's Jerusalem demonstrates his ability to offer multi-layered, nuanced interpretations.'

'E's independent research on the life of Constantine the Great, which he submitted for the Classical Association's Gladstone Memorial Essay Prize, was exceptional. Equally, his essay on Telemachus in the Odyssey highlights his skill in interpreting various perspectives and offering his own conclusions on character development... In Theatre Studies, E's writing is particularly remarkable. He consistently produces sophisticated essays, supported by extensive research beyond the course specifications.'

I hope that highlighting some of the remarkable strengths of our Year 13 cohort give you some of the same inspiration it has given me, and that you note the significance of students' own questioning and curiosity. With this in mind, Perhaps I can finish by reminding the whole school that we are just a week away from Reading Week, and that now is the right time, to be finalising the resources needed for independent exploration.

Best wishes,

Dr Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All years

900th Anniversary Whole School Photograph

As you will all be aware, the planned whole school photograph was unfortunately cancelled due to the weather earlier this week. We will be confirming an alternative date in due course and will update the school community via Teams and Headmaster's Bulletin.

Year 10 only

Beyond 900 Years

Last week, details of parent and carer events were published with the unintentional omission of Year 10.

Headmaster, Dr Chris Evans, would like to invite Year 10 parent and carers to the event, 'Beyond 900 Years' on Monday 3rd March from 7:30pm at Reading School, where information will be shared about Reading School's exciting plans to celebrate the 900-year anniversary of the School, along with the ambitious plans to improve the school site.

Years 11 – 13 only

Half term rowing camp

Our rowing program is now operational, and (weather dependent) we will be offering two days of rowing training at Reading Boat House during half term. These sessions will be led by our Head of Rowing, Rev J Stevenson.

Students already taking place in our rowing programs will be prioritised but we will include as many students as possible. Spaces are not first come first served, so please do speak with your child before signing them up. Please [click this link in order to sign up](#).

Years 8 – 10 only

Half term cricket camp

These sessions are fully subscribed and will take place on Wednesday 30th and Thursday 31st October during half term. Details will be sent to all parents and carers that have signed up in the coming days.

Safeguarding & Wellbeing

World Mental Health Day 2024

The World Mental Health Day, observed on October 10th each year is part of a global campaign coordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to raise awareness of mental health issues, promote positive mental health, and reduce the stigma around mental health conditions. During PSHE lessons this week, our Year 10s have been reflecting on mental health in order to create student-led resources to share with peers.

Please [click here to view a poster](#) created by Saharsh M (10W) and Haris S (10W) to view their poster that promotes emotional wellbeing.

School Community News

Excellence in Martial Arts

We congratulate James D (10E) this week for achieving a black belt in the Korean martial art Taekwondo. We spoke with James this week about his achievement and what it takes to reach black belt:



Q: Can you tell us more about your black belt achievement in Taekwondo?

I just got my black belt a month ago during a day grading which means spending a whole day being assessed, starting at 8am and finishing at 5:30pm. The day starts with a theory paper where you have to complete translation from English to Korean and from Korean to English. There're also some questions about different aspects of Taekwondo including patterns and rules that we follow which you have to go onto practically demonstrate later in the day. The practicals include being able to demonstrate self-defence, for example being able to manage yourself if someone grabs you, as well as sparring against an opponent and finishing off with jumps and kicks. The day is finished with a spirit test, which is basically testing your mental and physical strength.

Q: How long have you been practicing Taekwondo?

About 10 years now and I've always wanted to achieve a black belt. I originally got into Taekwondo because my mum was looking for something for me to do, and she found a local class and the rest is history.

Q: How many hours of practice and training does it take to achieve black belt?

So, in a typical week I train for two hours over three days in class and continue for about an hour on patterns at home.

Q: Does Taekwondo have a real-world application?

Yes, the self-defence aspect can be used real-world. Basically, if someone grabs you, you'll have effective techniques to use and know how to use them. It's all about unarmed combat and being able to defend yourself against someone who may be armed.

Q: What's the next for you after training for 10 years and achieving a black belt?

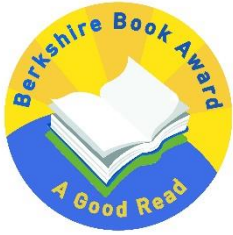
So I'll continue to compete in competitions like one I was in this weekend as well as work my way up to achieve a second dan. I'm currently a first dan black belt and you can move up until you get to ninth dan, which is Grandmaster and there are only two of them in the United Kingdom.

Q: What's Taekwondo given you?

I think it's given me a clear moral compass, because it teaches you a lot about what you should do and what you don't do. We also have the five tenets, which is, courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit. So those are the things we live by. And then we also have the oath, which is, I should observe the tenets of Taekwondo, I shall be courteous towards others, I should demonstrate integrity, to persevere despite difficulties, having self-control and an indomitable spirit.



Berkshire Book Award



This week saw the launch the 2025 Berkshire Book Award and we need your help! The Berkshire Book Award is very special as the books are nominated by young people (rather than publishers or librarians). As part of our 900-year celebrations, Reading School are proud sponsors of the 2025 Award and we invite all our students to get involved.

Students, please nominate a recent fiction book (you can nominate more than one!)

- Please head to the [BBA website where you will see the launch video](#).
- The [nominations page can be accessed by clicking here](#) (with plenty of suggestions for books to put forward). At this stage it is just first impressions of a book; no need to have read a book from cover to cover to suggest it for BBA - that will come later on.
- Criteria for nomination: a good read, published for the first time in the UK from 1st October 2023 - 30th September 2024

Nominations close on the 6th of November and the longlist will be announced on 13th of November.

RSPA

Who we are



'The Reading School Parents Association' is a charity managed by the parents and carers of Reading School students and we work alongside the School to provide a community for all the parents and carers. We raise funds using several methods, like the Preloved Uniform Shop, School Lottery, events and donations.

Over recent years, we have funded much needed outdoor seating, cricket nets, refurbished toilets, minibuses and, most recently, AV equipment. We are always looking for

new members to support the RSPA in order to continue supporting the school for the benefit of its students. For all enquiries, please email contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk.

The 'Classlist' App - a game changer

How many of us regularly use the 'Classlist App' and how many of us know the benefit of this App? Described as, '*the largest school parent community app in the world*', the app allows parents to connect, share helpful information and fundraise from one app. It also allows parents to share school runs, view lost property, check the latest events, school announcements, groups to join, announcements and much more.

There is no more un-moderated WhatsApp Groups with a GDPR-safe way for parents to share contact details and to connect with other like-minded parents safely.

In order to benefit from Classlist, we ask parents and carers to become an RSPA member, after which you will be assigned to a group containing other members of your child's form class. Members can then send messages to others within the group or individually. This facilitates the discussion of school-related matters including shared carpools, students travelling together to school, homework and lost property.

Please click this link in order to register.

<http://www.readingschoolpa.org.uk/membership-application>

Payment details:

Account Name: Reading School Parents' Association

Sort Code: 60-17-21

Account Number: 04619919

RSPA – Raising donations for School with Easyfundraising

[Easyfundraising](#) helps turn your daily shopping into a commission which is paid to us as a charity, and then passed to the School. They partner with over 7,000 brands who will donate part of what you spend. From day to day purchases of groceries, to your big annual spend such as holidays, it won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the brand.

Please do sign up to Easyfundraising to support the RSPA. When you raise your first £5 the RSPA receives another £5 on top... [click here to join us so that we get this bonus free cash](#). We've raised over £2,000 in the last few years and wish to encourage all unsubscribed parents and carers to join us!

The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

Opening dates and times:

- Friday 18th October - 3.30pm to 4.30pm
- Saturday 19th October - 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Friday 6th December 3.30pm to 4.30pm
- Saturday 7th December - 10.30am to 12.30pm

No parking is allowed on site on Friday openings.

There is parking available in the Walled Carpark on Saturday openings and the Uniform shop can be found in the back of the Walled Carpark. Please note shop opening is weather dependent, in the event of a poor weather forecast the opening may be cancelled. Please email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk with any queries.

A winter warmer for all the family



A welcome addition when taking part in any PE or games activity and may be worn to school on games day only.

Available online or try before you buy at the pre-loved uniform shop events.

Should you wish to order this can be done via the RSPA website or by [clicking this link](#).

Please bear in mind that XL - XXL hoodies are currently on special order and will take 2-3 weeks.

Have 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, be part of, and stay connected with the Reading School community.



Year 12 & 13 History Lectures – The impact of culture in the Cold War

We warmly welcomed back guest speaker, Beck Walker (OR 2014 – 2021) on Thursday of this week after having being invited to deliver lectures by Head of History & Sixth Form Transition Lead, Mr D Whitehorn.



Beck left Reading School in 2021 after having achieved four A*s and he went onto study History at the University of Cambridge where he has recently graduated and will now be completing a Law conversion course.



The next generation of architects in the making?

Our Architecture Elective has been led by Mrs Bradley who teaches students to analyse structural forms of buildings. She also encourages students to train their eyes in order to develop their visual comprehension in order to appreciate that function should give direction to form.



In architecture and drawing, form and function are two fundamental principles that guide both the design and aesthetic of structures and visual representations. The famous architectural adage, "*Form follows function*," suggests that a building's shape should be primarily based on its intended function or purpose. However, in practice, form and function are often in dialogue. Architects and designers may balance aesthetic form with practical needs, ensuring that a building is beautiful without sacrificing usability – Reading School's Waterhouse building being an example.

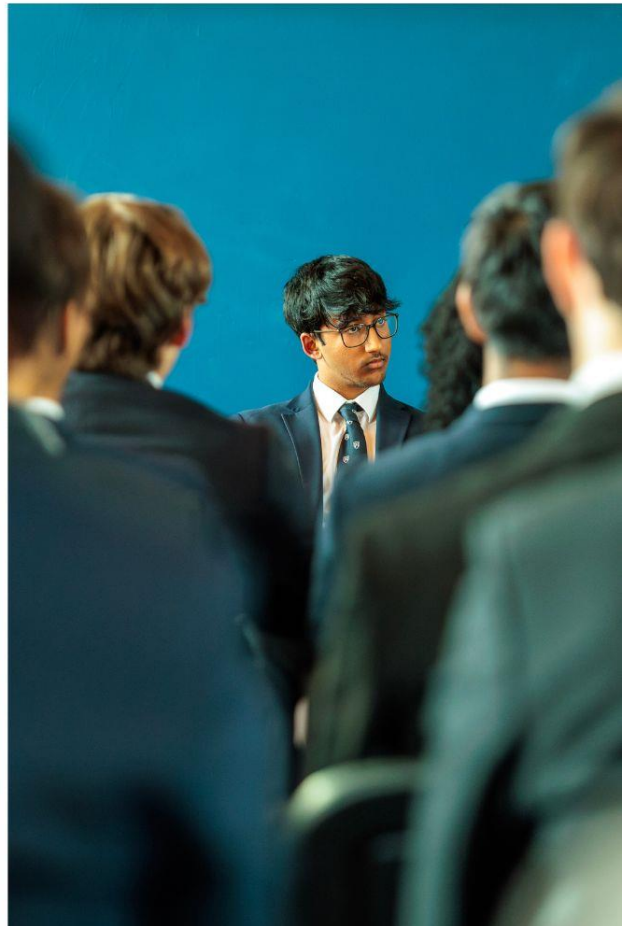


A collaborative Economics Debate with Winchester College

Reading School's Economics Department hosted its first ever Year 13 collaborative debate event with Winchester College on Thursday afternoon for its aspiring Economists of the future.



The format of the event allowed mixed teams made up from both schools to debate real-world issues, followed by taking questions from the audience while being expertly moderated by Shan S (13S).



The first of the four debates opened with, “Universities UK (body representing Vice-Chancellors) has said that universities are ‘essential to economic growth’. Therefore, we should be aiming to send 70% of school-leavers to university (by 2040) and tuition fees in England should rise in line with inflation”



Head of Economics, Dr R Chakrabarti shared, 'The afternoon was a great success! The participants were well-prepared, well-spoken, and receptive to each other's arguments, comments, and questions. At the end, I had students from both schools ask me if we could do this again, as they all felt like they had more to discuss. Really great to see such enthusiasm and especially good to see how well the students from the two schools were able to collaborate without having had the chance to coordinate their arguments in advance.'



Training mind, body and spirit

Ten years in the making! Congratulations to James D (10E) for achieving a 1st Dan black belt in Taekwondo. A student's first black belt indicates that they have mastered the fundamentals of their chosen martial art.



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.