



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

20th December 2024

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers, Students, and Staff,

Thank you so much for all your contributions to the life of Reading School this term.

Education is the tool society uses to ensure that our culture and communities are equipped to thrive and flourish in the future.

We should therefore be brave enough to regularly ask if what we are doing ensures that Reading School students know how to go on from here, to live and work, to think and to act in ways that ensure society continues to improve. In other words:

“This term, have we helped your sons to learn, to grow, to build relationships, to develop character, to acquire skills and to develop the passions that prepare them to make the world a better place?”

I dearly hope the answer is “Yes!”

I pray that you would let me know if this is not the case.

When we return in January, we will be celebrating Reading School’s 900th Anniversary.

We will launch our celebrations with assemblies for all students on Tuesday 28th of January. This will lead to the burial of a time capsule that students have been asked to contribute towards.

Our ‘Giving Day’ stretches from Wednesday 26th March to Thursday 27th March, during which time every student will be involved in sponsored challenges.

For all families and friends of the school our first ever Community Festival is on Saturday 5th July.

We hope that all ORs and past staff will join us on Saturday 12th July for the School’s Grand Reunion where we expect 900 Alumni to gather for significant celebrations together.

Parents and ORs, will also be cordially invited by invitation to a special Gala Dinner on Saturday 29th November which will feature a grand auction. We’ll share save the dates and booking processes in the Spring.

These are just some of the highlights to look forward in 2025. There will be public lectures, two House Music Competitions, thanksgiving services, social events and VIP visits, and we really hope that every single student and parent will have a profound sense of the joy of belonging to this community, at this time.

My hope is that the students of Reading School in 2125 will, on the School’s 1000th anniversary, be able to count this generation of students, parents and staff as benefactors and sages. A generation whose wisdom and sacrifice, whose courage and love, whose sacrifice and commitment, whose achievement and attitude, continued to lay the foundations for their success and happiness, inspiring them to carry forward the School’s values and culture that have defined Reading School for a millennium.

I wish you all a season filled with peace and joy, and may this holiday break bring you rest and happiness.

We look forward to welcoming you back in the New Year.

Chris Evans
Headmaster

Key information

All years and parents

Event Highlights 2025 – save the date

Just some of the special events taking place in 2025 and open to students, parents and alumni.

● Students ● Parents ● Alumni

MAR
2025
26 - 27

Giving Day
A 36-hour fundraising event where students take on challenges to raise funds for the 900th Anniversary Campaign, aimed at enhancing facilities, expanding resources and supporting our social mobility programme.



JULY
2025
5

Community Festival
A day filled with activities, cultural performances, art exhibitions, food stalls and workshops to celebrate the school's milestone anniversary for students, parents, staff, alumni and the local community.



JULY
2025
12

Grand Reunion
A global reunion at Reading School. 900 Alumni to celebrate 900 years. Includes school tours, food, music and much, much more.



NOV
2025
29

Gala Dinner
An elegant black-tie event at the Concert Hall in Reading, celebrating our 900th anniversary with fundraising, keynote speakers, auctions, awards and entertainment.



Beyond 900 Years

The planned Year 11 Parents Meeting with the Headmaster has been re-scheduled from Monday 3rd February to Monday 10th March 2025 from 7:30pm in Big School.

For any parents across any year group who have been unable to attend a meeting, you are welcome to attend on Monday 10th March 2025. The meeting will share news of the School's ambitious development plans and you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts and views.

Clubs and Extra Curricular Information – Lent Term 2025

Please [click this link](#) to access a full list of clubs and extracurricular activities taking place from Monday 6th January 2025.

Admissions Consultation

The Bulmershe School is consulting on proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements for 2026-27, and in-year admissions for other year groups during that year. Please click this link to access the consultation documents, which set out the proposed changes, admissions arrangements and how to respond.

Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing

Please [click this link to access a bitesize guide featuring wellbeing and mental health resources](#) and support. The resource pack has been created by NHS Berkshire Healthcare (Children, Young People and Families services).

Reading School Vacancies

Teacher of Biology – for further details, please [click here](#).

Chef de Partie – further details, please [click here](#).

Sous Chef – further details, please [click here](#).

School Community News

Christmas Card Affinity Campaign 2024



Launched in 2021, the Christmas Card Affinity Campaign is a special initiative that connects our Old Redingensians (ORs) aged 64 and over with our current students through personalised Christmas cards. The traditional, handwritten Christmas card becomes a particularly meaningful way to strengthen the bonds within our extended community as we approach our 900th anniversary in 2025.

For the 2024 campaign, Year 7 and 8 students were invited to design the artwork for the card's cover. The winner of this year's competition is Arjun K (8C), whose beautiful design was chosen to feature on the card. Arjun shared with us this week, *"I was really happy to have won, and it was something I'd worked really hard towards and put a lot of time and effort into. It makes me feel happy to be part of the community and I feel really proud."*

Over 350 cards have already been sent across the UK and Ireland as well as to recipients in North America, Europe, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand, and we've already received several touching responses from ORs, who wanted to personally express their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. These messages have been shared with the students, enriching their sense of community and connection.

Thank you to all the students who contributed to this meaningful initiative, including those who submitted artwork for the competition and those who took the time to handwrite the cards. Your involvement has truly made a difference in spreading joy this holiday season.

Cambridge Biology Challenge



Several students have recently taken part in an annual Biology Challenge organised and run by the University of Cambridge. The nationwide competition invites students to answer a question posed by Cambridge, and several students found out this week that they had been awarded certificates of merit and commendations.

Well done to: James M (12MC), Daniel X (10S), Ritesh S (12ZMC), Karthik V (10C), Rabin D (12VGG), Adhrit G (11L), Pedram A (10C), Rushil S (11C) and Naivedya P (10L).

National Youth Choir



Congratulations to Joshua O (9W) who has recently been accepted onto the prestigious [National Youth Choir](#) following a highly competitive nationwide audition. The judges praised Joshua's 'confident, mature, well-prepared performance' and we thank to Director of Music, Mr O Griffin and Teacher of Music, Mr J Druce for supporting Joshua on his singing journey.

LSE Undergraduate Political Review Essay Competition



Well done to Adi A (12GT) for his fantastic accomplishment of being shortlisted in a national competition run by the [London School of Economics](#). Adi's essay, 'The influence of Artificial Intelligence on the fairness and security of elections in 2024: risks and mitigations strategies' can be read by [clicking here](#).

The competition aims to encourage students to explore the field of Political Science and undertake university-style essay writing. According to the LSE it also, 'presents itself as an ideal extra-curricular for students wishing to include this experience in their UCAS personal statements.'

Learning Resource Centre

Enjoy 24/7 access to eBooks and audiobooks this Christmas.

Students can access [ePlatform for ebooks](#) and audiobooks this holiday season using their Office 365 login. This is free for students and resources can be used offline too, so excellent for travel!

Berkshire Book Award 2025

Students in years 7 and 8 have been welcomed to the LRC to participate in the prestigious Berkshire Book Award 2025. The task involved rating books from the longlist by reading the first page, reviewing the publisher's summary and evaluating the front covers of the longlisted titles. We are proud to announce our top picks were:

- The Reappearance of Rachel Price by Holly Jackson
- The Prisoner of Bhopal by Tim Walker
- Jack Splash by Tom Daley
- Skandar and the Chaos Trials by A.F. Steadman
- Murder by Mistake by Liz Jardine
- Elf Dog and Owl Head by M. T. Anderson
- Seven Million Sunflowers by Malcolm Duffy
- Percy Jackson and the Chalice of the Gods by Rick Riordan
- Running Away for Beginners by Mark Illis
- The Things We Leave Behind by Clare Furniss

We must wait until January 22nd, 2025, to find out what the official shortlist will be. To find out more about the Berkshire Book Award longlist, [you can visit their website by clicking here.](#)



Poem for December

Following last week's poem for December, 'A Cryptic Crossword Poem', Henry R shares his answers in a follow-up poem.

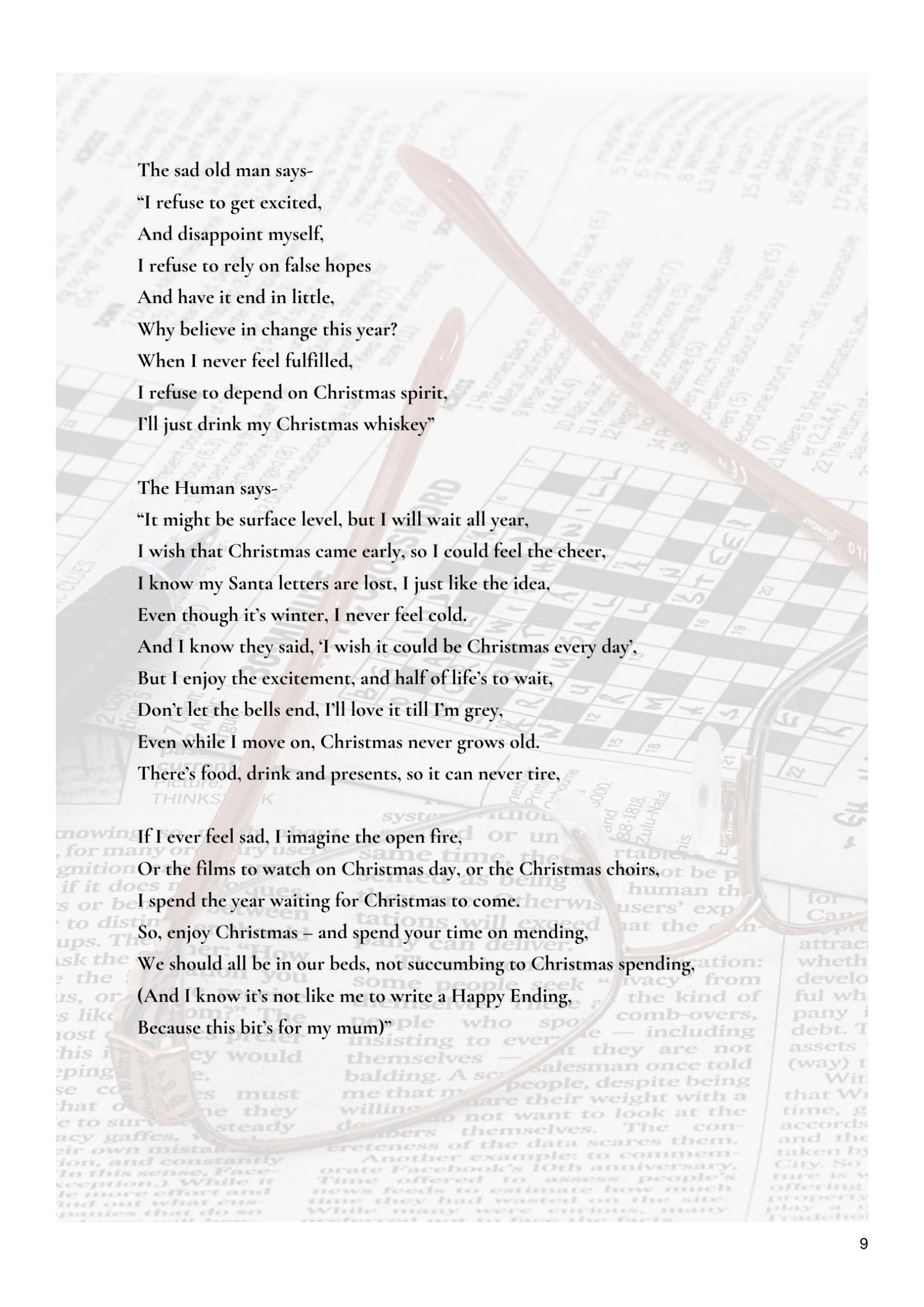
5 ways of Christmas

Henry R

The sour cynic says -
"It's a commercial ploy,
All the books and toys
It's not the time of giving
But our consumption way of living,
I don't find love in the fact
That all the presents packed,
Aren't cozy celebrations,
But cheers to the corporations"

The lazy child says-
"Holiday, and the best one,
Work and responsibility? No longer.
I'm not tiring any more
Or aiming to get stronger.
I can sleep four hours in
And escape harsh reality,
A holiday of nothingness
Spent on triviality"

The crazed countdowner says-
"It's only twelve months, now eleven, now ten,
How many weeks, how many days,
It all blurs into a Christmas haze,
It might be July, but I'll count again.
Only two months, it's almost the end!
I'm spiralling, I can't stop thinking,
All that will save me is Christmas drinking,
It's Boxing Day? No! I'll start counting again"

A crossword puzzle is the background, with a pair of glasses and a pen resting on it. The puzzle has some words filled in, such as 'WINTER' and 'STEEL'. The glasses are positioned over the bottom half of the puzzle, and the pen is positioned over the top half.

The sad old man says-
“I refuse to get excited,
And disappoint myself,
I refuse to rely on false hopes
And have it end in little,
Why believe in change this year?
When I never feel fulfilled,
I refuse to depend on Christmas spirit,
I’ll just drink my Christmas whiskey”

The Human says-
“It might be surface level, but I will wait all year,
I wish that Christmas came early, so I could feel the cheer,
I know my Santa letters are lost, I just like the idea,
Even though it’s winter, I never feel cold.
And I know they said, ‘I wish it could be Christmas every day’,
But I enjoy the excitement, and half of life’s to wait,
Don’t let the bells end, I’ll love it till I’m grey,
Even while I move on, Christmas never grows old.
There’s food, drink and presents, so it can never tire,

If I ever feel sad, I imagine the open fire,
Or the films to watch on Christmas day, or the Christmas choirs,
I spend the year waiting for Christmas to come.
So, enjoy Christmas – and spend your time on mending,
We should all be in our beds, not succumbing to Christmas spending,
(And I know it’s not like me to write a Happy Ending,
Because this bit’s for my mum)”

RSPA

Get ready for the Year 7 Disco

It's time to dust off those dancing shoes because Disco Fever is coming to Reading School! The Reading School Parents' Association is rolling out the red carpet for our incredible Year 7 students, inviting them to a night of music, laughter, and unforgettable memories. And guess what? This year, our 900th anniversary we're making it extra special!

We're thrilled to announce that we've extended an exclusive invitation to the Year 7 girls from Kendrick School. Together, they'll join our students to light up the dance floor for an evening packed with fun, friendship, and fabulous tunes.

Mark Your Calendars:

- Date: Friday, 24th January 2025
- Time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- Venue Detail: Reading School, Refectory
- Refreshments: Soft drinks and light snacks available for purchase
- Ticket Price: £10 (first come first serve basis)
- Link to buy the ticket: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/73564>

Tickets are selling fast and there is limited availability.

Teachers' Amazon Wishlist 2024 – results

The Wishlist of teachers' gifts has now ended, and we're absolutely thrilled to report that *the total of your gifts and donations for 2024 has now nudged just over £4,000!*

Your RSPA volunteers are currently boxing up all the items that have arrived and these will be delivered to School today on Friday 20th December, so that all departments can enjoy opening their gifts over the holiday break.

The personal notes that you have sent to us have been attached to your gifts, and we've had some beautiful messages from families, thanking various departments as well as particular Teachers for their "support", "inspiration", "guidance" and "kindness".

[Vouchers are still available over the holiday season](#), as there are some items that are currently out of stock, but we will still attempt to source these in time for January.

We would like to thank Rohini Luthra, Yogakshi Munjal and Claire Kirby on our RSPA notifications team for keeping up the circulation of messages that have helped raised the profile of this fundraiser, and also our Class Rep heroes who have supported the circulation of both these, along with so many other RSPA messages to their tutor and/or year group. We are so appreciative of your time!

A massive thanks also to the fabulous Jo Wyles, who has been part of the Wishlist Team for all four years, and who is stepping down from the committee in July 2025. We wish Jo all the very best!

Thanks again to everyone who has taken part in the 2024 Teachers Wishlist fundraiser. It has been amazing!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

As 2024 comes to an end, we would like to extend our warmest wishes for a joyful holiday break to all staff, students, parents and carers at Reading School.

As we reflect on 2024, we are so grateful for the amazing level of support that the RSPA have received which has allowed us to continue to support our students in the best way possible.

We appreciate all the time and energy you have all contributed and we hope that this holiday season brings you joy, rest and quality time with your loved ones.

We'll see you all in 2025 and wish the New Year brings prosperity, success and happiness for all.

Warm regards

RSPA Team

The RSPA Team



Michaelmas Term – Week 16

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



A Gift to the Reading School Community

Every year, Reading School's House Music Competition is recorded and made available to purchase. This year, all 5 House performances have been made available to watch for free as part of the 900th Anniversary celebrations – please click the links below to enjoy.



Click here: [School House](#) / [Laud House](#) / [East House](#)



[County House](#) / [West House](#)

Happy Christmas and may the holidays be filled with love and joy.























Reading School Chamber Choir wishes you Season's Greetings.

Dishanth G (9E), Oscar Z (10W), Freddie Shaw, James G (13EF) and Raphael N (12SP) perform 'Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen' (English: "Lo, how a rose o'er blooming"), a traditional German carol written by German composer Michael Praetorius circa 1609. The rose symbolises the Virgin Mary, and the text also refers to the Tree of Jesse, both important motifs in Jesus' life.

The second piece, "O Come, All Ye Faithful" was first published in 1751. Its authorship is debated, but the carol is most attributed to English hymnist John Francis Wade and is a staple of carol services worldwide.

Click thumbnail to enjoy the performance.



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.