



# Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



**Term 1**

**October 2013**

## Headteacher's Message

The academic year 2013-14 has begun with a very positive atmosphere in the school. The new staff members who joined us in September are working hard along with the students and as usual we are all focused on learning and making progress. The school, parents and students are in a collaborative partnership and with us all working together the students will make greater progress. Thus I would ask you to ensure your daughters come to school each day on time and ready for learning. Bringing in the correct equipment, wearing the correct uniform and abiding by the code of conduct. As you can see when you read this newsletter there are exciting developments in store for Reading Girls' and we will keep you apprised of all developments.

Year 7 students have settled in well – they look magnificent in their uniform and are a delightful addition to the school. The Science Museum came to the school and students experienced some loud bangs, explosions and stomach turning experiments. Year 11 students are also working very hard and are determined to concentrate on their studies and not be negatively influenced by recent changes by the DfE. Staff at RGS are committed to providing an excellent education to all students and to ensure that enrichment activities play a full part in this.

Our budget is linked to certain percentages. One way we can increase money coming into the school to buy resources for your daughter is if we can increase the number of parents claiming Free School Meals. If you are on Income Support or Child Benefits, you are eligible to claim a free school meal for your daughter. However, if you are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, you are **not** entitled. Please telephone Mrs

Whyte our school office manager on 0118 986 1336 who will be happy to advise you. Every eligible parent makes a big difference to our school budget.

**School ends at 3.10pm on Friday 25 October and students are to return on Monday 4 November at 8.40am** and go straight to their tutor bases.

I am particularly grateful of the support I have received from parents and members of the local community. I look forward to meeting you and your family during the course of this year.

**Viv Angus**  
Headteacher

## New School Build Update

Work on the re-development of Reading Girls' School under the Priority School Building Programme is progressing well and remains on course for delivery of a new school on the existing site by 2016.

At the start of the process the Education Funding Agency (EFA), who are procuring

this work on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) and their technical advisers engaged with the school to develop control option designs to test the options for a new school. Then, in July this year the EFA advertised the scheme, which, as well as Reading Girls' School, includes six secondary schools in Hertfordshire and Luton and received a strong response from the market.

In August this year, the EFA short-listed three bidders to proceed to the next stage of the procurement process. The three bidders invited to continue to the next stage are: Morgan Sindall, Wates and Interserve/Kajima.

Each of the bidders is now developing their designs (which are likely to differ from those of the control option below) and these will be evaluated by the EFA by Easter next year when the selected bidder is appointed to go to the next stage and further develop their proposals.



## School Uniform Supplier

As you are probably aware, Jacksons (our school uniform provider) will be closing their school uniform department from Wednesday 23 October. We have entered into an agreement with **Stevensons** to provide our school uniform from **Monday 4 November 2013** when their new shop opens at **11-12 Market Place, Reading**. Any ordered received by Jacksons will be honoured by Stevensons.



Stevensons have been providing quality schoolwear since 1925 and are a one-stop source for parents for quality school uniform, sportswear and sports equipment. They will be offering an online service approximately two weeks later when their updated website goes live. In the meantime you can register with them online and they will let you know directly when the RGS uniform is available online at [www.stevensons.co.uk](http://www.stevensons.co.uk).

## Childcare visit

On 25 September, the Childcare students in Years 10, 11 and 12 went to **Paultons Park** for the day. The aim was to put the theory that is learnt in the classroom about hazards, health and safety, risk assessment and how children play into a practical context. The girls completed a work book provided by staff at the theme park and were then able to go round the park in groups and go on the rides. It was a very successful day and the students gained a lot of useful information that they will be able to use in their coursework.



## Travel & Tourism

On Wednesday 10 October a group of Travel & Tourism students visited Thorpe Park. They attended a workshop designed to educate the students on Thorpe Park's approach to customer

service. They also enjoyed a few hours exploring the park and sampling some of the rides and experiencing Thorpe Park's customer service provision first hand. This trip provided the students with ample case study material to allow them to complete their coursework to a high standard and also gave them an insight into the world of travel and tourism.

## Citizenship

28 students from the Year 10 GCSE Citizenship group travelled to London to understand how Parliament works and how laws are made in the UK. They were given a guided tour of the **House of Commons** and the **House of Lords** before attending a workshop in Portcullis House. This workshop explained the law making process, which was very entertaining as well as educational. The trip into London and home again was made more interesting by the coach driver taking the 'scenic' route and showing the students the sights of London.



## Hairdressing

On Monday 14 October the Hairdressing students attended **Salon International**. This is an annual event which we have been attending for the past three years. Salon International takes place at the Excel centre in London and is the biggest show of its kind in the UK. It hosts a non-stop programme of amazing live events showcasing the new season's styles, cutting techniques and colour trends. With over 200 exhibitors it is the place to find the latest and greatest products under one roof. All the students have found it an enjoyable experience, where they have gained an insight into the ever evolving hairdressing industry.



## Roald Dahl Day

On Friday 27 September, RGS celebrated

### Roald Dahl Day.

The day not only celebrates the work of the popular children's author, but also raises money for the children's charity set up in Dahl's name. The charity supports seriously ill children and their families all over the country by providing nurses and carers as well as working with hospitals and patients. To help raise money, students in key stage three were encouraged to contribute one pound and dress up as a character from a Roald Dahl book or to wear yellow accessories with their school uniform (as a nod to Roald Dahl's favourite colour).



It was wonderful to see so many girls joining in. The school was filled with some of Dahl's best loved



characters from Matilda to Willy Wonka. Even the staff rose to the occasion, much to the amusement of many of the girls! The school raised £136 for Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity and a truly Dahlicious day was had by all.

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**Autumn Reading Challenge** - 15 students have completed the challenge so far this term, how many more will be taking part in the Christmas Lucky Dip?

Get your entry form in the Library.

## Holly Bourne—Author Event

The library started the new school year in style when Holly Bourne dropped in to talk about her debut novel *Soulmates* which takes a new approach to the supernatural romance genre so popular at the moment.

Holly talked about the research she undertook and was impressed that one of the students knew that the term 'soulmates' came from a Greek myth.



The girls did a True or False quiz, looking at ten weird facts about love that Holly had found during her research; only one was false.

Holly also talked about her career as a journalist. While gaining a first class degree in journalism at the University of Sheffield, Holly edited one of the universities newsletters, which gained her a job as a news reporter for the Sunday Mirror where she was shortlisted for Print Journalist of the Year 2010.

At the end of the session, Holly answered a number of searching questions about a career in writing before the girls queued up to buy copies of her book, which she signed for them. We are sure her visit will prove an inspiration to many budding authors.



## Fundraising

On Friday 27 September, the school was taken over by fundraising fever! The lower school participated in Roald Dahl Day while students in years 10 and 11 were invited to donate £1 to dress as something or someone they 'Aspire2B' raising £137 for the local Whitley charity.



The Curriculum Support team ran a cake



sale for the Macmillan Coffee Morning Appeal, raising £125, a similar sale in the staff room netted a further £50 for this very good cause.

## School Meals Price Increase

Please note Chartwells have informed us that from Monday 4 November 2013 the price of a standard school meal increases to **£2.25**.



The Northumberland Training Academy is running Employability Workshop in the Employment Ready Room every day from 12.00 to 12.30pm. Employability workshops are a great opportunity for individuals to join in a group activity instead of struggling alone, gain any help that they may need in searching for employment. The workshops include:

- job search
- cv preparation and development
- help with application forms
- how to prepare for interviews
- overcoming barriers to work and keeping that ideal job

As part of their Health & Safety units, some of our hairdressing students are to visit the Whitley Fire Station.

## Romeo and Juliet

Year 10's had the opportunity to see an amazing performance of Romeo and Juliet, staged by the 'Reading between the Lines' Theatre Company, at the



Minster of St Mary the Virgin Church in the centre of Reading. It was a lovely day and the 40 students accompanied by staff, walked into

town for the matinee performance. It was a stunning setting and the professional cast gave an enthralling performance, the staff and girls thoroughly enjoyed the performance despite the very hard seats!

## Open Day

On Thursday 3 October 2013, Reading Girls' School opened it's doors to prospective students (for admission in September 2014) and their parents. During the day, current students took visitors on tours of the school. The girls

then left early to allow time for staff to prepare for the main event in the evening. All the departments made an effort to show the interesting and enjoyable teaching methods we encourage, the Headteacher, Mrs Angus made a speech and was joined on stage by our Head Girls, and two Year 7 students, who all had positive things to say about their experiences here.

## Forthcoming Events in Term 2

### October

Thur 24—Year 7 Parent's Evening  
Fri 25—Black History Event concert and non uniform day

### November

Mon 4—Start of Term 2  
Tue 21—Careers Fair

### December

Mon 3—Inset Day  
Thur 12—Panto on Ice for Year 7  
Thur 12—Yr11 Business Studies to Cadbury World  
Thur 19—Senior Prizegiving  
TBC—Arabian Nights Christmas Show  
Fri 20—End of Term 2

## Courtesy to Local Residents

Please remember when delivering or collecting your daughter that you should respect the law and normal courtesy with regard to parking and driving. Please do **NOT** park on dropped kerbs, or double park, and do remember that Northumberland Avenue is a bus route, and inconsiderate parking can cause problems for residents and bus drivers. If you must use a car, why not arrange to park a little further away from the school and ask your daughter to walk a little way rather than expecting to be dropped off/picked up directly in front of the school?



## Improved text messaging system - and you can help the school save money

From time to time, we send information to parents via text message to your mobile phone. A new, free, smart phone app for parents is now available for download called 'School Gateway' for

Apple (iPhone 3GS or later, iPad, iPod Touch) and Android (2.3 / Gingerbread or later) devices.

**Please could you download this new app to your phone** (it's free) as it will help us improve communication with parents – and save the school money. The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes:

1. Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone go to [www.schoolgateway.com/apple](http://www.schoolgateway.com/apple) (Apple) or [www.schoolgateway.com/android](http://www.schoolgateway.com/android) (Android)
2. Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"
3. When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school
4. The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you. As soon as you've got the system set-up, all of the text messages we send you will appear in the app; you'll receive notifications/alerts as normal. If you've recently changed your email address or mobile telephone number, please let us know so we can update our records.

## Reading in Bloom—Gold Winners

At this year's Reading in Bloom competition the 'Garden Angels' were



awarded the Gold Award for secondary schools. The students attended the awards ceremony at Reading University where they also had the opportunity to visit the 'hot house'. The girls came back to school with very big smiles and a much deserved certificate and plant for their achievements.

## Local Business Support

We would like to thank a number of companies for their support at Reading Girls' School. **Procter & Gamble** for sponsoring the ICT Ambassadors in the



First Lego League, including purchasing a robot kit! **KPMG** for their continued support in work readiness projects and a donation of £250 which will be put into the minibus fund. The **National Grid** for their donation of a 'transmission simulator kit'.



## Science Museum Visit

On Wednesday 9 October Reading Girls' School had the pleasure of welcoming back The Science Museum and yet again, they did not disappoint. Asya and Rowan from the Science Museum, showed pupils science in action and some of it was not for the fainthearted!

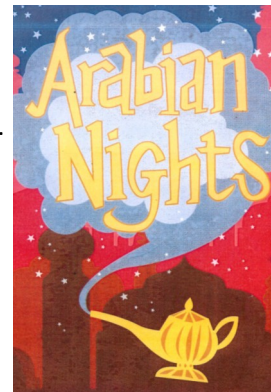
The pathway of food in the alimentary canal was shown by using a surgical camera being passed through Asya's digestive system. This was the most pupil-repellent part of the show. Pupils covered their eyes and shrieked in mock displeasure. Rowan modelled the pathway of food using bowls and various liquids to simulate some of the digestive organs, saliva and stomach acid. The old favourite, Barbie doll was back to show us how charge could be transferred from a Van der Graaf generator to her hair. The team demonstrated the Lightning Crouch position which limits damage to internal organs if a person should they be hit by lightning.

For the sake of Science, a brave pupil donned a nappy to show how chemicals called polymers can be used to keep baby comfortable and reduce the mother's wash load. The nappy was

placed on top of the pupils head and almost a litre of liquid was poured onto it. The pupil emerged from the display with a dry head! We would like to thank the team and we look forward to welcoming them back, next year.

## Christmas Production..... Arabian Nights!

It is the wedding night in the palace of King Sharhryar. By morning the new Queen Shahrazad is to be put to death like all the young brides before her. But she has one gift that could save her - the gift of storytelling. With her mischievous imagination, the young Queen spins her dazzling array of tales and characters. Witness them come to life before your eyes as Ali Baba defeats the forty thieves, Sinbad the Sailor battles with monsters and mythical creatures and The Little Beggar is killed over and over again in a spectacle of imagination, wonder and creativity that will have you howling with laughter and shaking with terror in equal measure. But the big question is: will Shahrazad's silver-tongued stories be enough to save her from her grisly fate?



**Come along to witness a fantastic evening of acting, singing and dancing from our wealth of talented students (and teachers...)**

## Holidays are fine but not in term time

Any absence in term time undermines the continuity of your child's education and reduces her chances of success. **Parents and carers are asked to take family holidays during the school holidays.** The Headteacher may authorise leave of absence but will consider the reasons for the request, the effect on the continuity of your daughter's learning and her overall attendance. Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for an unauthorised holiday during term time, you may be issued with a **fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent for each child doubling to £120 if not paid within 28 days.**

The school holiday dates for 2013/14 are as follows:

- Mid term break Monday 28 October to Friday 1 November
- Christmas break Monday 23 December to Friday 3 January
- Mid term break Monday 17 to Friday 21 February
- Easter break Monday 7 to Monday 21 April
- Mid term break Monday 26 to Friday 30 May
- End of term Friday 25 July