



Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



Term 2

www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk

December 2013

Message from Head

2013 is drawing to a close and RGS has achieved another successful year. The students and staff are to be complimented on their very hard work this term – it is truly a school working together that makes a difference. There have been many opportunities for students in the last term and they have been excellent ambassadors for both the school and the local area when they have participated in events inside and outside of the school. As you read through this newsletter you will be able to judge for yourself the excellent breadth of activities that the school has engaged in.

I continue to be proud of all the students and hope that they will continue to focus on their learning to ensure they achieve their full potential. I would ask you to support us in this by ensuring your daughter attends school every day and is punctual. Wearing the full school uniform and bringing all the necessary equipment do indeed make a difference to her overall achievement.

In January 2014 we are going to place all homework that is issued to your daughter on line. You will be able to access this via our web site. Further details can be found in this newsletter. We think this is an exciting new initiative which will allow you to track your daughter's completion and achievements with her homework.

Students are to return to school on Monday 6 January 2014 at 8.40 am and go straight to their tutor bases.

On behalf of the staff and Governors at Reading Girls' School we wish you and all your family an enjoyable break and a happy and successful year ahead.

Regards



Viv Angus
Headteacher



Parent Governors needed

The Governing Body would like to have more parents as members. There are currently three vacancies for parents which became available at the end of the last school year and a fourth vacancy will become available later in the year. Any parents who would be interested in joining us would be very welcome. Becoming a governor gives you a good insight into how the school works. Parent governors also play a valuable role on the governing body by bringing first-hand experience of the school from the pupils and families which helps other governors know how we can support the school. Please come and join us.

If you are interested please let the school office know in the first instance. On behalf of the Governing Body, I would like to send you all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Peter Kayes, Chair of Governors

Year 10 GCSE Media Trip

On Thursday, 5th December 2013, the three Year 10 GCSE Media groups went on an amazing trip to the cinema to watch *Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. When we got to the Oracle, Miss Barnett and Mrs Oles kindly allowed us half an hour to have lunch – knowing that we would have more than enough time to eat while watching the movie – and about 98% of us opted to pay a little visit to McDonalds. When we finished, everybody rushed to the Vue Cinema, skipping delightedly. We waited outside the cinema in the furious cold until we were herded inside and allowed to purchase some snacks.

Afterwards, we all gathered up and we went into the cinema to watch the movie. We were in Screen 4 and all of us rushed to get the top seats. The cinema hall was pretty much empty which added to our

sense of excitement and feeling of gratitude towards our wonderful teachers who had organised this trip for us.

The film was excellent. This term we have started preparing our second Controlled Assessment in Media, which is Cross-Media Study. This involves studying methods of film promotion (such as trailers, posters, interviews and other elements of a movie marketing campaign) and analysing them for effect. In addition, we are required to comment on how the various advertising strategies effectively promote the themes and content of the film, so being able to watch this new release was of great benefit.

Overall, the trip was great and I would award the film a 4/5 because although they had made changes to the movie compared to the book, it still had many great shots and the acting was prodigious.

Maryum Khan (10R)

Philippines fundraising

These year 8 students organized and ran a cake sale and sponsored silence to raise money for the victims of the Philippine typhoon. They worked really hard and raised over £135 for this worthy cause.



Teacher Training

On Tuesday 3 December I went to a training day on Tectonics and how we can use new case studies to improve our teaching. With natural hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis happening across the world, it is difficult for text books to keep up to date, so we need to be aware of what's going on and the best way to share it with our students. One of the lectures was given by Professor Ian Stewart whom you may recognize from his programmes on the BBC about 'The power of the planet' and a series on the ten most extreme volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis.

It was really exciting to meet a hero of the geography world.

Ms Cunningham



Black History Event

Back in the summer term, a group of students approached Mrs Angus as they were keen to organise a fundraising event, and wanted to make sure it was well organised. A date was selected and it was agreed that they could have a non-uniform day, sales of food with the main event to be a concert after school.

Nieema Hassan and Mwango Hwalima were the main organisers and said: "Basically since it's our last year we wanted to do something big for black history month (coming from an African background). So we decided to do a concert to celebrate our history and to showcase the talents of young people that we know. Our aim for the night was to entertain and educate, as well as having many performers there was also a spoken word piece, a poem recital and a presentation.

"There were performers not only from our school but others who are helping to celebrate with us. There were singers, dancers, rappers, a band, a fashion show and spoken word. We got together a group of students who were happy to help with the organisation and were a massive support. The students ranged from years 7-11. We set up several tables on the night to sell things, ranging from food, to



art and having your henna done, to a few young entrepreneurs who are selling their own accessories and tops in the evening."



The event was held on the last day of term one on Friday 25 October. Not only did they stage the concert that was open to the community, the school also had its own internal celebration with an international themed non-uniform day and food sales during break time and lunch. The event raised just over £1000 in total, which is the best fundraising effort anyone can re-call. The main speaker at the evening event, Shirley Anstis, of Envision Counselling has kindly agreed to be the guest speaker at Senior Prizegiving in December.

Language Club

On Wednesday 20 November, members of the language club celebrated French food and culture by making their own crêpes. Recipes and instructions were given in both French and English and the girls were able to use vocabulary sheets to understand the key French words. It was a very tasty way to learn more about French culture and food! Bon appetit!



Reading Youth Cabinet

On Thursday 24 October, members of the School Council attended a Reading Youth Cabinet Event. This was held in the beautiful and inspiring setting of St Laurence's Church in Reading town centre. Students from local secondary schools were welcomed to the event by the Mayor of Reading, Marian Livingstone, and Alok Sharma, the MP for Reading West.

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?

The Reading Youth Cabinet have this year picked two topics for major campaigns – mental health in young



people, and careers advice. The aim of the event was to get feedback from young people to inform these projects and help them develop their plans. This was done through a variety of workshops, discussion groups and activities. The event was attended by Connexions Adviza, the Carers' Project, school nurses, community workers and Listen to Within. We look forward to hearing about how the Youth Cabinet's projects progress and wish them well.

Also, the Reading Youth Cabinet's elections for next year are currently taking place and some of our students are nominated. Best wishes, girls.

Autumn Reading Challenge

Twenty girls took part in the Autumn Reading Challenge; between them they read and wrote about 138 books. As well as earning House Points during terms 1 and 2, a lucky dip took place at the end of term 2 for all participating students.





Business & Enterprise

Global

Entrepreneurship

Week took place in November. As well as being about setting up your own business, it was also about the importance of enterprise skills—teamwork, planning, communication, independence, dealing with stress, positive thinking, empathy for others, creative thinking and problem solving. While it's important for students to have English, maths and science GCSEs it's also essential for them to have these skills for their future work and life. The theme of this year's Global Entrepreneurship Week was **'Take a Step Forward'** and for a House Competition we asked students how they were using and developing these personal skills. There were some wonderful entries, some made us laugh, some made us cry and some were inspiring.



The winners were Liberty Haylett 7B, Daisy Penn 8B, Mary Haward 8C, Mairead Casey 11B and Louise Martin 11S.

Microsoft DigiGirlz



A group of Year 9 students recently attended the **Microsoft DigiGirls** event which was held at the stunning **Microsoft UK HQ** near the River Thames. Through the day, students had talks from a variety of people at Microsoft telling their personal stories of how they came to work there, their experiences and what it is like to work there and girls had the opportunity to ask questions. They also took part in a challenge working with mentors from Microsoft to design a new and exciting app. This included preparing a brief for the product to explain what it was and filming an advertisement for it. Our team were given a beautiful meeting room to work in with Harry Potter style furniture! The final part of the day included talks about designing games software and a look at some new technologies.



Year 11 Interview Skills

Our Year 11 students recently had a day of mock interviews to help them prepare for the future. Each student had time with a professional from a local business or employer, incorporating a short mock interview, feedback and questions and answers. Students could also get feedback on their CV if they had one. Most of them were understandably nervous before the event - meeting a stranger for an interview is never easy! However, they were brave and found the experience useful and a good practice for the future. We are very grateful to all our business volunteers from: **Microsoft, The Rotary Club, Chiltern Training, Olswang, KPMG, The Oracle, BMW, Foster Wheeler, Verizon, CISCO and Quintiles.**



KPMG have continued working on projects with us this year. As well as taking part in careers events, they took part in the mock interviews for our Year 11s and will be mentoring some students over the next few months.

First Lego League



Our ICT Ambassadors have been working on a robotics challenge called The First Lego League – Nature's Fury. Our team's entry in the competition has been sponsored by **Procter & Gamble**, who have also kindly purchased the kit for us. Staff from their Innovation Centre at the Gillette site in Basingstoke Road have been working with our students on the project and seem to enjoy testing out the robots too!

The regional final takes place on Thursday 19 December at the University of Reading. The girls have been working very hard and we wish them well!

QUINTILES* Quintiles are a pharmaceutical development company. Staff from their Reading Office in Green Park have recently spent time in school working on a variety of projects as part of their volunteering scheme. Staff took part in a careers activity for Year 9s; some helped with a Year 10 oil trading challenge which involved enterprise skills and financial awareness, and another group of volunteers helped with interview skills for our Year 11 students. We are very grateful for their time and support and hope they found the time they spent with us rewarding.

Also this term:

All the Year 9 Students attended the **Careers Fair held at John Madejski Academy**. Thank you JMA for inviting us!

We have been allocated some money from the Reading Borough Council - Decent Neighbourhood Fund to pay for a couple of projects the School Council are working on.



Reading Girls' has subscribed to a new service called **"Show My Homework"**.

This provides on-line

access to all homework that has been set across all year groups. From Monday 6 January, all teachers will be using this system to record homework. To see the homework timetable, just click on the "parent tab" button at the top right of the school website and select the homework tab. This week you should have received a letter via your daughter with a password which will allow you to log into the site and track your daughter's homework, what it is and if it is being completed on time. The school hopes that this will help parents to support their daughters to reach their full potential.

Chemistry Christmas Tree created by 9T



9N Independent English Project

As part of an independent library project during their study of Shakespeare's Othello, Class 9N were given freedom to research, for a speaking and listening presentation, topics relevant to the play. Yashica, Sidra, and Amasha developed their project together on the history and development of the Venetian Carnival inclusive of the development of the masks used. These young ladies made the extra effort of creating their own from the instructions, beginning with a paper Mache model. The final result was outstanding, as was their Power Point presentation. A special achievement award was justly deserved from their teacher. *Mrs J Edwards*



in a couple of friendly matches held at Prospect School. Their game play improved as the matches progressed and they demonstrated some good passing and defending skills.

Year 7 and 8 Football Teams



Year 7 (left) and Year 8 (below) have taken part in the Reading Schools' 6-a-side Football League. Both teams improved game by game as they got used to their positions and worked more as a team.



Their passing and defending progressed and they held off some tough opposition with a couple of good draws.

Year 9, 10 and 11 Football Team



The upper school team performed well overall in the league with a win and some good draws to finish in 4th place overall. The football was of a good quality with some excellent movement around the defenders. Our own defenders blocked well and there were some good saves from the keeper.

KS4 Badminton Team

Four girls represented RGS in this tournament playing a mixture of singles and doubles. The games were very competitive with a high standard of badminton played. They played two different teams from Kendrick and showed a good range of skills and tactics to try and outwit their opponents. A good effort girls.



Level 10 Trampoline Competition



Seven girls competed for RGS at the competition held at Kendrick School.

There were over 40 competitors so it was very nerve wracking to have to perform on your own in front of everyone and required a certain level of courage. The girls all did their best.

Year 7 Inter-House Benchball Competition



All year 7 tutor groups worked very hard over a number of hours to complete

the tournament. Much thought went into planning their tactics and developing their throwing, catching and defending skills. The final results were: 1st 7B; 2nd 7A; 3rd 7S; 4th 7C; 5th 7R

Year 8 Inter-House Benchball Competition



Similarly the year 8's also worked very hard to complete their tournament. They spent a lot of time in PE lessons and in their tutor time developing their plans and strategies to beat their opponents. The standard of play was very high with some excellent throwing and defending. All the games were pretty close and in the end three teams shared joint second position. The final results were: 1st 8A; joint 2nd = 8C, 8R and 8S; 5th 8B.

PE and Sports News



Year 7 and 8 Hockey League

Our new team of Year 8 girls took part in

the 7-a-side mini hockey league at Leighton Park School. They worked hard to develop their stick handling skills, dribbling, passing and tackling. They made huge improvements over the league. All their games were very close and they were unlucky to just miss out on the semi finals.

Sports Ambassadors for 2013-14



Four girls in year 9 were selected to be Silver Sports Ambassadors due to their contribution to clubs, fixtures and

acting as excellent role models in PE. They were invited to attend the Young Sports Ambassadors Conference at Reading University in November and should bring ideas to the PE department of activities they would like to implement.

Year 7, 8 and 9 Basketball and Year 10 and 11 Basketball friendly matches



Our keen basketballers in all years had a chance to practise their skills

End of term festivities

As is customary at the annual 2-day RGS festive lunch; students were waited on by teachers and support staff. The girls thoroughly enjoyed their traditional Christmas lunch and were visited by a very special guest—none other than Father Christmas delivering presents to a number of lucky students!

