



Reading Girls' School NEWSLETTER



Term 1

October 2010

The Science Museum comes to town!

On Friday 10 September, we invited the Year 7 girls from Kendrick School to join us for the Science Museum's visit to RGS.



Shana and Richard from the Science Museum vented their anger and frustrations on Barbie who was rocketed sky-high from a bottle full of Coca-Cola into which a Mentos had been dropped. You could see that she wasn't very happy, you could say that she was foaming with anger. Jeff the Jelly Baby suffered even more indignation at their hands as he was turned into a liquid. Unfortunately, Barbie was also subjected to being placed in a Van der Graaf generator where her skills were used to demonstrate how differences in charge can lead to lightning. Students were

educated in what to do (lightning position) and where to go during a lightning storm.



Some parents might have been a little disturbed by the language that pervaded the air as Sharna graphically detailed the voyage of corn, bread and hotdogs along the various parts of the digestive system. Ask them about it, but choose a time other than breakfast/lunch or tea-time, please!

The Science Department is closely guarding our supply of Ping-Pong balls just in case any of our keen scientists decide to copy Richard's demonstration of how particles behave in solids, liquids and gases. Teachers at Reading Girls' School will do anything to enhance the learning of their girls, as Mr Nichols showed when he placed what is usually worn on a baby (need I say more) on his head. One of the students poured a yellowish liquid onto the device (with quite a lot of fervour). Fortunately Mr Nichols stayed dry and his fashionable hairstyle remained in place - phew! This was an early introduction to long, repeating chains of molecules called polymers.

The team from the Science Museum brought enthusiasm, humour and drama as well as a keen desire to share their



knowledge of Science to Reading Girls' School. They linked well some of the topics that will be taught in Key Stage 3 and have given the girls a good head start. In the Science Department, we are sure that they have conveyed to the students that science is fun!

Reading in Bloom Gold Award



The Reading in Bloom Schools' Challenge had more entries than ever this year with 16 of the borough's schools taking part. The awards ceremony was held at Green Park on Tuesday 14 September. Green Park sponsored the challenge and provided garden tool kits as prizes. The Mayor of Reading Councillor Gul Khan presented the prizes. Reading Girls' School's Garden Angels were very proud to receive the Gold Award.



Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers

The academic year 2010-11 began with a very positive atmosphere in the school. We celebrated our **best GCSE results** ever – Year 11 students last year achieved a brilliant **76% 5 A* to C grades** – a 28% rise on the previous year and a 7% rise in 5A* to C grades including English and Mathematics. We also achieved the best attendance percentage in the whole of Reading. During the last academic year the focus was on improving our results and attendance and this will continue to be our focus this year.

In the third week of term we had an OFSTED monitoring visit who concluded that RGS is indeed a **rapidly improving** school and has worked hard to ensure that all students are receiving a high quality of education. The OFSTED report is available to read on the RGS website and also on the OFSTED website. The inspectors commented on the good behaviour they witnessed both in lessons and around the school and also described the girls as being eager to learn. With your help and support we wish to embed this thirst for learning within the school.

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 support us in ensuring 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 we can only improve further.



Our budget is linked to certain percentages. One way we can increase money coming into the school and buy resources for your daughter is if we can increase the number of parents claiming Free School Meals (see further details). Please telephone Mrs Hutchison our school receptionist on 0118 986 1336 who will be happy to advise you. Every eligible parent makes a big difference to our school budget.

Mobile Phones in School

We understand that mobile phones are a great way of keeping in touch. Our school policy means that mobile phones are not to be seen or heard during lesson time. In case of an emergency please telephone our main office on 0118 9861336 and Mrs Hutchison will ensure a message is forwarded to your daughter. Your support here is much appreciated.

As you read in this newsletter you will be aware that we are also committed to providing enrichment activities for all students – education is about examination success but along with this is the development and refinement of skills needed in a constantly changing world. 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.

School ends at 3.10pm on Friday 22 October. There is an INSET on Monday 1 November and all **students are to return to school on Tuesday 2 November at 8.40am** and go straight to their tutor bases.

New Security Measures

If you have visited the school recently you may have noticed that arrivals are greeted by a new set of electronic gates, which will be kept closed during normal school hours to deter unauthorised persons from entering the site. There are call buttons, which the reception staff will respond to as promptly as possible. There may be a short wait if they are already dealing with another caller or a telephone call. Please remember if you are visiting the site for any reason, you must report to reception, and not enter any other part of the school.

New Reception Area

If you have already visited us this year, you will have seen the new reception area. There are windows for visitors and students to talk to the reception staff, there are seats for visitors arriving for appointments, and we are able to display art work and certificates of which we are very proud. Inside the school we have a new display area of last year's 'high achievers' each of whom achieved at least 10 GCSE's at A*-C. This board will be updated each year as an inspiration to current students. We hope to inspire the younger students to match or beat their predecessors!

Yours sincerely



Governors' Message

A new school year has got off to a good start at Reading Girls' School based on our best GCSE results in living memory, with a massive increase in the number of girls achieving five or more grades A*-C up from 48% last year to 76% this summer, followed by an encouraging and positive Ofsted visit during September. Governors would like to congratulate all the students and staff on these achievements.

We are also pleased to welcome our new Deputy Headteacher, Mhairi Lavender, and look forward to working with her over the coming years as the school drives the girls' achievements to even greater heights.

It was very encouraging that our partnership with Kendrick School has enabled 13 girls to transfer to the Kendrick Sixth Form based on their excellent GCSE results. The partnership developed last year with TVU (now Reading College) also enabled a record number of girls to successfully complete courses in years 12 and 13, and the numbers enrolled in the Post 16 Centre this year have hit a new record.

A great start to what promises to be yet another record year for the school.

Peter Kayes
Chair of Governors

New RGS Website

As part of our drive on improving Reading Girls' School we are in the middle of completely redesigning our school website. We are hoping to launch it in the New Year and are working very hard on adding all the new content. We are involving the students in this and will be taking lots of new photos and videos in and around the school.



Free School Meals

If you are in receipt of any of the benefits given below, you are entitled to receive free school meals for your daughter(s). Please do take up this opportunity by asking for a 'Free School Meals' letter from Reception and return it with your evidence.

- ◆ Income Support
- ◆ Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- ◆ An income related Employment and Support Allowance
- ◆ Support under the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- ◆ Child Tax Credit (not Working Tax Credit) and annual income not exceeding £16,190
- ◆ The guarantee element of State Pension Credit

This evidence (which must be less than 3 months old) has to be provided three times a year to prove your continued entitlement. Please ensure this is returned to Reception within the first two weeks of the new school year and after the Christmas and Easter breaks. If the evidence is not returned within the first two weeks your daughter's entitlement to a free school meal will be withdrawn. Unfortunately the school is not in a financial position to be able to give free meals to students who are not entitled and we are unable to loan money.

eSafety update



Facebook and the CEOP Centre have joined forces to make young people safer online by launching the new 'ClickCEOP' application. A message from Helen Whittle, Education Officer, Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, Reading Borough Council.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk
www.ceop.police.uk

ClickCEOP is a new 'app' launched on 12 July which links the young user directly from their Facebook profile to help, advice and reporting facilities of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre - the police agency set up to tackle child abuse.

By adding the app, young people and parents can get support from CEOP on a range of issues - viruses, hacking, dealing with bullying online and they can report someone who is acting inappropriately towards them online. If you have a Facebook profile, app and bookmark the app. If children in your care are on Facebook, get them to search 'ClickCEOP' in Facebook and give them the chance to be one click away from help - if they should ever need it.

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 £50 per parent for each child.** School holiday dates for 2010/11 are as follows:

Mid term break Monday 25 to Friday 29 October (Post 16 catch up week)
Christmas break Wednesday 22 December to Monday 3 January 2011
Mid term break Monday 21 to Friday 25 February
Easter break Monday 11 to Monday 25 April
Mid term break Monday 30 May to Friday 3 June (Post 16 catch up week)
End of term Friday 22 July



Business &
Enterprise

Business & Enterprise News

Young Chamber's Multicultural Event

At the end of July, the Young Chamber held their Multicultural Event with displays of national dress, dance routines, artwork, quizzes and a variety of food. Lunch was extended that day to allow students to participate and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.



and present it to the room and our Year 11 team received a prize for the best idea – turning a piece of tube into a security fixing for a bag.

The final of the competition will be held in December. Good luck everyone!

Year 7 Safety Day

Year 7 students had a safety day in September with talks and activities on internet security, personal safety, consequences of truancy, road safety, results of underage drinking and smoking, and consequences of drug taking.



Say Yes!



We have two teams entered in the Connect Reading Say Yes Challenge. This is a Social Awareness Youth Enterprise Scheme with teams from schools in the Reading area competing. They will be working with business mentors to come up with ideas to address a social problem in their local area.



We would like to thank representatives from the police, RBC and Arcade for facilitating the day, and the local PCSO for organising the event.

The drug awareness activities (above) were organised by Arcade and a role play with 'PC West', 'Mr Smith the shopkeeper', 'young Billy' and 'Miss Jones' directed by PC Thomas (below).



Young Chamber

This week a group of the Young Chamber attended a Forum at the offices of Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce. This meeting was planned to enable Young Chamber students at various schools in the Thames Valley region to meet, exchange ideas, and plan joint events.



young
CHAMBER

The Young Chamber is currently recruiting new members and is planning a winter party for students at the end of December.



The launch was held in September at St Lawrence's Church in Reading town centre. The teams met their mentors for the first time, and carried out some team-building exercises.

One of the challenges that day was to think of a new use for an everyday object

Business & Enterprise News



Students meet the MP!



BAF Diploma students meet the Reading MP, Rob Wilson, with workers from Connexions.

Trade Challenge Roadshow

On Wednesday 13 October, BP took over the Maths department with the Trade Challenge Roadshow. Year 10 had the opportunity to experience Maths in the real world participating in a competition trading in oil on the stock market.

The girls participated in groups, aiming to analyse and interpret data in order to make as much money as possible from their oil. All the girls worked well and the staff from BP were extremely impressed by their behaviour and enthusiasm.

From the results that we had it seems that we may have some budding economists and stock market traders amongst us! Congratulations to all who took part.

Young Enterprise

Year 11 Business, Administration and Finance Diploma students are taking part in this year's Young Enterprise competition. Young Enterprise provides girls with the knowledge and skills needed to set up their own business. The girls are using the initiative to help them achieve the remainder of their units within the Diploma, whilst having some fun along the way.



The scheme encourages teamwork and creativity as well as vital business knowledge such as finance and customer service. Their company is called 'Dynamic' and hopes to commence selling jewellery during lunchtime after half term. Keep an eye out for posters and advertisements. We might have the next Anita Roddick in the school!



Roald Dahl Day



Monday 13 September 2010 brought delights of whizz popping proportions. Across the country children were celebrating Roald Dahl Day and it didn't go unnoticed at Reading Girls' School. The students in years 7-9 were tested on their Roald Dahl knowledge by taking part in a quiz. The winner, **Kimberley Blatchley** 7B received a £10 book token. Revolting sweets and cakes were sold at lunchtime with the help of 10R. Could you stomach some spaghetti worms? Or perhaps some of Mr Bunce's doughnuts? Well done to all who participated!

To finish, a quick test for you....do you know your Roald Dahl?

as well as Kimberley? Who illustrated many of Roald Dahl's books? Who did Miss Trunchbull force to eat a chocolate cake in assembly? What is the name of the pale-green fizzy drink that fills the BFG and Sophie with bubbles?

Careers Fair 2010

On Wednesday 13 October, the whole of Year 9 visited a Careers Fair at Rivermead Leisure Complex organised by Reading Borough Council. The students were able to hear short presentations on a variety of careers and find out about further education options. There were also stalls on different businesses and employers: the army, fire service, police, ambulance, RAF and NHS were all present as were



the BBC monitoring service, construction companies, law firms, accountants, IT companies, banks, hairdressers, tourism services, technology companies, engineers...

The girls found the event thought provoking and stimulating, and enjoyed chatting with professionals about their work.



PGL Trip to Osmington Bay

28 students and three teachers went on a field studies weekend to Osmington Bay from 1-4 October. The focus was on



both history and geography with trips out to Weymouth looking at the tourist industry, and to Corfe Castle.

It also involved visiting Boscombe beach on the way to see the regeneration thanks to the surf reef. It absolutely poured down and the sea was very rough – so no need for a surf reef! We dried out by the time we arrived at Osmington and took part in wacky races on Friday evening.

Saturday night saw everyone playing a game called Ambush, in the pouring rain, in the dark. Mrs Godwin looked very fetching in a large black bin liner, and Mr Nichols was caught cheating by calling Miss Stevens' phone to try and find the opposition in the dark!

On Sunday we went quad biking and abseiling and in the evening we had a disco. Before we left on Monday we also



did aeroball and archery! No wonder everyone was tired when they got back!

A great time was had by all – the trip will run again next year so don't miss out on a really fun weekend.

School Council

We are pleased to announce the following students have been elected to serve on the School Council for the next academic year:



Year 7: Doreen Chengula, Nimrah Iqbal, Anika Javeid.

Year 8: Mairead Casey, Nieema Hassan, Husna Mahmood.

Year 9: Kirsty Beckett, Melissa Browne, Fatoumata Darboe.

Year 10: Haddie Darboe, Sia Deniche Matturi, Noushin Sikhdar.

Year 11: Ayesha Hussain, Aleshia LaRose-Jones, Sheldon Richardson.

The new Student Council met for the first time on Monday 18 October to establish their priorities for the present academic year: their decisions will be reported in future newsletters.



Visit to France & Belgium

Proposed French/History trip from 1-4 April 2011 in northern France and Belgium (Rue and Ypres). Activities will include visiting local markets, farms, a chocolate factory and historical war sites all for £270.

Please ask Miss Barnett, Miss Komba, Mr Nichols or Miss Njuguna for a letter. Non-refundable deposit of £60 due ASAP.

BTEC First Diploma in Travel and Tourism

It has been a very busy term for the Year 12 BTEC Travel and Tourism students. On Tuesday 21 September, they visited The Mill House Hotel in Swallowfield. The purpose of the visit was to gain an understanding in the running of a small private hotel and to see good customer service skills put into practice. Kim Pybus, the co-director of the hotel gave the students a tour, introduced them to the staff and answered the many questions the students had prepared to allow them to complete their coursework. We would like to thank Kim and her staff for making the trip such a positive learning experience.



The following day, Carolin Mueller, Head of Human Resources at the Hilton Reading, delivered a presentation on how the Hilton delivers customer service and their customer service principles. Zoe Dymond, a Customer Service Agent from Virgin Atlantic also gave the students a talk on careers available in the airline industry and the high standards of customer service Virgin Atlantic expect.

On Tuesday 28 September the students then visited Thorpe Park. They attended a workshop designed to educate the students on Thorpe Park's approach to



customer service. They then enjoyed a few hours exploring the park and sampling some of the rides.

Both the trips and talks have provided the students with ample case study material to allow them to complete their coursework to a high standard and also given them an insight into the world of travel and tourism.

Music tour to Spain

A party of 31 students from Reading Girls' School and Thamesmead School in Middlesex went on the trip of a lifetime on a music tour to Comarruga on the Costa Dorada in Spain. They performed at three venues – two on the beach and one at a hotel – besides visiting Barcelona and having an enjoyable afternoon at a water park.



Due to the popularity of the tour, it is planned to run the event again in July 2011. **APPLICATIONS FORMS ARE AVAILABLE NOW FROM MR ELVIE.**

PE and Sports News

Year 9 'Chance to Shine' Army / Cricket Day

Fifty Year 9 and 10 Students took part in the combined Cricket and Army day at North Maidenhead Cricket Club on Wednesday 22 September.



Over the course of the day they took part in a variety of different cricket or army based activities. Members of the England Women's Cricket Team were also there to lend their support. The objectives of the day were to develop

teamwork, problem solving, and citizenship skills. Overall the girls had a good but exhausting day.

Year 7 and 8 Hockey League



After only a few practices the Year 7 and 8 girls entered the Reading Schools' Hockey League. They performed very well with one win, three draws and one loss. They have displayed some excellent skills in attack and defence and are hoping to make the semi finals.

Year 7, 8 and 9 Cross Country League



A number of girls were selected for the cross country team based on their excellent results in PE. They will have run four different cross country routes at Highdown, Park House, Little Heath and The Piggott. The runs have been challenging but everyone has worked really hard and produced some good results.

Cricket Training with Charlotte Edwards MBE, England Women's Captain

A number of girls were selected to work with Charlotte Edwards who has been coming into RGS to do some training with girls from Year 7,8, 9 and 10. They have been developing their batting and bowling skills.



U15 Cricket League

The Under 15 cricket team Captained by **Anjana Radhakrishnan** played very well to win their first match in the Berkshire



League against St Bartholemew School in Newbury. Excellent batting, bowling and fielding skills were displayed as well as demonstrating good sportswomen ship. Well done girls.

Street Dance Club

A number of students in year 7, 8 and 9 have been attending a street dance club on Fridays which is being run by Reading Borough Council. The girls will be invited to perform in the Performing Arts Evening which will take place on Thursday 25 November in the school hall.

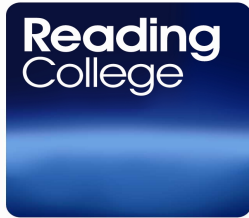


Mascots for the Reading FC v Ipswich Town Match 28 September 2010



Two year 8 students **Ammani Daniel and Antonia Sankoh** were selected as mascots in the Reading v Ipswich game:

'When we arrived at the Madejski Stadium, we had a look around and had a look in the shop. We were taken to the VIP area over-looking the pitch where we had lunch. We then went back under the stadium so we could walk out onto the pitch with the Reading Players, Antonia walked out with Mills and Ammani walked out with Shane Long! We were both really excited. We had to go out to the middle of the pitch where we had our pictures taken. We then went back to the VIP area to have pudding and watch the match. Reading won 1-0.'



at Reading
Girls'
School

open evening

POST 16 CENTRE

Wednesday 17 November 2010

6.00pm to 7.30pm

Come along to our open evening to find out more about the great courses we have on offer and to see the superb facilities including industry-standard hair and beauty salons and the nursery. Childcare, Business and Travel & Tourism are just some of the courses on offer.

Post 16 Centre

Reading College at Reading Girls' School

Northumberland Avenue

Reading RG2 7PX

Telephone: 0118 923 1010