



From the Headmaster

American author Fran Lebowitz once said, “*Think before you speak. Read before you think.*” This is a philosophy shared by us at the RGS where the written word is still regarded as one of the most powerful influences. There is no doubt that reading nourishes the mind, provides perspective, nurtures empathy, provides an education in the broadest possible sense, and is proven as having a positive impact on wellbeing. Yet, in our digital age, reading is statistically in sharp decline. Research published by the *National Literacy Trust* earlier this year found that just over 50% of eight to 18-year-olds read for pleasure, compared to nearly 59 per cent in 2016; only 25% read every day, compared to 43 per cent in 2015.

The inaugural RGS Reading Week for our junior students, and the associated suspension of homework, provided our students with not only the motivation but, equally importantly, the space to prioritise reading amongst so many competing and conflicting demands on their time. It was also a chance to embed further a love of literature among the students and staff alike. Rather than being a solitary activity, it provided the opportunity for reading to be a communal activity: something to be reflected on, enjoyed and shared between peers and also in class with members of staff.

In an increasingly global context to our daily lives, mistrust and prejudice are often fuelled by an inability to empathise and sympathise, often through limited horizons and through fear of the unknown. Books remain one of the most important vehicles to break down barriers and to make our students as worldly, tolerant and balanced as possible. The students were provided with an age-appropriate reading list which was unashamedly challenging and engaged with ‘big ideas’ which went beyond their normal spheres of engagement: books which were developmentally beneficial as well as being outside the students’ normal reading habits. The value of this is encapsulated succinctly by American philosopher Mortimer J. Adler, “*In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through to you.*” Reading for pleasure; learning for life.

Latest News

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Drama: The RGS was delighted to perform an abridged version of *The Tempest* in the *Shakespeare Schools Festival at G Live*. With energetic physical theatre, carefully staged choreography, and haunting sound effects, the audience was transported to the eerie island setting. A number of impressive performances included **Zac Warham** (2L) as the complex protagonist Prospero, **James Paterson** (2L) as the compassionate Miranda, and **Louis Kinsler** (1P) conveying the insolent and rebellious Caliban. **Milo Findji** (2C) and **Charlie Webster** (2L) showed good comic timing as they provided light relief as the jester Trinculo and drunken butler Stephano respectively. A play infused with magic, betrayal, love and forgiveness, and even mention of unicorns, were undoubtedly the perfect ingredients for a fantastic and well-received production.

Environment: **James Miller** (U6) was interviewed as part of a feature on Channel 4 News, talking about climate and biodiversity crises, and why they should be the focus of this current election.

Mathematics: Over 80,000 pupils nationally entered the Senior Mathematics Challenge, the RGS received an impressive 23 gold certificates, 27 silver and 13 bronze. Sixth Form students **Andrew Florescu** (who top scored with an excellent 116), **Adeeb Bisada**, **Matt Harris** and **Ben Watkins** all qualified to take part in the British Mathematical Olympiad: the top 1% of all entries.

Music: The Joint Schools' Chamber Choir sang Evensong at Trinity College, Cambridge, after becoming the first-ever school choir to do so in 2015. The setting of the evening service was Stanford's grandiose and much-loved *Service in C major*, followed by Howell's beautiful setting of Psalm 42, *Like as the hart*.

Science: Eight boys were successfully awarded *Original Research in Science* awards whereby students complete a minimum of two weeks of original research at a university or in industry to qualify. Upper Sixth Form students **Alasdair Hopwood** and **Kai Rohde** secured platinum; **Matthew Williams** achieved gold.

Young Enterprise: RGS teams dominated the awards at the Dragons Den competition at the Guildhall. *Fantastic Without Plastic* was Highly Commended; *Jumbo Entertainment* secured Best Company Report; *Centauri* finished second overall and *Vertex* with their GCSE and 11+ exam stress book came first.

Sports News

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Badminton: The Under 18A team achieved a narrow victory against King's College School, Wimbledon.

Chess: The 1st VI recorded strong wins against King's College School, Wimbledon, and Sutton Grammar School. In addition, the RGS 1st, 2nd and 3rd VIs have all qualified for the National Schools Chess Championship regional stages: a phenomenal achievement.

Cross-country: **Will Barnicoat** (L6) has been selected for Great Britain Junior Men in the European Championships in Lisbon after a fifth-placed finish in the Under 20 age group in a national-standard field in Liverpool; **Sam Martin** (L6) came second in the Under 17 race.

Hockey: In the indoor hockey south preliminary round and the south pools, the Under 18 team played, and won, their eight matches, including a 10 – 1 victory over Charterhouse School.

Rugby: An excellent block fixture against Reed's School included an impressive 26 – 13 victory for the 1st XV; in addition, the Under 16s and Under 15s secured a clean sweep of wins. In even worse conditions and torrential rain, RGS teams played with genuine commitment to secure their most encouraging results against St Paul's School for a number of years. In particular, the 3rd XV was involved in the game of the day as they secured the win with the last play of the game from a long-distance penalty kick.

Sailing: **Rob Mawdsley** (3S) competed in the XXXI Gran Premi Principat D'Andorra, a regatta for Optimist sailors held in Barcelona; he came first in the Under 16 competition and was second overall.

Swimming: In the English Schools National Team Championships, the Under 13s came twentieth nationally in both Freestyle and Medley Relays, while the Under 15s finished tenth in the Freestyle relay.

Forthcoming Events

[View the School Calendar](#)

Tuesday 3 December	Market Day Concert at Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 4 December	Orchestral Concert in Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 5 December	Performance of <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> in the Auditorium (for 3 nights)
Friday 6 December	Christmas Jumper Mufti Day
Tuesday 10 December	Carol Service in Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 11 December	Senior Carol Service in Guildford Cathedral
Friday 13 December	Term ends at 12.00pm

