



Governors' Annual Report 2023-2024

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Introduction from the Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the Head mentioned in her Spring Term newsletter, our Chair of Governors Mr Brain Watt has stepped down temporarily from his governance duties for medical reasons. We wish him well and look forward to welcoming him back. In the meantime, I have become Acting Chair of Governors and in that capacity, am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Board of Governors for the academic year 2023-2024.

In line with Brian's report last year, our unchanging objective is to strengthen the culture of continuous improvement in everything we do, to ensure that we provide an inclusive approach, distinctive family ethos, a strong sense of community and tradition of nurturing the individual gifts and talents of every pupil.

Various unwelcome interventions by the new Government have required considerable attention from the Finance Committee of the Board during the year, with the introduction of VAT on fees part-way through the school year, the unexpected increase in employer's National Insurance contributions, the abolition of charitable relief on local authority rates and high inflation. The Governors are very conscious that affording school fees can represent a major challenge for parents and have sought to minimise the cost through policies of very actively recruiting additional pupils, marketing our facilities to outside users and of paying close attention to all forms of expenditure, while continuing to ensure the high quality of the broadly-based education provided at Read. We are particularly grateful to our newish Bursar, Mr Scott Hunter and his financial skills for helping us to manage through these changes.

Notwithstanding these additional financial obstacles, the Governors remain committed to supporting parental choice by offering smaller class sizes, high quality teaching and a wide range of personal developmental and confidence-building activities, such as the Combined Cadet Force, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, sport, art and drama.

In this annual report, we have provided updates on the progress we have made in many areas and have again highlighted some wonderful achievements by our students.

Parents and pupils, past and present, play a crucial role in creating the warm and supportive character of the school and I thank them for their contribution, whether individually or through the PFA and Draxonians' Association. Similarly, I thank my fellow Governors for their professionalism and support. We were sad to say goodbye to Chris Sunley, who has been an excellent chair of the Board's Education Committee. We welcomed as Governors Jane Breach, who is Chair of Governors at a local primary school and is UK Community and Education Manager at Drax Power Station and Jane Gosney, who is a Moloney Trust trustee, a former Primary School Head and the daughter of a Draxonian and former Governor, Mr Coggrave. Jane Gosney will oversee teaching and learning in the Lower and Upper Junior Schools.

Above all, I want to praise and thank our dedicated staff for their unstinting commitment to the interests and lifetime success of our pupils and Mrs Ainley for her leadership. As a former pupil myself, I owe much to the school and wish it the best of futures.

Yours sincerely,



David Pritchard
Acting Chair of Governors

Head's Annual Report 2023-2024

I am pleased to share the Head's Annual Report for the academic year 2023-2024, another very busy and successful year for Read School. All of our activities and accomplishments throughout the year are chronicled in our social media pages and various school communications, however the Head's Report is designed to provide a succinct and high-level summary of the academic year.

Our Commemoration Day Programme from the 357th Commemoration Day in July 2024 also provides a nice pictorial memento of the year and may be viewed at <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/58661783c7.html> or a hard copy ordered from school.

Pupil Roll

We started the year with a pupil roll of 248 in September and ended in July 2024 with 260, reflecting good ongoing growth, particularly in the Senior School. Since 2018 pupil numbers have gradually increased from a low of 160 pupils and we are keeping the target of 300 firmly in our sights with particular focus on Lower Junior School, Sixth Form and Boarding.

The Read School network continues to grow, and we consider ourselves very lucky to have such supportive parents who are a constant source of new parent referrals.

Throughout the year we also welcomed several international students to Drax, some coming as part of group educational visits and some individually for longer-stay immersion programmes. All of these visits provide Read pupils with a good opportunity to put language learning into practice, learn about different cultures and build friendships.

Boarding

Our community of boarders continued to grow with both full time and weekly boarders joining the crew. Mrs Sally Warren was appointed as the new Head of Boarding, making a tremendous impact throughout the course of the year in further developing the boarding environment.

Sally's husband, Greg also supported the site team with many projects and following refurbishments to girls' rooms the previous year, a number of improvements were made to the boys' boarding accommodation including painting and re-carpeting of boys' rooms and investing in new larger beds. The boarders' common room and sick bay were also refurbished. We were very grateful for the parental donation of a top-of-the-range pool and table tennis table which was extremely well utilised by boarders throughout the year!

Lower Junior School

Turning to the pupil accomplishments of 2023-2024, our pupils in Reception – Year 2 had another action-packed year, full of creative learning and fun.

LJS pupils enjoy a very vibrant and rich curriculum which includes enrichment subjects such as PE, Music and French alongside core subjects and they benefit from the expertise of Senior School teachers as well as their own wonderful teacher team of Mrs Fairhurst and Mrs Burnell. Notable highlights of the year were 'Owl adventures' (a phenomenal bird of prey display), Harvest Festival, a December nativity production of Beep Beep Bethlehem, Mothers' Day Afternoon Tea, Easter Concert and a visit to the Street Life Museum in Hull.

As well as joining many activities with the Upper Junior School, LJS pupils participated in most of our whole-school events, from European Languages Day, the Moloney Trust competition, Talent Show and our special services at St Peter and Paul Church, Drax.

Upper Junior School

Pupils in Upper Junior School had a calendar crammed with activities both inside and outside the classroom: a themed history day, family workshops, Young Voices, Countryside Learning visit, World Book Day, a trip to the National Space Centre and Murton Park.

Mr Hill and Mrs Campbell ensured that the fixtures in rugby, football, cricket and hockey, netball and rounders at both U9 and U11 level, gave every pupil an outing and pupils also competed in a number of cross country and athletics competitions with some outstanding individual results.

Particular highlights of the School year were the Junior School production of Peter Pan (with a set designed and built entirely by pupils), the Junior School residential to Bewerley Park, a Chinese Dragon dance to celebrate the Chinese New Year and the Junior School Summer Concert in the last week of term which showcased the incredible talent of our younger pupils.

As with LJS, Upper Juniors pupils benefitted from having Senior teachers for Science, Maths and English (Y6) as well as Music, making the eventual transition to Senior School so much easier.

A generous donation by the PFA purchased additional Chromebooks as well as new play equipment for the Junior School.

Junior School - Academic Attainment

Pupils in the Junior School complete termly assessments using the Hodder Rising Stars programme and these are invaluable to teachers and parents in tracking pupil academic progress throughout Key Stages 1 & 2. Combined with our small class sizes, this means that every child can be supported, stretched or challenged according to their needs.

Balancing assiduous preparation with pupil wellbeing and enjoyment of a fantastic extra-curricular programme, Mr Hill's Year 6 class took national SATS tests at the outset of the Summer Term and pleasingly, again recorded excellent results, with both Maths and English results over 20% above national SATS averages.

Senior School

'The work of the School is not subservient to the mere passing of examinations' states the 1923 Draxonian magazine and this certainly reflects the School's enduring commitment to providing a broad and rich education for our children and one which hopefully inspires a love of learning for life. A snapshot of the accomplishments of individual departments, captured more fully in the Commemoration Day Programme, is included below:

English: War & remembrance poetry writing in November, Y9 poetry workshop with students entering a *'This is me'* poetry competition. Introduction of Functional Skills qualification in English.

Maths: 30 students participated in the national Junior Maths challenge winning 8 bronze and 5 silver awards. As well as offering Functional Skills qualifications to develop essential maths skills and confidence, the Maths department remained committed to the acceleration of our most gifted mathematicians by supporting early exam entry for several pupils.

Science: In March the whole school celebrated British Science Week with the theme of *'time'*. Pupils enjoyed many STEM activities including a PFA-funded Go-Karting session and in-school talks by a number of STEM ambassadors from industry.

Music: With 71 pupils having instrument or singing lessons in school, music is really thriving at Read. The annual Moloney Trust competition saw 50 musicians of all ages taking part and our Christmas concert was held for the

first time in the majestic setting of Selby Abbey. We were also delighted to see the inauguration of a chorister programme for Read pupils with three Senior pupils joining this year.

Our annual Talent Show, summer concert and various church services throughout the year provided a window into the incredible and multi-faceted musical talent in our small school.

Drama: A Key Stage 4 trip to see Blood Brothers was much enjoyed by Drama students who are increasing in uptake at GCSE and now A-level. This year's Senior School production of the 'Addams Family' was an incredible accomplishment and all our performers and back-stage helpers were a credit to the School.

Creative Arts: long a standout strength of Read School, the Creative Arts department provides students with the opportunities for practical projects which allow both imagination and skill to flourish. The Creative Arts and MFL departments staged an unforgettable trip to Barcelona while Art students also had the chance to visit London art galleries.

In FPN (Food Preparation & Nutrition) Year 7 completed pasta workshops at Carlton Towers while other year groups participated in the Future Chef competition and enjoyed lots of practical sessions from learning how to fillet a pheasant to learning how to make halloumi!

The DT department was grateful for the addition of three new 3D printers and continued to make full use of the new laser cutter. Our new Enterprise Club was introduced and pupils enjoyed making fundraiser items.

Humanities: In October thirty-two students had the opportunity of a lifetime to travel to Iceland while Year 10 pupils participated in a *Sustainable City* competition in York. Always a poignant part of the school calendar, our history students researched the lives of past pupils who served or died in the World Wars and presented their findings at our November 2023 Remembrance Service.

Classics: Classics students enjoyed a February trip to the 'Eternal City', Rome as well as a Sixth Form visit to Warwick University's Festival of Drama.

Languages: The MFL team hosted a fantastic Languages Day in September and gave Spanish learning a boost with the culturally enriching Barcelona trip which included a visit to one of our Spanish partner schools, Agora.

Computing: Read's IT department embraced the national '*I Belong*' initiative, paving the way for more girls to embark upon STEM careers. This was also reinforced with a SheCanEngineer STEM visit to London in summer. The international Bebras competition was again run for pupils from Year 6 – Year 13 with twelve students gaining prestigious gold awards (representing the top 10% in the country).

Business & Economics: One of the highlights of the year was certainly the Careers Fair which took place during National Careers Week in March. This featured around 40 local and national businesses who came into school to offer careers advice and inspiration to pupils of all ages. The Business Studies department ran another hugely successful *Grow A Pound* campaign, raising £1,468 for school projects. Dr Armstrong who teaches our increasingly popular A-level Economics programme, delivered a fascinating evening lecture entitled 'the history of money'.

Sixth Form: The Read School Sixth Form grew considerably in 2023-2024 with 50% more pupils electing to remain at Read post GCSE than the previous year. Small class sizes and a wide array of subjects (with BTEC Business Studies added) provide a rich and bespoke learning environment with continued access to Read's many extracurricular opportunities.

Sixth Form also ran a series of after school talks which examined many subject areas including Chemistry, Classics and a visit from Oxford University. In November Sixth Form students raised money for Movember, the men's mental health charity with a charity football game and a bingo night.

Senior School - Academic Attainment

At Read School we strive to ensure that all pupils achieve their full academic potential, regardless of their starting point and it was therefore very pleasing to see the excellent results achieved in Senior School & Sixth Form this year.

A-level Results: At A-level we achieved a 100% pass rate (versus 97.2% national average) for the sixth consecutive year and, while results nationally were on a par with pre-Covid 2019 results, our own comparison showed a +20% in grades A*-C increase vs. 2019. Student BTEC results (Sport and Business) were exceptional.

Our departing Year 13 students this year were equally divided between university and degree apprenticeships with three pupils opting for a gap year.

GCSE Results: We had our best GCSE results since 2014 with an 88% pass rate (versus national average of 67.6% and 63.9% in Yorkshire/Humber). 24% of all grades achieved were grades 9-7 and favourable to national averages of 21.8% and Yorkshire 18.3%). We celebrated some outstanding individual outcomes: Evelyn Crompton achieved 8 x grade 9's and 1 x grade 8; Maksym Bondarchuk achieved 5 x grade 9's and 3 x grade 8's; Year 10 pupil Finley Woodroffe achieved 3 x grade 9's a year early! Overall pupils achieved on average an average 'value-add' (progress versus baseline MidYIS / YELLIS predictions) of +0.4.

Sport

Read School well and truly punches above its weight in sports – in both Junior and Senior School - competing and often winning against much bigger schools with a considerably larger pool of players. Read pupils unfailingly undertake every match with passion, determination and great sportsmanship while our sports staff admirably balance the need to compete against larger schools with the desire to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to play in fixtures. Throughout 2023-2024 pupils enjoyed a buoyant match list with local independent schools and some local comprehensive schools, notching up significant sporting success in rugby, football and cricket as well as hockey and netball.

Our strong historic links with Selby RUFC continued with sponsorship of the 1st XV and of the annual Selby RUFC Minis Festival.

Two cricket tours took place this year with pupils in Years 7/8 travelling to Great Yarmouth and Y9/10 students participating in a tour to the Lake District.

BTEC Sport was successfully introduced as a level 3 qualification, and we have been delighted with the impressive grades obtained so far.

The school year ended with a sports-filled final week which included sports days for Lower & Upper Juniors and Senior School as well as the pre-Commemoration Day *Draxonians v. School Cricket Match* (won again by the School) which was extremely well attended by parents, pupils and Draxonians alike.

Combined Cadet Force (CCF)

The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) enjoyed another historic year which included becoming affiliated with the 4th Battalion Royal Yorkshire Regiment, following a rebadging ceremony in May.

The CCF continued to play a central role at many Read School events, including our Remembrance Day parade and our D-Day 80th anniversary Commemoration Service in June 2024. Cadets were honoured to commemorate this historic event in the presence of D-Day veteran and Read School great grandparent, Mr Ronald Dukes.

In March twelve cadets participated in a two-week trip to Cyprus while both Army and RAF cadets had the opportunity to attend summer camps in Strensall and Northern Ireland respectively at the end of the year.

Throughout the year cadets achieved a good many awards, badges, promotions and recognitions including Head Boy Freddie Thomlinson who received the Lord Lieutenant's Award, an extremely prestigious award presented by the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, in recognition of outstanding cadet service.

It was an honour to be invited to address the RFCA Annual Conference in York and a wonderful opportunity for Head Boy & Girl (and senior cadets) Freddie and Sophie to speak about their own personal development through the CCF.

Duke of Edinburgh (DofE)

Read School is proud to be a licensed organisation for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and this year thirty-one pupils completed the Bronze award, and eighteen Year 11 pupils completed the Silver Award. These levels of participation and completion rates are far above national averages and reflect the excellence of the Read programme.

DofE and CCF activities have now been combined under a single 'adventurous activities' banner at Read School, led by Miss Rothwell and this area of the School is going from strength to strength. Neither programme could run without our many staff (and parent volunteers) who give up their free time to run weekend expeditions.

In addition to completing intensive training programmes, cadets and DofE students also undertook a good number of community projects, among them visiting local care home residents, fundraising for CCFA, attending local Remembrance services and decorating Drax Church.

Educational Visits and Trips

Educational visits not only provide a great opportunity to learn outside the classroom but also help increase confidence and independence. In 2023-2024 our list of visits was extremely impressive and many have been noted above. Key overseas trips took in Iceland (October), Rome (February), Barcelona (March), Cyprus (April) and World Challenge Norway (July) while educational visits closer to home were organised by departments in all sections of the School.

Staffing

As Read parents know, it is the dedication of the teaching and support team whose individual excellence, passion for their subject and commitment to doing the best for their pupils throughout the year make everything possible. At the outset of the year, we welcomed Mrs Warren (Head of Girls Sport and Head of Boarding) and boarding assistant, Miss Sowden to the staff team while Mrs Prosser started a new role at Read as School Counsellor. In December, Mr Scott Hunter also joined the team as Bursar – a timely appointment given Mr Hunter's extensive experience as a chartered accountant and VAT specialist.

At the end of the year we said a sad goodbye to Miss Hutchinson (History) and congratulated Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Kavanagh in her new Business Development role at Read School, giving her the chance to put into practice what she has been teaching Read Business Studies students for 12 years!

Business Development

Against the backdrop of the VAT challenges and other financial headwinds unleashed on the independent sector last year, the School adopted a strategic imperative of growing alternative revenue streams in order to strengthen the financial stability of the School. Incremental non-fee revenues not only provide additional funds for school maintenance and upgrade projects but also help subsidise school fees.

Read School Enterprises, our company which manages the rental of school facilities after hours and during school holidays had another very successful year with a steady stream of cricket and football teams letting the sports hall and MUGA. A highly successful Summer School programme attracted over forty Read pupils as well as a dozen

international students and will be further developed next summer. We also hosted a summer let in August, ensuring that we are making full use of the school land and buildings out of term time.

Further to Kids' Corner Pre-School moving to the Read School-owned Drax Primary School in June 2022, in July this year we were pleased to welcome their ever-expanding Pre-School class back to the Read School Lower Juniors Shipley Building. In addition to providing rental income, it is hoped that this will also serve as a good feeder into Read's Reception class.

We have some exciting business development initiatives in the pipeline for 2024-2025, including gaining Chartered Management Institute (CMI) accreditation which will enable us to deliver leadership and management courses to local businesses. Watch this space for further news!

School Maintenance

Considerable investment was again made this year in school maintenance and infrastructure, including the refurbishment of the Performing Arts studio, installation of a new and upgraded gas system for the Read Block Science laboratories, the refurbishment of our Norfolk House Sick Bay and renovation of the back field. We extended our biofuel heating system to Moloney Hall and Coggrave (Junior School) and also expanded the CCTV system. The mammoth project of upgrading school changing rooms was also started and will complete this academic year.

Charitable Giving

Read School was set up as a charity and altruism is central to our ethos. In 2023-24 we raised over £3500 for a number of charities and supported many charitable events. Stand out events were *Race for Life* (June 2024), *Movember*, *Comic Relief*, European Day of Languages fundraising for Cancer Research and the Music departments efforts to raise over £1000 for the Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

Parents and Friends Association (PFA)

The PFA continued their stellar support of the School throughout the year. We are fortunate to have such a talented group of professionals in key positions and the focus and dynamism of the team has delivered unprecedented levels of school support in terms of funding for key projects, pupils experiences and supporting important school events. This year Read School pupils were the lucky recipients of play equipment (LJS), Chromebooks (UJS), Dragon dancing (full school) and STEM Kart Racing (full school).

A significant further achievement in 2023-2024 was the creation of the PFA garden adjacent to the car park and the donation of benches and planters around school. The December 2023 Winter Ball at Carlton Towers was a real highlight but the PFA also ran numerous bars and BBQs throughout the year as well as hosting events such as Christmas Fayre, Artisan Market and Fashion Show which have now become a staple in the Read School calendar.

As we enter an exciting new phase of development for the School, it is exciting to see the PFA going from strength to strength.

In Summary

I hope that the above serves to recap the many accomplishments of our small but very busy school throughout 2023-2024 and underlines that despite the political and financial challenges imposed on us, Read School – now in its 358th year - is in a strong position to weather this latest storm.

Giving back to the School has always been a leitmotif of our history and the willingness of parents, Draxonians and not least our governing body, to commit their professional expertise to the ongoing benefit of the School, is one of the true strengths of Read School.

Earlier this year we celebrated the many parent and Draxonian volunteers that play an invaluable role in contributing to school life:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ1OQkx64ws>

Thank you most sincerely for putting your trust in Read School for your child's education and for your support throughout last year.

Looking ahead, our primary goals are to ensure that Read pupils continue to benefit from the best quality education with priority given to academic achievement and building skills and confidence for life and that parents continue to receive excellent value for money.

It is a privilege to be part of this wonderful school and with a staff, governor, parent, PFA and Draxonian team that is second to none, it is exciting to contemplate what we might achieve in the future.

2023-2024 was an excellent year. What's next?

Best regards,



Mrs Ruth Ainley
Head

Link to Commemoration Day Service July 2024

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL4RRMahjPw>

History, Mission, Values and Vision

Background and History of Read School, Drax

Read School was founded from the endowment declared in the will of Charles Reade dated 1667. The school, erected at Drax, was designed as a free school, for the habitation of the schoolmaster “to instruct the children of the parish without charge, to read, write and cast accounts, and further to teach them Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and other languages as occasion should require”.

From 1902 until 1967 the school was known as Drax Grammar School and was a voluntary aided grammar school serving the Selby and Goole areas. In 1967, a decision was taken to extend the schools in Selby and the governors at Read School had to decide whether to become independent or to close the school. The decision for independence followed and the school became known as Read School. Well-known and respected in the area, Read School is now a fully co-educational, boarding and day school, taking children from the ages of 4 to 18. A wide range of academic studies is offered at GCSE and A-level, together with a full programme of sports, drama, music, CCF and adventurous activity.

Pupil roll, the barometer of the School’s financial health, has fluctuated over the past ten years from a high of 380 to a low of 160. The School has embarked on a programme of recovery and rejuvenation and had a roll of 260 at the end of the academic year. In 2024, Read School celebrated its 357th anniversary.

Read School Mission, Aims and Values

Read School delivers a first-class education, welcomed by parents and enjoyed by pupils. It is a school with a pervasive warm and friendly culture that pays attention to individual needs, with small class sizes and high-quality teaching. The School is set apart from others by its inclusive approach, distinctive family ethos, a strong sense of community and tradition of nurturing the individual gifts and talents of every pupil.

Mission

- Maintain a warm and welcoming school with an inclusive ethos for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds;
- Enable all pupils to realise their academic potential with a broad and rich curriculum that promotes a lifelong love of learning;
- Develop well-rounded, resilient and aspirational young people who have the confidence, skills and enablement to achieve success in their chosen careers and to make a positive contribution to society.

Aims

- Provide outstanding day & boarding school provision for boys and girls aged 4-18, with small class sizes, excellent teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum which responds to the needs of each child;
- Ensure outstanding pastoral care and arrangements for pupil welfare, including boarding, thereby ensuring the quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils;
- Offer a wide range of educational opportunities outside the classroom and high quality cocurricular provision, including sports, music & performing arts, adventurous activity and volunteering;
- Embrace activities for public benefit, including outreach in the local community;
- Secure the long-term financial stability and longevity of Read School through effective leadership and governance and the development of commercial enterprise that supports sustainable, profitable growth.

School Values

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| - Kindness in the school community | - Fair play |
| - Tolerance & respect for others | - Hard work |
| - Good manners & discipline | - Enjoyment |
| - Caring for the school environment | |

Governing Body

Governing Body as at July 2024

Governor	Role / Committee	Appointed
Mr Brian Watt	Chair of Governors	October 2016 Chair March 2020
Mr David Pritchard	Vice Chair of Governors	February 2020
Mrs Lisa Dukes	Chair of Finance & Premises Committee	June 2023
Mr Graeme Campbell	Finance & Premises Committee	March 2022
Mrs Kim O Hara	Chair of Safeguarding, Health & Safety Committee	March 2022
Mr Jonathan Inglis	Safeguarding, Health & Safety Committee	December 2023
Mr Chris Sunley	Chair of Education, Teaching & Learning Committee	July 2020
Dr Richard White	Education, Teaching & Learning Committee	March 2020
Mrs Tracy Butler	Chair of Marketing & Communications Committee and of the Read School Foundation	March 2023
Mrs Jane Breach	Marketing & Communications Committee	March 2024
Also attended Board Meetings:		
Ruth Ainley	Head	
Mark Voisey	Deputy Head	
Scott Hunter	Bursar & Clerk to the Governors	
Other Staff Members In attendance for various Committees		

Departures:

Mrs Clare McLaughlan

Arrivals:

Mrs Jane Breach and Mr Jonathan Inglis joined the Governing Body during the academic year 2023-2024, further strengthening the Marketing & Communications and Safeguarding, Health & Safety Committees respectively.

Representations to the Governing Body

Representation to the Governing Body may be made at any time to the Chair of Governors, c/o the Clerk to the Governors at Read School:

Bursar / Clerk to the Governors
Read School, Drax, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 8NL, UK
Email: bursar@readschool.co.uk
Tel: 01757 618248

Meetings

The Governing Body met on the following dates and discussed the matters shown below:

- 22 September 2023
- 28 December 2023
- 15 March 2024
- 4 July 2024

Each meeting addressed the standard matters of:

- Board Administration
- Financial Update
- Head's Report
- Committee Chair Reports

Other key matters discussed during the many Board and Committee meetings included:

- School response to VAT on school fees.
- Annual budget and setting of fees.
- Launch of fees in advance scheme
- Student recruitment targets and achievements.
- Debt recovery concerning unpaid school fees.
- Bursaries and Scholarships.
- Key staff recruitment
- School performance and preparations for inspections in the light on new guidelines
- The ISI Part 1 Compliance Inspection.
- Improvement of governance and governor visits to School.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Scheme.
- The Strategic Plan.
- The School Improvement Plan.
- The growth of Read School Enterprises Limited.
- Major School projects.

Committee Chairs' Reports

Finance and Premises

The Finance and Premises Committee convened regularly to assess the school's financial status. This included analysing and considering strategic options regarding the proposal to add VAT on school fees, as well as reviewing the monthly management accounts, cash flow, new capital projects, revenue-generating opportunities, and fee collections to ensure efficient school operations and value for money on fees.

Draft headline results for the last financial year ended 31 August 2024 were as follows:

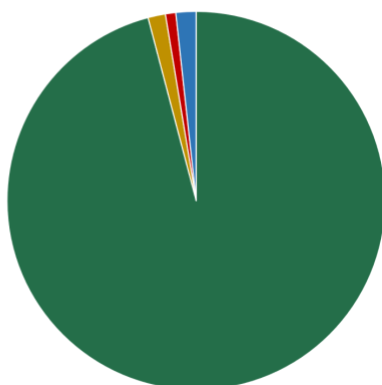
	Year ended 31 August 2024	Year ended 31 August 2023
	£	£
Income	3,777,383	3,322,753
Expenditure	(3,805,759)	(3,422,716)
Net income/(expenditure)	(28,376)	(99,963)
Gains/(losses) on investments	19	(1,024)
Net increase/(decrease) in funds	(28,357)	(100,987)

The annual financial comparison for the School reveals a nearly 14% increase in income, which can be attributed to the increases in student enrolment and inflationary fee adjustments. Concurrently, total expenditure has risen by 11%. The majority of this expenditure increase is due to inflationary pressures resulting from general cost-of-living rises, which have directly influenced the costs associated with delivering education and maintaining the premises.

The School has continued to invest in the maintenance and enhancement of its facilities, which remains critically important. As the charts below illustrate, over 95 percent of income is derived from school fees and recharges, with the remaining balance provided by lettings, donations, grants, and other sources of income. The highest levels of expenditure were driven by staff, premises, catering, and support costs.

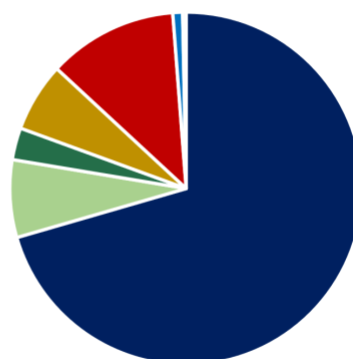
FY23/24 Income

- Fees and recharges
- Lettings
- Interest and other income
- Donations
- Grants



FY23/24 Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Catering
- Teaching overheads
- Support costs
- Premises costs
- Bus costs
- Financing costs



The recent policy changes have placed unprecedented financial strain on independent schools across the country. These measures, including the imposition of VAT on school fees, removal of business rates relief, increases in national minimum wage, and changes to employers' national insurance contributions, collectively raise operating costs for the upcoming year.

Given these changes and the potential challenges in maintaining and further developing the pupil roll, the Committee continues to be focussed on diligently managing costs and monitoring and reviewing contracts and expenses to ensure continuing good value. We are also exploring other ways of generating additional revenue and achieving savings while preserving the quality of education and services the School continues to provide.

The financial records for the current year so far, combined with the efforts both completed and in progress to address the challenges and headwinds, provide us with a solid and risk-mitigated foundation for the School's continued prosperity.

Lisa Dukes

Chair of the Finance and Premises Committee

Education, Teaching & Learning

Members of the Education, Teaching and Learning Committee have visited the school each term in the 2023-24 academic year. The priority in the visits is to visit classrooms and discuss issues with the teachers and the Head. Additionally, there are also very good opportunities to talk to pupils directly about their work and learning. The overall context for the visits is set by the school's Improvement Plan and the ISI Inspection Framework.

The 2024 national examination results for both the Junior and Upper School were excellent and, in all cases, well above national averages. It is pleasing to have seen notable progress made - as well as the retention of ongoing good practice - again in this last academic year. In particular, we noted:

- The excellent use of well-established flightpath procedures to judge pupils' attainment and progress. For example, at GCSE the average progress made by both boys and girls was well above those indicated by the earlier national tests which established the flightpaths.
- The results in the Junior and Upper Schools reflect the high-quality teaching observed.
- The levels of involvement and engagement shown by pupils in their lessons is of high quality. Pupils respond well to questioning, demonstrate independent learning, and confidently share their thinking.
- That pupil behaviour in lessons, as well as around the school, is consistently excellent.
- The opportunities provided by a wide-range of extra-curricular activities significantly enhanced the pupils' learning in the school.

The levels of commitment shown by teachers, subject leaders, senior leaders, the Head and support staff are very high and there is a general willingness to implement the issues identified in the school's Improvement Plan, as well as drawing on the best practice shown by colleagues. The members of the committee are extremely optimistic that education, teaching and learning will continue to be a strength of the school.

Richard White

ETL Governor

Safeguarding, Health & Safety

The Safeguarding, Health & Safety Committee holds the responsibility of supporting and reviewing core areas of safeguarding, health and safety compliance within the school and boarding as well as overseeing the pastoral and wellbeing aspects of the whole school.

It has been another busy year for the school with a lot of progress made in safeguarding, health & safety activities and provisions.

The school has continued to improve its Compliance with a comprehensive record of essential maintenance works, where maintenance jobs are prioritised and budgeted for throughout the year, and regularly monitored with the Governors. The Health & Safety compliance is strengthened with oversight from the new Health & Safety Governor.

Delivery of key maintenance projects saw the welcomed refurbishment of boarding accommodation and improvements in the fire alarm, as well as the ongoing maintenance of the Read estate.

A successful roll out of the new Learning for Life (LFL) curriculum programme (formally PSHE) is helping to teach and support our pupils on how to navigate the complexities of life.

The Governors have been encouraged to see the school continue to support pupils' wellbeing through the school's counselling and mental health provision. This is further supported by wellbeing and mental health issues discussed as part of Learning for Life and weekly assemblies and additional staff training on helping children who have experienced trauma.

The school has continued to implement safeguarding and wellbeing training for all staff during the year, including updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, and National Minimum Standards.

Priorities for 2024-2025

Safeguarding

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 training.
- Rerun the Pupil Voice survey 2024, involving the school council to review the results and consider improvements.

Health & Safety / Maintenance

- Continue to invest in facilities to promote child wellbeing, including making improvements to the boarding accommodation and sports facilities.
- Create additional staff parking to relieve some of the congestion around drop off and pick up times.
- Review longer-term eco-energy options (e.g. solar panels).
- Explore Biodiversity Net Gain project options for the school.

Kim O'Hara

Chair of the Safeguarding, Health & Safety Committee

Marketing, Communications & Foundation

The Marketing and Communications Committee, strengthened by the appointment of Mrs Jane Breach, met regularly throughout the year to discuss priorities. A key strategic area of the committee's remit is to drive school growth by increasing pupil roll, and despite a particularly challenging backdrop relating to VAT charges, this was achieved, as highlighted within the Head's report. We thank the Head and her team for their dedication in delivering the many successful school open days, sixth form open evenings, recruitment fairs (domestic and international) and engaging outreach work within the local community. We also thank Read school parents, friends and family members who have supported and promoted Read school within their own network throughout the year.

Advancement of the Read School website, social media platforms and strategic marketing resources have also continued to be a priority this year, with much progress made. We recognise the importance of strengthening these routes in order to enhance communication with both existing and potential families. We also thank all families for contributing to this year's school survey and commit to continue to drive actions based on these insights.

The Read School Foundation is the coordinating body for the school's various fundraising and grant receiving activities in conjunction with the Parents and Friends Association (PFA) and Draxonians. A relaunch of the Foundation is planned in 2025, to further enhance the Schools philanthropic endeavors. For this year, we would like to extend our thanks to both the Draxonians and the PFA for their hard work and support of the school throughout the year.

In summary, the key priorities for Marketing and Communications and Foundation for 2024-2025 can be found below:

- Continuing to drive growth in pupil roll, maintaining focus on Junior School, Boarding and Sixth Form as priority areas.
- Enhance communications for parents and stakeholders by further development of the Read school website, social media and digital platforms to ease navigation and communicate our purpose and values more effectively.
- Ensure pupil and parent voices are captured and listened to throughout the year and with actions delivered based on this insight.
- Relaunch the Read School Foundation to help provide new opportunities to the school, pupils and wider community.

Tracy Butler

Chair of Marketing & Communications Committee and of the Read School Foundation

School Improvement Plan 2024-2025

Our strengths:

- GCSE, A-level and SATs performance are well above average compared to maintained schools;
- Excellent teaching in small class sizes with an overall teacher: pupil ratio of 1:6;
- Robust tracking mechanisms for the assessment of pupil performance and progress are in place in both Junior and Senior School;
- Retention of historic ethos of being a non-academically selective school with focus on the individual pupil and developing talents, confidence and skills for life;
- Effective behaviour management system and a cohesive system of pastoral support (Deputy Head, Heads of Key Stage, Form Tutors, Matron, Boarding and SEND teams);
- A high level of pupil achievement outside the classroom across performing arts, sport and adventurous activities (CCF and DofE) contributing effectively to development of soft skills;
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive;
- Pupils welcome everyone to their school community and appreciate diversity of culture and backgrounds;
- Read enjoys a positive relationship with parents, creating a warm family feel to the School

Our areas for development:

Academic attainment:

- Continuous improvement in examination results with earlier targeting and interventions for possible under-performers;
- Increase school 'value-add score' (examination outcomes relative to target grades) with particular focus on Sixth Form, boys' and SEND pupil attainment;
- Implement Year 11 mentoring programme;
- Investment in formal study skills training (Years 10 & 11);
- Continue to embed independent learning skills;
- Sharing of curriculum information - Junior School, KS3-5 curriculum guides to be posted on website to make teaching content more explicit for parents;
- Continue to embed alternative qualifications such as Functional Skills (English as well as Maths) and Unit Awards;
- Celebrate academic achievement within school ensuring a culture of aspiration with sufficient stretch and challenge to push our brightest pupils.

Pupils' social and economic wellbeing and contribution to society:

- Expand new Learning for Life (LFL) programme to link up with Junior School PSHE;
- Expand careers provision at Read School building on current activities during National Careers Week (Careers Fair) and throughout the year;
- Expand current work experience programme;
- CCF - build on community outreach programmes and expand work of cadets in local area;
- Continue to run overseas visits for cultural immersion and consider new visits for Sixth Form;
- DofE - continue to recruit at all levels and aim for a Gold group every year;
- Further develop counselling programme at Read School, expanding provision
- Develop Thrive programme at Read School;
- Pupil well-being projects - refurbished changing rooms;
- Improve tracking of pupil extra-curricular achievements within all sections of the School – Read Diploma;
- Work towards acquisition of International Schools Award.

Finance & Management

- Continued growth in pupil roll to achieve budget targets (265 by end academic year 2024-2025)
- Growth of Boarding, Flexible Boarding, Junior School and increased retention into Sixth Form;
- Continued growth in Read School Enterprises (facilities lettings) as a supporting revenue stream;
- Gain accreditation with Chartered Management Institute (CMI) for launch of business training division;
- Continued focus on refurbishment and investment in infrastructure in key areas
- Expand current biofuel system, replacing oil, review and optimise school energy systems (including further LED lighting);
- Improved car parking for LJS;
- Develop former swimming pool space;
- Complete refurbishment of back field;
- Complete environmental grounds projects to improve sustainability of Read School grounds as part of wider school environmental plan.

Read School Five-Year Strategic Plan Summary

Aims:

- Provide outstanding day & boarding school provision for boys and girls aged 4-18, with small class sizes, excellent teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum which responds to the needs of each child;
- Ensure outstanding pastoral care and arrangements for pupil welfare, including boarding, thereby ensuring quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- Offer a wide range of educational opportunities outside the classroom and high quality co-curricular provision, including sports, music & performing arts, adventurous activity and volunteering;
- Embrace activities for public benefit, including outreach in the local community;
- Secure the long-term financial stability and longevity of Read School through effective leadership and governance, strong financial management and the development of commercial enterprise that supports sustainable, profitable growth.
- Assess the risks to independent schools relating to the charging of VAT on school fees and loss of business rates relief, leading to the early development and introduction of coping strategies.

Strategic Framework:

1. Teaching, learning and pupil achievement;
2. Pastoral care, safeguarding and arrangements for pupil welfare (including boarding);
3. Extra-curricular provision and sports;
4. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils;
5. Leadership, management and governance;
6. Marketing and communications, including alumni relations;
7. Public benefit – outreach and charitable activities.
8. Strong financial management.

1. In order to achieve the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement, we will deliver:

- A curriculum which inspires pupils and enables them to make excellent progress;
- A curriculum which builds key soft skills which meet the needs of the evolving workplace;
- Effective teaching and learning which enables children of all abilities to fulfil their academic potential whilst acquiring a lifelong love of learning;
- Teaching strategies which allow pupils to take leadership with their learning by promoting independent learning and higher order thinking skills (ISI 2018 recommendation);

- Effective monitoring of pupil progress throughout all key stages, including benchmarking to national averages, and clear communication of academic performance to parents;
- Effective communication of School's learning priorities to pupils and parents;
- A collaborative teaching staff who promote an academically aspirational culture and who routinely share good teaching practice;
- Small class sizes, good teaching resources and facilities;
- Excellent academic results (performance to national and local results and value-added);
- Investment in digital solutions to enhance teaching and learning in school.

2. In order to achieve the quality of pastoral care and arrangements for pupil welfare (including boarding) we need:

- Robust safeguarding protocols and procedures;
- Effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies;
- Staff who are attentive to the individual needs of each child;
- An effective pastoral structure (form tutors, heads of key stage, pastoral leadership team (PLT));
- An inclusive culture which celebrates diversity and is sensitive to the needs of all children, regardless of gender, sexuality or ethnicity;
- Excellent careers and higher education guidance;
- A positive ethos where pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life;
- A commitment to ensuring that gifted and talented pupil enjoy stretch and challenge;
- Strong pupil and parental voices and effective mechanisms for capturing them;
- Appropriate site security, enhanced by recent investments in CCTV and alert software;
- Excellent record-keeping and clear and effective lines of communication;
- Excellent counselling provision;
- A caring and supportive environment for all pupils, which complies fully with KCSIE 2024 and NMS.

3. In order to achieve the quality of extra-curricular provision and sports we will deliver:

- A diversity of sports, performing arts, CCF, DofE and other extracurricular experiences, ensuring that every pupil gets to develop skills and confidence outside the classroom;
- An awareness by pupils of the many benefits to be gained from participating in a wide variety of co-curricular activities;

Sports:

- Ensure that outdoor and indoor sports facilities throughout the School are well managed, safe and fit for purpose (e.g. front and back field, MUGA, sports hall, sports changing rooms and shower facilities, including plans for a gym/fitness suite)
- Maintenance resources to support sports facilities;
- Competitive sports fixtures within the independent sector and local community, including national and overseas sports tours;

CCF:

- Build on the recent restructure of CCF, capitalising on new opportunities such as work with the community, camps and external courses for cadets to build skills and qualifications; Ensure provision of additional extra-curricular opportunities, outside Thursday sessions, including camps, flying (RAF) and special events;

DofE:

- Ensure continued provision of DofE programme at Read School: Bronze Award (Y9); Silver Award (Y10) and Gold Award (Sixth Form);
- Retain Read status as DofE Licensed Organisation.

Music & Performing Arts:

- Continue to improve the quality of instrumental music performance within the School (orchestral music, rock bands, jazz group etc.);
- Complete upgrades to Performing Arts studio and microphone system for Moloney Hall;
- Continue to strengthen links with Moloney Trust for further funding opportunities;
- Strengthen links with Selby Abbey, e.g. develop chorister programme.

Creative Arts:

- Continue to invest in school kitchen facilities;
- Build up cooking accreditation programme and courses available for pupils.
- Other:
- Ensure wide variety of extra-curricular activities available each term for Junior and Senior Schools and that all subjects have extension opportunities to develop and nurture pupil talent;
- Ensure an increasingly dynamic and diverse programme of activities at the weekend;
- Leverage our spectacular natural environment more fully (kitchen garden, forest school).

4. In order to achieve the quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of our pupils we will deliver:

- An effective School Council, ensuring that pupils receive effective feedback to issues raised, ensuring that democratic values are reinforced;
- More meaningful opportunities for volunteering - both within and outside School;
- Improved School environmental sustainability credentials, maintaining a consistent approach to ecological matters and a commitment to achieving 'net zero' target;
- Continue to involve pupils in all aspects of school community life such as the planning of new site development projects and the running of community focused events;
- Continue to develop Read School platform of giving, promoting charitable outreach for local, national and global causes to develop a sense of social responsibility and effect meaningful contributions to designated charitable causes;
- Increase the number of pupil-led assemblies and greater diversity of guest speakers;
- Continued development of PSHE programme within school and alignment to legislative requirements, ensuring greater coordination between themes discussed in PSHE classes, tutor groups and assemblies;
- Ensure ongoing training for all staff involved in PSHE delivery, an important and evolving area;
- Ensure pupils are made aware of the enriching and positive benefits from living within a community that celebrates diversity and nurtures a culture of mutual respect.

5. In order to achieve excellent leadership, management and governance, we will deliver:

- Coherent vision and clear strategic direction
- Effective leadership, management and governance oversight of all aspects of school life to ensure consistent and effective implementation of policies and development plans;
- Ensure ongoing effective financial management of School, with targeted build-up of reserves;
- Effective communication of key developmental objectives so that they are readily understood by all members of the School community;
- Review of all regulatory and non-regulatory policies annually;
- Engaged and motivated staff;
- An effective appraisal programme containing clear developmental targets;
- Governing committees comprising requisite levels of professional expertise and motivation;
- Governors to provide effective oversight of scholarships and bursaries;
- Capitalisation on the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) project and its potential benefits for the School;
- Assurance that governors continue to be an active and supportive presence within School.

6. In order to achieve excellent marketing and communications, including alumni relations, we will deliver:

- Excellent relations with all stakeholders;
- Continued development of the Draxonians Association and support of the PFA;
- An effective Foundation to encourage legacy donations;
- A strong market position that effectively communicates the distinctive features of the School and its USPs in order to attract day and boarding pupils of a high calibre.
- Strong sales and marketing action to support short-term hire of facilities and foreign student visits.

7. In order to develop the public benefit of the School, we will:

- Become increasingly effective at networking and building partnerships in the local community;
- Communicate our purpose more effectively;
- Increase the scope of our public benefit activities via Read School Enterprises;
- Become increasingly effective at networking and building commercial partnerships both in school and in the wider community.

8. In order to deliver strong financial management, we will:

- Ensure effective control of all costs and cash flow management;
- Drive growth in the Pupil Roll, with renewed focus on Boarding, Flexible Boarding, the Sixth Form and the Junior School;
- Ensure fee setting remains competitive, whilst maintaining the small class sizes and excellent levels of pastoral care and co-curricular activities;
- Drive effective efficiency measures in all areas, especially with energy;
- Identify and address areas of the school where improved financial contribution might be required, such as short-term hires and foreign student visits;
- Support strong business development initiatives and effective grant applications, as well as encouraging donations and legacies.