



20th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,



RIVER ACADEMY | YEAR 7 2024 ~ 2025

LEMPESI

Well, here we are! The end of the first term at River Academy- 15 weeks, 75 days, and an exceptionally long term. I am sure the children are all tired and ready for some down time and goodness me it is deserved. For all the members of the River Academy community this has been a herculean effort.

- A new school
- The transition to secondary school
- A new job
- A different parental routine
- Homework and timetables
- New ways of working
- New behaviour systems and expectations

- Learning to navigate a new space

However, despite these challenges for all concerned they have smashed it by every measure!

- A wonderful curriculum that supports and stretches students to excel
- Brilliant teaching across the timetable
- Elevated levels of attendance (Top 10% of UK secondary schools)
- No external cover needed as staff attendance is so high
- 94% average hand in rate for Sparx putting us in the top 20 schools nationally
- Poetry recitals, pantomime trips, house matches, communal Christmas singing
- Incredible standards of behaviour
- 66% of students regularly attending extra-curricular clubs
- An elective programme that allows all students to broaden interests and develop new skills

The term has also ended in a flurry of interesting and entertaining activities:



Pantomime Trip

In true River style we marched 180 students across Reading, keeping them safe, having fun and looking smart on our way to The Hexagon.

It was such a pleasurable afternoon for everyone involved. For many members of our global student community, this was their first Panto and the pantomime conventions of the dame, the communal singing, the shouting out (“He’s behind you!”) and the colour and joy, all made for a wonderful afternoon. The sheer delight on so many of our students’ faces is a memory I will long treasure and vindicated our decision to take the students, share in the traditions and great fun that the pantomime offered. A special thank you to Mr Tumble for such a great trip!

House Matches

On Monday afternoon all of the students competed in our half-termly house matches. The boys played football, and the girls played end ball, a combination of netball and bench ball. The games were all fiercely contested but played with great spirit and sportsmanship.

There were some heroic performances including Erikah Pascal shining for the girls and Jacob Keevil top scoring in the boys matches. The winners are as follows:

Boys football:

1. Lambourn/
Kennet
2. Pang
3. Avon
4. Thames
5. Loddon

Girls endball:

1. Thames
2. Lambourn
3. Loddon
4. Kennet
5. Pang
6. Avon

Overall:

1. Lambourn
2. Thames
3. Kennet
4. Pang
5. Loddon
6. Avon



Christmas Dinner



On Wednesday we had our Christmas dinner. This was great fun with quizzes, dingbats and singing to complement the delicious food.

I must give my thanks to Miss Angell for the brilliant if slightly cheeky quiz, along with Miss Moore for leading the singing. The '12 days of Christmas' was particularly fun with all 24 tables participating and singing their part with real gusto.

I was also really pleased how well the students transitioned back into their lessons after such a raucous and high-spirited lunch. All of the staff reported on a focused and hard-working final hour of the day.

Celebration Assembly

Wednesday evening saw 80 River families gather to hear festive musical performances and celebrate the hard work and tenacity of the students across this term. It was a lovely evening and demonstrated the strength of our community. It was so heartwarming to hear the staff testimonies of the students' diligence and industry, and staff were touched by the kind words of so many families at the end of the event.

Two more stars!



I also want to pay tribute to two students with noteworthy achievements outside of school. Firstly, to Jacinth who recently achieved her Grade 5 in the harp. This is a substantial achievement for a student so young and demonstrates elevated levels of dedication and effort.

In addition, Benas who won the Berkshire Junior Open Chess championships last weekend, winning all of his six matches on his way to victory. He was playing against competitors several years older than he is and deserves huge congratulations for this outstanding achievement

Tutor groups

Just a quick note that we are changing the Tutor group names to our house names

- 7.1 will become 7 Thames
- 7.2 will become 7 Kennet
- 7.3 will become 7 Pang
- 7.4 will become 7 Loddon
- 7.5 will become 7 Lambourn
- 7.6 will become 7 Avon

This will allow us to promote the house system and competitions more effectively.

School Council- Weekly Challenges

Our wonderful school council have had the idea of setting the students weekly challenges. The first of these will start on the week we return- 6th January – and will be focused on the tutor group with the highest aggregate of merits for excellence in the classroom. There will be a prize – to be decided by the students for the best tutor group.

It just leaves me to say, have a wonderful break, a merry Christmas, a happy Hannukah and we will see you all in 2025!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a light grey or blue ink and is positioned below the "Yours sincerely," text.

Andy Hartley

Headteacher