



RIVER ACADEMY
Issue 15

Headteacher's Update

7th February 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope everyone is well and is looking forward to the weekend. And I hope you like our new signs too! These are some of the final parts of the build that is still going in- the 3D slightly neon lettering definitely stands out!



Recruitment

I am just beginning a round of interviews for next year's teaching staff and have some exciting applicants visiting the site over the next week. Their feedback on the school, its culture and student body has been unanimously positive which is so pleasing so I am optimistic we can make some great appointments for September over the next few weeks.

Visitors

This feedback was supported by two visitors from last week; Mouhssin Ismael, the CEO of the City of London Academies Trust and Jon Peck, our own CEO. Mr Ismael visited as a result of some of our posts on Twitter and he gave us real food for thought on what is going well and what we need to

be absolutely sure about if we want to sustain our excellent start over the next 6 and a half years. In both cases, they were very impressed by our school, our values and the way we ensure the students work hard and remain focused at all times.

Attendance

Our attendance rate has fallen a little recently, but this unsurprising given the time of year, however, the most recent government data published on 31.1.25 still showed us in the top 10% of schools for every measure of attendance; that is whole school, Free School Meal students and SEND students, so thank you for your support with this. I know one or two students have been coming in with boxes of tissues determined to stay in school and keep studying which is admirable. However, we have also issued our first fixed penalty fine this year in the last week for a family trip in term. This fine was not issued lightly, but the student was suffering due to a poor attendance rate even before the trip.

Homework, Sparx Reader and Maths

Thank you for your support in ensuring this is all happening. In our second week of Sparx Reader the students achieved a completion rate of 98.3% ranking us as the 4th best school in the country and our Sparx Maths completion rate last week was 97% making us 10th ranked school out of 2550 schools.

Cumulative Assessment week results

Mrs Billingham delivered a fine assembly this week to ensure that the students understood their results and the context of their results. The staff are now using the data to construct interventions and using a very fine spreadsheet, we can see which students have performed well versus their SATs scores and who has perhaps not done so well. Exams are always a learning experience, and we hope those students who feel flat after seeing their scores can reflect, pick themselves up and do it differently for when we have our end of year exams in June.

Mobile phones

We had a tricky start to the week with several students needing some attention following a spat on one of the student WhatsApp groups over the weekend. Students were rather sadly trading insults, adding people in without their permission and disappointingly not showing our River Academy values of respect, community and empathy. Can I thank all of the parents who supported the sanctions we imposed and can I reiterate the need for the 'management' of the phone by parents. A quick check of the groups your son or daughter is on, and their content is always a good idea.

Sports

Lastly, we've had plenty of sporting action in the last week. The boys' football team defeated The Wren 4-2 in their first fixture and the boys' basketball team achieved a handsome 21-7 victory over Maiden Erlegh School in Reading. The girls' netball squad had an A and B team fixture versus

Highdown and won one and lost one. In every case the spirit, high standards and community of River Academy shone through. Let's go River, let's go!!



Take care and best wishes

A. Hartley

Andy Hartley
Headteacher