



## Headteacher's Update

11 July 2025

### Dear Parents and Carers,

Well, it is another hot one, isn't it?! I hope everyone can stay cool in such heat. As I write, the building has soaked up Thursday's hot temperatures very well and the PE kit has helped the students to stay cooler.

### Water!

Thank you for your support regarding Monday's closure. I was called at 4 o'clock by my site manager and then we had a couple of hours whilst we waited for Thames Water to make a report which sadly did not resolve the situation. As you can understand, all large public buildings need running water and an assurance that the supply will be sustainable. Thankfully, the building contactors visited on Monday morning the valve that was at fault was identified, switched back off and has been closely monitored ever since. There's never a dull moment!!

### NGRT tests

We received some great news earlier this week after our students took their end of year reading tests. These are national tests benchmarked against many thousands of other students. I am delighted the students have made significantly more progress as a whole group than the calendar months they have been in school with us. I am also delighted that all the different subgroups in school have made progress and most importantly, our Pupil Premium students have made the same amount of progress as our non-Pupil Premium students. To witness students whose reading age has leapt from 6 to 10 or 9 to 13 years of age in the last 9 months is incredibly heartwarming.

Please see the document attached to read Ms Billingham and Ms Myer's explanation of how we have achieved this.

### Cross Trust Assessments

I cannot go into specifics on this one, but we have some provisional data that shows an extraordinarily robust performance from River in the recent cross-Trust English, Maths and Science results. Our mantra of 'no child falls behind' means we do have to dig deep and show grit sometimes to make sure students complete work, but these recent sets of data really vindicate our approach.

### Feedback

I was delighted to read a lovely piece of feedback from a parent this week. Undoubtedly, by this point in the school year and term energy levels start to diminish but this was lovely pick me up for which all the staff were incredibly grateful.

*Dear River Academy Team*

*I just wanted to drop a quick message to say how brilliant I think you're all doing. As a parent, it's honestly been so reassuring to see the standards you've set and the way the school is being run, especially in your first year. Starting a brand-new school can't be easy, but the way you've gone about it, with consistency, care, and clear expectations, is really impressive.*

*I was actually revisiting some of the older weekly updates the other day and came across the bit where some parents had fed back that the school is quite strict. I read Mr Hartley's response again and just thought, yes — spot on. His words about checking uniform, equipment, and expecting students to show respect really hit the mark. These things matter. They're not just rules for the sake of it, they're what create a calm and focused environment, and they give students the structure they need to succeed, not just now, but in the long run too. And honestly, if I look at my son I can already see how seriously he takes all these rules and expectations when it comes to school. It has made such a positive difference, and as a parent, that means a lot.*

*I also really appreciate the way assessments have been done and the way the results have been shared. It gives us such a clear picture of where our child stands right now, what he's doing well in and what needs more focus. That kind of clarity really helps us support him better at home too. I'm really pleased my child is part of River Academy, and I just wanted to say thank you to Mr Hartley and the whole team for everything you're doing. It really doesn't go unnoticed. I just hope it continues in the same spirit moving forward, I honestly can't wait for my younger one to start with you the year after.*

*Warm regards*

### **New staff**

We had a fantastic day with 14 of our fresh staff on Wednesday as we inducted them into River Academy and our vision and values. Mr Rosser who will be one of our Heads of Year next came back on Thursday to find out even more.

Part of our planning next year is to avoid the 'Year 8 dip' and so we will be asking the students to participate in the River Baccalaureate which will award points for participating in all aspects of school life- from academic success to performing arts, from sports to charitable work and representing their house at events, from leadership to volunteering. It will be a chance to further develop those important character and life skills that employers value so much.

We cannot wait to launch it with them in September!

### **PGL**

Next week I will have photos from our trip to PGL Liddington this weekend. What I do know is that the students are extremely excited by this opportunity and I am sure we will have a wonderful time.

Watch this space!

### **D.I.S.C.O.**

I hope you have all got your tickets purchased for the PTA disco that is taking place on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July at 6pm. It will be a lovely way to end the year for the students.

Please [click here](#) to take you to the PTA event form where you can sign up.

### **Sports Day**

Sports Day is next Friday. Mr Clare has done a sterling job of ensuring everyone contributes and plays a part in their house teams in all the field and track events. Full results will be revealed on the last day!!

### **PE kit**

Given the predicted heat we will stay with the option of PE kit until further notice.

**Last day of term**

We will finish at 12.30pm on the last day of term, July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**The start of next year**

As mentioned previously Year 8 will return at 9.30am on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September. The first three days will be spent with Year 7 making sure they are fully 'Riverised' for when their timetables begin the following week.

Have an amazing weekend and thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a dark ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Andy Hartley

Headteacher