



RIVER ACADEMY

News Stream

Headteacher Update



Our preparations for our September opening continue apace and in every aspect of the project progress is tangible.

Firstly, this half term has been incredibly busy with recruitment and has seen us appoint six Heads of Department.

Despite a tough recruitment market and widely reported teacher shortages, the River project has clearly captured the attention of the teaching community. For each position we have had strong fields leaving me with difficult decisions on deciding between well qualified, confident classroom practitioners, many of whom already have existing experience in middle leadership. We have appointed Heads of English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Technology and PE and amongst these appointees we have degrees and post graduate qualifications from Oxbridge and Russell Group universities as well as curriculum vitae littered with experience of working in excellent local and national schools. The River community is incredibly fortunate to have such a brilliant team leading their education.

In addition, we have also appointed our Office Manager, Sara Stevens who will begin with us on June 1st in preparation for our opening. Sara is experienced at working in schools in a variety of roles and is known for her energy, flexibility and positivity which will be ideal qualities for working in a new school with a small staff.

Sara's appointment marks the first of our support staff appointments. The rest of our vacancies - Site Manager, Teaching Assistants, Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Receptionist, Behaviour Support Worker, School Cook and a Catering Assistant will be advertised in the next few weeks through My New Term which can be found [HERE](#). If you are interested or know anyone who is interested, please do not hesitate to apply!

Whilst there are more details of the progression of our site later in this newsletter, I just wanted to say how exciting it was to go on site earlier this month. The building is really taking shape with the internal fit out moving forwards and really giving us an idea of the sheer size and scope of the buildings. The sports hall, drama studio, activity studio and huge main hall are also nearing completion and will provide the students and school with a range of spaces for all sorts of activities.



Student Transition

Our student induction will take place on **Tuesday 9 July**. Unfortunately, we will not have access to the school site by this point, therefore we intend to bus the students to and from Rivermead to Maiden Erlegh School. Paul Gibson, the headteacher of MES, has kindly agreed to lend us the space he has available at that point in the school year because Year 11 and 13 will no longer be in school.



On the evening of **Wednesday 10 July** we will holding a **parent meeting at Rivermead Leisure Centre**. More details of both these events will follow in due course but please mark them on your family calendars if your child is joining us in September.

We also intend to invite all parents to a 15-minute face to face meeting in advance of September. This will give you the chance to ask any individual questions and also give us the opportunity to go through individually with you what it will mean to be a River parent. More details will follow on this initiative as we work out the logistics on this.

Community

I have continued to be active over the last few weeks meeting a range of partners and stakeholders of the River Academy community. For example, I have met a local business partnership, Ethical Reading, to examine how they can support the school through careers and work experience opportunities. Julie Foster, our School Business Manager and I have also met the manager of the Garden Centre next door to the school. Their delivery gate is in our car park, so we just want to work out the logistics for this process (there are special gates that open for this purpose). It is great to make this neighbourly connection and hopefully start a long and positive working partnership (and the odd free Christmas tree!).



Furthermore, I have met the outreach team at Bradfield College (a local independent boarding school) on ways they could offer some support/ facilities to support the River Academy community. As part of the charitable status that independent schools are granted there is an obligation for these institutions to collaborate with their local communities and students less fortunate than their own - I hope we can begin a mutually beneficial relationship from this meeting. Lastly, I am looking forward to delivering a presentation to the Belltower group, the residents association of the streets around EP Collier School, on River Academy and the sort of a school it will be and what it will offer the local community.

The River Academy project is clearly exciting the local teaching community, the local residents and local parents. As a brand-new school with such a professionally qualified and experienced specialist teaching team, it offers a rare opportunity for our young people and families. I hope you all share my excitement and anticipation and all the remarkable things that are to come for our River community.

Project Update



The River Academy Project team had a tour of the building on 5 March 2024. The building is really starting to look like a school now and we were really excited to see the progress that has been made.

Other than finalising some internal paint colours, all of the decoration and design decisions have been made and we will now turn our attention to the items that we will need to turn this building into a school!



We have many shopping lists on the go, which include items from food tech equipment to fire fighting equipment to exercise books. We have also finalised our IT requests which will involve the delivery of £950k of IT equipment installed at the school over the next 3 years. We have now made most of our teaching appointments for the September start, with just a few hours of music left to cover. After Easter we will turn to the appointment of support staff, with interviews planned for the end of April and beginning of May. If you or any of your contacts are interested in any support staff positions, please do keep an eye out on [My New Term](#) or our [website](#).

Introducing Mrs Moore



River Academy is delighted to announce Christina Moore has been appointed to be our new Head of Year 7.

Christina is a skilled pastoral leader who brings enthusiasm, energy and a long track record of success to her new role. We know that our first intake of students will not only be in safe hands, they will also be pushed to be the very best version of themselves under Christina's experienced leadership.

Welcome to Team River Christina!



Welcome Miss Stevens



We are delighted to announce the appointment of our new Office Manager and PA to the Headteacher, Sara Stevens.

Sara is currently working at another school within the Trust and comes with a reputation for hard work, initiative, and positivity.

This was proven on her interview day where she was appointed from a very strong field of applicants as she demonstrated both the knowledge and the desire to make a difference to the River community.

We can't wait for Sara to start working for us in June as we get ready for our big opening in September!

CGI School Fly-through

Bowmer and Kirkland have supplied a CGI fly-through of our new school giving us the opportunity to see exactly what River Academy will look like when it opens in September.

To access it, please click on the **play button** below.

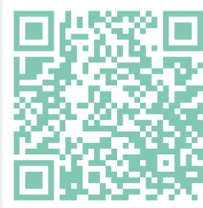


Vacancies

Schools run by Maiden Erlegh Trust attract the highest calibre of staff and governors and we will be looking for the brightest and best to work for the benefit of the students.

If you think you can offer something special, please get in touch by sending an expression of interest to: recruitment@maidenerleghtrust.org.

Vacancies can be found on the website [HERE](#) or by scanning the **QR code**.



Where to find us?



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