



Headteacher's Update

12 December 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope everyone is well and not too fatigued as we stride towards the end of this term.

Panto!

The festivities have begun at River Academy, and we have got into the swim of things with a wonderful trip to the pantomime. One hundred and eighty-six Year 7 students signed up for the event and enjoyed some traditional English Christmas theatre. The Panto had all the elements of fun and mass participation that make it such a brilliant experience for our students, along with the social conventions of going to the theatre—sitting down, watching, and engaging without being on your phone. This is all part of the holistic experience that



education should be, as we prepare our students to be young citizens. I am so grateful to Ms Myers for her hard work and logistical tenacity in making the event happen.

Snowflake Serenade

Thursday saw our first-ever Christmas concert. Mr Abiola and Mrs Powell marshalled the performers and readied them for the big night. What a lovely spectacle it was, and many staff were very emotional as we saw our young students deliver some

incredible performance s. Thank you to all the parents and staff who supported this great evening.

Sport

Our Year 7 basketball team blew us away with a fantastic 42–2 scoreline on Tuesday evening. The Blessed Hugh Faringdon team was overwhelmed by our students' strength and teamwork.

On Thursday, the Year 8 team played and, despite being Year 8 only against a large Year 8 and 9 Theale Green team, came away 45–22 winners.

A huge thank you to Mr Clare for his energy and tenacity in running these teams.



Flu

You will have seen the news regarding the spike in flu around the country, and we have been working hard with our staff to keep classrooms well-ventilated and remind students and staff to wash their hands. I was concerned on Monday when our attendance was 92.5%; however, as usual, the River Academy team has rallied round and bucked the national trend with attendance rates of well over 97% for Wednesday and Thursday. Good effort, everyone!

Next Week

We are looking forward to welcoming our award winners on Tuesday to our Celebration Evening. If you have been nominated you would have received your invite, please click on the link in the email to register your attendance by Sunday evening the latest.

Additionally, it is Christmas Dinner on Wednesday, with just under 300 students dining with us. We can't wait for the songs, quizzes, and Brussels sprouts to get flowing! On the same day, it is Christmas Jumper Day. Students should wear their normal uniform (with blazers optional for this day) and their jumper on top. Christmas jumpers are optional but will be great to see a big turnout of festive knitwear raising money for Save the Children.

A reminder that there are no Electives on Wednesday as it is now so dark. These will resume on Wednesday, 7th January.

Lastly, please be ready for our traditional early finish on Friday, 19 December, when we will close to

students at 12:30 p.m.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Andy Hartley

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a dark ink and includes a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Andy Hartley

Headteacher