



RIVER ACADEMY
Issue 20

Headteacher's Update

6 March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well and have enjoyed the drier weather over the last few weeks. Our field is firming up nicely, and it has been lovely to see the pitches marked and ready for the upcoming football fixtures.

School Field

We recently uploaded a great video of the rear of the site to our social media pages, showing how beautiful the grounds are looking in their early Spring finery.

Attendance

Thank you once again for your support in ensuring attendance remains high despite the time of year. Since Christmas, our overall school attendance has been 96%, which is highly impressive given the winter months.

RIVER ACADEMY

Sparx Reader

Sparx Maths

Sparx Science

Sparx Success!

Sparx Reader: 99.5% 1st out of 1085 schools

Sparx Maths: 99.4% 1st out of 2520 schools

Sparx Science: 99.7%

Sparx

This commitment has been reflected in another fantastic set of Sparx results, with River Academy appearing at the top of the rankings tables in both Maths and Reader once again. This is even more impressive given that last week's deadline was brought forward to Thursday due to the INSET day.

Year 7 Mastery Showcase

Our Year 7 students received their Mastery Showcase assessment results on Wednesday, and it was heartening to see how much they cared. From those at the very top of the year to those who find school more challenging, there was so much interest, delight, frustration and conversation. It said a great deal about our school culture that so many students are eager to achieve and succeed,

even when things don't go their way. I am very much looking forward to Mrs Billingham's results celebration on Friday afternoon.

Careers

Year 8 had their third session of the Barclays life skills programme this week. The programme raises awareness of the skills and character traits that facilitate success in the workplace. As ever, the students fully engaged with the session and had a great time. Our session leader, Richard said this of the students.

"Year 8 were, once again, phenomenal! They never fail to amaze me with their professionalism, their candour and their impressive can-do/will-do attitude!"



It was another brilliant day, and I very much look forward to the next one".

We are also taking a small group of students to the Reading office of PWC in two weeks for a workplace experience. PWC is a global consulting company who support businesses to work efficiently and profitably. Careers with PWC are highly sought after and I hope this first event can be the beginning of a very positive relationship with this company.

Miss Angell has been as busy as ever and two weeks ago took a group of Year 8 students to Reading University. The purpose of this trip was to promote Higher Education amongst students who may not have a family history of this pathway. The students loved it and were keen to come back to school to present me with their work. We take a group of Year 7s on a similar trip next week and my thanks go to Miss Angell for her tenacity in making sure our students get these great opportunities.

Feedback

We have received lots of positive feedback over the last couple of weeks. From potential teaching recruits to the police officers running the knife arch, and from various educational visitors, we continue to hear the same messages: *"Your students are so polite"*, *"Your students are so proud of the school and their achievements"*, *"The classrooms are so calm and focused"*.

In addition, we received two particularly lovely comments: a local Head of Science described *"the ethos, environment and vision of River Academy as inspirational"*, and a Head of English from another local school shared that *"I feel reinvigorated — you have created something incredibly magical at River."* I know staff have felt extremely encouraged to hear such validation of our work.

Surveys

A reminder to please complete the Parent Survey sent out last week. A big thank you to those who have already responded; however, we need more completions to gain a truer picture of parent views, for those who haven't completed it yet [please click here](#).

Sport

Our netball teams have made a strong start to their league campaign. The Year 8 girls have won three out of four fixtures, while the Year 7s have won two and drawn one in their River Academy debut. Miss Moore is proving to be an excellent coach, and our only loss so far was a narrow 7–6 defeat to Kendrick (an all-girls school).



In football, our Year 8 boys' team won one and lost one in their league fixtures on Thursday, while our Year 7s sadly lost both of their debut matches.

Curriculum Consultation

Please keep the evening of March 24th free. We will be holding a consultation

event regarding our GCSE and Sixth Form curriculums. While we have an outline of what these may look like, we are keen to hear your views on which subjects would be of most value to our students.

Take care and have a wonderful weekend.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andy Hartley

Headteacher