



RIVER ACADEMY
Issue 23

Headteacher's Update

27 March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's the final day of term and we're all feeling a little "final-day-of-term", but very proud of everything we have achieved since returning in early January.

Since September

- **875,000 Sparx Maths questions** have been answered – an incredible average of almost 2,500 questions per student.
- **7,170 hours of reading** and **4,000 completed books** on Sparx Reader alone. This equates to over **20 hours of concentrated reading per student**, in addition to tutor reading and reading across the curriculum.

We held our annual review of The Bridge Unit today with Reading Borough Council and, in preparation, looked closely at students' reading ages. Every student has made progress in line with, or exceeding, the time they have been at River. One student has made **over six years of progress in just 17 months** – a phenomenal achievement.

Thank you for supporting our homework expectations. Research consistently shows that a positive narrative about school at home significantly contributes to academic success and long-term life chances.

Attendance

Thank you for ensuring your children attend school every day. We work hard to provide a calm, safe learning environment where students feel valued and taught by passionate subject specialists. Our attendance average of over 96% since Christmas is a testament to the strength of our partnership with you.

Mastery Showcase Assessments

Looking ahead, all students will sit their second Mastery Showcase Assessment Week in the next term. **Taking place w/c Monday 11th May**, students in both Year 7 and 8 will complete assessments in all subjects, much like they did in the first Spring Term.

In the first week back after Easter, students will have assemblies delivered by Dr Dukinfield and Mrs Billingham about how best to prepare for the assessments. Alongside this, more specific details will be communicated directly to parents.

In the meantime, as we know many students are keen to begin their revision, we advise using the Student Sharepoint to return to past booklets, knowledge organisers, revision materials and resources, as well as returning to the Assessment Papers returned after the last Mastery Showcase Week, as these outlined the key knowledge and areas of development.

12 days of Eggcellence

Our term has finished with different rewards each day for different challenges around attendance, Sparx, merits and other aspects of River student life. It has been great to see the students enjoying the hot chocolates, eggs and extra sports that are awarded for winning. Our rewards finished today with one tutor group getting an extended lunch break for the most merits across March! It's been a lovely way to finish the term.



Silver Programme

Taking place this term:

Make sure you are signing up to these amazing FREE opportunities!



Description		Y7/Y8?	Date	Time
Visiting Author		Y7 & Y8	21/4/26	3.45-4.30pm
Beneath the Magic: The Dark World of Fairytales		Y7 & Y8	23/4/26	3.45-4.30pm
History of Board Games		Y7	30/4/26	3.45-4.30pm
Portuguese Poetry		Y7 & Y8	5/5/26	3.45-4.30pm
Manjeet Mann & the British Library celebrate National Poetry Day		Y7 & Y8	8/6/26	3.45-4.30pm
World Ocean Day		Y7 & Y8	11/6/26	3.45-4.30pm
Why do we hate wasps?		Y7 & Y8	2/7/26	3.45-4.30pm
Narratives in Video Games		Y7 & Y8	14/7/26	3.45-4.30pm

Speak to Miss Angell if you have any questions.

More details about each session will be shared in the bulletin.

This has been another fantastic term of enrichment opportunities. Last night we hosted more than 20 students for our Maths Challenge event, following on from last week's activities where over 30 students dissect a cows heart .

Next term's events poster is included above. My thanks go to Ms Angell for her exceptional work organising the programme, and to all staff who have delivered sessions and inspired our students.

Ski Trip

Mr Woodfine and I are heading to the Alps tomorrow with 20 of our Year 8 students as part of the annual Maiden Erlegh ski trip. Our students will join over 220 students and 25 staff on what promises to be an incredible experience.

We have run ski-fit classes since half-term to ensure students have the strength and stamina needed for six full days on the slopes. As you can see from the photo of yesterday's hoodie try-on, excitement levels are high! Please also read Mrs Walker's recent letter about the **2027 ski trip**, open to students currently in Years 8 and 9.



Sport

Our Year 8 boys ended their season with a **4–1 victory over Theale Green** and a walkover against Prospect. Tommy Ross scored all four goals in the Theale Green match! The team finished 3rd out of 8 in the group, narrowly missing out on a playoff place.

Interhouse

Monday's Interhouse fixtures were great fun. As always, we were impressed by how smoothly and positively these events run—clear organisation, supportive spectators, excellent student officiating, and fantastic sportsmanship. The winning house will be announced later today.

School Show and LAMDA



Thank you to everyone who attended *The Wizard of Oz* on Monday. There are definitely some future stars among our students. Despite challenges—including cast changes, two knee operations during preparation, limited rehearsal time, and other hurdles—the performance was a triumph. Huge thanks to Ms Moore, Mr Abiola, and the entire cast and crew.

Please also see the attached flyer for our LAMDA classes. We are very fortunate to have an outstanding drama teacher offering 1:1 and small-group lessons each week. These sessions build confidence, develop performance skills, and provide focused time on drama. Pupil Premium students interested in joining should contact the school, and we will arrange financial support.

Parent Curriculum Evening

Thank you to the approximately 140 parents and carers who attended Tuesday's Curriculum Evening. Your engagement and feedback were greatly appreciated. The slides have now been shared alongside a questionnaire seeking your views on our GCSE and Sixth Form offer.

Staffing

Mr Gennace, one of our Teaching Assistants, will be leaving us over the Easter break. He has provided calm, assured support to some of our most vulnerable students, and he will be greatly missed by the SEN team.

From 13th April, Ms Moore will become our Designated Safeguarding Lead, taking over from Mrs Clarke, whose SENCO workload has grown significantly due to the school's increasing popularity.

Return to School – Monday 13th April

We look forward to welcoming students back at **9:10am on Monday 13th April. This is not an INSET day.**

As usual, we will begin the term with a full reset, ensuring students are ready to learn—with correct uniform and full equipment.

A small number of families have already been contacted regarding uniform, particularly skirt length following growth spurts. Please could all parents check that:

- uniform meets expectations
- students have a complete set of equipment, including a **reading book**
- hair is **no shorter than a grade 1** and **does not include skin fades**

Thank you for your support with these standards.

Wishing you all a wonderful Easter break. We look forward to seeing everyone on 13th April.



Andy Hartley

Headteacher