



RIVER ACADEMY

Issue 5

Headteachers' Update

4th October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another positive week at River Academy.

Open Evening

On Wednesday we opened our doors to prospective parents and families from the local area. Our student helpers (over 90 of our 180 students helped) were a real credit to the school and themselves and we had a lot of feedback about the confidence and elan of our students in their smart River Academy uniforms proudly discussing the school and what it has to offer. Indeed, the two student highlights were Jacinth playing the harp for parents as they arrived for 20 minutes and the 90 student helpers all standing in front of the parents for the first talk and reciting the poem *Invictus* with real panache and confidence. We handed out around 450 prospectuses on the night which with an average of three people per family meant around 1300 visitors came into River Academy on Wednesday. In many ways it was too busy, and we are looking at ways of easing and managing this next year, but these are nice problems for a headteacher to have. It will be interesting to know our first preference numbers later this term once all the applications are in.

Attendance

Attendance for the year so far stands at 97.7%, which is pleasing, and thank you all for supporting the students to make a strong start to secondary school. However, I did my first home visit this week for a student that had not been in school for a couple of days without anyone letting us know the reasons. It is obvious that attendance is a key component of academic success, and we will do our utmost to support families and students in getting into school.

Homework

As we get further into term homework has increased a little. It is great to see so many of the students flourishing and progressing under our systems. This is borne out by our most recent Sparx Maths report which compares Year 7s from across the country for September. Our students had a 94% hand in by the deadline rate. **This placed River Academy at 38th out of 2343 schools that use Sparx Maths across the country.** Many of the schools above River are private, grammar or specialist schools so these figures are a fantastic testament to the academic hunger of the students. As I write I can see our current completion rate for this week so far is 60% so please can I ask that all parents give this a big push over the weekend to get our completion rate above 94% for this week.

On Friday's we hold Catch Up Club for an hour for those students who are not currently getting homework done. Tonight, we have our first 'cohort' with seven students staying late which is a shame but proof that we are determined that students will not be allowed to fall behind. There are different reasons for the non-completion but in many cases it is due to a lack of technology at home, a lack of English being spoken or

understood or parents working long shifts and not being able to support, therefore this extra Friday session is so important in giving these students the opportunity to keep up with their peers.

Cooking and Food Technology

It has been such a pleasure to see the students' pride and happiness at completing their practical cookery sessions over the last two weeks. The students clearly enjoyed these lessons, and there was a lot of pride in the banana muffins.

Cooking and preparing healthy food from scratch is a life skill, as is being open minded and trying new foods and whilst the foods the students prepare will not necessarily always be family favourites I hope we can all encourage the students to get stuck in with these vital lessons in future independence.

Please do keep an eye on the My Child at School app and your e-mails to make sure you know the ingredients required. If anyone is struggling to cover the cost of the ingredients, please do let us know and we can support families in these circumstances.

Student Leadership

Ms Moore announced her Student Leadership teams this week which was fabulous to see including the School Council, Sports Leaders, and Subject Representatives. The photos below are evidence of just how proud the students are of their achievements, and it was fabulous to see.



Have a great weekend everyone and stay safe

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a dark grey or black ink on a white background.

Andy Hartley
Headteacher