



RIVER ACADEMY



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Headteacher's

Thank you for your interest in River Academy.

We are a new and growing secondary school, proudly situated on the banks of the River Thames in North Reading. Our state-of-the-art facilities and exceptional staff create an inspiring environment where students are encouraged to work hard, think big, and take pride in their achievements — whether academic, personal, or creative.

Our ethos is built on high expectations for all and a firm belief that no student is left behind. We are committed to academic excellence and to nurturing capable, independent young people who are ready to make a positive contribution to the world.

At River Academy, our core values Excellence and Determination, are at the heart of everything we do. These are underpinned by a culture of Community, Empathy, and Respect, which guide how our students behave and interact with others. These values shape every aspect of school life, from rigorous academic learning to leadership opportunities, sport, and the arts.

We encourage our students to take pride in their achievements and to develop the skills, character, and confidence they need to lead successful, fulfilling lives.

As Headteacher, I bring over 30 years of teaching experience to River Academy. I am inspired by the opportunity to build a culture of excellence from the ground up. Our students impress me every day with their positivity, kindness, and ambition — and we are excited to celebrate their first examination results in the years ahead.

I warmly invite you to visit us. You'll find purposeful classrooms, passionate teaching, and a vibrant community that values learning, kindness, and achievement.

Mr Andy Hartley, Headteacher

s welcome



Our Trust

River Academy is part of Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET), a family of schools that work together to offer outstanding opportunities to all our young people. Being part of MET brings tangible benefits to our students and staff every day.

- Students take part in our Intra-Trust Sports Programme, visiting other MET schools for matches and tournaments, and accessing excellent sports facilities beyond our own. Including inclusive events and Trust-wide activities designed to build confidence and celebrate participation
- Our students benefit from Trust-wide trips, including the annual MET Ski Trip, cultural and subject-specific visits, residentials and Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme
- The annual MET Careers Fair brings together employers, training providers, sixth form colleges and universities to support students' future choices
- Our staff benefit from Trust-led professional development opportunities and networking which support great teaching, strong leadership, and consistent pastoral care across our schools, which directly improves the student experience

Being part of Maiden Erlegh Trust strengthens our school while allowing us to maintain our unique identity.

Find out more here:

[Click to visit MET website](#)

[Click to](#)



[Click here to open MET Instagram](#)

[Click to open MET LinkedIn](#)

Our values

Aim High
Be Inclusive
Work together

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Our values in c

At River Academy we have five simple school values: Determination and Excellence, Respect, Empathy and Community. We believe that everything can be drawn back to these five school values. We refer to them continuously throughout our week. Our merits are linked to our values and in our Celebration Assembly, certificates are awarded to students who live out each of our values.

In addition we strive to embody our Trust values in all that we do.

Aim High: At River Academy, students are encouraged to challenge themselves, take ownership of their learning and build the confidence to exceed expectations. A powerful example of this is our national recognition by Sparx Learning: River Academy was named a national case study following exceptional and sustained student engagement with Sparx Maths and Sparx Reader, consistently ranking in the top ten schools nationally.

Be Inclusive: Our community reflects a wide range of cultures, experiences and languages, and this diversity strengthens the way we learn and live together. We support students with additional needs through a graduated approach to SEND, guided by the principles of the SEND Code of Practice. The Bridge, our on-site resource base, offers tailored support to help ensure every student can access and enjoy school life.

Work Together: We promote a culture of collaboration — between students, staff, and families. Students contribute to whole-school life through initiatives such as the River Academy Community Lecture programme, which they help to organise. Oracy is a key part of our approach, and students come together at lunchtime to discuss and debate diverse topics, building confidence, critical thinking, and communication skills.

action





What is it like

A Calm, Purposeful Environment Where Students Thrive. River Academy is an incredibly special place. From the outset, we have been designed to be a calm, orderly school where exceptional behaviour creates the foundation for outstanding teaching, learning, and personal growth.

Our culture is built on kindness, respect, and high expectations — values that are lived every day by our students and staff.

In every classroom, students are inspired by passionate teachers who are experts in their subjects and deeply committed to helping every child succeed. Clear routines and consistent boundaries support students to develop focus, confidence, and pride in their learning. This structured environment allows every student to thrive — academically, socially, and emotionally.

At the heart of our school is a diverse and vibrant student body, united by a shared commitment to inclusivity and excellence. We celebrate individuality and difference, while fostering a strong sense of belonging and community.

Our students benefit from exceptional facilities on a modern, purpose-built campus. Every space — from our well-equipped classrooms and specialist science labs to our ICT suites, sports facilities, music rooms, and drama studios — has been designed to support high-quality teaching and a rich, engaging curriculum.

Find out more here:

[Click for our website 'About us'](#)

[Click to](#)

at River?



[Click to open 'Key staff' info](#)


[Click to open 'Our school day' info](#)



Find out more here:

[Click to read our 'Student Bulletins'](#)

[Click to a](#)




“The practice in this school is highly impressive... a determination that the pupils will achieve well; high expectations visibly evident.”

Department for Education

[Access our 'Key policies'](#)

[Click to read our latest news](#)

A photograph of two young boys in school uniforms sitting at a desk in a classroom. The boy in the foreground is a Black boy with short, curly hair, wearing a grey sweater over a white collared shirt and a teal tie. He is looking down at a book or paper on the desk. The boy in the background is a white boy with short brown hair, also wearing a grey sweater over a white collared shirt and a teal tie. He is also looking down at his work. The background is slightly blurred, showing a classroom setting with a computer monitor visible in the upper right corner.

*"The teachers
and students
are really kind
and really
supportive."*

Year 7 student

Our Curriculum

A Curriculum Designed for Excellence and Opportunity. We believe every child deserves a broad, ambitious, and carefully structured curriculum that inspires curiosity, builds confidence, and prepares them for the future.

Our curriculum reflects high expectations and a commitment to purposeful, engaging learning for all.

A Strong Academic Foundation all students follow a rich academic core, including

- English, Mathematics, and Science
- Humanities (History and Geography)
- French as a modern foreign language

These subjects are complemented by a vibrant offer of creative and technical disciplines such as Art, Drama, Music, Design Technology, and Computing, ensuring every student can discover and develop their talents.

A Coherent, Knowledge-Rich Journey

Our subject specialists work closely together to deliver a curriculum that:

- Builds knowledge and skills over time
- Is structured around clear learning goals
- Provides regular opportunities to revisit and embed key concepts

Find out more here:

[Click for 'Curriculum' info](#)

[Click](#)



m

[Click for 'SEND' info](#)

[Click for 'Learning & teaching' info](#)



Our approach supports strong academic progress and nurtures independent, confident thinkers.

Inclusive and Supportive Learning

We are proud of our inclusive ethos. Students with additional needs are supported through high-quality classroom practice and targeted interventions, ensuring every learner can thrive.

Developing the Whole Child

We place great importance on personal development. Our curriculum is enriched with:

- Independent reading and academic discussion
- Oracy and communication skills woven into every subject
- PSMSC (Personal, Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development) delivered through assemblies, tutor time, and curriculum themes
- Careers education introduced from Year 7, helping students connect learning to future aspirations

Ready for the Future

Our curriculum is designed to support strong progression into Sixth Form and further education, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and character to succeed in life beyond school.

Find out more here:


[Click for 'Curriculum' info](#)

[Click](#)



[Click for 'SEND' info](#)

[Click for 'Learning & teaching' info](#)

A person's hand is holding a white student planner in front of a row of teal school lockers. The planner is open, showing handwritten text. The lockers are modern and have a silver handle. The background is slightly blurred, focusing on the planner and the hand.

"I love how it's really modern and the expectations are high, and we are different from other schools."

Year 7 student

Find out more here:

[Click to read 'Tools for learning'](#)

[Click for 'H](#)



[Higher ability student' info](#)

[Click for 'School calendar'](#)

Preparing for t

Inspiring Ambition, Supporting Futures. We are committed to helping every student develop the confidence, ambition, and knowledge they need to plan for a successful future.

From Year 7, students begin exploring the world of work and further education through a rich programme of careers learning embedded in:

- Subject lessons
- Tutor time
- Personal Development sessions
- Assemblies and enrichment activities

Our careers programme is shaped by the Gatsby Benchmarks, ensuring students benefit from:

- Encounters with employers and professionals
- Talks from further and higher education providers
- Curriculum-linked careers learning
- Access to high-quality resources and guidance

As the school grows, work experience opportunities will become a key part of our offer, giving students valuable insight into the workplace.

Find out more here:

[Click for 'Careers' info](#)

the future



Sixth Form

We are excited to grow with our students. In the coming years, we will open a Sixth Form that reflects our ethos of high expectations, personalised support, and ambitious outcomes.

Our Sixth Form will offer

- A wide range of A Level and BTEC qualifications
- Tailored advice on university, apprenticeships, and careers
- Enrichment opportunities that prepare students for adult life and leadership

Part of a Stronger Network

As a proud member of the Maiden Erlegh Trust, our students also benefit from a Trust-wide careers programme, including:

- The annual MET Careers Fair
- Access to expert guidance and employer networks
- Support for all post-16 pathways — including Sixth Form, college, and apprenticeships

We aim to ensure every student leaves us with a clear sense of direction and the confidence to take their next steps.

Find out more here:

[Click for 'Sixth form' info](#)



Support and v

We place a strong emphasis on wellbeing and pastoral care to create a calm, respectful environment where every child can grow, academically, socially, and emotionally. Our approach ensures that students are known as individuals and supported to overcome any barriers to learning, and to reach their full potential.

Daily Support and Pastoral Care

- Form tutors provide daily check-ins and are the first point of contact for students and families
- A dedicated support team offers guidance and wellbeing support through check-ins and targeted interventions
- Personal Development, assemblies and tutor time explore key themes such as identity, mental health, and respectful relationships
- Clear routines and high expectations help maintain a positive and inclusive learning environment

Tailored Specialist Support from Internal and external professionals

- Bespoke targeted interventions
- One-to-one check-ins with a Teaching Assistant
- Small group Emotional Literacy sessions
- Mentoring through Building Resilience in Young Minds
- Guidance from Reading Inclusion Support in Education
- Advice from the Brighter Futures for Children SEN Team
- Support from an Educational Psychologist

Our commitment to wellbeing is woven through every aspect of school life, ensuring that students feel confident, cared for, and ready to succeed.

Find out more here:

[Click for 'Health & wellbeing' info](#)

[Click for 'P](#)

Wellbeing



[Personal development' info](#)

[Click for 'Student Helpline' links](#)

Beyond the cl



classroom






A Wide Range of Opportunities for All. Every student takes part in enrichment activities that extend learning and build a sense of belonging.

Our offer includes:

- Inclusive Electives Programme — open to all students, encouraging engagement and personal growth
- Clubs and activities across sport, the creative arts, and STEM
- The River Academy Community Lecture Series, connecting students and families to inspiring academic ideas
- Lunchtime oracy sessions, including gratitude reflections, topical discussions, and poetry recitals
- Student-led initiatives that build leadership, organisation, and communication skills
- Trips and visits that bring learning to life and broaden students' cultural horizons
- A rigorous and varied Higher Ability Student lecture and workshop series, designed to stretch and challenge

Our enrichment programme is an essential part of school life — helping students to grow in confidence, develop new interests, and prepare for life beyond school.





"It's not just about teaching lessons — it's about the patience, kindness, and support you give to every student, every day. You create a space where kids feel safe, encouraged, and excited to learn, and that means the world."

Year 7 student



Working with f

We believe that strong, respectful relationships with parents and carers are key to student success. We work in partnership with families to ensure every child feels supported, understood, and able to thrive. Parents and carers can contact us at any time for information or support.

Starting the Journey Together

We offer a range of opportunities for families of Year 5 and Year 6 students to get to know our school, including:

- School tours and open events to meet our staff and students
- A welcoming Transition Evening for all Year 6 families
- Follow-up support for families unable to attend transition events

Ongoing Communication and Support

We keep parents informed and involved through:

- A weekly Headteacher's Update, sent electronically
- Timely letters and updates about key events and opportunities
- A Year 7 Parents' Information Evening each September
- A Meet the Tutor Evening early in the autumn term
- Annual online Curriculum Evenings to support learning at home
- A termly Parents' Forum — a space for discussion, feedback, and collaboration

We are proud to work closely with our families to create a warm, inclusive community where every child can flourish.

Find out more here:

[Click to read about 'Attendance'](#)

[Click for](#)

families

['Free school meals' info](#)

[Click for 'Parent support' links](#)

Welcoming new

Starting secondary school is a big step for students and their families. At River Academy, we work hard to ensure that every child feels informed, connected, and confident before they walk through our doors in September.

From the moment school places are confirmed, we begin a carefully planned transition process designed to support a smooth and positive start.

Our Transition Offer Includes

- Regular updates and bulletins from March onwards, following National Offer Day
- A series of welcome events, enrichment activities, and induction experiences throughout the spring and summer terms
- Clear email communication and guidance to support families at every stage
- A dedicated Induction Day in June, giving students the chance to meet staff, explore the school, and connect with new classmates
- Ongoing contact with form tutors and the pastoral team to ensure a confident start in September
- A Parent Welcome Event at the start of Year 7 to introduce families to life at River Academy and our values — the ‘River Way’

We are committed to making every family feel part of our community.

Find out more here:

[Click for ‘Starting at River Academy’](#)

[Click for ‘Upcoming Events’](#)

ew families



[uniform and equipment' info](#)

[Click for 'Parent guide to assessment'](#)

Applying

We welcome applications from families across Reading and the surrounding area.

- For Year 7 admissions, please apply via your local authority
- We also welcome enquiries about in-year transfers and are happy to arrange a visit
- Full admissions details, including key dates and open event information, are available on our website.

Find out more here:

[Click for 'Admissions' info](#)



River Fact File

School Name: River Academy
Type of School: Secondary (11–18) *
Headteacher: Mr A Hartley
Number of Students: 374 presently — 1200 full capacity
Location: 1 Richfield Avenue, Reading RG1 8EQ
Opened: September 2024
Ofsted: New school (not yet inspected)
Website: www.river-academy.co.uk
Email: river@maidenerleghtrust.org
Phone: 0118 467 6720

*We are adding one year group per year. We opened in 2024 with a single Year 7 cohort and will grow annually to become an 11–18 school with a Sixth Form.

Find out more here:

[Click for 'Headteachers' updates](#)

[Click for 'S](#)



[School Advisory Board' info](#)

[Click for 'Safeguarding' info](#)

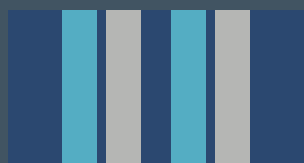


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