



THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

STUDENT VOICES



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**FEATURING NEW SECTIONS, CHALLENGES,
ARTICLES AND MORE!**



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello to all our readers this month! I hope that you all enjoyed your easter holidays and have come back to school with a renewed sense of motivation as we have started our final term. In this final term, we always experience the most changes, from mocks to GCSEs or even just doing proper PPEs for the first time (for all the year 10s). However, that doesn't mean that throughout the rollercoaster of emotions the next few months will bring, we won't be here to celebrate the highs with you.

Although starting next month, it will be a new editor who has the honour to do so, as I will be stepping down from my role. Yet that isn't to say it was an easy decision to make. I love the Spotlight, and you can be sure that you'll still see my name make an appearance regularly as I write articles under new leadership. I hope to see the Spotlight continue to grow as a new generation takes control and brings something fresh to the table.

Albeit, my regular call to help is still going to be part of this incredible edition as I urge you to drop in to our meetings on a Thursday lunch in the T block. Feel free to bring along your lunch and hear all the ideas being thrown around. There is something for everyone, and the new leadership team would love to see you take their place as they begin to navigate their new roles. You can write, draw, photograph to your heart's desire or even suggest something new that we haven't quite seen before. Now more than ever is your time to put forward change. I myself didn't expect to take on the role of editor when I joined the Spotlight team, but anything can happen when you take the opportunities laid out for you.

So, for the final time, I would like to thank everyone who has helped the Spotlight become what it is today and what it will progress into. Thank you to my team, who I know I can always rely on as they show up to meetings, suggesting new ideas and offering their help wherever necessary. Thank you to Mrs Sweeney, who consistently lets me borrow cameras at such short notice and is always a great help in seeking advice whenever I need it. Thank you to all the teachers who have suggested original ideas throughout my time editing in person and through the survey. And finally, thank you to you - our readers, who keep the Spotlight alive through your curious minds. I hope that you continue to show support as this new era begins and maybe, one day, see your own name in the Spotlight for your contributions.

So, for the final time, happy reading! I hope that you all enjoy this month's edition of the Spotlight, which has been written for your enjoyment, and I hope to see some of your names join mine in the next edition. Always take opportunities!

BY AMAARA MANGERA - EDITOR



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BLURTING

BLURTING:

The Blurting Method is an active recall study technique designed to improve memory retention and identify gaps in your knowledge. It's especially popular for revision-heavy subjects like sciences, history, or languages.

Here's how it works in practice:

1. Study first

Go over your material normally- read notes, watch a lesson, or review a textbook. Try to understand it, not just skim.

2. "Blurt" everything you remember

Close your notes and write down everything you can recall about the topic from memory. Don't worry about structure or neatness- get it all out onto paper.

3. Check against your notes

Compare what you wrote with your original material. Highlight:
What you got right, what you missed and what you got wrong

4. Fill in the gaps

Add the missing or incorrect information in a different colour so it stands out.

5. Repeat the process

Go over the same topic again later and repeat the blurting. Over time, you should recall more and miss less.

Why it works:

The method is based on active recall, a principle from Cognitive Psychology. Actively retrieving information strengthens memory far more than passive rereading. It also taps into the testing effect, a testing effect where recalling information improves long-term retention.

When to use it?

- Before exams to test your knowledge
- After learning a topic, to reinforce it
- Alongside spaced repetition for maximum effect

Simple example

If you're revising biology, you might study cell structure, then close your notes and write everything you remember about organelles, their functions, and the differences between plant and animal cells. Then you check and refine your knowledge.



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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Just a little late

Every year on March 8, people around the world celebrate International Women's Day—a global occasion that recognises the achievements of women while also highlighting the ongoing struggle for gender equality. It is both a celebration and a call to action, reminding societies of the progress that has been made and the work that still lies ahead.

International Women's Day began in the early twentieth century when women in many countries were campaigning for better working conditions, voting rights, and equal opportunities. The first National Women's Day was observed in the United States in 1909 by activists supporting labour rights and women's suffrage. Over time, the movement spread worldwide, and in 1975, the United Nations officially recognised International Women's Day.

The day is important because it draws attention to challenges women still face today. Although progress has been made in education, employment, and political representation, gender inequality continues to exist in many parts of the world. Women still experience wage gaps, fewer leadership opportunities, and barriers in certain careers.

International Women's Day also celebrates the achievements of women across many fields. Scientists, leaders, artists, teachers, entrepreneurs, and activists have all played important roles in shaping society and improving lives. Recognising these contributions inspires future generations and encourages continued progress.

Around the world, the day is marked through events, campaigns, discussions, and community activities that promote equality and recognise women's contributions. Many organisations also use the occasion to introduce initiatives that support gender equality.

International Women's Day reminds people that equality benefits everyone. By continuing to support equal rights and opportunities, societies can move closer to a future where everyone has the chance to succeed.

As the world marks March 8 each year, the message remains clear: celebrating women's achievements is important, but continuing the work toward true equality is just as essential.

BY SAFIYYA KHAN



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THE BATTLE OF THE BANDS

The concert opened with NeuroDivine's first-ever public performance, which was an extremely exciting way to start an afternoon of brilliant performances. Their first performance was 'Viva La Vida' by Coldplay, featuring Grace on the piano and Phoebe on the bass guitar, along with some beautiful harmonising. Next, their full band performed 'I See Red' by Everybody Loves An Outlaw. As someone who witnessed the band practising on Wednesday after school, I know first-hand just how much effort they all put into preparing for such an incredible performance, and it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience to be able to see how much they've managed to improve throughout band practice and all the way to Battle of the Bands.

After that, it was time for Six Blind Chickens to perform. It's always a really enjoyable experience watching Six Blind Chickens perform, as their mix of instruments and harmonious singing voices never fails to exceed expectations, and Battle of the Bands was no exception to this. The group began with a performance of 'Clocks' by Coldplay, which resulted in lots of cheering throughout the audience, especially from the year eight members of the audience. Then, they performed 'Don't Stop Believin' by Journey, which was one of the songs they performed at the Bolton battle of the bands, and it was absolutely incredible. The instruments were played to perfection, mixed with fantastic belt notes from Evie, and it was an overall fantastic execution of a brilliant song.

BY CIARA CLARKSON

The third band performing was Ches, a recently formed year seven group. They began their section of the concert with a performance of 'Lab rules', which is a science parody of the song 'New rules' by Dua Lipa. It was interesting to see a parody version of a popular song performed as part of a concert, and that was something I'm pretty sure has never really happened during any musical showcase at Sharples. Their second performance was 'The Village' by Wrabel, and they managed to perfectly capture the eerie and haunting melody of the song.

Then, it was time for Stave & Close to perform. From my experience, Stave & Close are usually the band whose performance results in an immeasurable amount of audience excitement, and this was definitely the case during the Battle of the Bands. They began with 'Super Massive Black Hole' by Muse, and before they had even begun to play, the audience was already standing up, cheering, and waving their arms about energetically. As expected, they performed brilliantly, with many of the crowd singing along and screaming with excitement, myself included. Their next song was 'Holiday' by Green Day, which they had performed at the winter showcase, and they somehow managed to upstage themselves with this performance. The audience was jumping up and down, singing, screaming, and much more. The energy in the theatre at this point was incredible, and Stave & Close did an absolutely fantastic job during this performance.



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The penultimate band performing was On the Edge, formerly MegaKnight and the Hog-riders. For this concert, they attempted to perform two considerably difficult songs: 'Hysteria' by Muse, and 'Stacy's Mom' by Fountains of Wayne, of which the former is infamously difficult to perform. The crowd was very loud during both of their performances, several clapping, singing and cheering along, and they performed quite well overall.



The final band performing was CANTastic, which I'm part of. Despite difficulties in finding time to practice together as a band, we performed pretty well, opening our section with 'Mr Brightside' by The Killers, which was a definite crowd pleaser, considering the number of people standing up and singing along. It was genuinely lovely to see the crowd's response to our performance, and even though my microphone was dead during that song, it went very well. The final performance was 'Disturbia' by Rihanna, featuring Naomi's first performance on the drums at a showcase, which was really nice. The harmonies in Disturbia worked very well, with contrasting low and high notes between those of us singing, and yet again, the crowd was singing along, cheering and celebrating for the final performance of the afternoon.

The day ended with 6 Blind Chickens receiving 1st place, and NeuroDivine coming in 2nd place, so well done to everyone in either of those bands, as you definitely deserved the appreciation. It was a brilliant experience, and a perfect end to the term, especially with the announcement by Mr Elston of his new boy band with a group of 4 year eights (which I'm pretty sure is called '4 boys and a perm').

BY CIARA CLARKSON

JOKES COLUMN:

The past, the present, and the future walked into a classroom.

It was a little tense...

- Anonymous

What do ducks watch on tv?

Duckumentaries

- Anonymous

Why was the broom late to work?

Because it got brushed away by the wind

- Anonymous



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FINAL FUTURE HONOURS

Earlier this month marked the final session of the Future Honours programme held at the Bolton Sixth Form. As part of the Marvellous Medics strand, we were given the opportunity to take part in a hands-on practical in which we dissected a lamb's heart. Being able to observe the structure of the heart first-hand allowed us to clearly identify the chambers, valves, and major blood vessels, helping to reinforce our understanding of how the heart functions. Although it felt a little strange at first working on an organ, the experience quickly became very informative and interesting.

We were also shown the dissection of a bull's heart, which was significantly larger. This comparison highlighted how the same basic anatomical structure can vary in size between different animals, while still performing the same function. It provided a useful visual contrast and supported our learning from the practical.

In addition to this, we learned about hemispheric lateralisation, which refers to the idea that the two sides of the brain are responsible for different functions. For example, the left hemisphere is more associated with logical thinking and language, while the right is linked to creativity and spatial awareness. This topic helped us to better understand how the brain processes information.

As part of this topic, we were introduced to Alien Hand Syndrome, a rare condition where a person's hand can appear to act on its own without conscious control. This example helped to show how important communication between the two hemispheres is, and what can happen when that connection is disrupted.

Overall, the programme has been a highly valuable experience, and the final session was both educational and memorable. I have learnt a lot throughout, from practical skills to new scientific concepts, which have made the experience both interesting and rewarding. I would strongly recommend this programme to the upcoming Year 10's, as it provides a unique opportunity to learn in a hands-on and engaging way while gaining a deeper understanding of science in a way you wouldn't in lessons.

BY SAFIYYAH PATEL

DRUM ROLL PLEASE...

Last month, we once again asked you what your favourite article was. So after tallying up the score, the results are in. The favourite read last month was...

Sharples Iftar: plus a few words of wisdom - Khadija Moosa

A big well done to Khadija for writing such an amazing article. However, you may be wondering how you can get involved and cast your vote. The answer is simple: answer the Spotlight survey! We'll be sure to add your vote to our ballot!



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THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON MRS PATEL

Welcome back, readers, to the Sharples Spotlight's Teacher of the Month! This edition features a passionate, multitasking RE teacher, a teacher who is behind some of the most celebrated competitions and events in school and who loves encouraging students to grow and develop new skills - Mrs Patel!

As many of you may know, Mrs Patel actually used to be a student here herself! Mr Baldwin was her form tutor, Mr Wills taught her Business, and Mr Savage was her Head of Year in Year 11. Her RE teacher, who was Ms Webster, became a key role model and inspired her love for the subject.

After completing RE work experience and discovering how much she enjoyed it, she went on to study at Bolton Sixth Form College, then to earn her degree at Edge Hill University, in Lancashire (Near Liverpool). She returned to Sharples in 2017 and has now been teaching for almost a decade.

To Mrs Patel, Sharples feels like a second home, being a place that is constantly celebrating the community's differences through events like the Year 9 Easter Lunch and Iftaar Night, Christmas Markets, and many more. She loves making a difference to students, seeing their grades rise, and helping them understand different religions and cultures. She is also the teacher behind one of the school's most beloved events, celebrating diversity - Diversity Day. Not only does she organise these kinds of events, but every year, she organises Work Experience for around 240 Year 10 pupils - helping with emails, applications and ensuring every student has a placement.

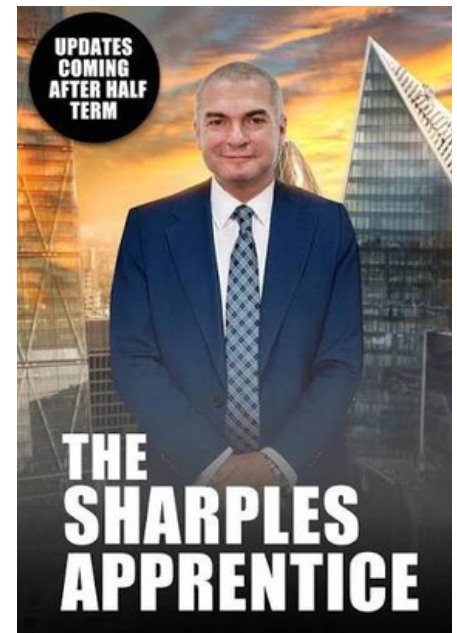
Soon, she will be launching an exciting opportunity, exclusive to year 10s - Sharples Apprentice - where Mr Savage becomes "Lord Savage," and students compete in tasks to earn his investment. Last year's winner received £100! The applications to apply to be a part of the Sharples Apprentice are open until the 30th of April!



Outside of teaching, Mrs Patel enjoys a wide range of hobbies that keep her active and creative. She loves going on long walks, shopping, and has recently taken up playing paddle with her husband. She also has a creative side: she loves doing henna and even used to run her own balloon-display business. Although she no longer runs it professionally, she still creates displays for family, friends, and Sharples, including last year's prom display, which took an entire day to make!

Overall, Mrs Patel is a beloved teacher in the RE department - she contributes so much to not just her students, but to the school and community with her excellent teaching skills, event planning, and so much more!

BY SAFIYA IBRAHIM





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LITERATURE SOCIETY- Y10

On Wednesday the 25th of March, some Year Ten students presented their final projects for the annual LitSoc challenge in the library. The theme for Year Ten's Literature Society challenge this year was Film and Literature. An intriguing but rather challenging topic to produce a creative project out of, the participants certainly did not disappoint when presenting their final work in the library.

Over the few weeks we were given, we all created our own projects that linked a piece of literature to a film. Some of the created projects included: book trailers, models of significant scenes from a book or film and artwork related to a book of the producer's choice. A rather intriguing but seemingly challenging project at first, there were a great deal of thoughtful and amazing works that came about when we presented our creations to the rest of the school.

My own project was about the Book Thief, by Marcus Zusak. My partner and I decided to create a comparison between the book and the film through a film reel containing key scenes and quotes from the book and a moodboard. Over the course of the few weeks we were given, we found it slightly challenging to incorporate such a complicated book into a creative project. However, it was extremely enjoyable and we both learnt a lot about how to improvise when you need to, like when managing your time, as well as your resources. One of the reasons we decided to use the Book Thief as the focal point of our project was because of its unique writing style and its unconventional narrative. (I highly recommend reading it)



Our efforts had certainly not gone to waste when we came second in the competition. Being the first time either of us had ever taken part in the LitSoc challenge, we were pleased to have our efforts recognised and we welcomed the final vote happily. Despite not being voted in first place, we were happy that we came into the final winners, which ensured that the work that we did put in was being appreciated and acknowledged by both the staff and the pupils.

The vote at the end of our presentation was conducted by both the participants as well as other pupils from across the school. The final winners were announced and were rewarded with treats and an upcoming trip at the end of the year, as well as another challenge of the same theme for the summer term.

Overall, it being the first time I took part in the challenge, I was amazed to see just how creative my fellow competitors were. An interesting insight into the many different interpretations of the theme provided, the effort put into everyone's work was apparent, making it much more enjoyable, as well as difficult to choose the winners.



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EASTER FAMILY MEAL

This month, the year 8s experienced something amazing: the Sharples easter family meal. It is safe to say it was lovely and everyone enjoyed it. Here is what happened:

During period 4, everyone made their way to the canteen with tables that were nicely decorated with awesome things such as Easter-themed cups and plates, colourful decorations, and easter bunny headbands and customised glasses, which made the experience more exciting. It was very clear that a lot of effort was put into this event.

The food was delightful, and some of the students in older years played a very important role and were happily helping with serving everyone and making sure everything was okay. They first came around with starters, and they served good garlic bread! It was enjoyable. Then, a bit after we ate, we had the option to choose between a cheese swirl and noodles as our main meal, and they both were very good. They were great choices to have for the meal, and they were well prepared.

After everyone had finished their lovely and delicious meals, a few people from each form had prepared a speech about all their form's achievements during their time in year 8 and confidently read it out to everyone. Their speeches were fantastic, and surely they put a lot of effort into making them. They were thoughtful and well-written.

To end the meal on a sweet note, they also gave out chocolate eggs, which were yum.

Overall, the Easter family meal was an incredible experience. It was not only about good food, but also about celebrating achievements and coming together as a community, and I'm sure the next group of year 8s will enjoy it too.

BY FATIMA ZARAH

THINKING OF TRAVELLING?

Thinking of travelling this year? Well, these year 8s have! 60 lucky students in year 8 got to go to France over the easter holidays, where they managed to do so many amazing things, and even saw the Eiffel Tower!

After months of payments, students in year 8 got to go on an 18-hour coach journey to France, with 2 hours on an amazing ferry (with an arcade in it). After arriving on Tuesday evening, students got straight to a campfire where they got to roast some yummy marshmallows and have a good night's sleep. After a day of activities, they got to go on a well-deserved Disneyland trip, where they spent 8 hours exploring and going on many rides, as well as buying various items from the gift shops and food stalls.

A day later, another amazing opportunity came when the students went sightseeing at the Eiffel Tower and even went on a cruise to see the Louvre and Notre Dame!

The adrenaline of travelling abroad without your parents was such a rush for many of the students. Yet even though we were supervised by the teachers, we all still felt free and amazed.



BY AASIYA AHMED

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MOST WANTED NOW



2025/2026



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WANTED



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