



THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

STUDENT VOICES



DECEMBER EDITION

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello to all of our Spotlight readers! I'm here to give you the December edition but as usual I have a few notices to run through before I let you go through all this edition has to offer. Firstly, a big thank you to all the Spotlight members who have put such hard work into their articles this month.

Secondly, you spoke and we listened. The favourite article last month was (drum roll please) "The Spotlight is on Mrs Baloda" by Khadija Moosa. Now if you did not know that you could have a say in this decision then I'll tell you how to make your voice heard in 3 words: the Spotlight survey! This survey is perfect for all of you opinionated readers who forever have a long list of critiques. All you simply have to do is answer the questions and tell us what you think! The survey gives us the information we need to make the Spotlight better and more interesting just for you so be sure to fill it in once you are done reading this incredible new edition!

Once again, my other notice is my calling to you for your help. I'm sure you're all sick of hearing it but wouldn't it be amazing if you could let the whole school see your writing, art or even photography skills. We need as many pupils involved as possible so don't be shy! You don't need to be the best, simply willing to learn and implement what you have been taught into the things you do. The Spotlight is somewhere you can develop so be sure to come to one of our meetings in T2 on a Thursday or send me an email at 22mangeraa@sharplesschool.co.uk

Finally, I hope that you all enjoy this edition of the Spotlight and the holiday ahead of us! Be sure to take that well deserved rest and enjoy binge watching all the Christmas TV like your life depends on it. However, more than anything I hope that all the students doing their GCSEs enjoy the hidden Christmas Carol quote!

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Spotlight and take in everything it has to offer! (Don't forget the survey!)

BY AMAARA MANGERA - EDITIOR



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CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Ho, Ho, Ho! Merry Christmas readers! Well, not quite Christmas yet, but we have already celebrated our 2nd annual Christmas market! For one evening every year Sharples school opens its doors to the public to spread festivities and cheer to all of Astley Bridge and beyond and once again this year I was there to report on everything going on.

Where should I even begin? There was so much going on from Period 5 when the elves began to help set up and take their stations to 7pm when the doors finally closed. I should probably start from the beginning and technically that was not Period 5, no, in fact it was weeks in advance. It's hard to see the bigger picture sometimes and how much work goes into the preparation to create such an electric atmosphere and to ensure everything runs smoothly. From PTA meetings, Interact meetings, Student Affairs, handing out leaflets in the community (after doing that I have major respect for all postmen, my knuckles may never be the same again), ordering all the items and collecting volunteers, it is a hefty job. So I think it's important today to extend a huge thanks to all



the teachers, students and parents who worked so hard to create a magical night for everyone involved, but of course the largest of thanks must go to Miss Curzon for being an absolute superwoman and coordinating so much of it. Her office in the run up was like walking into a convenience shop and she devoted so much of her time and energy for the second year in a row.

So what was actually going on? Well, the Christmas market isn't just about festivities, it's also about raising money for a number of departments, projects and equipment for the school.

As usual the Art department was selling art supplies to raise money for more art supplies. Art is an expensive subject! I bought a notepad and colouring pencils for my collection for only £3! This was an absolute bargain for me but it was clear my mum did not think I needed any more art supplies.

In Food Tech, it was cakes galore with cupcakes, carrot cake and chocolate cake. On top of this there was hot chocolate, meringue, rocky road, fudge and so much more delicious looking goods. Being the greedy girl I am, I could not resist the temptation to buy a slice of chocolate cake, which I did not hesitate to eat straight away. Of course, I am also a fantastic daughter, so I took a slice of carrot cake home for my parents, which my dad devoured all by himself. Sorry Mum! Everyone in the Food kitchens aced it. Here I asked Mrs Brown what her favourite item was being sold in the kitchens and she said she loved the carrot cake and the Christmas decor.

Geography was selling 'Reindeer food' for the little children to take home and use to lure the reindeers to their home and force Santa to come with gifts too! I will say somebody popped a packet and got glitter all over me, not saying any names, but know that I am still not happy.



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Ms Bhaloda made an epic return with her crepe making skills and let me tell you that crepe was divine. She even managed to get me some whipped cream as an added touch. This money will likely be used to fund the epic but ridiculously expensive, yearly Language trips.

Miss Amdavadi and Miss Patel were running a stall selling pick 'n' mix and candy canes to raise money for the English department and of course the Reading budget.



The choir graced us with their presence again this year led by Miss Keegan and Mrs Brooke. Their wonderful voices twisted a little bit of extra magic through the air and put a smile on everyone's faces. I asked Ciara Clarkson, one of the choir members, what her favourite song to perform was and she said the iconic 'Last Christmas' by Mariah Carey.

Other stalls included mehndi (henna), crotchet by Grace Bonner, stationery, tuck shop, raffle, tombola and so much more. I got my mehndi and the Y10 girls were doing a brilliant job and I was very happy with the results especially considering the cheap price. On top of that I bought a packet of Wotsits from the tuck shop.

We of course should also acknowledge the community stalls which made a return once again this year. Starting off with 'Tash's custom engravings' they were selling beautiful wooden decorations, key chains and other sentimental pieces. They can be found on their Facebook shop if you're interested in buying something from them. Secondly 'Little Leopard coffee shop' was once again a major hit among the adults. They sold a variety of flavours of mocha, hot chocolate and other coffees. It looked so mouth-wateringly good that I was extremely tempted to buy one but considering I'm not a fan of coffee or hot chocolate I forced myself to stay out of the long queue.

GG's boutique was selling a range of fashionable clothing and accessories. Although none of it seemed to appeal to the teenagers I'm sure it attracted attention from the staff. Last year, Mrs Molyneux purchased a lot of gifts from there so I wonder if she did the same this year. They are located in Astley Bridge close to ASDA so if you're interested go check them out.

Well, it's been a long one from me this month but I hope you enjoyed it. The last thing I have to say is a very Merry Christmas from the whole Spotlight team and for those of you, who aren't celebrating, simply enjoy a well-deserved break!





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THE SPOTLIGHT (Through popular request) is on MR FOWLDS!

This month, the Spotlight team decided to interview Mr Fowlds as teacher of the month. Now the beloved Science teacher, running enthusiast and Nottingham Forest fan has been teaching at Sharples since 2020, but let's see what led him on this journey to Sharples in the first place...

Now, as a child, Mr Fowlds said that he had two main ambitions in life: becoming an athlete, which he later called a "faded dream" due to his "lack of athleticism", or a dentist because he once heard that they "earned good money". If I'm going to be honest, I'd say that the job of an athlete is still up for grabs considering how much running he does, because in his words "if you're not runnin', you're only getting slower.". Mr Fowlds did mention that a maths teacher inspired him as a child ; this maths teacher could also multiply any 2 two-digit numbers at the snap of his fingers.

After studying in Liverpool University, Mr Fowlds moved to mainland Europe for 4 years. Apparently, he got into teaching "accidentally": he took an available position and surprisingly enough, he ended up really liking it. He was an English Foreign Language teacher until he moved back to the UK to start teacher training and he never looked back. Whilst originally from Nottinghamshire (a county just East of Greater Manchester in the East Midlands), Mr Fowlds apparently interviewed here sometime around 2020, and was "really impressed" with the students and faculty here at Sharples School, and he's been here ever since.

Mr Fowlds is mainly a Chemistry teacher, and his interest in chemistry stems from the fact that "the rules of chemistry don't change." If you follow the set rules, you're bound to get a valid solution, which results in satisfying problem solving. Mr Fowlds also runs a 'Chemistry Clinic' for Year 11s on Thursday lunchtimes. He says that he opened it to "give an opportunity to students for one-on-one lesson time". Students get to choose the topics that they learn, relearn and/or revise and Mr Fowlds described the Chemistry Clinic's purpose as "extending knowledge beyond the classroom.". Outside of chemistry, Mr Fowlds, initially, says that all he does is "run and run and run", but he does enjoy playing cricket, watching films (especially in the 'Whodunit' genre) and reading. His favourite book is "Sapiens: A brief history of humankind" by Yuval Noah. Now, when asked what he would have if he could have anything, his initial response was "World Peace," which he realised wasn't a physical thing you could exactly buy, so he changed it to an indoor running track. This was, naturally, met with the option of buying a treadmill instead, but his response was that he "wants to move and not just stay in one place," which is a specific but probably common sentiment for runners everywhere.

All in all, Mr Fowlds has been a great teacher to many here at Sharples in his 6 years of being here, and we all hope that his contributions will only grow as time goes on. It's also very important to remember that teachers have lives outside the poster-filled walls of the classroom.

BY IDRIS ORIOLA



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DIVERSITY DAY

On Friday 28th November, Sharples School was alive with colour, music and conversation as students and staff came together to celebrate Diversity Day, an event dedicated to recognising, respecting and enjoying the many cultures, identities and experiences that make up the school community. The day was not only a celebration, but a means of learning, exploring and reflecting other cultures in a meaningful way.

From the moment students arrived at school, the plain and boring school surroundings were transformed into a flurry of unimaginable colour and wonder. Many pupils arrived dressed in traditional clothing that represented their heritage, instantly filling the school with vibrant colours, patterns and textures. Flowing saris and salwar kameez adorned with intricate embroidery sat alongside elegant African dashikis and headwraps in bold prints. Other students wore East Asian traditional dress, including beautifully detailed cheongsams and kimonos, while some proudly represented European cultures through folk dresses, kilts and embroidered blouses. Several students also chose to wear clothing linked to religious traditions, such as hijabs, abayas and other modest dress, helping to highlight the importance of faith as part of cultural identity. The variety of dress created a powerful visual reminder of the diversity within the Sharples School community.



Throughout the school day, many additional and exciting activities were added into normal lessons to ensure pupils, especially in years 7 to 9, were fully engaged in learning and respecting cultures from around the world. The school halls were filled with laughter and happiness, but perhaps the most stimulating part of Diversity Day were the stalls themselves, of which many were run by students in both the New Block, for Y7 and Y10, and the theatre for the other years.

Some stalls offered tastings of traditional foods, allowing visitors to experience different cultures through flavour, while others featured games, quizzes and crafts inspired by countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.



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Some stalls offered tastings of traditional foods, allowing visitors to experience different cultures through flavour, while others featured games, quizzes and crafts inspired by countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. These stalls not only reflected creativity and effort, but also encouraged confidence as students spoke passionately about their roots and traditions. In addition, Mrs Smith and a few other pupils were selling pre-owned books, reminding students of the importance of reading at Sharples.

What made Diversity Day particularly special was the sense of collaboration. Students and teachers worked side by side, learning from one another and sharing responsibilities. This partnership helped to create a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere where questions were encouraged and curiosity was celebrated. Throughout the day, the school buzzed with excitement: music and conversation filled the air as students moved between stalls, collecting tasters of cultural food, sweet treats or small handmade items. More importantly, they left with a greater understanding of each other and a stronger appreciation for differences.



Furthermore, all of the money raised on Diversity Day was used for an even greater purpose; the money was donated to Oxfam, a British-founded confederation aimed at alleviating global poverty and supporting families in tough situations, its main aims of support being to the Gaza strip, Sudan and Bangladesh currently. This idea of a charitable donation further encouraged students to partake and spend money on the stalls.

Diversity Day at Sharples School was a powerful reminder that diversity is not just something to acknowledge, but something to celebrate. By giving students and teachers a platform to share their stories, knowledge and creativity, the event reinforced the school's commitment to inclusion and respect. It was a day that many will remember- not just for its colour and energy, but for the sense of unity it created within the school community. We look forward to celebrating Diversity Day next year and seeing what other amazing ideas will thrive.

BY AAMEINA MAROTHI

DEBATE EVENING: FUTURE HONOURS PROGRAMME

Earlier this month, the Future Honours programme evening was held for Year 10 students from across Bolton at The Bolton Sixth Form. One of the highlights of the programme was a debate evening, where students from different schools came together to learn how to express ideas clearly, listen to others, and argue in a respectful manner.

During the debate evening, we learnt several key debating skills. One important skill was public speaking, which helped us gain confidence in front of an audience. This can especially be useful in real life because it prepares us for presentations, interviews, and speaking up in class or future workplaces.



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Another skill we learned was critical thinking. We were encouraged to analyse topics carefully, consider different viewpoints based off our own opinions, and support our arguments with evidence. Through this, we are able to make decisions, understand the news and media without being drawn into propaganda, and solve problems logically.

We also developed a very important skill when it comes to debate, which is listening attentively to others. Debate isn't only about speaking and getting your point across to the audience but it is also about understanding others opinions and contradictions. This is essential in everyday life, especially when working in teams, resolving disagreements, or communicating effectively with others.

Finally, we practiced teamwork and respect, learning how to disagree politely and work together to build strong arguments. These skills are valuable especially when it comes to working in groups and future careers.

BY SAFIYYAH PATEL

FORT ALICE: WHAT IS IT?

Fort Alice is a wonderful company that does amazing charitable work for those in need. 8 Year 10 students went to the trip and we were accompanied by Ms Edwards-Edge the year 10 coordinator.

They hosted a great event where domestic abuse was explained and elaborated very well. We had a guest speaker come in and speak about her daughter Holly who was a victim of domestic abuse, and unfortunately passed away. Then we had another speaker (Emily) come and speak about her personal experience, and how she dealt with it. There was also a workshop about self defense which was very educational, where we learnt how to protect ourselves if we ever needed it!

Another workshop we did was about incel. incel is "involuntary celibacy" a term used by primarily men who often blame women and society for their situation. they usually indulge in sexism and misogyny. An activity many of us enjoyed was to make an art design based on the word empowerment. After that we did an activity where we were educated on situations that can become unsafe and how to prevent it.



BY BHAVIKA MUTTRA AND EMILIE-ROSE HASLAM



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Students A Christmas quiet? trip miracle!

On Monday the 15th of December, Y7's went on a well-deserved trip to cineworld. Even though it was quite a long trek, it was definitely worth it! It was a riveting experience as we watched the sequel to Zootopia 1, ZOOTOPIA 2!

Most Year 7's found that they enjoyed this movie even more than the first one!

On average the students rated this movie a 5/5! And although most of them haven't yet said it, you could tell that even the teachers were intrigued in this incredible movie!

Here are some of the Y7 students' thoughts-

"I enjoyed this " This was one of my favourite movies because it had a happy ending." the plot twists!"

-Maryam Patel 7S1 -Amilah Musa 7S1

Recently, year 8 pupils went on a trip to see Bad Guys 2 in the cinema - cineworld. When we arrived at the cinema, we found our seats and were excited to have a fun day with friends. Just before the movie began, the students took their snacks and drinks out - ready for the film to start.

Soon after, while we were in the cinemas, the trip took an unexpected turn, and we found ourselves watching Zootropolis 2. Suspense, excitement and laughter filled the room. Pupils enjoyed spending time with their friends, eating snacks and even missing lessons.

Everyone was engaged with the movie and even laughing at the funny scenes. On the journey back, everyone was talking about their favorite scenes from the film, how much fun they had and how it left us on the edge of our seats.

JOKES COLUMN:

What kind of tea is hard to swallow?

Reality

- Anonymous

What does a foot call when his car breaks down?

A toe truck

- Anonymous

I would tell you a construction joke

but I'm still working on it.

-Maryam Asmail 7P4

What do you call a blind dinosaur?

A do-you-think-he-saurus

- Anonymous

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Purple tie admissions 2025

Having the new school year starting in September, we are delighted to announce that we are looking for new additions to the Student Affairs Committee for years 7-10 (having Y7 applications and interviews already complete). Each applicant will need to fill out a Google form and, if lucky - be invited to an interview hosted by Miss Curzon and some of the purple ties for the chance to be accepted and given your purple tie and badge in assembly!

So why should YOU join the SAC?

Joining the student affairs committee is an amazing way to get involved in school life, and it's an amazing opportunity to meet new people and even make new friends! It helps you develop leadership skills and communication skills, and you can even share ideas that can improve your student experience. Being part of the SAC will also look good on things such as a CV or will even help with college applications. It also gives you a chance to contribute to decisions that will affect your future at the school. To sum it up, it's a rewarding way to grow personally and help your school community!

We really hope for the best for all applicants! Good luck and if you don't get accepted - it's nothing to worry about! There will always be another chance next year!



BY ASNA PATEL & AASIYA AHMED

Christmas: "God bless us, every one!"

Christmas is one of the most celebrated holidays around the world. It occurs on December 25th each year and is a time when people come together to share joy, kindness, and generosity. While Christmas has religious roots, many people also enjoy it as a cultural celebration that helps families and communities connect.

Originally, Christmas was seen to honor the birth of Jesus Christ, making it significant for Christians. During this time, many people attend church services to remind themselves of the holiday's meaning. However, Christmas has developed numerous traditions enjoyed by people from various backgrounds. These include decorating Christmas trees, exchanging gifts, and sending cards to friends and family.

One of the most important aspects of Christmas is spending time with loved ones. Families often gather to share meals and enjoy each other's company. For many, Christmas is not just about receiving gifts but about creating memories and remembering the birth of Jesus.

Another key message of Christmas is kindness. During this season, many people try to help those in need by donating to charities or volunteering. These acts of kindness help spread the real spirit of Christmas and remind people to care for one another.

In conclusion, Christmas is a special time of year that carries both religious and cultural significance. It encourages people to be kind, grateful, and caring. By bringing families together and promoting goodwill, Christmas remains a meaningful and cherished celebration for people of all ages.

BY MARYAM MUNSHI



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MELLORS- CANTEEN UPDATES



A green “Suggestions for Mellors” box, reflecting the company’s colours, has been placed next to the double doors leading to the area near the Inclusion Room and theatre. This allows everyone to provide written feedback on any aspect of the catering, from the taste and quality of the food to ideas for new menu items. The focus is particularly on the dinner period, when suggestions about meals, portion sizes, and nutritional balance are especially valuable. In addition to the physical box, an online feedback form has been created, giving students and staff the option to submit comments digitally. All feedback will be carefully reviewed and considered to improve the meals in the canteen and ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

While Mellors provides a high standard of catering, the Student Affairs Committee highlighted during the meeting a number of issues including that portion sizes could be increased to better supply the necessary nutrients to students and that the current offerings do not yet provide sufficient variety to meet all dietary needs. Make sure to check out the green suggestions box or submit your ideas through the online form. Your thoughts and suggestions really matter and will help shape the meals served to everyone at Sharples.

BY AMAAN YOUNAS, ISA AHMED AND M. ZAYAAN AMIN

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT OF THE YEAR: SPOTIFY WRAPPED!

Recently, the annual review of Spotify statistics per person was released (Aka Spotify wrapped). Spotify wrapped is an accumulation of all your yearly data from listening to Music, Podcasts and audiobooks on Spotify. It includes lists of your :top music artists, top songs, top albums, minutes listened in total, minutes listened to your top artist, percentage of listeners of your top artist that you were in and your listening age, as well as specifying the amount of genres/artists/albums/podcasts you listened to. One exciting feature of Spotify Wrapped is that it lets you receive a message from one of your top music artists, which is a wholesome way to show appreciation for all the time you spent listening to them! These statistics are measured through the analysis of your listening between January to Mid November, then compiling lists and averages based on your music choices in comparison to others. You can also discover which songs were your overall most listened to, Via a playlist which lists your top 100 songs, and how many times you have listened to each of those 100 songs.

Spotify wrapped can be a fun way to break down your music listening statistics for the year. For example each user receives information about different days where they listened to music such as most listened to day and most



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listened to for a particular artist or even just a mix of artists. Firstly the most listened to artist this year was Bad Bunny with over 19.8 billion streams and his album DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOToS also reached the number one spot for most listened to album.

Taylor Swift was the 2nd most listened to artist. However, her newest album which came out on October 3rd, surpassing the record for album with most presaves ever did not reach the top 5 albums. Instead these were given to The Kpop demonhunters soundtrack - a very popular movie during the summer where it was widely watched and praised online- HIT ME HARD AND SOFT by Billie Eilish, featuring many popular tracks most namely, BIRDS OF A FEATHER and LUNCH but also WILDFLOWER and THE GREATEST. In 4th place with her album SOS Deluxe:Lana was SZA who has been seen as a very popular and influential artist throughout 2025. Finally in 5th place with her incredible album Short and sweet was Sabrina Carpenter as the very fun loving pop star was incredibly popular this year as her short and sweet tour recently came to its end. There have been so many artists this year influencing and changing our world, but there can only be a few songs to reach the top 5. Unsurprisingly Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars held the top spot with their hit 'Die with a smile' released in late 2024. In the UK the most popular song was Alex Warren's Ordinary and 2 of the top 10 were taken up by Chappel Roan who was a very popular artist with her album Rise and fall of a Midwest Princess released in 2024. Spotify wrapped is such a brilliant way to review your year through the music you listened to and I really hope that everyone who listened was pleased with their results and maybe some even got in the top percentage of their favourite artists but I'm sure whatever people got they can't wait to get next years.

BY NAOMI AND CIARA CLARKSON

FOR WHAT MUST BE THE 100TH TIME THIS YEAR: WE WON

Recently, our school was presented with the annual UK Literacy School of the Year award and we were visited by the judges, who spoke to a number of pupils and visited the newly decorated library.

The UK Literacy Association is an organisation which aims to encourage the development of literacy skills in all individuals and to provide people with the means to value reading, language and communication. Towards the end of last academic year, a group of judges came to our school and observed how we integrate reading into all areas of our learning, guided by pupils from our school.

Reading ambassadors and members of the Sharples Spotlight were invited to participate in the celebrations, with the opportunity to speak to the members of the UKLA and talk about the many different ways that reading is taught to be a vital part of our lives. They also spoke about the different opportunities provided by our school in many different areas, as well as the diverse range of roles many pupils have. Year Ten students were able to watch the award being presented to our English teachers and they also watched a video showcasing many of the achievements obtained by pupils and the English department. Literature is a very big part of Sharples and this was clearly evident in the presentation, where our teachers received their well deserved trophy.

BY FATIMA ISMAIL



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From Classroom to Courtroom

On Wednesday 26th November, pupils from Year Nine and Year Ten had attended the annual Mock trial trip, which was organised by Miss Hassan and Miss Kirk. Pupils were encouraged to apply for roles in the courtroom like barristers, witnesses and even a Judge. After many weeks of preparing and rehearsing, we attended Bolton Coroners Court to perform a trial that was based on a real incident, which was regarding knife crime within young people.

After a final rehearsal on the day, we set off for the courtroom, which is in the town centre. Upon arrival, we met Mr Timothy Brennand, who is the Senior Coroner for Bolton. We were able to learn what his role involves and the different areas of law that we can get involved in. We asked questions about what it is like to pursue a career in law and what it is like to work in a courtroom.

We had to maintain the rules of courtroom conduct and we learned about how to carry out a real court case, as well as addressing some of the common misconceptions about what it's really like in a courtroom. As part of the experience, we were able to get into character for our roles, with the judge having to dress up with a traditional gown and wig, along with the barristers. Throughout the trial, we had to practice our public speaking skills and our communication as we each had an important role to play in the experience. There were many different roles involved, such as the Judge, the prosecution, the defence, the usher and the clerk. We all stepped into these roles and carried out a live trial, which included questioning witnesses and evidence being put forward either for or against our defendant.



in the end, the members of the jury had to decide the verdict, where the defendant's guilt or innocence is declared, based on the discretion of the jury. If the defendant is declared guilty, then the judge would have to determine the sentence or the penalty that the defendant would have to face. If the verdict is not guilty, then any charges against the defendant would be dropped and they would be free to leave the court. In our trial, the defendant was declared guilty and the judge declared a sentence of 27 years.

Thank you to Miss Hassan and Miss Kirk for organising this experience, as it was very enjoyable and informative, as it opened our eyes to what a career in law could look like. As somebody who attended the trip, I would highly recommend it as we had a great time and learnt a lot as part of the experience.

BY FATIMA ISMAIL