



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

STUDENT VOICES



**ARTISTS:**  
MYESHA CHOUDHURY

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

**JUNE AND JULY EDITION**

**EDITOR: KHADIJA MOOSA**  
**CO-EDITOR: AALIYAH ISSAK**

**WRITERS: SAFIYYAH PATEL**  
FATIMA ISMAIL  
IDRIS ORIOLA  
NABIHA FAHAD  
UMAYMAH PATEL  
MAARIYAH MATADAR  
SAFIYA IBRAHIM



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

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Hello Readers! Welcome to the June And July (end of term) edition of the Sharples Spotlight, another brilliant compilation of articles for your enjoyment!

Before I let you go and read, I'd also like to appeal to you all to join our brilliant team. We are in huge need of writers so if you or someone you know is interested I urge you to contact me at [23moosak@sharplesschool.co.uk](mailto:23moosak@sharplesschool.co.uk). This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your creativity, improve your skills and it looks great on Gold Tie and college applications in the future. We love seeing new passion and interests expressed every month. Articles can even be submitted anonymously for those of you who prefer to play your role in the background. We meet every Thursday in T2, so get yourself down, we can't wait to see you there! Who knows, perhaps you could be in my position next year. Next month, we will be combining the June and July editions, so we'll need lots of writers to help document the busy last half term. All work can also be submitted to me by email, we love to see 'one-off-articles' from outside of the team. This opportunity is for everyone, whether you enjoy writing or not. This could be the perfect opportunity for you next year. If you're going into Year 10 it's time to start thinking about Gold Ties.

The end of the school year is very close, so I figure this is the time to extend my thanks for all their dedication to my brilliant team of writers, artists and photographers who show up eagerly every week and produce quality writing for your enjoyment. My Star Writer this year is 'Aasiya Ahmed' who consistently shows up and always produces good quality content even if she rarely meets the deadline :-)

We have a brilliant range of articles for you this month from a review all the way to our crowd favourite Teacher of the Month. Our writers have worked incredibly hard all year to provide you with the best quality content. Your favourite article from last month can be found on page 12.

It's also important to thank all of our readers, you are instrumental in the success of the Spotlight and we love hearing from you. Don't forget to fill out our feedback survey so we know exactly what you want to see from us. Speaking of feedback, the result for your favourite May article is on page , make sure to submit your votes for this month quickly.

Finally, enjoy your well needed break, and I'm excited to see what we all achieve next year.

See you next year! Happy Reading!

*BY KHADIJA MOOSA - EDITOR*



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## FIFA WORLD CUP 2026

### Everything you should know!

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the FIFA World Cup is being held in The United States, Mexico and Canada for the 23rd edition of the tournament. Here's everything you need to know about the tournament.

First, this tournament is the first to house 48 teams, instead of 32, numbers we will reportedly be seeing for all world cups going forward (if all goes according to FIFA's plan). Due to there being 48 teams, there's now 12 groups instead of 8, which means that there's now an additional round of 32 within the knockouts.



The knockout rounds means that if a team loses a match, then they're officially out of the tournament, whether that be in open play or penalties. Teams that have been knocked out of the group stages, due to either finishing last in their group or not being a good enough third place nation, include but are not limited to: South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Haiti, Curaçao, Turkey and Scotland (amongst others).

Whilst the tournament is being held in three different countries, I feel as if it is important to note that  $\approx 69\%$  of the stadiums that games will be played in are in the United States, having 11/16 of the total cities, whilst Mexico and Canada have 3 and 2 cities respectively. Whilst there have been criticisms of the United States seemingly hoarding most of the games, a more valid criticism is where the final is being played, the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

You can't walk to the World Cup Final. Yes, you read that correctly, the MetLife Stadium makes it impossible to walk to, due to the lack of pedestrian infrastructure. Richest country in the world and they can't even provide an authentic World Cup Final experience...



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But enough of my ranting about the tournament, let's have a look at **potential contenders**:

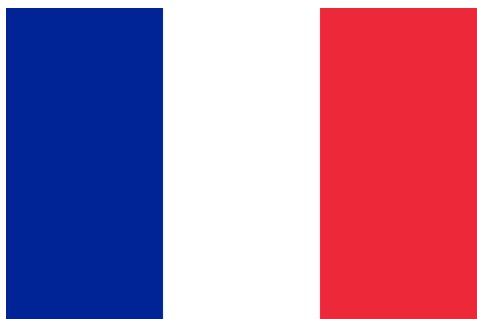
**Argentina** - After winning the 2022 edition in Qatar, Argentina have consistently proved critics wrong, mainly with the help of the 8x Ballon D'or winner Lionel Messi. They haven't lost a game since September 2025 and are looking to win back-to-back World Cups this year.



**Brazil** - Despite their last win being 24 years ago in 2002, Brazil have been looking more consistent in recent years, their last loss being a 2-1 loss to France in a March friendly this year. Due to having stars on their team like Raphinha and Vinicius Júnior, Brazil will be looking to finally add a sixth World Cup, as they're currently the country with the most world cups with five.



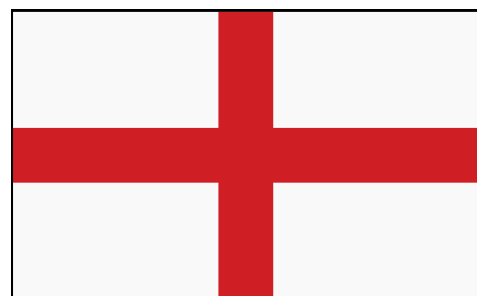
**France** - France are, in my opinion, the most consistently good team in world football currently. They've made back to back finals in 2018 and 2022, beating Croatia 4-2 in the final to win it in 2018, and they haven't had a competitive loss since the Nations League Semi Finals, in which they lost 5-4 to Spain. France are currently unbeaten in the tournament, having won all three of their games in the group stages, whilst scoring 10 goals over three matches and only conceding 2.



**Spain** - The last Spain match I watched was the Round of 16 match against Morocco in 2022, in which they had possession of the ball 77% of the match, nearly had 1000 passes, practiced 1000 penalties before the match, tied the game 0-0 and then proceeded to lose on penalties to Morocco, crashing out of the tournament in ironic fashion. Since then, however, Spain haven't lost a match since 2024, losing 1-0 to Colombia in a friendly in 2024. They also beat England in the final of the Euros in that year, much to the dismay of many reading, I presume. And now with new stars rising like Lamine Yamal, Spain have quite a good chance of at least going far, and their games will likely be exciting to watch.



**England** - It was with extreme reluctance that I put England here, but it's better than lying to you all and saying that Portugal are contenders for the World Cup. Now England's squad is *okay* to say the least. The fact that the squad list keeps getting leaked on Twitter isn't a big help. They did quite well in the group stages, admittedly, but did draw against Ghana 0-0 which is time I will never get back. They do have the potential to go far if they play their cards right.





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Now, whilst this World Cup is sure to be a memorable one, there are a few things tainting its reputation, e.g. the hydration breaks only being present due to advertisements, the seemingly random deportation of foreign referees, the United States being generally cruel to the Iran's Men's team, amongst many other things. Now, I'm going to be crystal clear when I say this, you're still allowed to enjoy the World Cup, these issues don't overshadow the passion and high-stakes that the World Cup brings. However, they are important to note because if we were to stay silent on these issues, nobody would be held accountable.

Well that's enough from me, I pray for an interesting watching experience for everyone reading. All I can say is that I, personally, have France down to win the World Cup this year, but that's just me. Enjoy the tournament!

**Editor's update:** France lost to Spain 2:0 in the semi-finals and England have sadly exited to Argentina in a gruelling game meaning the finals on Sunday will be Spain vs Argentina.

BY IDRIS ORIOLA

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## PHYSICS OLYMPICS CHAMPIONS 2026

A few days ago, I was given the opportunity to attend the Physics Olympics at Bolton School with seven other Sharples students. Throughout the day, we took part in a variety of physics challenges that tested our teamwork, problem-solving skills, and creativity.

At first, I wasn't sure how well our team was doing, and with so many schools competing, I honestly thought we wouldn't be very successful. I enjoyed all of the activities but my favourite challenge was the Delayed Timing, where we set up a ramp with obstacles to get the slowest time possible when the ball rolled down the ramp, and even though we didn't achieve a great result, it was very fun! The competition was difficult, so I was feeling nervous when it was time to reveal the winners. However, when the results were announced, my teammates and I were exhilarated to find out that we had achieved 2nd place overall! We had also won 1st place in the Sink or Swim challenge, which I was excited about because I knew we had the best solution. The other Sharples team came 1st overall, which meant double victory for Sharples! They came 3rd in the Rainbow Babies challenge, 1st in the Tall Towers Challenge, and 1st in the Fermi Quiz. Our school secured both 1st and 2nd place out of more than 20 competing teams. It was an unforgettable experience, and I am very proud of both my team and everyone who represented Sharples.

A huge thank you to my teammates, Aisha, Arfa and Aysha G, whose creative ideas and teamwork helped us achieve second place. And on the other team Caleb, James, Reem and Khadija. And of course a huge thanks to Mrs Melmoth and Mrs Booth for making the trip a possibility and being the best cheerleaders.

BY NABIHA FAHAD





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## SPORTS DAY 2026

This year's Sports Day brought sunshine, excitement and plenty of school spirit as students took part in the annual Inter-Form football and netball competitions. With temperatures soaring to 32 degrees, players showed determination and resilience, giving their all despite the challenging heat. The competition has been intense, and with the finals taking place this week, everyone is eagerly waiting to see which forms will come out on top.

Away from the pitches, there was plenty to enjoy. A DJ kept the atmosphere lively throughout the day, while the ice cream van proved to be a popular stop for students looking to cool down. The inflatables also provided a fun way to relax between matches, creating an enjoyable atmosphere for both competitors and spectators.

The day was filled with memorable moments, from impressive teamwork and brilliant goals to enthusiastic support from the sidelines. Every form showed great sportsmanship, encouraging one another and celebrating each other's successes.

The cheers from classmates created an uplifting atmosphere that kept spirits high throughout the event.

Although the hot weather certainly tested everyone's endurance, it didn't stop students from making the most of the day. Many took the opportunity to spend time with friends, enjoy the entertainment and create lasting memories outside the classroom. It was an amazing chance to relax, have fun and appreciate the sense of community that makes our school special.

Whether students were representing their form on the pitch or supporting from the sidelines, Sports Day was a fantastic opportunity to come together, show teamwork and celebrate school spirit. We wish all the finalists the very best of luck and look forward to seeing who will be crowned this year's Inter-Form champions.

**BY SAFIYYAH PATEL**

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## BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH: A REVIEW

For this year's end-of-year rewards trip, pupils were offered five possible choices: Trafford Centre, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Hollywood Bowl (Years 7–8 only), Jumbles, and Ninja Warrior. We chose Blackpool Pleasure Beach, and therefore this month's article focuses on our experience there. The visit took place on Monday 13th and provided a full day of varied attractions, unpredictable moments, and memorable experiences.



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## Aviktas: Operational Difficulties

The newest addition to the park, Aviktas, attracted considerable attention due to its modern design and recent opening. However, it experienced repeated operational issues throughout the day.

The queue reached over three hours, and progress was frequently halted due to technical delays. Several announcements informed guests that the ride was temporarily closed because of malfunctions, causing uncertainty and frustration among those waiting. The heat made the long wait feel even more challenging, as the queue was densely packed and moved extremely slow. Although the ride appeared visually impressive and had generated significant anticipation, its reliability problems overshadowed the excitement.

Many visitors chose to leave the queue after multiple stoppages, and the overall experience was defined more by waiting than by the ride itself. However, this ride stands top of our lists for the scary thrills created when hanging upside down mid air, others would call it 'mid'. Despite the challenges presented by Aviktas, the visit to Blackpool Pleasure Beach offered a memorable and engaging end-of-year experience. The combination of classic attractions, modern rollercoasters, and coastal surroundings created a lively and enjoyable atmosphere. The park's reliable rides ensured that everyone experienced a full and active day, while the unpredictable moments added to the uniqueness of the trip. Overall, the visit provided a mixture of enjoyment, shared experiences, and lasting memories that will be remembered well beyond the end of the school year.



**BY MAARIYAH MATADAR AND UMAYMAH PATEL**





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## YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK

At 9 am on Thursday 4th June 50 year 9's set off to Yorkshire to visit the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Once we arrived we were met with a vast expanse of scenic English countryside, and we were able to catch a glimpse of the eye-catching sculptures. The first work of art we saw was the walk of art two, a walkway of tiles with names of YSP supporters, pampered pets and even individual customers, all etched into metal plates as part of a display planned to feature a staggering 10,000 names over an estimated 200-300 plates.

The park wasn't sectioned off from the animals and was an open field where mainly sheep roamed free, posing some unpleasant drawbacks to the trip, however we also sighted geese, rabbits and even caught a glimpse of a deer. We sighted multiple abstract sculptures including the colorful Muamba Posy sculpture, the alarming virgin mother statue, the thought provoking charity statue, and the ironically boring, plain and unhumorous haha bridge!

We then took a scenic walk around the lake and found ourselves in the peaceful meadows and flower gardens where we stopped for lunch, then took pictures and admired the view, along with viewing some other sculptures like a brick house and mini construction wall, a purse where we posed for a group photo, and also a rabbit perhaps inspired by Alice and wonderland. This bit was personally my favourite as it was so relaxing and peaceful! Then after a quick ice cream break the trip was over and it was time to head home.

ANONYMOUS





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## DUKE OF EDINBURGH

2 days and 1 night. Backpack- check. Waterproofs- check. Water bottle- check. Laces fastened- check. Spirits still high- check. This was how we all started at the beginning of our DofE Bronze expedition. After multiple training and planning sessions we thought we were prepared. Little did we realise how difficult the journey would be. Okay, maybe that was a little bit dramatic... Disclaimer: this is a recap of my DofE experience and does not necessarily reflect wider views.

On the morning of our expedition we arrived and met with our groups. We did last minute checks and tried to adjust to the weight on our backs. We set off from a carpark in Rivington, and honestly after only 10 minutes of walking I was beginning to wonder how we'd ever make it to the campsite and back home.

Throughout the day, we puzzled over our maps and trekked resiliently through a range of terrains. I'm proud to say on Day One my group only got confused once in the middle of the forest with lots of small winding paths that felt impossible to navigate. At that point we felt so lost that we rang Mr Davies however he reassured us that we weren't actually that far off. Our spirits were still somehow high. We forced ourselves to smile through the pain and remain as positive as possible.

As we approached the campsite we were hit with relief and flooded with excitement. We dropped our backpacks as fast as we could and plopped down on the grass. We built our tents and then spent time as a team cooking on our stoves and enjoying a much needed warm meal. Throughout the evening, there were games of football and volleyball, students running around and everyone's favourite part- toasting marshmallows. All credit belongs to Mr McCann and his brilliant fire building skills. We had great fun standing around trying not to burn our hands and watching Mr McCann show off his skills.



After a troubled sleep, we woke up early the next morning not even remotely well rested, had breakfast and packed our tents up. We set off, but this time our pleasure did not last. At first we felt ready and strong, an ice cream break at Fredericks gave us a boost of adrenaline and we were ready to move. However, eventually we found ourselves lost. Very, very lost. In fact we ended up on the side of a main road in Adlington. We weren't meant to be on the main road. Luckily we were rescued by a superhero, who goes by the name 'Mrs Stephenson'. She showed us where we were on the map and walked a short distance with us to make sure we remained on the track. No, we did not get picked up in the car.



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Artwork by Myesha Choudhury

This was when our moods were rapidly dropping. We were struggling to navigate a huge field with lots of complicated paths but eventually we made it out. The rest of the walk was a struggle. The day before I'd felt quite good, but I had a huge blister on day 2 and my legs were finished.

Crossing the finish line was an enormous relief and I spent the rest of my day hobbling around the house and lying in my bed.

This was a trip, which was fun, character-building and proved how strong we all are mentally.

I would recommend this trip to all of the younger years. Thank you to Mr Davies, Mrs Finney and all the teachers that made this trip possible.

BY KHADIJA MOOSA

## JOKES COLUMN

Why did the priest like swiss cheese? Because it was holey. -Umar Dharma 8P1

What kind of award do dentists hate to receive?  
A plaque

What musical instrument would you find in a bathroom - A tuba  
toothpaste- Mrs Booth

Why did the escalator going up never want to touch the other escalator?  
The other escalator was always coming down with something.



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## TOTM- MRS FINNEY

Welcome back to this issue's edition of Teacher of the Month! The lucky teacher this month is Mrs Finney, one of our brilliant geography teachers, as well as one of the teachers who is in charge of our school's Duke of Edinburgh programme. An avid reader of Greek mythology, she has been teaching at Sharples for the past seven years, where she has certainly made her mark on the school and its students.

Miss Finney hadn't always wanted to be a teacher - her father was a lecturer but she didn't feel confident enough to teach at first. She initially wanted to be a garden designer when she was at school and she didn't go to university until she was twenty two. She completed her degree in 'Physical Geography' at the University of Hull in 2002, and she then got a job at a garden centre, where she worked for two years. Before she became a teacher, she was rather unsure of what path she wanted to pursue, until she volunteered at a primary school then signed up to be a teaching assistant. After that, she received her qualifications and signed up to become a Geography teacher in 2018.

She recalls enjoying the typical environment of a secondary school, which enabled her to want to go into teaching, which she has now come to love and be extremely passionate about. She says that it's important for every student to take as many opportunities as possible, and that many pupils don't realise how lucky they are. She also explains that there is no need to worry if you are unsure of what you want to do, as she was also unsure of what she wanted to accomplish when she was younger and didn't go into teaching until she was forty years old.

In her spare time, she loves cross stitching, walking her dog and Greek mythology, particularly stories about women in Greek mythology. Her favourite author is Jennifer Saint and she is very much looking forward to reading her latest book, which will be released this year. Despite teaching Geography, she enjoys watching history documentaries, spending time in the gym and she also really loves maps, which is one of the reasons as to why she enjoys organising the Duke of Edinburgh award so much. She volunteered for DofE at her old school, St James, which is in Farnworth, and she then volunteered here at Sharples, where she organises the Silver expeditions.

Thank you very much to Mrs Finney for agreeing to be interviewed for this edition and I hope you enjoyed reading this month's interview!

BY FATIMA ISMAIL

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## THE RESULTS ARE IN...

### Your Favourite Article for May...

# SHARPCHELLA



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

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## BACK TO SCHOOL HAUL:

### A DEEPER DELVE INTO THE PENCIL CASES OF STUDENTS

As excited as we all are to finish the year soon you'll be confronted once again with the stress of a brand new school year. I'm sure you've all been through the pressure and stress that comes with back to school shopping so in this article we're going to talk through our favourite items to buy to start this school year in style and make the process a little bit easier!

### BACKPACK

SAFIYA: Whether choosing a handbag or a backpack, opt for something wide and deep, preferably with a lining and strong seams. And try not to get something with a soft mesh on the front (Not the plasticky mesh often used in water bottle carriers on backpacks). This would make sure that your bag doesn't end up being a torn heap of fabric by the spring term (i.e. me in year 7). I prefer a backpack over a handbag, since if you're tired you can distribute the weight across both shoulders and not just one. There are plenty of good backpack brands on the market: Jansport, Nike, Adidas, Converse, Fjällräven and the list goes on. Look for thick, durable and waterproof fabrics. If you're like me and also want hundreds of pockets in your bag, you can buy backpack / handbag organisers that slot into your bag, helping keep it structured and helping you keep your things nice and organised.

### WATER BOTTLE

KHADIJA: When it comes to water bottles I don't recommend a specific brand, but I will always believe that a reusable stainless steel/thermal water bottle is the way to go. This is because it will keep your water at a nice temperature for the whole day and it is far more environmentally friendly. I do remember having a water bottle from Primark, which was quite disappointing because the paint very quickly chipped away and stuck to my hands.

SAFIYA: I agree, but rather than making the mistake of getting a Primark one, try finding a good-quality, leak-proof and well built metal bottle; It doesn't necessarily have to be anything expensive or tiktok-viral. Get a good bottle that will last you a while - cheaper ones WILL dent super easily and, unfortunately for khadija, the paint comes off even after a short while.



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SAFIYA: I can say that I definitely prefer more inky pens over ballpoint pens since I write really quickly, and ballpoint pens usually don't glide across a page as smoothly. Anyone who owns an inky pen knows the pain of smudges, and for me it really doesn't help because of the fact that the side of my hand gets covered in ink after dragging across the page. I always keep a backup of Pentonic LINC pens, but Kenji gel pens work the best for me - the ink dries really quickly, stopping me from smudging all over my page. Plus, they look nice. However, they come with their own problems; the barrel can be really fragile and can smash, the ink runs out very quickly and they are a bit uncomfortable to hold. In the end, I'm still looking for a good pen - maybe Khadija can help me out...

## PENCILS

KHADIJA: As ridiculous as it probably sounds, a good quality pencil is important for smooth, dark writing and beautiful diagrams. This year to save money, I bought a pack of mechanical pencils from Home Bargains, but I can't say I'm the biggest fan. I mean they are very aesthetically pleasing, but in terms of usage I much prefer the BIC pastel mechanical pencils. They are far more expensive but I think they are well worth the price for how long they lasted.

SAFIYA: BIC Mechanical pens are the way to go - you never have to worry about having them sharpened, which can make your average pencil tiny if done a lot, as long as you carry a few refills with you!

## HIGHLIGHTERS

KHADIJA: As peculiar as it sounds I don't use actual highlighters. Instead I use Crayola Pastel Supertips. This is because they have a perfect tip for highlighting and a beautiful array of pastel colours, which makes even books for the worst subjects feel extra cheerful. I bought these on Amazon for less than £2 but their retail price is around £3.50+ and the 10 pack in particular isn't available in many stores.

SAFIYA: If you know me, you probably know that I actually have two sets of highlighters; I use these random square ones that I found on Amazon one random day, and rather than being random bright and fluorescent colours, they actually come in really nice neutral shades. The best part - I got two packs of 5 for about £4! I also have a set of dual ended Zebra Mildliners, where one side is a brush pen and the other side is a fine tip. Though they are a little pricey, I really like how versatile they are. If you are planning on buying them, I would recommend getting them from a shop in person, as I got mine for about £1 per pen in a 15-pack (so £15) but plenty of online resellers sell these for around £30!

DISCLAIMER: This article has been reused



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

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## TOTM- MRS BENNETT

Welcome back, readers, to the Sharples Spotlight's Teacher of the Month! A second one this month!

This edition features a dedicated, outdoors - loving Computer Science teacher - someone who is passionate about helping students grow in confidence, develop digital skills, and discover just how capable they truly are.

This month, we're shining the spotlight on Mrs Bennett, a teacher who inspires curiosity, resilience and creativity in every lesson!

Unlike many teachers who discover their subject later in life, Mrs Bennett found her passion through a desire to make a positive difference in young people's lives. With technology constantly evolving, she wanted to help students build the knowledge and confidence to use it safely, responsibly and creatively.

Computing quickly became the perfect fit - a subject full of problem-solving, creativity and perseverance. Whether students are writing their first program or designing digital media, Mrs Bennett loves watching them realize they're capable of far more than they first believed, witnessing those (and I quote) unforgettable "lightbulb moments."

One of the most rewarding parts of her job is seeing students achieve something they once thought was impossible. Every day brings something new, and she enjoys building positive relationships while preparing students for a future shaped by technology.

Outside of school, Mrs Bennett enjoys spending quality time with family and making the most of the outdoors. Walking is one of her favourite hobbies - from peaceful countryside strolls to challenging hikes. She has even completed both the National Three Peaks and the Yorkshire Three Peaks!

Travelling is another passion, whether it's exploring new cultures abroad or enjoying weekend breaks in the UK. At home, Mrs Bennett loves relaxing with her three cats, watching films or box sets, and unwinding after a busy week of teaching.

The Computing Department itself also has an action-packed year ahead, filled with opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom. Students will be visiting Bletchley Park, the historic home of British codebreaking, to explore the origins of modern computing and cybersecurity.

They'll also be heading to Manchester Airport to see how technology is used in real-world operations - from security systems to logistics. Another highlight will be a trip to Amazon, where students will witness cutting-edge robotics and automation in action.

Alongside these visits, students can take part in robotics competitions, coding challenges, and digital technology activities designed to spark creativity and innovation.

To celebrate students' achievements, the department also plans to run reward trips, including visits to games arcades - a fun way to enjoy technology outside the classroom. Personally, as a computing student, I can't wait!

During our interview, Mrs Bennett shared some great advice - *"Stay curious and never stop learning. You don't have to know all the answers straight away, but you should always be willing to ask questions, try new things and learn from your mistakes. Treat people with kindness and respect, work hard even when no one is watching, and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. The skills you build through perseverance, resilience and a positive attitude will help you far beyond the classroom."*

Overall, Mrs Bennett is an excellent teacher - whether trekking up mountains or dealing with a class of rowdy year sevens, Mrs Bennett is always resilient and hardworking!

**BY SAFIYA IBRAHIM**



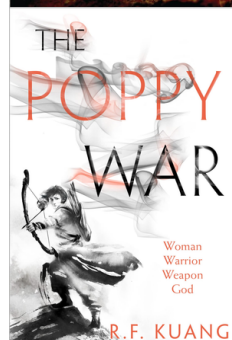
# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## SUMMER BOOK RECS 2026



### MORNINGS IN JENIN- SUSAN ABULHAWA

This is a multi-generational novel that follows the Abulheja family's experiences during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Forcibly removed from their village in 1948, they endure life in a refugee camp, loss, and displacement across several countries. The story, primarily told through the perspective of Amal, a young girl growing up in the camp, explores themes of love, loss, identity, and the enduring impact of conflict on individuals and families. Rather than focusing on the political side of conflict it explores the emotional journey of the families who are forced to leave behind everything they know, build a new life for themselves and watch their relatives leave the world forever. You feel the hopelessness that conflict brings and the pain in every letter on the page. The descriptions are so perfect and make you dream of one day being able to visit the olive trees of Palestine and make you shake with sorrow as you read about the beautiful little children suffering. Don't read in public, you will cry.



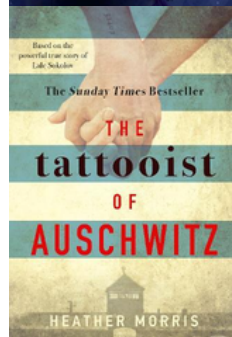
### THE POPPY WAR- R.F KUANG

The Poppy War by R.F. Kuang is a highly acclaimed yet brutally intense historical military fantasy. It follows a war orphan named Rin who escapes a bleak life by acing the empire-wide test and gaining entry to the most elite military academy in the Nikaran Empire. The book explores the impact of drugs on the human mind centering around China's booming Opium trade in the middle of a war. Rin is forced to lead her nation with her new found power to success. This book emotional, fiery and full of a burning passion. However, it does contain certain mature themes, so read with this in mind. This is a fantastic trilogy by Kuang which will make you scream, cry and laugh all at once. This is a 5 star read.



### DIVINE RIVALS- REBECCA ROSS

Divine Rivals by Rebecca Ross is a critically acclaimed fantasy romance that blends a "rivals-to-lovers" dynamic with a magical, World War I-inspired setting. The story follows two competing journalists who magically correspond through enchanted typewriters (not knowing that they are work rivals), ultimately falling in love while navigating a devastating war between rival gods. Sometimes YA romance can be uncomfortable and follow a stereotypical storyline, but this book was poetic, the style of literature was beautiful and the enemies to lovers trope was perfectly done. I loved the setting and the sweet romantic atmosphere that came with the vintage typewriters and the main characters being journalists. A great recommendation for any teenage girl or even boy.



### THE TATTOOIST OF AUSCHWITZ- HEATHER MORRIS

Heather Morris's The Tattooist of Auschwitz is a bestselling historical novel based on the true story of Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew tasked with tattooing ID numbers on prisoners at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is an emotional, hopeful, and harrowing tale of enduring love amid the darkest atrocities of the Holocaust. This book combines a true story of pain and love with the harsh facts of the Holocaust, including characters, which represented the people Lale met throughout his life and through his time in the concentration camp. By classing this novel as historical fiction, Morris was able to weave in the larger cruel picture of life in camps and across Europe during WWII serving as a reminder for all of us today and bringing further emotion into the tale. This novel is not just for readers of romance it's for everyone and a true eye-opening read especially for those interested in History. This would be a great novel to consolidate Y9's History topic this year.



### PROJECT HAIL MARY- ANDY WEIR

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir is a thrilling sci-fi novel about a junior high teacher who wakes up millions of miles from Earth without his memory. He must use his scientific knowledge to solve a celestial mystery and save humanity, ultimately teaming up with an unlikely alien friend in deep space. As his memory returns he realises how crucial his mission to save humanity is. In a race against time he works with his new friend to work out how a mysterious living organism is destroying our Planet. This book was a Science geeks dream and even if this is a genre you wouldn't usually pick up I would one hundred percent recommend it. This book was recently made into a movie with high praise.

# The Sharples Spotlight

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