



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

STUDENT VOICES



**ARTISTS:**

FPIPPA MOSS

MYESHA CHOUDHURY

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

**MARCH EDITION**

**EDITOR:** AMAARA MANGERA

**CO-EDITOR:** KHADIJA MOOSA

**CREATIVE DESIGNER:** SAFIYA IBRAHIM

**WRITERS:** SAFFIYAH PATEL

AAMEINA MAROTHI

IDRIS ORIOLA

AFIA ZUBAIR

FATIMA ZAHRA

FATIMA ISMAIL

AAMEINA MAROTHI

AFIA ZUBAIR



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello to all of our readers this month! Well done to all of you for surviving two entire terms of school. I know it may be hard to believe it, but there is only one more left! In order to kickstart your holidays, the spotlight team have compiled a compilation of this month's best moments for teachers and students. So, before you go rushing through this incredible new edition of the Spotlight, let me leave you with some of my final thoughts of this term.

Firstly, time moves fast. So, whilst I have the chance, I would like to thank my amazing Spotlight team for always finding time in their busy schedules to contribute their best work. If it weren't for their hard work, there would simply be no Spotlight at all. We truly appreciate the work that they put in and the determination they have shown throughout the school year.

Secondly, we want to include all the things that you love in the Spotlight. However, these things don't have to be just school-based. We want to share everyone's ideas and stories, so if you have something to write or show your passions, then be sure to attend one of our meetings at T2 after your well-deserved two-week rest. Although maybe you are more of a behind-the-scenes person who wants to share your ideas without the pressure of anyone knowing, if so, you can submit your work to me at [22mangeraa@sharplesschool.co.uk](mailto:22mangeraa@sharplesschool.co.uk) to be published anonymously. Either way, one of the best ways to share your ideas is to get involved, even if that just means filling out our monthly survey. S

peaking of which, the results of your favourite article can be seen on page 11! I won't spoil it too much but this month we had a draw so be sure to check out who won. Not only that, but in last month's survey we announced the tragic loss of our monthly TOTM article (teacher of the month), therefore, I am glad to declare its return!

Finally, this half term has been short but no doubt full of all types of events both in and outside of school. This month has taught us discipline and the importance of community with not just one but two Sharples Family Meals taking place this term. So, to all those who have just finished fasting for the year, Eid Mubarak! And, for all of you who are still participating in Lent, I wish you the best of luck and Happy Easter!



That's all from me! I hope that you have a brilliant Easter break and take advantage of the well deserved free time. Happy reading!

BY AMAARA MANGERA - EDITOR



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## TO THE WORLD OF WORK THEY GO

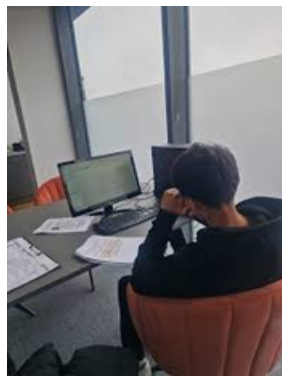
Earlier in February, Year 10s were allowed to complete a week's work experience outside of school in an establishment, institution or real-life workplace. This opportunity gave us an insight into the real working life, while being enjoyable, challenging and eye-opening. I had completed my work experience at The Olive School, Bolton. At first, I wasn't sure what to expect, but as the week went on, I found myself becoming more confident and involved in the daily routines of teaching.

One of my main roles was supporting the teacher in the classroom. This included helping younger students with their work, listening to them read, and assisting with activities such as SAT exam practice and end-of-term whole school parent assemblies. At first glance, teaching may seem straightforward; however, in reality, much patience, organisation, and creativity are required to keep children engaged and motivated. I quickly realised that every child learns differently, and it was important to adapt my approach depending on their needs.

I also had the chance to observe how lessons are planned and delivered. The teachers carefully structured each lesson to make learning both fun and educational, often using games and interactive activities. This showed me how important it is to create a positive learning environment where children feel comfortable asking questions and making mistakes.

Outside the classroom, I helped supervise during break and lunchtime, which was another valuable experience. It taught me how to manage groups of children and handle different situations responsibly. Building relationships with the pupils was one of the most rewarding parts of the placement, as I could see them becoming more comfortable around me as the days went on.

Overall, my work placement helped me develop key skills such as communication, patience, and teamwork, while also giving me a real insight into the teaching profession. It was a rewarding and enjoyable experience, and it gave me a greater appreciation for the hard work teachers do every day. For the current Year 9 students, this is something to look forward to next year, as it's a really exciting chance to try something new, gain confidence, and start thinking about what you might want to do in the future.





# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

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## THE SPOTLIGHT *IS ON* MRS HEATON

This month, our selected Teacher of the Month is one of our amazing science teachers, Mrs Heaton. Originally from a town near London, she has two children, two dogs (one of which is notorious for breaking her arm a few years ago - which you may remember if you're in year 9 or above), and she has been a teacher for about twenty-one years. Although she currently doesn't have enough time to pursue them, she has many hobbies, particularly watching live music, ideally from the 90s/2000s, which is her favourite thing to do at the weekend. She grew up with her mum, her grandparents, her aunt and sometimes her uncle and his son, as well as living with many different animals: seven rescue dogs, five cats, a rabbit, Guinea pigs and a budgie.

She also loves to make things, quad biking - although she would like to do this more often- and she adores music and, in her own words, is addicted to Spotify and her vinyl collection. She also occasionally enjoys baking and is attempting to enjoy gardening.

She moved to Devon when she was eighteen to study at the University of Plymouth and then moved up to the area of Lancashire straight after university. She met her husband, who is Miss Heaton's brother, at university, and they have been married for twenty-two years.

When asked about what she wanted to pursue when she was younger, she replied that she still doesn't know what she wants to do. She believes that young people, including herself, are expected to suddenly know what they want to do with their lives once their teenage years are over. She recalls thinking that some kind of 'adulting' handbook would just appear because she felt that adults seemed to know so much more than she did. However, she soon came to realise that everyone is just trying their best, and that what adults do have is experience, which she says is the best teacher. When she was younger, she greatly enjoyed reading, going through many books in a week. One of the things she loves about reading is that it opens doors to new worlds, and her vocabulary is quite good now that she is older. She used to ride horses, and she even used to compete in riding competitions, and she was also part of a Ladies Rugby FC when she was in university. The one thing that she knew was that she wanted to be around animals, particularly dogs, due to the fact that she was surrounded by many pets growing up, as mentioned earlier.

She didn't always want to be a teacher - in fact, she had no intention of being one whatsoever. She was forced to go on work experience at a local primary school and did not enjoy it at all, which means that she has a lot of respect for primary school teachers, as she knows that she could never do their job. When she finished studying for her degree, she assumed that she would end up working in the conservation sector. Whilst she really enjoyed working in the education department of the zoo near her university, she stated that the pay was terrible, which is why she no longer works there. She also did some work with maintenance, which she found rather unchallenging and monotonous. She also worked at an office job with United Utilities, where she made some excellent friends but immediately realised that she would never be happy with such a boring job.

She felt that she needed to be challenged and that she needed to manage herself. As a result, she reflected on what she didn't enjoy about teaching when she went on work experience. When she realised that teaching a primary school wasn't right for her, she decided to train as a secondary school science teacher. Despite initially being rather nervous, she realised that she actually loved science enough to talk about it for hours without running out of things to say or getting bored.



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

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Some of the reasons as to why she wanted to be a science teacher were that it ticks a lot of boxes for her. She says that it is interesting, constantly changing, and she is able to control a lot of what happens during the day with minimal input from anybody else. She loves learning, and whilst she enjoys having a routine, she doesn't like it so much that she wants to do the same thing every single day. Most importantly, she loves working with young people. She believes that the students at Sharples are fantastic and polite people. She also loves seeing how their understanding develops over the five years they spend at school, as well as hearing their success stories from parents and their younger siblings.

Finally, she stated that the reason she is a teacher now is because of what school was like for her. She went to secondary school in a 90s council estate near London, which had over two thousand pupils, and the behaviour was not as good as it could have been. Her school rarely had any specialist teachers, and she remembers having to teach herself GCSE Physics because no one else would. When she was told by her careers teacher that she should train to be a secretary because of how she achieved the highest possible grade in the Pitman Qualification in touch typing, which she knew was not right for her. She says that she is a science teacher today because of the fact that someone tried to tell her that she should be something else, enabling her to prove them wrong.

Thank you very much to Mrs Heaton for agreeing to be interviewed for the Sharples Spotlight. I hope you enjoyed reading this edition's teacher of the month!

*BY FATIMA ISMAIL*

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## PRICE WATERHOUSE COOPERS TRIP

On Monday 16 March, 30 Year 9 students were involved in a trip to the accountancy firm Price Waterhouse Coopers, Salford, to take part in a new world new skills seminar, with many of us coming mainly to escape our boring lessons!

After a prompt arrival at 9:45, we were taken up to the meeting room. The first section focused on us getting to know our volunteers/their educational journey to their role, and a bit about accountancy/the firm, followed by a more interesting icebreaker session (centred around survival during a zombie apocalypse!) which tested our reasoning skills. There was a lot of heated argument as members of different teams tried to get their point across and convince their teammates that their solution was best!

With the firm being on the 7th floor of a multi-functional 17-floor building, we were an impressive 8 stories high, and many posed to capture the scenic background of the city skyline. After our break, we got onto the main - and most beneficial - part: interview skills. Through a series of activities, we mastered several key skills and took on board some important points, from learning what an interviewer is actually looking for in your answer to techniques on how to structure your responses.

At 2:30, it was time to head back, and we arrived back at 3:12, just about avoiding being sent back to English! Overall, I found the seminar both pretty interesting and beneficial, and will definitely try to use the information/skills we learned, despite the fact that I have no intention of going into accounting!

*BY ANONYMOUS*



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## THE SHARPLES IFTAR: PLUS A FEW WORDS OF WISDOM

Let me begin this article with a traditional Islamic greeting- Assalamu alaikum (Peace be upon you all), because today we are discussing the beautiful Sharples Iftar which took place on the 6th of March.

Before I tell you all about it let me explain why events like this are so important during this time. We are living in a period when Islam is a religion often associated with terrorism, violence, cruelty and dictatorship particularly in the British mainstream news and on social media. In fact a very recent report from the Centre for Media Monitoring reported that across a huge 40,913 articles across 30 major news outlets 70% of those articles analysed associated Islam and Muslims with negative behaviours or themes, even if Muslims were not the central theme in the articles. This is called bias and unfortunately it's believed and accepted, because why wouldn't you trust the *Daily Mail* or the *Telegraph*. This is resulting in Islamophobia and distrust in our diverse communities. In reality, Islam is a religion of peace and centres around submission to God. Its teachings are of justice, equality and kindness with the greatest of mankind- The Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W)- being the greatest example. In fact Islam made all skin colours equal before the great and mighty Western world. And these things are not difficult to see if you sit down and ask a Muslim about their religion. So, I urge you before making assumptions, ask questions, research and don't be afraid!

This is why the Sharples Iftar was so special because we got to share our beautiful culture and practices with our school community, debunk myths and connect with each other during the holiest month of the Islamic calendar- Ramaḍān. To learn more about this blessed month there is a fantastic informative guide in the February edition.

During the lead up to the Iftar, Mr Adam and Mrs Patel gathered together a group of volunteers to help organise the event. From a virtual assembly, to hours of decorating and planning, and a giant Shein order the canteen was ready for 200 hungry mouths. I'd like to thank Mrs Patel in particular at this point, who worked tirelessly to organise and decorate. So much time and thought went into it from making sure the colour scheme was perfect to deciding how many feathers to put in the vases, she ensured every detail was perfect for our enjoyment.





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Before we could indulge in the delicious feast, we were privileged to be in the presence of two highly knowledgeable members of the Muslim community who blessed our ears with Quran recitation, Islamic poetry and an inspiring speech on the topic of the evening- our Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). The first was Hafiz Ahmadullah Awan and the second being Dr Mohlana Mohammed Amejee. Hafiz Ahmadullah's melodious voice and memorisation of the Quran was only another testimony to the purity, beauty and dedication thriving within Islam. At this point I'd also like to give a special mention to someone who many of you will know- Haziq Khawaja- who stood in front of teachers, students and governors as the MC of the night. We all learnt valuable lessons that evening from Mohlana Muhammad Amejee who spoke with charisma and simplicity, engaging the audience until the very end and educating us all. He was a fantastic role model for the Muslim community and for all of us generally and he raised many of the points, which I mentioned at the start regarding the negativity surrounding Islam.

When the time to eat finally came, Hafiz Ahmadullah read the Call to Prayer and we broke our fasts with a date following the tradition of the Prophet. From samosas and chicken legs to biryani, we were treated with the full desi experience and finished off the meal with a choice of desserts from the wide range. Thanks goes out to the volunteers who were fasting and still walked around with platters serving everyone selflessly and those who made desserts in their free time for us to enjoy.

A final thanks goes to Mr Adam and Mrs Patel who spent time and effort putting together the evening for the 4th year in a row. We are extremely grateful for you both.

My last message goes out to the Muslim's and the non-muslims. For the Muslims, my message is this- it's time to write our own narrative, to show the world that we are more than what is shown in the media, and it's so very simple- work hard, and be tolerant- it's time to speak out. Now to the non-muslims, there is so much controversy and misinformation in the media and we all sometimes get mixed up, but we need to ask questions to the people who have answers, to the muslims not to the internet. We respect you, we care for you and we love sharing our beautiful religion with you.

*BY KHADIJA MOOSA*





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## WORLD BOOK DAY 2026

World Book Day was celebrated with enthusiasm and creativity at Sharples School this year, bringing students and staff together to share a love of reading. The day was filled with imaginative costumes, engaging activities, and a strong sense of community, highlighting the importance of books in education and everyday life.

The corridors were transformed into a vibrant parade of stories, with costumes inspired by all different genres from romance to mystery, and horror to historical fiction- There was always something for everyone. Teachers also joined in the fun by dressing up to match their subject's genre, helping to create an atmosphere where reading was celebrated by everyone- the science teachers as detectives was my personal favourite!!



Throughout the day, students in KS3 took part in a variety of activities designed to promote literacy and creativity, including book quizzes and creative writing workshops. Many lessons were adapted to include literary themes, encouraging students to think about how reading connects to different subjects.

The school library became a central hub of activity, hosting special events and displays that showcased a wide range of books throughout the entire week. Students were encouraged to explore new genres and authors, helping them to discover stories they might not have picked up otherwise.

World Book Day at Sharples School was not just about dressing up- it was about inspiring a lifelong love of reading. By creating a fun and inclusive environment, the event reminded students that books can open doors to new worlds, ideas, and opportunities. Overall, the celebration was a great success, leaving students motivated to read more and appreciate the power of storytelling.

I asked some teachers about what they thought about World Book Day and here was their feedback:

*“World Book Day this year was a fantastic celebration of literature and storytelling. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm across the school, with staff going above and beyond to dress up and transform their corridors with creative decorations. The effort and imagination on display truly brought books to life and helped inspire a love of reading throughout the day. A reminder that if you're into it, read into it!”* - Miss Kirk

### World Book Day





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*“Sharples School had an amazing time celebrating World Book Day! The halls were filled with colorful decorations, and students eagerly explored books and stories throughout the day. It was a wonderful celebration of creativity, reading, and the excitement that books can bring to staff and students alike.” - Mr McCann*



*“World Book Week was an incredible celebration at the school! The library hosted exciting events throughout the week, and the school was beautifully decorated to spark a love of reading. Some students had the unique opportunity to visit the local library, where they enjoyed an inspiring talk by a guest author. Additionally, a few students brought joy to the community by reading to residents at a nearby care home, sharing stories and smiles.” - Mrs Atherton*

BY AAMEINA MAROTHI





# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## STEM WEEK CELEBRATIONS

STEM week is a week that celebrates all subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. This year for STEM week, Different departments hosted and organised creative activities to help students learn more about these subjects in a fun way.

In the science department, each year group had a different theme for STEM week. Year 7 students completed their projects about organ systems, Year 8 students focused on elements of the periodic table, and Year 9 students explored the evolution of stars. Students explored these topics in groups of two to six and demonstrated skills such as communication, teamwork, and collaboration.

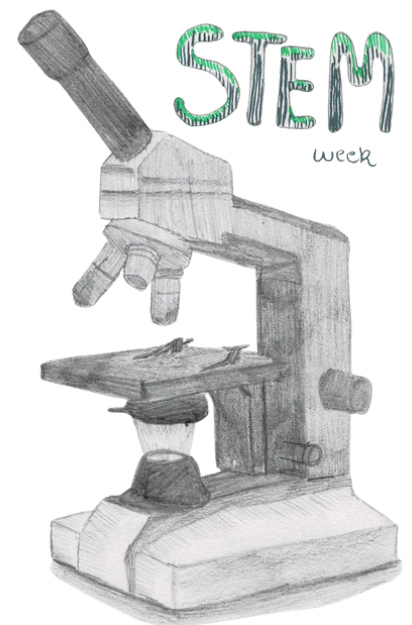
We started our projects on 09/03/26 and presented them on 16/03/26. Here's what we did.

For Year 8 students, the elements of the periodic table were split into six groups in each class. Each group researched a different section of the periodic table. Our group worked on non-metals (excluding the halogens). We researched the properties of Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen and Sulphur as well as where they can be found. I think our projects turned out really well. After presenting, we visited other classes to look at their projects and then voted for the winning one. It was so interesting to see what other groups had done.

In the computing department, we looked at inventions that exist today and ideas for future inventions. We learned about things like the smart home in Japan, which is a house where all devices and appliances are controlled automatically, the smart fridge, which is connected to the internet and has features like a touchscreen and cameras, and the delivery drone, which is used by companies like Amazon to transport packages. After that, we then designed our own inventions and made a poster explaining what it is, how it works, how it would be useful, and who it would be useful for.

Finally, in the math department, we played this game called " Countdown". We were given a set of numbers and had to use different operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to make a target number. We had a timer of around 30 seconds to 1 minute, which made it more exciting as we had to try to get it before the timer ran out. The person who got the most right answers got put into a competition to see who was the fastest. I really enjoyed this activity because it was fun and helped improve my maths and calculation skills.

Overall, STEM week 2026 was an enjoyable experience. It helped me learn a range of new things differently and helped me understand why these subjects are important. It was amazing, and I can't wait for next year's STEM week.





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## WHAT TO CHOOSE? JOKES COLUMN:

The Year 9 Options Evening at Sharples was a vibrant, inspiring event that invited students from Year 9 for an important milestone in their school journey - choosing which GCSEs they will study in the coming years. As pupils prepare to enter Key Stage 4, the evening offered a valuable opportunity to explore the subjects that will shape their GCSE years and learn how the choosing process works.

Almost as soon as the doors were open, the canteen was flooded with parents and students speaking to teachers, frantically grabbing pamphlets (and hopefully snatching a biscuit or two from Food Tech's table!). Every so often, students had the opportunity to receive a presentation from senior staff in the theatre, who outlined the purpose of the options process and explained how students can fill in their options form. The message was clear: choosing GCSE subjects isn't about deciding what career you're going into-it's about discovering strengths, interests, and ambitions, and most importantly, choosing what you love.

Teachers highlighted the importance of balancing passion with practicality, encouraging students to think about what they enjoy, what they excel in, and what might support their long-term goals.

This year, Year 9 students can choose up to three options, with triple science being one of them. This has led to mixed feelings; whilst some are happy with triple science being something to choose - and not be chosen for, one year 9 complains, "If I choose triple, I will only be able to choose two other options. If I don't choose triple, I'll have three options but fewer GCSEs. What do I choose?"

Overall, I can guarantee that Options Evening was a success - now, students have a better idea of what to choose from the many subjects available and are more confident in what they want to do.

Good luck to all Year 9s choosing their options!

WRITTEN BY SAFIYA IBRAHIM

**Why did the scarecrow win an award?**

Because he was outstanding his field!

- Lavina 8p2

**Do you want to have a pizza joke?**

Nah it's too cheesy!

- Lucy palmer 7P5

## 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...

**Teens' thoughts on: the social media ban**

*and*

**Youth speaks: back for seconds!** - Safiya Ibrahim

A big well done to Safiya 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!



# THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

## Did YOU know?

### Did you know?

There is a day dedicated solely to world Happiness!

The International Day of Happiness is celebrated on the 20th of March every year to commemorate the importance of Happiness and well-being. The day falls on the equinox, which symbolises balance, harmony and global unity.

### Did you know?

The International Day of Happiness was introduced by the United Nations.

In 2012, the United Nations established a day through a General Assembly Resolution, inspired by Gross National Happiness (GNH), which prioritised emotional well-being over economic incentives. The day encourages government, communities and individuals to adopt policies and practices which enhance lifestyle.

### Did you know?

Every year has a specific theme!

This year's official theme is " Social media and Happiness ", which highlights the impact of digital media and its long-lasting impact. A framework, " Keep Calm, Stay wise, Be kind", allows individuals to regulate emotions and encourages mindful interactions online.

### Did you know?

Every year, the World Happiness Report is launched, providing an insight into Happiness trends. The 2026 report revealed that Finland, for the past 9 consecutive years, has been the happiest country in the world.

Ways to celebrate the International Day of Happiness:

Spend some time with a loved one, even if it is just talking or walking in the park; communication often builds trust and provides joy.

Volunteer to help those who require support and share positive messages.

Practice gratitude by simply reflecting on things that you are grateful for.

World Happiness Day reminds us of the collective pursuit of happiness, which can be achieved through meaningful connections and empathy.





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## A TRICKY MATHEMATICAL CONUNDRUM

On Thursday, 12th of March, a handful of selected Year 10 students didn't go to their Science lesson after Lunch, as they instead made their way towards the canteen for an elusive maths competition. I'm sure many maths teachers had the absolute displeasure of hearing the same questions asked about it 3 or 4 periods earlier.

When everyone signed in and formed teams, some formed out of friendship whilst others were formed out of reluctance, the challenge was finally revealed:

“Create a 3D shape out of card and tape to hold 150 ml (cm<sup>3</sup>) of Coca Cola. The most interesting and functional shape wins!”

First of all, it's a weird choice of drink ; Coca Cola, really? Even after that horrible AI advertisement? And secondly, we had an hour which was more than enough time to make a shape, net and a poster. This all sounds ironic when you consider that I was in one of the groups that ended up losing but we'll discuss that later.

Now there were a multitude of options that each group could pick ; cubes, cuboids, cylinders (which is technically just a replica of a Coca Cola can). However, among the options was a.. Sphere?! If someone could make a perfectly flat 2D net of a sphere, they're either lying about doing so, or have been ignoring NASA's calls because that shouldn't be possible unless someone hastily wrapped their shape in layers of tape, to stop the liquid from leaking. Of course, a regular cuboid was the safest option; easy to measure, easy to make the net and ultimately easy to form, but other groups decided to get more creative with it. We had buckets, baskets, ponds (I'm pretty sure someone made an octagonal prism) but it was very ambiguous whether or not the judges were prioritising functionality or looks but one thing for certain is that teams that finished quickly, and had around 10-20 minutes left, found any way they can to occupy themselves.

There was tying someone to a chair with tape (it was a pretty strong trap as well), screaming matches, annoying other groups, and even sabotaging their own group for seemingly “the love of the game.”

Overall, it was an interesting way to spend Period 5 and 6, and I will be consulting my group members on how boring a cuboid was and how we should've gone with a hexagonal prism instead.

Thanks for reading!

*WRITTEN BY IDRIS ORIOLA*

# The Sharples Spotlight

VOL. 15, NO. 8



MOST WANTED NOW



2025/2026



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