



Half Term is on the Horizon!

We are almost reaching towards the end of half term and I know it will be gladly welcome for many! For a lucky few, they will be going to Spain with Y11 which is a brilliant opportunity for all involved.

There aren't many other schools that can say they take Y11 pupils to Spain in their final year at high school. It will be an opportunity for students to develop new friendships, revise in the right space and also make memories that will last a lifetime.

I know the students really appreciate all that goes into the monumental planning - I'm sure Alan Barnes can say more about this!

As the term comes to a close, it is fantastic to see the range of opportunities that have taken place at Sharples.

For example:

- Y7 Tie Ceremony
- Y7 Musical Performance
- Library Lock in
- Fresher's Disco
- Y11 Next Steps Evening
- Y10 Steps to Success Evening
- Visit to Hardwick Hall
- Ongoing ALS

The list could go on and on, but it's just to showcase how much goes on at Sharples. This only accounts for the students here, the staff have also engaged with meaningful, context driven CPD and the feedback has been great so far.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Article on Home Learning

Sharples Shoutouts and Celebrations!

Sharples Staff Section

CPD Book Recommendations

X / Twitter Shoutouts

Updates on the Teaching and Learning Development programme



Home Learning

It is fair to say that this year we have endeavoured, as a school, to raise the profile of home learning and to ensure a consistent approach to home learning has been utilised. Last year, during ELT meetings and ATL meetings, discussions took place around the format, quality and type of homework that should be being set. Following on, this year, we have a new KS3 homework schedule that has been shared across the school so that SLT links and other members of ELT can monitor and check in on the homework that is being set, and also monitor the students who are consistently not completing their homework.



This has allowed for us to assess the trends of pupils who are consistently not completing homework, and also acts as a supportive measure to the department in order to ensure the home learning is complete. Further to this, we have put a range of support in place such as homework club at lunchtime, breakfast club with access to Chromebook and from next half term, the library will be open till 4.30pm to support pupils with completing their work.

Beyond this, we are also looking at supporting parents with ensuring that their child's homework is complete with support at Progress Evenings going forward.

But why?

All the above that has taken place or is going to happen, is a monumental task that takes the driving force and consistency of a school to ensure it happens, it's definitely not going to happen overnight and it is going to have its teething problems.

Yet still, we want to continue on and drive home learning forward.

Home learning is a vital part of education, not only does it allow for pupils to clarify their understanding and learn from their mistakes, but it also develops skills of independent thinking, organisation, time management and working to deadlines. It also may help some students with their management of stress or worry, students need to be exposed to some sort of pressure, in order to grow and challenge themselves. If we didn't ever give students the opportunity to struggle, progress not only academically but also mentally would be stagnant.



One of the great things about Sharples is the well rounded individual that often leaves in Y11. But this individual has gone through the Sharples Bacc, becoming an ambassador, potentially a Gold Tie and even a Sports Leader, whilst simultaneously managing the academic demands of a rigorous curriculum and home learning programme. The role of a school goes beyond just allowing students to achieve academic excellence, it is about who they are as a person once they leave that institution.

The question we need to answer is: are they filled with ambition, a readiness to succeed and the ability to look beyond the classroom to thrive once they leave our care? Home learning plays a huge part in this development, although it may seem insignificant, like it is one piece of the puzzle, it is a huge puzzle that needs to be as best fit as possible for our students.



According to the EEF, homework improves student outcomes by +5 months, particularly with secondary school pupils. Research shows that homework is most effective when it directly links to classroom learning and includes meaningful feedback. Clearly explaining the purpose of homework—whether it’s to build knowledge or improve fluency—helps pupils understand its value and stay engaged in their learning. Therefore, it’s imperative to set relevant home learning that students can see and acknowledge the benefits from.



One interesting case study is a school in Kidsgrove, King’s Church of England Academy. Staff recognised that the traditional approach to homework was not delivering the consistency or impact they wanted — and it was placing burdens both on pupils (some of whom found homework difficult to fit around home commitments) and teachers.

They implemented a clearer, more purposeful homework model: tasks that link tightly to classroom learning, are differentiated sensibly, and are supported by teacher feedback. This helped align homework with the curriculum and made the student experience more coherent.

A major benefit of the redesign was its impact on staff workload and student engagement. By refining the types of homework set (focusing on meaningful practice and consolidation rather than “busywork”), the school found that teachers could manage their time more effectively and students could complete tasks that contributed more clearly to their learning journey. The clarity around purpose helped strengthen the connection between home and parental involvement.

To support the success of homework at school, it’s clear that the purpose of homework should be shared. Students should know why the homework is set, whether it is to: reinforce.

knowledge, build fluency, prepare for the next lesson or assess knowledge. Teachers should also provide feedback that guides improvement. In doing so, homework becomes less about ticking a box and more about strengthening learning

Before making such significant changes, the school analysed the data they had collected with a Y11 cohort leaving. Grade 1 indicates a commitment to home learning, whereas grade 3 indicates homework was left incomplete. The progress and outcomes are quite clearly positive when students are working beyond the classroom.

| Commitment to homework 2018 | Best 8 GCSEs | P8 Maths | P8 English | Science, Geog., Hist., French | Option Subject(s) |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Grade1 | +0.19 | +0.44 | +0.85 | +0.31 | +1.04 |
| Grade 3 | -1.27 | -1.01 | -0.84 | -1.63 | -1.85 |
| Commitment to homework 2019 | Best 8 GCSEs | P8 Maths | P8 English | Science, Geog., Hist., French | Option Subject(s) |
| Grade1 | +0.19 | +0.04 | +0.76 | +0.24 | +1.07 |
| Grade 3 | -0.97 | -0.50 | -0.36 | -1.21 | -3.89 |
| Commitment to homework 2020 | Best 8 GCSEs | P8 Maths | P8 English | Science, Geog., Hist., French | Option Subject(s) |
| Grade1 | +1.06 | +0.70 | +0.85 | +1.07 | +1.44 |
| Grade 3 | -0.59 | -0.73 | -1.50 | -0.64 | +0.16 |
| Commitment to homework 2021 | Best 8 GCSEs | P8 Maths | P8 English | Science, Geog., Hist., French | Option Subject(s) |
| Grade1 | +0.53 | +0.30 | +0.23 | +0.56 | +0.85 |
| Grade 3 | -1.18 | -1.04 | -1.33 | -1.30 | -1.07 |

Although I don't think we need a case study to prove the benefits of home learning, it's useful to see that the approach Sharples is taking, is one that will have a huge impact on the outcomes of our pupils. It's a whole school shift in culture and one that needs to be driven by every member of staff.

I wholly appreciate the work all members of staff are doing around homework and hope that by the end of this year, our homework schedule and programme is one that is consistently used, monitored, tracked and supportive to all pupils and staff.

SHARPLES CELEBRATES!



Each month we want to shout out teachers who want to share excellent practice! The first 3 teachers to email n.ayub@sharplesschool.co.uk with an example of brilliant practice will receive a box of celebrations delivered to their classroom!



Abdul Awal

Abdul Awal, always creates a positive and nurturing environment for his classes. He adapts his lessons brilliantly for his Y7s and is always around to make others smile.



Sabrina Bhaloda

Sabrina has really got stuck into life at Sharples, even before she officially got the job last year! With her fantastic French, crazy crepe machine and general enthusiasm for life, there is never a dull moment with Sabrina. She brings continuous positivity and light into the classroom for her pupils.



Ramona Mitrea

I would like to nominate Ramona Mitrea for her outstanding work and dedication with the Year 11 Spanish GCSE students. Ramona has gone above and beyond to ensure the class is thoroughly prepared for their examinations, always using innovative methods and personalized extra support on Tuesdays at lunch time for the pupils who are struggling, providing a positive and effective learning environment, significantly boosting student confidence and engagement. The implementation of the supplementary Tuesday lunch lesson has proven to be an invaluable resource, offering crucial extra practice and targeted revision time.

Sharples Staff Section

In this part of the newsletter, we want to discover more about the staff at Sharples and the incredible work they do on a daily basis.

Each month, one member of staff will feature and we will discover more about their background and how they ended up at Sharples.

This month, Jaren Baldwin has kindly detailed more about his experience into teaching.



1. How long have you been working at Sharples?

I'm currently in my 20th year of teaching having started at the age of 21.

2. Why did you want to go into teaching?

I've always had a love for sport and wanted to work with young people. I wanted a practical career and one that is rewarding with every day being different

3. Where did you study and was there a module / topic that you were really passionate about during your time at university?

I studied at Liverpool John Moore's University. I really enjoyed a module looking at physical activity levels amongst young people and adults and some of the barriers around participation in a healthy, active lifestyle.

4. What is the best part of your job?

Developing relationships and meeting young people. I enjoy getting to know students outside of the classroom at extra curricular clubs and watching them excel and enjoy themselves

5. What are you most passionate about in terms of teaching and learning?

Adaptive teaching is very important to support and challenge students to ensure engagement in lessons.

6. What are the non-negotiables in your classroom?

Following curriculum maps to ensure consistency within the department.

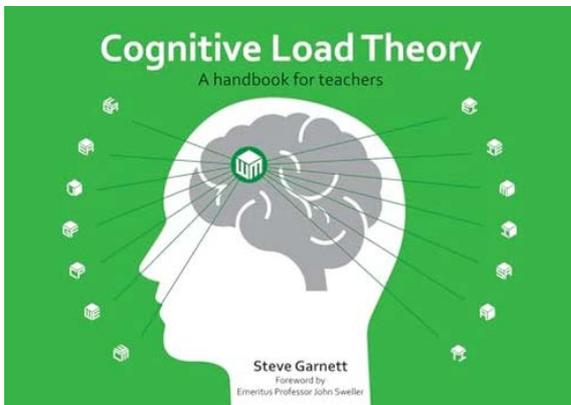
7. If you could share one element of best practice with the rest of the staff, what would it be?

The importance of routines in lessons. It is essential that these are present throughout all lessons to ensure smooth transitions, time management and effective behaviour management.

Book and Twitter (X) Recommendations

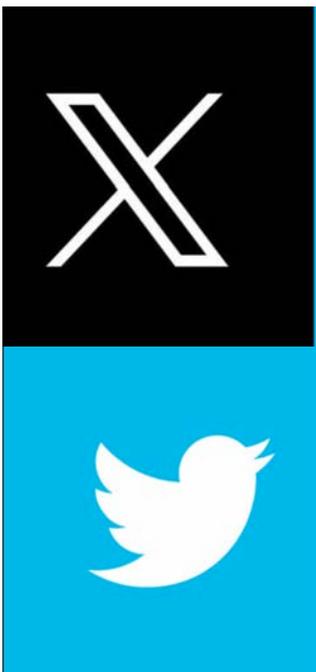


Cognitive Load Theory



In Cognitive Load Theory: A handbook for teachers, Steve Garnett brings clarity to the complexity surrounding CLT and provides a user-friendly toolkit of techniques to help teachers optimise their pupils' learning.

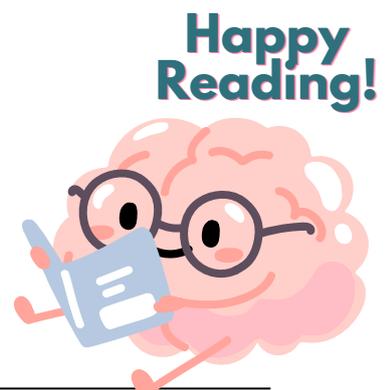
Please email n.ayub@sharplesschool.co.uk if you would like to borrow!



Checking for Understanding

A thread that breaks down checking for understanding in the classroom, supported by research and evidence.

[Click here to view the thread](#)



Teaching and Learning Development Programme Updates



In the next term, we will be continuing on with our Teaching and Learning Development programme by starting the instructional coaching part of the journey.

Please ensure you plan a suitable time to go to observe your coaching partner and a coaching conversation happens with notes in your purple note book.

Alternatively, here is a quote from Claire Brook about how easy Iris Connect is to use:

Iris Connect is so easy to use, in a practical subject I have been using it for formative assessment to be able to rewatch the performance and assess, plus share best practice amongst the team to moderate our assessing.

If you would like to get involved with Iris Connect further next term, please let NAY know.

Dates for your Diary:

Friday 7th November - Oracy CPD

Wednesday 7th January - Adaptive Teaching Session 2

Friday 9th January - Teaching and Learning Session 2

Tuesday 13th January - Formative Assessment Session 2

Thursday 15th January - Oracy Session 2

The second session with an external speaker for the Literacy / Phonics / EAL / INA strand will be confirmed soon.

Thank you for reading!