

Teaching and Learning Monthly Newsletter

SHARPLES
SCHOOL



December 2025



It's Christmas!

The countdown is officially into single digits and it's nice to know that soon we will be able to have a well earned rest before the pace and energy of January begins !

Going into 2026 for Sharples is an opportunity to improve and continually strive for the best for our pupils. With the commencement of Y9 assessments and Y11 PPEs, it really feels like the countdown to GCSEs begins in January.

With a renewed sense of energy and enthusiasm in January, I believe we should be going forward with high expectations of all our pupils and ourselves. Teaching with pace and energy should be a huge element of every classroom and will be vitally important in January.

I hope you have a wonderful, restful break with quality time to spend with family and friends so that when you do come back in January you feel that your students will thrive under your care in the classroom.

Through routines, high quality teaching and purposeful feedback and checking for understanding, we would see the students go from strength to strength and as ever, at Sharples we are always moving forward - it's the same for Teaching and Learning!

Have a lovely break!

In this newsletter you can expect:

Article on the Building Leadership Programme
by Aamina Amdavadi

Sharples Shoutouts and Celebrations!

Sharples Staff Section

CPD Book Recommendations

X / Twitter Shoutouts

Updates on the Teaching and Learning Development programme



Building Leadership Course

Over the past year and a half, a group of dedicated staff members embarked on an exciting leadership journey through our internal Building Leadership Course. Led by myself and Jacqui, this course was designed to foster leadership skills within our school community, providing participants with the tools, support, and knowledge they need to lead effectively and make a real impact.

An overview of the course

The Building Leadership Course was structured around five dynamic and engaging sessions. Each session was crafted to guide participants through the stages of leadership, from understanding key leadership concepts to implementing and evaluating their own projects. The course featured a blend of theory, practical exercises, external guest speakers, and reflective learning.

Session 1: an introduction to leadership

In our first session, we focused on defining leadership and distinguishing it from management. We explored situational leadership and discussed how leaders can adapt their approach depending on context. Participants also learned about stepping out of their comfort zones - an essential component of growth as a leader. Our guest speaker Adam Robbins was extremely insightful and informative as well.

To set the stage for the practical element of the course, we introduced the project challenge. Each participant was asked to identify a project they wanted to lead, with the support of an in-school sponsor. This laid the foundation for the hands-on learning that would follow.

Session 2: implementing a project
In the second session, we shifted focus to the implementation phase.

Participants worked on refining their leadership behaviours, from managing change and ensuring engagement to handling difficult conversations with confidence. The key takeaway was the importance of relationship-building and gaining buy-in from all stakeholders.

By the end of this session, participants had developed a comprehensive plan for their projects, including intent, implementation strategies, and anticipated outcomes. They were then tasked with writing a 1,000-word project plan and delivering a mini-presentation.



Session 3: measuring impact

As participants moved forward with their projects, the third session turned to measuring impact. Staff shared their progress in 5-10 minute presentations, offering insights into their successes, challenges, and the data they had gathered. We were fortunate to have Yamina Bibi, an expert in assessment data, as a guest speaker, who helped participants refine their understanding of how to effectively analyse data and track progress.

Building Leadership Course

By the end of this session, participants were ready to carry out their projects and gather the final data needed for evaluation.

Session 4: analysing data

The fourth session was all about reflection and considering how to analyse the data that has been collected and how to determine success and identify areas for improvement. We explored the art of delegating, prioritising tasks, and using data to drive decisions.

Participants also reflected on their leadership journeys, identifying what they had learned and how they could inspire, motivate, and influence others. The session concluded with a focus on the next steps - what would participants do differently, and how could they continue to build on their leadership skills in the future?



Session 5: evaluation and presentations

The final session was a celebration of the participants' hard work and growth. Staff presented their projects, sharing their journeys, successes, and reflections with their peers. It was clear that the course had not only developed leadership skills but also fostered a deep sense of collaboration and shared learning.

At the end of the session, certificates were awarded, and a mini celebration marked the culmination of the course. It was an inspiring moment, as we saw our staff members emerge as confident leaders, ready to take on new challenges and make a difference in their areas.

The impact of the course The Building Leadership Course has been an invaluable professional development opportunity, not just for the participants but for the entire school community. By empowering staff to take on leadership roles, we've cultivated a more collaborative, forward-thinking environment where everyone has the tools to lead and innovate.

We're incredibly proud of the work the participants have done and look forward to seeing the ongoing impact of their projects on our school. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Lucie Melmoth, Lucy Hartley, Claire Finney, Naznin Patel, Shah Husayn, Sophie Shawcross and Jack Corrigan on their success. I would also like to thank Jacqui for her invaluable support with the planning and delivery of each session.

This course is only just the beginning. Moving forward, we plan to expand leadership opportunities across the school, ensuring that all staff have the chance to develop and thrive in their roles.

Through initiatives like this, we aim to build a culture where leadership is not just a title, but a shared responsibility among all.

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!



Margaret Heaton

Mags provided outstanding support while I was away sick, taking over my classes and ensuring the students received consistent, high-quality instruction. Her efforts kept them firmly on track with the curriculum, demonstrating remarkable dedication and professionalism.

The pupils were highly engaged and thoroughly enjoyed the creative teaching methods and educational games Mags incorporated into her lessons.



Rachel Helm

Rachel creates a great collaborative atmosphere with all students working well, supporting one another in their pairs, actively engaged in the talk task. Rachel included lots of effective questioning to check for understanding and probing questions to stretch and challenge.



Robert Poole

Rob Poole has been nominated this month for bringing lessons to life by bringing in a variety of outside guests and speakers. This offers many opportunities for students to interact with individuals from all different walks of life and to understand the way a society functions.

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, Alan Barnes has kindly detailed more about his experience into teaching.



1. How long have you been working at Sharples?

I started working at Sharples in September 2021

2. Why did you want to go into teaching?

Whilst working at Tesco as a stock controller, which was not very interesting, I started volunteering at a local school. I found the experience extremely rewarding and enjoyable and I decided that I wanted to pursue this as a career. Being a teacher was not something that I thought of doing when I was a student or at university but I could never imagine doing anything else anymore.

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 Lancaster University and my topic was in my final year when we studied the impact of colonialism on the African continent and how the social, economic, and political context of Africa was different now than it would have been without outside intervention.

4. What is the best part of your job?

Obviously, teaching in the classroom - it is the most important thing we do each day; I strongly believe that schools can transform students' lives and that with high expectations we can show students what they are capable of achieving and what they can become through hard work and determination. A very close second would be organising and running trips; I have led so many trips since coming to Sharples; something which I did not get to do as much in previous schools, and I really enjoy providing opportunities for students that they would otherwise never get.

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

Assessment for learning. I have spent a lot of time researching and reading how to effectively assess students' understanding in different ways that allow teachers to know that students are listening, that they are remembering, and that they are understanding. More recently, I have been exploring strategies for how to assess whole class understanding in a way that allows students to answer anonymously, preventing students from copying others answers and allowing me to be certain that a student knows or does now know something.

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

Ensuring every student is participating; no matter how amazing the explanation or the questioning, it will not benefit every student if they are not listening and it is usually the students' who need to listen most that may not be listening! High expectations, consistency, and routines which maximise learning time and ensure that every student is part of the lesson are the way we can transform students' lives for the better.

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

Ensure the students' know the routines, practise the routines and drill them until the students do it perfectly. It is so easy to do it at first and then let it drift until you are back at square one. Routines allow lesson time to be used to maximum benefit and allow for more learning. It is often 'easier' to just accept 'something close' but in the long term the benefits of well established routines are immeasurable. Also, don't forget to use lots of praise for students who get the routines right, not just sanctions for those who get it wrong (although both are important)

Book and Twitter (X) Recommendations



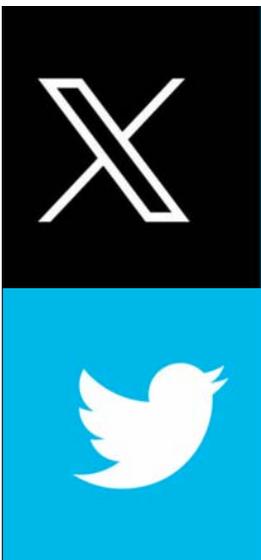
Teaching WalkThrus



Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli team up to present 50 essential teaching techniques, each with five clear and concise illustrations and explanations. It forms a truly unique repository of key teaching methods, valuable to any classroom practitioner in any setting.

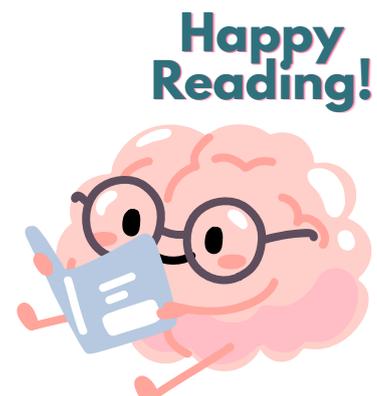
The book covers important practical techniques in behaviour and relationships; curriculum planning; explaining and modelling; questioning and feedback; practice and retrieval; and Mode B teaching. Each technique is simply explained and beautifully illustrated in five short steps, to make sense of complex ideas and support student learning.

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



The link below will take you to a Twitter thread that comments on checking for understanding, adaptive teaching whilst also maintaining high expectations!

[Click here to view the thread](#)



Teaching and Learning Development Programme Updates



Dates for your Diary!

Timings will remain the same

Session 1: 9.30-11

Session 2: 11.20-12.50

Wednesday 7th January - Adaptive Teaching - Woodbridge

Friday 9th January - Teaching and Learning - Woodbridge

Tuesday 13th January - Formative Assessment and Feedback - Kate Jones

Thursday 15th January - Oracy - GKI

Tuesday 20th January - INA / EAL - The Bell Foundation

Thank you for reading!
