

The Magazine of Wath Academy

Vol. 103 No. 6
Jul/Aug 2026

Torch

32

Pages!

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Ever!**

Wath Warriors

**Cheerleaders Become
National Champions**

Class of 2026

**Year 11 Prom and
Year 13 Summer Ball**

New Principal

**Exclusive Interview
with Mr Hopkin**

School Visits

**Yorkshire Wildlife
Park and London**



**WATH ACADEMY
AWARDS**

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All About the EPQ

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Summer Films



**Wath
Academy**

Torch

Volume 103 Number 6
July/August 2026

wathacademy.com/torch



Torch is Wath Academy's
student-produced magazine,
published every half term

You can contribute to *Torch* by
attending the after-school club on
Mondays at 2:50 pm in G20
or by emailing articles to
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**Wath
Academy**

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It's the Last Torch of the Academic Year!

Thank you for reading *Torch* throughout 2025–2026. The next issue will be published just before autumn half term.

HOUSE UPDATE



With just days to go before the much anticipated Sports Day, the House standings are shaping up for a thrilling finish.

Athens currently leads the Games Cup with 47 points, followed closely by Troy on 46. Rome sits in third, while Carthage, Sparta and Thebes will be looking to bounce back from the bottom spots.

In the Staff Cup, Rome holds the top spot, thanks to strong performances in quizzes and creative challenges, with Troy trailing by just a few points. Thebes and Sparta are

in the chasing pack, while Carthage and Athens are at the back.

Whichever house you belong to, there is something to celebrate in the half term just gone.

With Sports Day on the horizon this half term, there's still plenty to play for so make sure you get involved in the events. It could be the perfect opportunity for underdogs like Thebes and Carthage to shine and end the term on a high.

Mrs Lines • Head of Troy



Last year, Troy (pictured) won the Games Cup, while Rome won the Work Cup and Staff Cup

WATH'S NEW PRINCIPAL



Mr Hopkin gives Torch an exclusive interview.

As Mr Ransome is now Director of Education for Maltby Learning Trust, Wath Academy has a new Principal. Mr Hopkin took over on 1st June. We asked him about his life and being Principal.

How long have you worked at Wath Academy and what other jobs did you do before being Principal?

I have worked at Wath Academy for 19½ years. During that time, I have held a number of roles, starting as a PE teacher before progressing through middle and senior leadership positions, including Head of Year, Assistant Principal, Vice Principal and now Principal.

Have you worked at any other schools?

No. Wath Academy is the only school I have worked at. After completing my teacher training at Minsthorpe Community College and Harrogate Grammar School, I joined Wath and have been here ever since.

What made you want to become a teacher?

Sport gave me a lot of opportunities and benefits growing up and I wanted a career where I could encourage more young people to experience those same opportunities. I wanted to help students see the value of sport, get involved, develop confidence and resilience and enjoy the same advantages that participation in sport has given me throughout my life. Alongside that, I wanted a career where I could make a difference to young people's lives every day. Teaching gives you the opportunity to help students succeed, build confidence, overcome challenges and achieve things they may not have thought possible.

What do you like about Wath?

The people. We have fantastic students, dedicated staff and a real sense of community. There is a huge amount of pride in the school and I feel very fortunate to have spent my entire career here.

Wath Academy's Principals



Rev. A T L Gear
Sep 1923–Aug 1940



Mr J Ritchie
Sep 1940–May 1954



Dr C R T Saffell
Apr 1955–Aug 1972



Mr A R H Murphy
Sep 1972–Apr 1977



Mr J Brothwell
Sep 1977–Feb 1991



Mr D E Kirby
Jul 1991–Aug 1997

What are your plans for the future of the school?

We want every student to have access to fantastic opportunities, whether that's through lessons, sport, the arts, trips, leadership opportunities or extra-curricular activities. We will continue to improve our facilities, create even more opportunities for students and make sure every young person feels supported to achieve their best. My aim is for Wath Academy to be a school that every student is proud to attend, every member of staff is proud to work in and one that is recognised as one of the very best schools in the country.

Are there any plans for Year 7 and Year 8 to move out of the sports hall and have their own canteens?

Yes. We are in the final stages of progressing plans for two new dining facilities on site. These will be built during the next academic year and are planned to be open and in use before Christmas. They will provide a much better dining experience for students and reduce the need to use the sports hall for dining.

When Maltby Learning Trust merges with Accord Multi Academy Trust and becomes Place Partnership, what will change?

For students, very little will change on a day-to-day basis. You will still attend Wath Academy, wear the same uniform

and be taught by the same staff. The main benefits will be increased opportunities for students, greater collaboration between schools and access to additional expertise and resources across a larger organisation.

Which famous person do you most admire?

Jonny Wilkinson. His dedication, professionalism and commitment to constantly improving are qualities that I have always admired.

Do you have any hobbies outside school?

Spending time with my family, watching rugby, keeping active and watching my children take part in sport. I also enjoy travelling and spending time outdoors whenever I get the chance.

What is your favourite food?

A good steak.

Favourite animal?

A dog, especially Labradors – I have a Fox Red called Bonnie.

Favourite place?

Tignes ski resort in France.

Thanks to Mr Hopkin for speaking to us!

Ruby B • Year 8
Connie S • Year 7



Mr R. Godber
Sep 1997–Aug 2002



Mr E Sampson
Sep 2002–May 2003



Mrs P Ward
Jan 2004–Aug 2016



Mr J Taylor
Sep 2016–Aug 2020



Mr L Ransome
Sep 2020–May 2026



Mr A Hopkin
Jun 2026–Present

Acting Headteachers: Miss S Swift (after death of Mr Ritchie), Miss E Clegg (between Mr Murphy and Mr Brothwell), Mr D E Kirby (after death of Mr Brothwell until being appointed permanently) and Mr J Chisholm (after death of Mr Sampson)

CHEERLEADING VICTORY!

Wath Warriors take home gold at the UKCA Summer Championships



Performance photos UKCA





On 28th June, dozens of students from Wath Academy took part in a nationally recognised cheer competition hosted by the UK Cheerleading Association at Manchester Velodrome.

After months of training and perfecting our routines, the school brought home two spots on the podium, with the urban cheer group securing first place in the division and the stunt group achieving second!

We also took part in the pom dance routine and, despite the tough competition, we still managed sixth place.

The event is one filled with a sense of community and spirit. It was a day that everyone loved and can't wait to get involved with again next year!

Erin F-L • Year 9





MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Mental Health Awareness Week was held from 11th–17th May. Wath Academy took part in the whole week, including Wear It Green Day.

In May, we celebrated Mental Health Awareness week. The theme this year was how being part of a community can help you maintain good mental health.

Research shows we thrive when we have strong connections with others and supportive communities around us. We are

a community at Wath Academy and this Mental Health Awareness Week celebrated this community that supports us and helps to protect and nurture good mental health.

Students had an assembly that linked the key drivers of integrity and our curriculum intent of students becoming responsible citizens to community and how to maintain good mental health and there are posters around school.

Staff have done a Wellbeing Wednesday lunchtime walk and an after-school yoga session.

On the Thursday, staff were asked to 'Wear It Green' (a national campaign) to wear any item of green clothing to show their awareness of good mental health and show students that support was available all around them.



Mrs Pritchard • Associate Assistant Principal

MATHS VISIT TO LONDON



The Maths trip to London was both educational and perfect for creating long-lasting memories. To start the day, we arrived at Buckingham Palace and took in the sights before making our way to Covent Garden, where we stopped for refreshments and souvenir shopping.

In the afternoon, we visited the British Museum, where we took part in a series of maths-related challenges. This also gave us the opportunity to explore each exhibit in our own time. Later, we went to Pizza Express for our evening meal before arriving at our hotel.

The next day, we walked around the Bank of England and visited MathsWorld, which gave us a better understanding of real-world finance and problem-solving skills.

Overall, the Maths trip was a fantastic experience that we will all remember for years to come. We learned so much and made fun and exciting memories, while also building stronger bonds with people we did not expect to become close to. It helped us to appreciate the opportunities we are given. If I could, I would do it all over again.

Mr Omid • Second in Faculty Mathematics



Chloe C and Ellie N are here to inform you about the recent Year 7 school trip to Yorkshire Wildlife Park in Doncaster.

On 30th June, most Year 7s got the wonderful opportunity to visit the Yorkshire Wildlife Park for a Science trip. There was a variety of exciting – some fearsome – creatures that were seen during this adventure.

The first amazing animals we saw was the mighty King of the Jungle: the lions. They were resting as it was only relatively early, yet their size and posture still resulted in us feeling intimidated through the enclosure walls.

Secondly, we had the liberty to view the majestic polar bears, playfighting in their little lake. Even though they were only playing, their sheer strength and size was obvious to us.



Later on in this phenomenal day, each group had a venture through the Wallaby Walkthrough and the Lemur Forest. Both of these remarkable places allowed us to see the creatures up close and personal.

While the groups were having lunch in the Pyramid Tent, we had a front row seat to the enclosure for the zebras and the impalas, who were peacefully grazing on the luscious grass and refreshing hay.

In the Amazonian Enclosure (which is a walkthrough, just like the Lemur Forest), we witnessed minute Golden Howler Monkeys in their prime. An all-round favourite from the groups in the enclosure was the cute capybaras. These sleek animals are the largest rodent in the world! We even had the privilege to view a baby capybara.

The towering giraffe was next on our sightseeing list. Its imposing figure astounded us as it easily reached up to the top of the pole for its yummy treat. Because of their iconic necks, it makes drinking very awkward. Luckily, these creatures have adapted to only need to drink every few days.

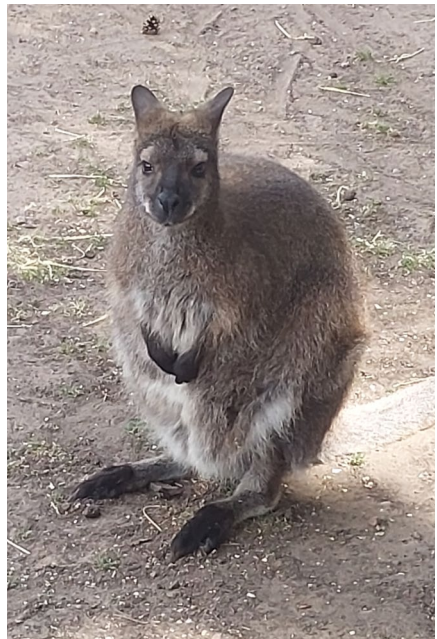
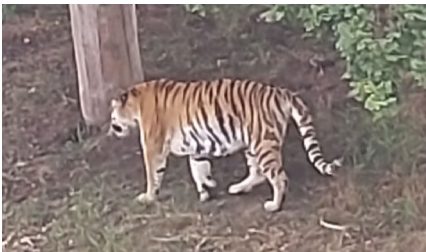
After that, groups travelled to the mighty tiger's habitat. It was sunbathing lazily on its steep ramp; although it took no notice in us, everyone was still speechless from its sheer beauty. Even though it was alone, it was evident it had family due to the amount of bones littered about the space.

The groups had a short time in the wonderful park area, running about and enjoying the enthralling slide.

As well as this, the Year 7s had time in the gift shop, with many purchasing a small soft toy or a souvenir.

As a whole, we all enjoyed the trip and would gladly recommend the attraction or visit again.

Chloe C & Ellie N • Year 7



All photos by Chloe C

YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is an important part of both the Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form curricula. Wath's Year 10 students went on placements from 18th–22nd May.

During work experience week, Year 10 students had the opportunity to spend a week in a variety of workplaces, gaining first-hand insight into different careers and developing employability skills.

Students were placed in a wide range of companies, where they learned what it is like to be part of a team, take on responsibilities, and adapt to new environments while building confidence.

Some students took part in workplace visits, including to The Entertainer toy shop, Rotherham Leisure Complex and Royal Mail, where they learned about a variety of job roles and career pathways. They also took part in hands-on activities to experience.

The week was a valuable opportunity for all Year 10 students, helping them to develop skills, explore career options, and prepare for their future education and employment journeys.

Miss Mellor • Careers Manager

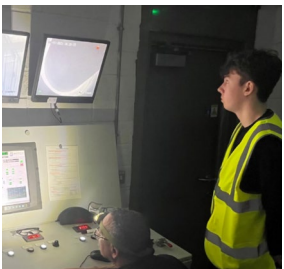
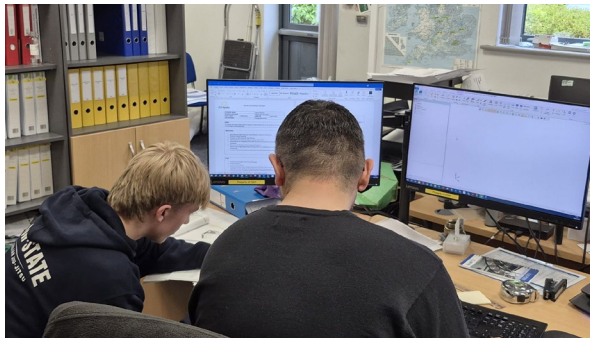


Student Voice

“ I have grown in confidence around new people and got better at communication. It has impacted my future because the job I want to do needs good people skills. ”



Student Voice
“Although I don’t plan on working in this industry in the future, the experience taught me great amounts on what the working world is like and the right mindset to succeed in life.”



EPQ – MORE THAN JUST ‘ENRICHMENT’

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is an enrichment option offered to Sixth Formers. EPQ students undertake a research-based project on a topic of their choice and gain a university-recognised qualification equivalent to half an A Level. Year 12 student Alex E, who has just completed his EPQ, tells us all about it.

Wath Academy Sixth Form students are lowering their asking-grades for university within the first six months of enrolling in Year 12.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) launched in 2008, with the prescribed goal to ‘extend and develop students’ abilities beyond the A Level syllabus and prepare for university or their future career’.

Essentially, students undertake their own individual large-scale project, supported by extensive academic research and source reliability analysis, both conducted independently, regarding any subject area of their choice. This can take the form of a ‘report’, requiring a 5,000 word written dissertation to summarise the findings of the project, or an ‘artefact’, which requires the creation of a physical product alongside a shorter closing written report.

Some of This Year’s EPQs

Was modernism right for architecture?

How is the morality of cannibalism shown in literature and film?

How is ‘The Hundred’ impacting cricket?

Artwork of the ‘perfect’ woman’s face, in relation to Western beauty standards

Topics can range from evaluations of the ramifications of AI to the creation of artwork reflective of a specific genre or period – truly, anything rooted in academic study that can lead to an insightful final judgement. So, in essence, EPQ students are rewarded with the equivalent of half an A Level for researching and producing something in any subject area that interests them.



Towards the end of the EPQ, students deliver a presentation on their findings and their own learning



However, suggesting that the benefits of undertaking an EPQ lie exclusively in the chance to earn an additional qualification would be a significant understatement. The EPQ course allows students to build and apply skills that are required for post-18 learning, providing participants with a head start on their peers.

Personally, my EPQ topic centred around the science of pop music, since I enjoy producing music as a hobby in my own time. Despite my project focus regarding a subject that I don't study at A Level, completing my EPQ has developed my abilities in writing academic literature, finding and analysing sources, and constructing a bibliography. These skills will be especially helpful in the short-term, as they are each applicable for the NEA (coursework) section of my History A Level course, as well as long-term application for future university coursework.

One of the final parts of the course is the presentation section, where students deliver a speech around the topic of their

project, the findings of their research, and their work process used throughout the course. This section is incredibly rewarding, as students develop their skills in communication and confidence through a showcase of the work they have completed.

Though study is largely conducted independently, Wath Academy provides in-depth introductory sessions during enrichment periods to set students on

the right track, as well as in-person support during enrichment periods later in the course and the availability for students to email staff members outside enrichment sessions.

Overall, the EPQ has been the most rewarding single thing I have done in education. Undertaking an EPQ, especially during Year 12, is a low-risk, high-reward enrichment choice. The course gives students a taste of the study methodology required for higher education, as well as rewarding participants for learning more about something that interests them, outside of their other A Level choices.

“The EPQ has been the single most rewarding thing I have done in education.”

Alex E • Year 12

CRICKET REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Wath cricketers celebrate a standout season across all year groups.

The Wath cricketers have enjoyed a truly outstanding season, with impressive performances from Year 7 through to Year 10. From local fixtures to long-distance away days, the teams have shown skill, teamwork and a real love for the game. This year's success reflects not only strong coaching and commitment, but also the enthusiasm of players who bring experience from a wide range of clubs across the region.

To capture the spirit of the season, Year 8 player George T shared his thoughts on

what makes cricket at Wath Academy so special.

“What’s the best part of playing for school?”

George explains that one of the highlights is the mix of players from different clubs: Wath, Elsecar, Upper Haugh, Mexborough and even Hingham.

“Everyone gets on really well and encourages each other. When we play against each other at club level, it actually



The Year 10 cricket team

makes it even more fun to get runs and wickets against each other.”

The school teams benefit from a remarkable blend of talent. Some players have represented Yorkshire at their age group, others are part of the South Yorkshire pathways, and many compete in District and MCC cricket as well club cricket. Alongside them are players who simply enjoy turning out for school with their mates, and together they form a squad that's both competitive and close-knit.



The Year 7 cricket team

The away fixtures have also been a major highlight. Over the past two years, Wath teams have travelled to Woodhouse Grove, Hymers, Birkdale, Harrogate, Ripon Grammar and Beverley Grammar, gaining valuable experience and making lasting memories.

“Which is the best away fixture you’ve played at?”

George doesn’t hesitate: “Probably Woodhouse Grove for the Joe Root Cup finals day last year. We came away with third place and a load of free stuff like caps and Northern Superchargers merchandise.”

This year, the Year 7s matched that achievement at Harrogate, facing familiar rivals Kirk Balk and Wickersley. They



too returned home “dripping in free merchandise,” adding to the excitement of the day.

Another standout venue was Hymers College, which George describes as “a little like playing at Hogwarts, a different experience altogether. We always like to beat the private schools if we can!”

“What are your hopes for next season?”

George and his teammates are already looking ahead with optimism. Their aim is simple: to build on this year’s success, enjoy more competitive fixtures, and continue developing as a squad. With the talent and enthusiasm shown across all year groups, the future of Wath cricket looks bright.

Mr Tingle • Head of Faculty BIC



Some Wath students have even represented Yorkshire County Cricket Club

WATH ACADEMY AWARDS

This year marked the fifth Wath Academy Awards and they made sure to deliver a night full of a wide range of performances and the celebration of all this year's award winners.

We opened this year's ceremony with an astounding performance from our choir, Vox, who sang 'Reflection' from *Mulan*. This kicked off the night, filling Sheffield City Hall with massive applause. I would like to say a massive thank you to Mrs Hole for leading us during rehearsals, teaching harmony, joining us together, having a laugh and, most importantly, the amount of dedication she has put into this year's Academy Awards.

The evening carried on with performances such as 'A Cover Is Not the Book' from *Mary Poppins Returns*, which was performed by Molly H and Jonny F in Year 12, as well as a group of dancers who brought Mary Poppins alive, creating a perfect atmosphere. Another fantastic performance was by Daniel and Billy in Year 13 and Devon in Year 10, where they brought new life to classical performance, being named a fan favourite from the audience with people saying that they "never wanted it to end".

After each performance, there was a section of awards showcasing students' progress, attainment and key achievements. These awards looked at all students who have done exceptionally well over the academic year. The prestigious Principal's Award was awarded to Georgia W in Year 11 this year for her outstanding work across the year.

All staff this year have shown fantastic support towards students making sure the evening runs smoothly and making sure everything was the best it could possibly be. A special thank you to all of the staff involved in all the behind the scenes, setting everything up and all the hours of work they put in.

Finally, a massive well done to all performers and award winners who spent the day in the City Hall representing our school and its achievements.

Who knows if next year's Academy Awards will top it off and be even better?

Niamh E • Year 9





All photos by
Adam Galliford Photography

Year 11 Prom

The Class of 2026 attended the biggest (and, because of the heatwave, hottest) prom ever.

The largest Year 11 prom in its history took place at Wentworth Woodhouse on Friday 26th June 2026.

Two hundred and fifty-nine Wath students turned up in style in various weird and wonderful vehicles to celebrate the end of their five years at Wath Academy.

A large number of staff gave cheers and applause as each student walked the red carpet into the venue before voting for the annual awards, eating, dancing, having

photographs and taking advantage of the on site ice cream van! The weather certainly helped as students were able sit outside in the sun to have a break from the dance floor.

The various new additions to the event meant that staff were unanimous in their views that this was our biggest and best Year 11 prom. A great time was had by all!

Mr Lines • Director of Year 11,
Pastoral and Intervention



Image: Chris Smith/Capture Photography



Prom Award Winners 2026

- Prom Queen** Chloe C
Prom King..... Lewis S-D
Best Dressed Katy P
.....Alfie H
Most Improved Rocco W
Most Inspiring Brooklyn F
Top Joker Taylor S

Year 13 Summer Ball

A fitting celebration for our Sixth Form students.



On Friday 3rd July, our Year 13 students and staff from Wath Academy were lucky enough to have their Summer Ball at Tapton Hall.

All students looked spectacular as they arrived, posing for photos in the grand entrance and stairwell, before sitting down to a delicious three-course meal. Awards for the evening were presented for 'Best Dressed' and 'Future Prime Minister', along with several other categories, all voted for by the students.

Following on from the formalities, students then enjoyed one another's company,

reminiscing about their Sixth Form experiences – good and bad!

It was a wonderful evening, and one that students, I am sure, will look back on with fondness, as yet another positive memory created from their time at Wath Academy Sixth Form.

Thank you to all students who attended and staff who came to share the evening. Finally, a huge "good luck" to all our Year 13 students in the next chapter of their lives!

Mr Barlow • Head of Sixth Form

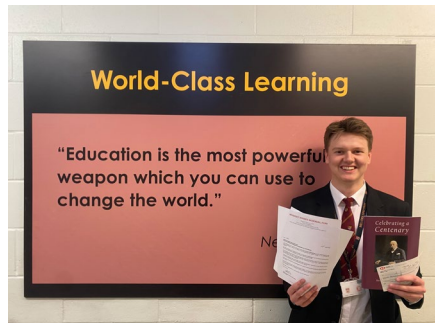
SIXTH FORMER'S SPANISH SUCCESS

Ollie W is runner-up in a languages competition.

Huge congratulations to our fantastic Year 13 A Level Spanish student, Ollie W, on securing an incredible 3rd prize in the prestigious Herbert Hughes Memorial Essay Competition!

Organised by the University of Sheffield, this highly competitive competition attracts top linguists from across the county, making Ollie's achievement an exceptional testament to his academic dedication, analytical depth, and advanced language skills. Crafting a prize-winning essay requires both outstanding fluency in Spanish but also a mature, insightful engagement into the complex issues facing Spain and the Spanish speaking world.

We are immensely proud of Ollie for representing our school community at such



a high level, and this brilliant accolade is a well-deserved recognition of his hard work as he approaches the end of his A-Level journey.

¡Enhorabuena, Ollie!

Mrs Lebon • Subject Leader MFL

Write for Torch!

Torch is a student-run magazine. We are always looking for articles, opinion pieces, creative writing and reviews from budding journalists in Years 7–13 (and staff too!).

If you want to take part, you can come to the after-school enrichment club. Next year, it will be on Mondays straight after Period 4 in G20. Can't make it? No problem! You can also email articles to torch@wathacademy.com.



From the Archives

Each edition of *Torch*, we reprint an article from Wath Academy's extensive collection of old school magazines (available online at wathacademy.com/torch).

This issue, we hear about a foreign exchange – where students from different countries stay with each other's families – in 1951. Wath Grammar School pupil Peggy had just hosted German student Brigitte. Here, Peggy writes about her return trip to stay with Brigitte's family in Weidenau, a suburb of the city Siegen, as well as her wider travels in what was then West Germany. This article originally appeared in the 1952 edition of *The Wathonian*.



My Holiday in Germany (1951)

On the 26th July, we set off, Brigitte back to her home and I on my first trip to another country. We travelled via London, the Hook of Holland and Cologne where at midnight we saw the great cathedral nearby, tall and erect reaching up to the dark sky. We went on to Weidenau and Brigitte's joyful reunion with her four sisters and her grandparents.

For the next few days I had to get used to eating a large amount of spiced sausage and having a meal at 7.0 p.m. instead of 4.0 p.m. There was no tea to drink but only coffee which did not taste at all like ours.

As I walked along the streets I was surprised to notice how many girls wore embroidered aprons over their dresses, and gaily coloured three-quarter socks. It was interesting to see the number of boys who instead of wearing long trousers wore short leather ones. On asking if all houses had three or four families in them, I was informed that there were very few 'one-family houses' as they are called.

As I arrived at the end of their summer term I was able to attend the girls' grammar school for two days only. I found, rather to my discomfort, that school starts at 8.0 a.m. but finishes at 1.0 p.m. with a short break when the girls eat sandwiches. However, I saw that the discipline is much stricter than ours. Whenever a pupil speaks to a master or mistress or is spoken to by one, she stands up. There are seven forms but they start in the seventh form and work up to the first. The lessons are practically the same as ours except that pupils study three foreign languages and as there is no school field there are no school games.

During my visit to Bonn and Koblenz on the Rhine, to a girls' youth camp and several country villages, I found everyone extremely helpful and friendly. I owe many happy friendships to the school exchange system which enables us to become friends with people of another nationality.

Peggy Sanderson • IV.A

June Heatwave

We all sweltered at the end of last month.

The sun beats down on the dry ground, making it too hot to touch. There is no breeze. Students move slower than normal and also without their customary blazers. Everyone is in a desperate search for classrooms with air conditioning. Someone heard a rumour that it may rain next week.

That was the scene in the week commencing 22nd June. The UK entered its second heatwave of the year, after the first in May half term. This was much worse, though. Temperatures reached 33°C in Wath-upon-Dearne and even higher in the south of England. The record UK temperature for June was broken more than once across the week.

The cause of this was a 'heat dome', where high pressure pushes hot air towards the ground, rather than it rising up into the atmosphere. The humidity of the air also made it feel even hotter. According

to Channel 4 News, the 'wet bulb effect' means the water content of the air is so high that sweating doesn't cool you down like it normally does. This is why heatwaves in the UK can feel more unpleasant than abroad.

At Wath Academy, students (and teachers) did not have to wear blazers all week to help them cope with the heat.

The week brought back memories of the final week of school in July 2022 when temperatures reached 39°C. This was the hottest it has even been in the UK.

Extreme weather like heatwaves and heavy snow is becoming more common because of climate change. This shows why it is so important to tackle climate change before we all burn to a crisp!

Ruby B • Year 8



SOCIAL MEDIA BAN?

The Government has announced a ban on under-16s using social media. Year 9 student Niamh E, who will be affected by the ban if it goes ahead, considers whether it is a good idea.

Over the recent weeks, before Sir Keir Starmer's resignation, there has been a plan to initiate a social media ban for under-16s across the UK from early 2027. This has caused many people to question whether or not this will work due to the information provided from Australia's social media ban where 6 out of 10 teenagers found a loophole around it.

Social media apps involved in the ban include Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X and Reddit. This means any under-16s will not be able to create an account to any of these apps and existing ones will be banned.

In my opinion, the social media ban could be both bad and good for the UK. Currently, however, I believe there are bigger things to look at and that we should be delaying the main focus from this situation until a later point.

There are many reasons why MPs want this ban to be put in place. The main reason is to keep children safe from harmful and inappropriate imagery/videography online. This should stop children from seeing as many negative thoughts from people online, which should result in reduced bullying rates throughout the country.

However, I believe that the ban should be slowly introduced by slowly adding limits to certain apps saying you are only allowed a certain amount of screen time a day for at least a year before putting a full ban. I think it should happen this way as there are a lot of children who are addicted to their screens and need time to get off of them.

In conclusion the ban will be a promising idea, but it isn't necessary at this very second.

Niamh E • Year 9

REVIEWS

The Illustrated Mum by Jacqueline Wilson

The Illustrated Mum is a book by bestselling UK author Jacqueline Wilson, published in 1999. It follows the story of two sisters (Star and Dolphin) and their eccentric mum Marigold. As main character Dolphin says in the book, Marigold can get 'weird' sometimes. After a particularly manic episode, Star decides that she's had enough and runs away to the city to go and live with her dad, leaving her younger sister Dolphin alone with her (still struggling) mother.

The book explores themes of family, mental health, sisterhood and the reassurance that things can and eventually will get better.

This book is amazing for people of all ages, though is recommended for ages 10 to 14,

and is in fact recommended by the school itself for Year 8s as part of the '60 Books to

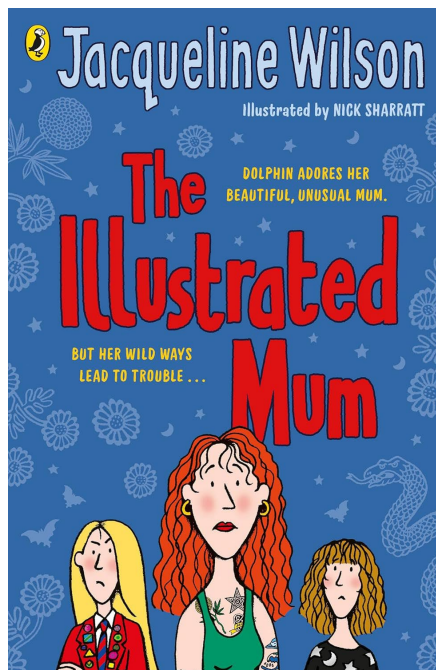
Read Before You're 18' list in students' planners and on the displays around the school on the corridors.

In my opinion, this book is one of Jacqueline most iconic books and serves as a beautiful representation of family and fight and how life can be both messy and perfect all at once.

One psychology expert says the book "captures the emotional nuance of the illness however may not reflect the standard experience

for everyone living with the condition today". ★★★★★

Edith S • Year 8



We Want Your Reviews!

If you have read, watched or played something lately, why not let *Torch* readers know your opinions? Send your reviews to torch@wathacademy.com.

Toy Story 5 (in cinemas now)

Pixar's *Toy Story* series of films has been setting the standard for computer-animated films since the original *Toy Story* in 1995. This latest instalment (and the first since 2019) is a welcome return, though it doesn't reach the highs of other films.

At the beginning of the film, the toys – including Buzz Lightyear, Jessie and many other returning characters, but not Woody – have finally found a loving owner, eight-year-old Bonnie, after passed down between families.

Bonnie wants to ask the twins that live next door if they want to play. When she plucks up the courage to ask, the twins see her carrying her beloved toys and laugh at her.

Bonnie sees everyone with electronic devices and wants on herself. Her parents finally give her a 'Lilypad' (like an iPad) called Lily. Like all the other toys, it comes to life when Bonnie is out the room.

Lily's arrival makes the other toys, especially Jessie, worried that they will be

forgotten. Jessie reaches out to Woody to find a way to keep Bonnie playing with toys.

The film really shows how traditional toys can still be useful, even when it seems like electronic devices are taking over. I agree with this message. The film also explores bullying, which it conveys realistically, even though it is not nice to watch.

It was welcome to see the characters return for a fifth time. Woody now has a bald patch from where his paint has rubbed off, showing he has aged. Jessie is my favourite character because she is so nice and really wants to help Bonnie redevelop her love for toys and show her that electronic devices aren't necessary.

Although I enjoyed the film, it feels like the series is being dragged out now and it has taken them seven years to do another one. I really feel like Pixar are running out of ideas of what to do. This should be the last film. ★★★★★

Ruby B • Year 8



Image: Disney

Enola Holmes (Netflix)

This film starring Millie Bobby Brown is about fictional detective Sherlock Holmes's adventurous younger sister who is also a budding detective herself.

She grew up in a place called Ferndell Hall in the Victorian English countryside with her mother Eudoria. Everything was perfect until one day Eudoria disappeared without a trace. Enola was given (through a series of worded clues) a huge wad of money to help her traverse through the streets of London on her first unofficial detective case.

Enola is now the ward (someone else is her guardian) of her oldest brother, whom she has not seen for years, Mycroft; he wants to send her to a finishing school so she can become one of society's 'fine ladies'.

Obviously, Enola detests the idea of finishing school so she escapes on a train and meets the reckless Lord Viscount Earnest Augustus Tewksbury, Marquess of Basilwether. Then there is the infamous 'Man in the Brown Bowler Hat' or Linthorn, as he is later known. He is on the hunt to kill Tewksbury to have his vote in the house of Lords, but when Enola helps him escape by jumping off of the train, he is also set on hunting her too.

Now on her mum's trail in London, she has ditched the young Lord and has cracked a worded code which led her to a lane on which she found an experiment she did with her mother on a much larger scale. An explosive scale! While there, Linthorn tries to attack her and kill her but luckily Enola did not have an ordinary education; Eudoria had taught her Ju-jitsu! The young detective then escapes Linthorn and runs, still determined to find her mother.

The youngest Holmes then realises the 'nincompoop' Tewksbury is still in mortal danger, because of this she puts her mum's case on hold to save him. On the hunt to find her friend,

Enola is arrested by Inspector Lestrade (who mistakes her for a fugitive) who ultimately pardons her and returns her to Mycroft. Following his earlier wishes she is sent to the finishing school for young ladies and of course (mainly to do with her active upbringing) she does not fit in.

Later on, the young Lord Tewksbury manages to free Enola and together they travel back to London and near his family stately home.

However, the Man in the Brown Bowler Hat will not stop his pursuit of the young protagonists and again he tracks them down to the house. We later find out that it is not only the mystery man but the Lord Viscount's Grandma who wants the young man gone.

I would recommend this movie to anyone who likes history and fiction mixed in with adventure and eye-catching fight scenes that leave you hanging on the edge of your seat. If you have watched this and enjoyed it, there is an *Enola Holmes 2* and *3* (that came out on 1st July) streaming on Netflix.

★★★★★



Chloe C • Year 7

Michael

(available to rent online and coming soon to subscription streaming services)

I'm sure you've heard of the new film based on the King of Pop: Michael Jackson! His famous role was played by his nephew, Jaafar Jackson.

The legendary singer unfortunately passed away on June 25th 2009, aged 50, due to cardiac arrest.

This movie showcases his early life in deeper context.

When Michael Jackson was a young boy, he had four other older siblings; he was the youngest.

Michael's father – who we will dive deeper into later – called them the 'Jackson Five'. The Jackson Five was a small but talented band who starred 8-year-old Michael as the lead singer.

However, his natural talent was pushed by his controlling father, Joe Jackson. The movie depicts and emphasises Joe Jackson's unrelenting and abusive control over all his children.

As Michael Jackson grows older, his father books more gigs at bigger places and adds to the growing stardom and publicity the Jackson Five are gaining.

On the other hand, Michael Jackson wants to break free of his father's grasp and go solo.

He declares to his father – with some nervousness – that he really wants to go solo and release his new album. His father agrees, but with one condition: to do a world tour with the other members of the Jackson Five.



As the movie continues through Michael Jackson's fame, it also showcases his fans and him visiting hospitals and donating to charity.

Personally, I really enjoyed this movie of his childhood and everything else; it shows the hard journey of rising to fame and persevering through hardships.

When I watched *Michael*, I wasn't really that much of a fan, but this changed my mind by a lot!

I recommend this to anyone, especially pop singers, since this movie is gold!

★★★★★

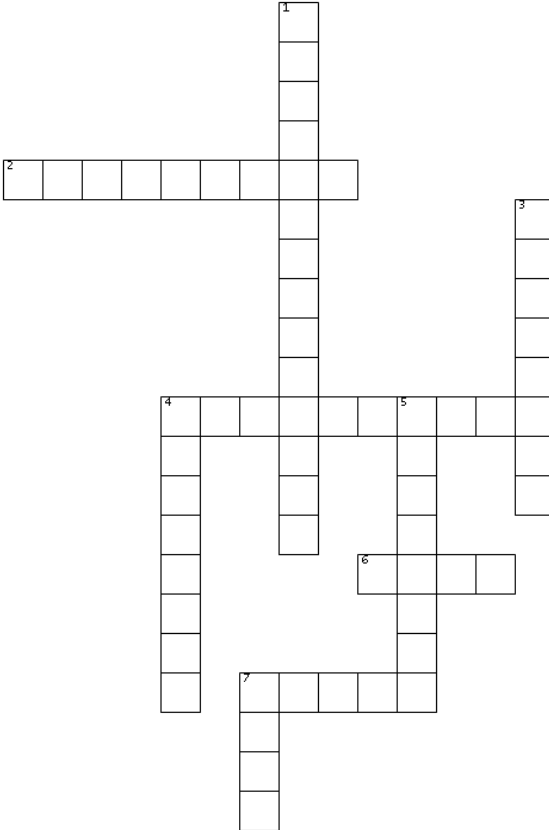
Ellie N • Year 7

PUZZLES

Solutions on
page 23



Summer Crossword



Clues

Across

2. Something round you play games with on the beach (9)
4. You build them on the beach using buckets (10)
6. The whole beach is covered in this (4)
7. You use this to dig a hole on the beach (5)

Down

1. Like kayaking but standing up (14)
3. Something you eat to cool down on a hot day (3, 5)
4. Something you put on to protect you from the UV rays (8)
5. Something you do to catch a tan (8)
7. You do this to move in the sea (4)

Ruby B • Year 8 | Matilda D • Year 8 | Connie S • Year 7



Anagrams of Things You Take on Holiday

- | | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. ATEUSCSI | 4. KINIBI | 7. ARSTNANTIAL PPA |
| 2. TPSRASPO | 5. SREOU | 8. MNUSECAR |
| 3. GASNSUESIS | 6. ETCTSIK | 9. KOBO |

Ruby B • Year 8

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