

Balcarras Sixth Form

2022





Corinna Youngs (Year 11 Pittville)

Plans: to study physics at university or natural sciences at Cambridge

The thing that sold Balcarras to me was the teachers. They are all so supportive and welcoming, and they made me feel at home instantly. From the very beginning of Year 12, they have given me so much support for my early entry application to Cambridge, everything from helping me to deeply explore my subject, to help with personal statements. All the teachers have made my lessons enjoyable, and they continuously challenge my understanding. This helped me to narrow down what I would like to study post 18. Even through our disrupted Year 12, the sixth form team have been so supportive, and they have organised many different activities and events to make us a very close community. My favourite ones have been sixth form dress up day and the Christmas buffet. These allow us to focus on something apart from the stresses of A-levels and to have a bit of fun, pulling our community together. Outside of my academics, I have taken part in Gold DofE and I have really enjoyed this. It has helped build my confidence and has given me more skills, as well as some great memories. I have really enjoyed my time so far and I am looking forward to what's to come, even though it will be very stressful, and I am confident that I will continue to receive any support I need.



Jabir Rashid (Year 11 Pittville)

Plans: to study accounting and finance at university

Joining Balcarras was a new step in my life after previously attending an external secondary school. Although it was a step outside of my comfort zone, I was amazed to be greeted with such a welcoming atmosphere, further aided by an incredible culture and work ethic shared by so many here at sixth form. Balcarras has allowed me to take steps towards fulfilling my potential and enabling me to realise who I truly am as a person. Academically, Balcarras has made me dream of achieving things I would never have been able to achieve without the added value gained from excellent teaching and staff who put their students first. This has led to unlocking ambition within me, which I did not realise was there. My ambition has been reflected in my grade progression which signifies the added value I have gained as an individual. Balcarras has not only encouraged me to do well academically, but has also allowed me to take opportunities to apply these skills in real life scenarios through a vast range of career opportunities and extra circular activities. It may be true that some opportunities were cancelled due to Covid, but the sixth form staff and students have done an excellent job of creating opportunities and adapting to these circumstances. For example, I took part in a stock market trading competition put on by the business department. This allowed me to gain valuable knowledge and skills which has encouraged me to start trading by myself. Post 18 I plan to study accounting and finance at a large city university such as Birmingham. This is different to what I thought I would do initially as a timid Year 12 but, as a Year 13 I am now filled with confidence to achieve at the highest level and take on the world with open arms.



Hannah Nicholls (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study Modern and Medieval Languages at Cambridge

By the end of Year 11, I was sure that I wanted to continue studying French and Russian at A-level with a view to taking a modern languages degree, so the opportunity to continue my Russian and French studies in such a strong and supportive languages department encouraged me to join the sixth form at Balcarras. Whilst being a friendly environment, the school is also academically challenging, and I've valued the opportunity to extend my languages beyond the classroom by taking part in translation competitions, workshops and foreign language debating competitions. The chance to do an EPQ exploring interests of mine such as Francophone African literature has particularly challenged the depth and range of my language abilities as well as giving me the opportunity to develop research and academic skills relevant for study at university. The support of the staff and the sixth form team at Balcarras is second to none with a huge range of extracurricular activities enhancing the academic focus. Opportunities for music making are superb and I've been able to develop my love of choral singing with the Balcarras Chamber Choir, taking part in the Midsummer Music festival and the Christmas Carol Concert, which has provided me with a firm foundation enabling me to carry on singing in university choirs in the future. The range of music on offer means that whatever your musical tastes you're likely to find it celebrated here at Balcarras. The work ethic at Balcarras is strong and I have found the school provides an exceptionally supportive environment for those applying for humanities and languages at university. Equally importantly, beyond the classroom, it has given me the skills and independence to make the most of what university life will have to offer.



Matthew Graham (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study biochemistry at university

After studying at Balcarras since Year 7, I knew continuing my studies at the sixth form was the right choice for me. The excellent teaching standard and facilities in the lower years continued into Year 12, and I found the transition smooth due to the friendly atmosphere of the teachers and other students. I am currently studying chemistry, biology and history. I have found that the equipment and facilities for my subjects are excellent, especially in chemistry, and the independent study room allows me to keep on top of my schoolwork in a focussed environment. The attention paid to students has helped me achieve the best I can in my subjects, with teachers always being available to talk to whenever I have sought help. As someone studying both humanities and science subjects, I can say that both are equally valued by staff. The history NEA and my EPQ have allowed me to delve into topics that interest me, outside the course content, and researching the decline of the Spanish empire under Carlos II for history has given me insight into independent work that I feel will be useful for my time at university.



Welcome to Balcarras Sixth Form

A warm welcome to this guide about the courses available in the sixth form from September 2022.

We are proud of the opportunities we offer, based around an exciting range of courses, excellent teaching and an atmosphere of enjoyment and collaboration. This combination, along with outstanding results at A-level, has led Ofsted to judge that we are one of the best sixth forms in the country.

In November 2020 we were named The Sunday Times Southwest State School of the Decade in recognition of our superb academic performance over many years.

It is not just in terms of raw results that the sixth form excels. Over the last three years we have achieved the highest A-level value added for any state school in Gloucestershire and nationally we are in the top 2% of providers.

As well as superb facilities for academic study, there is a wealth of extracurricular activities, along with consistent support and guidance throughout your two-year programme. We are very proud of the achievements of our sixth form students, and the contribution they make each year as Balcarras continues to strive to go from strength to strength.

I hope you will want to join us and I look forward to the contribution you can make to our success in the future.

Dominic Burke Headteacher

The sixth form is outstanding. The quality of teaching, leadership and what the school provides is exceptional. Students gain a very high standard in examinations. **OFSTED**

Welcome



Thank you very much for taking some time to read our new sixth form prospectus!

Your sixth form education is an exciting stage of your life and a successful and rewarding experience from 16 - 18 will unlock a world of opportunities before you. I am confident that at Balcarras you can thrive and succeed.

The quality of the teaching in the sixth form is exceptional and the experience you will have as a Year 12 and Year 13 student is, I believe, unrivalled. The exciting and positive atmosphere in our purpose-built sixth form building is tangible.

We hope that you will leave the sixth form as well-rounded and highly qualified adults with a clear vision of your future intentions and pathways.

At the beginning of this journey you will choose four subjects in which you have a keen interest. This can sometimes be a difficult decision and therefore your teachers, tutors and parents are on hand to guide and advise you where necessary. You may also wish to talk to the sixth form team, Mrs Derrick, Mr Constance, Ms Taylor or me.

I cannot wait to meet you and discuss your plans and aspirations.

Darren Leatherbarrow Head of Sixth Form

Teachers are experts in
their subjects. **OFSTED**

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A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Sixth form team

Mr Darren Leatherbarrow, the Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Derrick and Mr Constance, the Heads of Years 12 and 13 and members of the Senior Management Team meet with each applicant before they enter the sixth form to help them to make the right choices. This gives students and parents the opportunity to discuss any questions they might have.

Throughout your time in the sixth form, Mr Leatherbarrow, Mrs Derrick and Mr Constance will be available to offer advice on your studies and your future, and to listen to your concerns. They each have an office in the Sixth Form Centre and are the normal points of contact for parents of sixth formers.



Mrs Derrick



Mr Constance

Tutors

Students will be in tutor groups. The role of the sixth form tutor is to be concerned with the welfare and academic progress of their students. Tutor groups meet as a whole, but there will also be regular individual tutorials at which your academic progress will be discussed. Tutors pay particular attention to attendance (our expectation is 100% attendance) and students will have regular feedback from your subject teachers. Students are expected not to take family holidays in school time.

A feature of Balcarras Sixth Form is our system of progress reports. In the first term you will be set target grades for each of your subjects. Progress grades are then published each term. This gives students and parents a clear and current record of academic progress.

Administrative support and UCAS guidance

Ms Lynda Taylor provides administrative support for sixth form students and staff, and would be delighted to aid you in any way. Ms Taylor plays a crucial role in recruitment and admissions, and is the sixth form's UCAS supervisor, and as such will play an integral role in your sixth form journey.



Ms Taylor



Mrs Dean

Study supervision and mentoring

There are a number of additional members of the sixth form team who will work with you on a daily basis. Our study supervision team consists of Mrs Dean, Mr Boughton and Mr Meredith. They not only supervise Study in our state-of-the-art purpose-built study rooms, but also monitor attendance, and provide crucial academic mentoring and pastoral support, in addition to our tutor team and subject teachers.



Mr Boughton

Teachers

Your A-level teachers will probably be your most important contacts. After all, you are coming to the sixth form for academic success. They will advise you about your progress, as well as reporting regularly to your tutors and, of course, your parents. They can also be a useful source of information about careers and degree courses in your chosen area.



Mr Meredith

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Careers and university advice

Progression to university is the goal of many students. Towards the middle of Year 12 the futures course is dedicated to university choices and the UCAS system. In addition to this, Mr Leatherbarrow, Mrs Derrick and Mr Constance will be available to discuss applications with students. The first half-term of Year 13 is when UCAS applications are written and sent (the school deadline is 5th December – but early applications are advised). All students use the electronic application system which makes the whole process paperless and quick.

The Oxbridge application programme plus information about grants, loans and fees will be available to parents and students – an information evening will take place in May of Year 12. The Head of Careers, Mrs Bull coordinates our advice service to students. This will continue to be an important support to students, and Boost coordinator Mr Niblett runs a substantial advice and preparation programme.

Reports and parents' evenings

Communication with parents is something we value. At the beginning of Year 12 an information evening is held for the parents of all new sixth form students. In addition to the 3 yearly progress reports, there is also a full written report in Year 12. There are also parents' evenings in both years, with two for Year 13. Students are expected to attend these meetings along with their parents.

The Sixth Form Councils

There is a very active student voice in Balcarras. Each half term the Year 12 and Year 13 Councils will meet to discuss issues affecting student academic progress, pastoral and welfare issues, extra-curricular opportunities, sixth form accommodation and uniform, and planning fun social events! Each year the student Councils make recommendations which result in positive and progressive changes to the sixth form.

...students gain access to the top universities or the apprenticeships of their choice. **OFSTED**



A-levels offered at Balcarras

Twenty-five A-levels are available. Syllabus information is available on pages 10 - 40.

Art

Biology

Business studies

Chemistry

Computer science

Drama and theatre

Economics

English literature

Environmental science

French

Further mathematics

Geography

History

Mathematics

Music

Photography

Physical education

Physics

Politics

Product design

Psychology

Religion, philosophy and ethics

Russian

Spanish

Textiles

We also provide vocational qualifications:

Food science & nutrition

Health and social care

Creative iMedia

THE COURSES ON OFFER

What is an A-level?

All students who apply to Balcarras are choosing to study a full suite of four A-level subjects for the entire duration of the first year. We believe that the curriculum offered at Balcarras will provide you with excellent breadth and flexibility, and enable all students to progress to their preferred post-18 destination. We ask that all applicants opt for at least 4 subjects because we believe that this provides the opportunity to work out what you really want to study by the end of Year 12. Surveys have shown that more than 50% of students change their minds about the three subjects with which to continue in Year 13. Most students will drop one of their subjects at the end of Year 12 and study 3 subjects in Year 13. No student is required to continue with all 4 subjects for two years, although some may be advised to continue with all 4 subjects depending on their university course choices. We will of course offer advice to students on their choices and any thoughts they may have about further study. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the sixth form team.

Assessment

Each A-level course comprises of multiple units of work. These are usually assessed through examinations, coursework or a combination of the two. In Year 12 internal trial examination assessments will take place in February, and further rigorous end of year exams will be held in June - July. In Year 13 internal trial examination assessments will take place in January, and the final external examination will take place in May - June.

A-level courses are challenging and are more demanding than GCSEs. All students will receive regular assessment and feedback throughout their courses to support their progression from GCSE to A-level. In all A-level courses grades A* to E will represent a pass, whereas the vocational courses we offer are graded Distinction* to Pass.

Choosing your courses

When choosing your courses, you should be guided by three key factors: academic ability and aptitude; enjoyment and interest; relevance to your future career aspirations. Firstly, you should consider your academic strengths: which are your best subjects? Secondly, you should select subjects you most enjoy studying.

Thirdly, if you have a firm idea about your future career or a subject you wish to study at university, then you are strongly advised to do some careful research into which subjects are required to ensure all options remain open to you.

With four A-level courses available to you in Year 12, there is an opportunity to maintain a fairly broad curriculum. For example, you may wish to take a language alongside three science subjects, or a science subject alongside three arts and humanities subjects. Universities and employers will welcome such breadth.

Progression

Progression from Year 12 to Year 13 is not automatic. It is dependent on your progress throughout Year 12, and your examination results. If students do not gain at least a pass grade in their trial examinations in Year 12, then they may be advised not to continue that particular course to A-level and it may be that their programme of study is changed.

The vast majority of students, however, following four A-level courses in Year 12 will usually progress into Year 13 to take three A-levels. Any student wishing to continue to study all four A-levels in Year 13 may do so. The decision about which course to drop, if any, will be made at the end of Year 12. This decision will be made on the basis of discussion between the students and teachers. Parents are welcome to be involved in the discussion if they so wish.

Entry requirements

The minimum requirement for entry to sixth form is two grade 6's and three grade 5's to include mathematics and English. Please refer to the Balcarras website for full details.

Many subjects will require a grade 6 in that particular subject at GCSE. Details can be found on the relevant subject page.

Each year, many students apply from schools other than Balcarras. The benefits they bring to the sixth form, both socially and academically, are valued immensely. However, we are only able to accommodate a maximum of 50 external students.

In the event that more than 50 wish to take up a place in Year 12, students will be allocated places based on the over-subscription criteria set out on the school's website.

A RICH EXPERIENCE

Alongside your academic subjects there will be a number of other courses on your timetable:

Futures

This course offers a variety of elements:

- Preparation for higher education: choosing the right course, UCAS applications, money management, student accommodation
- Alternatives to higher education
- Starting a career, taking a gap year
- Study skills and tips for achieving success at A-level, including note taking, essay writing and time management

Guest speakers

The whole of Year 12 comes together once a fortnight to listen to a variety of interesting and informative guest speakers. Recent topics have included gap years, careers in film making, university finances, volunteering in Gloucestershire, safe driving and many others.

Sixth form games

Every Wednesday afternoon all Year 12 students take part in a sporting activity. This is a compulsory part of the curriculum, and the aim is for every student to do some form of physical exercise which they enjoy. Each student selects from a wide range of activities, which varies from term to term. A number of competitive options are available including netball, hockey, football and rugby. Fitness training or inter-school fixtures also take place during this time. More recreational options (both onsite and offsite) have included body conditioning, the use of the fitness suite, yoga, dodgeball, golf and badminton.

Extracurricular activities

Students participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities including: The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Young Enterprise, the paired reading scheme, 'Engage' discussion forums, the Bar Mock Trial, World Challenge, debating, school music competitions, drama productions, inter-school sports matches and regular intra-tutor competitions.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)

The DofE at Balcarras is thriving. The sixth form are invited to join at Gold level (no previous levels are required if this has not been done before). The Gold Award involves a physical recreation, skill, residential and volunteering section as well as a 4 day expedition. Meetings are held regularly to encourage students to gain their award whilst at Balcarras and to provide support and encouragement. The expedition training is undertaken in school time with the expeditions running in-house in the summer between Year 12 and 13 to the Peak District and Dartmoor. Pupils can use participation in other activities such as paired reading, paired maths mentoring and their extra-curricular games towards their DofE sections.

Young Enterprise

The success of the Young Enterprise scheme at Balcarras has been exceptional. Students have formed their own companies, producing and selling a range of goods and services in recent years. Each business is judged on its trading activities, the quality of production and a financial report at the end of the year. As a team we have finished in the top two within Gloucestershire for the past ten years, winning the last four years in a row. We have also represented the county at the South West final on no less than four occasions.

The paired reading scheme

Year 12 students are invited to take part in the paired reading scheme run by the learning support and English departments. Students are given training by the learning support department and then paired with a Year 7 or Year 8 pupil. The student and the pupil arrange times to meet, and the sixth former helps the pupil with reading and literacy. This proves to be extremely rewarding for both.

Extended Project Qualification

The Extended Project is a Level 3 qualification and is intended to stretch and challenge students beyond their A-level choices; it is therefore highly regarded by universities and employers alike. The EPQ allows each student to embark on a self-motivated and largely independent project. The students have freedom of choice over their project's title, subject to approval by the course coordinators, and the direction of its completion; our students find this highly rewarding. See page 40 for further details about EPQ.

OUTSTANDING FACILITIES

The sixth form is based in its own purpose-built centre. The facilities are outstanding – with science laboratories for sixth form courses, as well as the information technology and business suites. There is a superb high spec drama studio and a total of twelve classrooms. Much of the sixth form teaching takes place in the block - though some subjects like art and design technology take place in other parts of the school, taking advantage of specialist facilities.

Private study

We firmly believe that our supervised study facilities, which are open to students both before school from 08:00, and after school until 18:00, play a crucial role in the success of the sixth form. There is no doubt they help our students develop effective study routines, that it facilitates the academic progress our students

make, and enhances the vibrant sixth form community we enjoy. Developing good independent study habits is the most effective way to academic success in the sixth form. Most students will have about one hour a day private study time. There are two large study areas, with over 120 computer terminals and study carrels at which you can work. These are used for supervised private study in both Year 12 and Year 13.

Sixth form common room

The common room provides a superb space in which students can socialise. It is well equipped for use by students at break and lunch, including a music system and vending machines. There are facilities for students to make their own refreshments including a kettle and microwaves. There is also a wide variety of food served to sixth formers in the common room at break and lunchtimes.



The sixth form ... has standards that are among the highest in the country. **OFSTED**

UNIFORM

The idea

The uniform, decided by consensus between staff, students, parents and governors, allows flexibility. The dress code is distinctive from that of the lower school. Sixth form students are expected to be smartly dressed at all times and act as role models for the younger pupils at the school.

The design

A number of sixth formers were involved in agreeing the design. A feature is the sixth form logo - which appears on the polo shirts, jumpers and cardigans.

The uniform

- Black or brown formal shoes
- Smart black or grey trousers or smart black or grey skirt
- Balcarras Sixth Form polo shirt - red, ash grey, or royal blue
- Balcarras Sixth Form Jumper in black or grey or Balcarras Sixth Form Cardigan in black
- Belts should be black, grey or brown

Training shoes, boots, scarves, jackets or coats may not be worn in the sixth form. Jewellery, hair colour and make-up should be subtle. Students should see their Head of Year if they are unsure about any item.

Sixth Form Games kit

- Trainers
- Boots for football and rugby
- Either shorts, track suit bottoms or leggings
- T-shirt, jumper
- Jewellery should be removed before exercise and hair tied back



Buying uniform

The polo shirts, sweatshirts and cardigans are available from "The Schoolwear Company", "Monkhouse" (formally named "Schooltogs"), or gently worn from the sixth form office.

ART

Syllabus title:
Art (Fine art)

Examination board:
AQA

A-level

Unit 1	Portfolio unit supported by 1,000-3,000 words		60% of A-level
Unit 2	Practical examination	15 hrs	40% of A-level

Studying A-level art

The course is sympathetic with the structure of GCSE art. It revolves around units of coursework and controlled tests set against four assessment objectives. As with GCSE art, much of the practical work is triggered by critical studies with written research acting as a diary of work undertaken. Students can work in a range of media including painting, mixed media, printmaking and sculpture. All work will be internally marked, and then moderated by AQA. The controlled test in Year 12 should be seen as an opportunity for developing ideas and in Year 13 to develop a more fully realised project.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved a grade 6 in GCSE art. Students must demonstrate some proficiency in their use of written English, especially helpful at A-level. Consideration can be given to students who achieve a level 5 at GCSE depending on their portfolio.

BIOLOGY

Syllabus title:

Biology

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Paper 1	Covers topics 1-4	2 hrs	35% of total marks
Paper 2	Topics 5-8	2 hrs	35% of total marks
Paper 3	Topics 1-8 and the relevant practical skills	2 hrs	30% of total marks

Studying A-level biology

We deliver the AQA biology syllabus. It is an ideal course for students who really enjoy biology and want to explore all the different facets of the subject.

Biology at A-level is stimulating, demanding and challenging. We cover many different topics from human disease, to animal physiology, plant physiology, new gene technologies and the biochemistry of cells and processes. Prospective students will need to be good at applying knowledge and understanding to novel situations whilst displaying a high level of literacy and numeracy – at least 10% of the marks at A-level will come from the use of maths skills taught in higher tier GCSE maths. Students will also complete a series of set practicals chosen by AQA. The skills developed in this course have enabled past students to successfully follow higher education courses in medicine, midwifery, veterinary sciences, zoology, biology, biochemistry, marine biology, forestry and ecology.

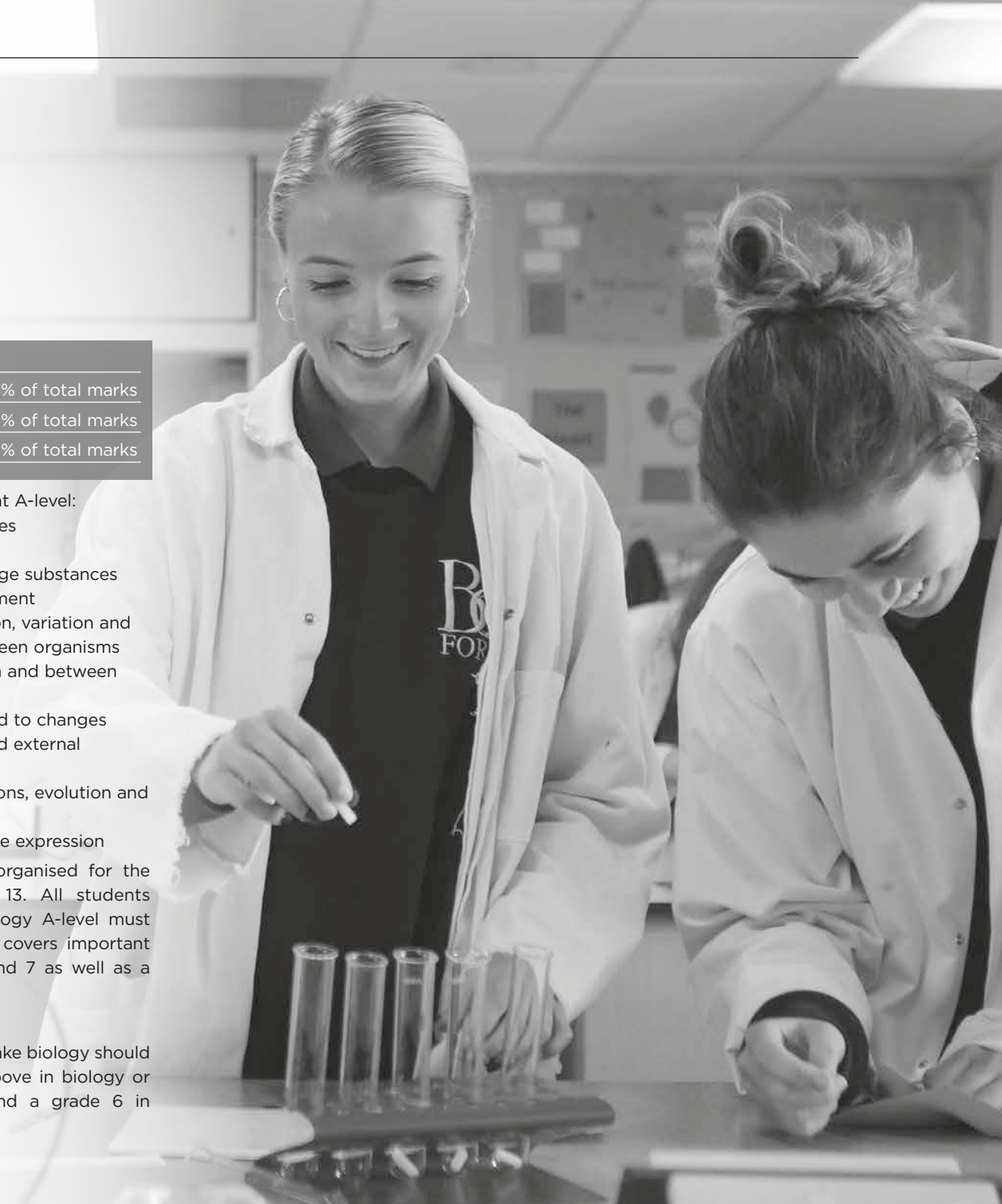
8 topics are covered at A-level:

- 1 - Biological molecules
- 2 - Cells
- 3 - Organisms exchange substances with their environment
- 4 - Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
- 5 - Energy transfers in and between organisms
- 6 - Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- 7 - Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
- 8 - The control of gene expression

A field day is also organised for the September of Year 13. All students studying the full biology A-level must attend this trip as it covers important aspects of topic 5 and 7 as well as a required practical.

Entry requirements

Students wishing to take biology should have a grade 6 or above in biology or combined science and a grade 6 in maths.



BUSINESS STUDIES

Syllabus title:

Business studies

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Paper 1	Business 1: Strategic Decisions	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level
Paper 2	Business 2: Managing Strategic Change	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level
Paper 3	Business 3: Business in Context	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level

Studying A-level business

The course is an excellent overview of the different skills needed in a business environment. It introduces key theories and then tests them in a real world situation. The emphasis of the course is on the relevance of business theory to businesses in practice. Students will learn a variety of decision-making techniques and apply these in examination conditions.

The course also places an emphasis on developing entrepreneurship skills and giving students the confidence to set up and run their own company in the future. This is a major government initiative and all students in business are encouraged to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different business operations.

Entry requirements

Successful A-level business students need to have good communication skills and be confident using numbers.

Students do not need to have studied business studies at GCSE-level.



CHEMISTRY

Syllabus title:
Chemistry A

Examination board:
OCR



A-level

Paper 1	Periodic Table, Elements and Physical Chemistry	100 marks and is split into two sections and assesses content from teaching modules 1, 2, 3 and 5	2¼ hrs	37% of total A-level
Paper 2	Synthesis and Analytical Techniques	100 marks and is split into two sections and assesses content from teaching modules 1, 2, 4 and 6	2¼ hrs	37% of total A-level
Unit 3	Unified Chemistry	70 marks across all teaching modules 1 to 6	1½ hrs	26% of total A-level

Studying A-level chemistry

Chemistry develops experimental skills and increases a student's ability to handle, apply and evaluate information as well as extend their knowledge and understanding of scientific theories and applications. The students will discover how and why the atoms and molecules that make up every chemical react and behave. This enables students to have a greater awareness of the way the material world works. Chemistry will be a stimulating, highly academic challenge as well as a course full of exciting and varied activity. It is worth noting that chemistry is essential for students wishing to pursue a career in medicine, veterinary science, dentistry or pharmacy.

The Year 12 course is divided into four teaching modules.

Module 1 - Development of practical skills in chemistry

Module 2 - Foundations in chemistry

Module 3 - Periodic table and energy

Module 4 - Core organic chemistry

In Year 12 learners study modules 1 to 4 and continue with modules 5 and 6 in Year 13. The internally assessed Practical Endorsement skills also form part of the full A-level.

Module 5 - Physical chemistry and transition elements

Module 6 - Organic chemistry and analysis

Within A-level chemistry, 20% of the marks available within written examinations will be for assessment of mathematics.

Entry requirements

Students wishing to take chemistry should have a grade 6 or above in chemistry or combined science and a grade 6 in maths.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Syllabus title:

Computer Science

Examination board:

OCR

A-level

Unit 1	Computer Systems	2½ hrs written paper	140 marks	40% of total A-level
Unit 2	Algorithms and Programming	2½ hrs written paper	140 marks	40% of total A-level
Unit 3	Programming Project	Non exam assessment	70 marks	20% of total A-level

Studying A-level computer science

Computer science is a challenging subject that asks students to think in a computational way. There is an emphasis on abstract thinking, problem solving and reasoning using analytical, logical and creative skills.

The course itself is very demanding and covers computing fundamentals, looking in depth at computer architecture, programming and internet technologies.

It is an excellent way to prepare for degree-level study in areas such as computer science, programming, software and systems design or engineering. It is also effective as career entry and industry preparation.

Entry requirements

For students wishing to take computer science, a minimum grade 6 in GCSE science, a minimum grade 6 in GCSE mathematics and a 6 in GCSE computer science (or equivalent) are both essential. All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

CREATIVE IMEDIA

Syllabus title:

Creative Digital Media Production: Digital Games Production

Examination board:

Pearson Edexcel

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Digital Games Production

Unit	Unit Title	Marks	Assessment
3	Digital Media Skills	120	Practical examination 20 hours
13	Digital Games Production	60	Internal assessment
29	2D Animation	60	Internal assessment
40	3D Modelling	60	Internal assessment
43	3D Animation	60	Internal assessment

Studying Creative iMedia

This qualification is equivalent in size to one A-Level. It consists of 5 units of which 2 are mandatory and 1 is external. Mandatory content (50%). External assessment (33%). Internal assessments are moderated by Pearson.

Creative digital media production is a vocational course, meaning you will be learning skills and knowledge not just to allow you to proceed to the next level of education, but to experience realistic workplace scenarios, expectations and demands. The focus of the course is digital games production. You will learn the theory related to games design and development, including 3D modelling and animation. You will learn about the gaming industry and what to expect in a client brief, which you will be expected to fulfil. You will demonstrate your understanding of production and post-production activities by working on the skills required to produce media products, and prepare appropriate documentation to support them. You will work independently using media hardware and software to complete given projects. This course provides an opportunity to demonstrate your individual creativity and flair.

Entry requirements

A minimum grade of M2/B/6 in Level 2 creative iMedia or an equivalent qualification is required. If pupils have not had the chance to study the subject at Level 2/GCSE, a portfolio of graphic design work and written content can be used to prove ability. These applications will be considered on an individual basis.

DRAMA & THEATRE

Syllabus title:

Drama & Theatre

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level				
Component 1	Devising	40% NEA (coursework based)	Students devise a piece of theatre which they then perform. They record and reflect upon their work in a portfolio.	Internally assessed and externally moderated.
Component 2	Text in Performance	20%	Students produce a group performance from a play influenced by study of an established practitioner. They also present a separate performance of a monologue or duologue.	Assessed by a visiting examiner.
Component 3	Theatre Makers in Practice	40% written exam	Based on theatre visits, practical and theoretical study. This paper comprises 3 sections covering live theatre and questions on two set texts.	Exam 2 hours 30 mins.

Studying A-level drama and theatre

This course allows students plenty of opportunities to combine practical and academic approaches. Students will study set texts and the work of several practitioners. Skills and insights will be developed through individual study and group projects, performing scripted pieces and producing original work. Please note that there is a requirement to attend professional theatre productions and workshops, some of which will probably be in the evening.

To be a high achiever in drama, candidates are expected to work co-operatively and sensitively with others. Students should also be able to give up significant

time outside school hours, and to have a genuine interest in drama. A willingness to experiment with new ideas and a sense of fun are also very important.

Entry requirements

It is not necessary for students to have studied GCSE drama to take A-level drama and theatre, although the course does revisit and build upon skills gained at KS4. Students should have achieved a grade 5 in English GCSE. If they have studied GCSE or IGCSE Drama then a minimum C grade or grade 5 is also expected here. However, at least as important as these requirements are genuine commitment and self-motivation.

ECONOMICS

Syllabus title:
Economics

Examination board:
AQA

A-level

Paper 1	Markets and Market Failure	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level
Paper 2	The National & International Economy	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level
Paper 3	Economic Principles and Issues	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level

Studying A-level economics

Economics A-level provides a very good grounding in economic and strategic thinking which will provide students with a solid foundation in economic awareness and understanding. The course encourages students to develop an understanding of economic concepts and theories through a critical consideration of current economic issues. It also expects students to apply economic concepts and theories in a range of contexts and to appreciate their values and limitations in explaining real-world phenomena.

Note: Many universities require students applying for an economics degree to have gained an A-level in mathematics or further mathematics.

Entry requirements

Successful A-level economics students need to have good communication skills and be confident using numbers. Consequently, a GCSE grade 6 in either English Language or English Literature and mathematics are necessary.

Students do not need to have studied business studies or economics at GCSE-level.



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Syllabus title:

English Literature

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level			
Component 1:	Drama*	2 Hours and 15 Minutes	30%
	Section A: Shakespeare (Othello) Section B: A Streetcar Named Desire (Tennessee Williams)		
Component 2:	Prose*	1 Hour and 15 Minutes	20%
	Students write one essay comparing the novels Frankenstein by Mary Shelley and The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood		
Component 3:	Poetry*	2 Hours and 15 Minutes	30%
	Section A: Poems of the Decade (post-2000) Section B: Victorian Poetry (pre-1900)		
Component 4:	Coursework		20%
	Students will write a coursework essay comparing two thematically linked texts of their choice (either prose, poetry, drama or literary non-fiction).		
*All exams are open book which means that clean copies of the texts (texts with no notes on) can be taken into the exam.			

Studying A-level English Literature

If you have enjoyed English at GCSE, then you will love A-level English Literature. A-level English is the perfect opportunity to sit and discuss books with other like-minded students and to be guided in your discussions by dedicated teachers who remember clearly how exciting it was to be learning about these things for the first time. No-one ever forgets their A-level texts as the characters and themes will stay with you forever.

Lessons will be structured in a variety of ways. Sometimes your teacher will tell you things about the text, about the context behind it or about the range of different approaches that critics have taken on it. At times they will want you to work in groups to share and present your opinions and at others they will ask you to explore your own ideas individually in a detailed essay. The best lessons are those where students discuss, reflect and challenge and as the course goes on, become increasingly independent.



This is a challenging, modern and academic course which is extremely well regarded by universities and employers. A facilitating course, A-level English will broaden the range of degree courses that you will be able to apply for. The qualification demonstrates that you are a skilled reader and an adept writer with the ability to evaluate an opinion, the skills to argue a viewpoint and the imagination to empathise with another's situation. As such it is a highly valued A-level for professions such as law, journalism, media, theatre and business.

Entry requirements

English Literature A-level will stretch you both critically and creatively, but to get the most out of the course students must have a genuine love of both reading and writing. Entrance on to the course requires a minimum of at least a grade 6 in either English Language or English Literature, but preferably in both.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Syllabus title:

A-level Environmental Science

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Paper 1	3 hrs written paper	50%
Paper 2	3 hrs written paper	50%

Studying A-level environmental science

Students who enjoy a multi-disciplinary approach to learning and have a keen interest in the sustainability of our planet will find this course engaging and thought provoking. Environmental science is a holistic subject with many interconnected systems and processes. A change to one process can affect many other processes over different spatial and temporal scales. Consideration of environmental issues and the conclusions reached should be based on reliable evidence-based information and quantitative data. Students will develop an understanding of how human society relies upon natural systems for resources and life support systems.

What will I study?

1. The physical environment
2. Energy resources
3. Pollution
4. The living environment
5. Biological resources
6. Sustainability
7. Research methods

Learners will study all modules.

Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of the interconnections between topics.

Questions will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

Career Opportunities:

- Environmental Consultant
- Marine Biologist
- Sustainability Consultant
- Environmental Manager
- Recycling Officer
- Waste Management Officer

Entry requirements

GCSE grade 5 in maths and English and grade 5-5 in combined science or grade 5 in biology and chemistry in triple science.

FOOD SCIENCE & NUTRITION

Syllabus title:
Food Science & Nutrition

Examination board:
WJEC

Year 12 Certificate in Food Science and Nutrition

Unit Number	Unit Title	Assessment
1	Meeting Nutritional Needs of Specific Groups	Internal: practical and written assessment External: 1 ½ hour written exam

Year 13 Diploma in Food Science and Nutrition

2	Ensuring Food is Safe to Eat	Externally marked - eight hour timed, supervised assessment
3	Experimenting to Solve Food Production Problems	Internal: responding through investigative and experimental work to a scenario based on a food production problem

Studying food science and nutrition

An understanding of food science and nutrition is relevant to many industries and job roles. Care providers and nutritionists in hospitals use this knowledge, as do sports coaches and fitness instructors. Hotels and restaurants, food manufacturers and government agencies also use this understanding to develop menus, food products and policies that support healthy eating initiatives.

The WJEC Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition qualification allows pupils to gain a wealth of knowledge about the food and nutrition industry. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the relationship between the human body and food as well as practical skills for cooking and preparing food. It has been

designed to provide pupils with knowledge, understanding and skills to progress to further study and training. It is assessed through a combination of coursework, written examinations and timed extended assignments.

Entry requirements

Pupils must have studied GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition and have obtained a minimum grade 5 or GCSE Design Technology subject (product design or textiles) and have obtained a minimum grade 6. Sound ICT skills would also be advantageous. If you are considering a long-term career, a science-based subject may also be beneficial.



Aoife Leatherbarrow (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study English and history at university

I attended Balcarras from Years 7 to 11, and I decided to stay on for sixth form as it had always been a great school with an excellent standard of teaching. Currently, I am studying English literature, history, art and an EPQ where the high standard of teaching continues. Through my time at sixth form, I have found that both the humanities and STEM subjects are equally valued, and students are always supported. The school facilities, especially in terms of more practical subjects like art, are very good and are open to students during study hours. Taking four subjects in Year 12 allowed me to continue my interest into the Russian language, with the support from the Modern Foreign Languages Department, despite my decision to discontinue this subject into Year 13. The school also offers many extra-curricular activities. To me most notable is the school production – allowing students across year groups to socialise, and it is always one of the highlights of the year. There are also student lead clubs like the Philosophy Club which encourages students to debate in a more seminar fashion. Teachers at Balcarras support students in their studies and are always approachable, as is the sixth form team. Students have strong work ethics and are independent in their studies and are encouraged to take more responsibility. Throughout my time in sixth form, there is a focus on preparing students for their post-sixth form destinations, whatever they may be, which has encouraged me to look at various options and has given me confidence in my UCAS application.



Gwilym Johnson (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study geography and planning at university

I have attended Balcarras since Year 7 and felt no need to move once I had completed my GCSE courses and received my results. All the teachers here are extremely helpful and always willing to take the time to fully support your academic needs, as well as encouraging you to achieve your best. Despite not doing AS-levels, for me taking four subjects in Year 12 was very useful as it kept all my options open going into Year 13 and beyond. I chose product design, drama, business, and geography and enjoyed them all thoroughly throughout Year 12. Deciding which subject to drop out of the four was a difficult decision, which I think speaks volumes about the teaching, facilities and support that are available. I also think that there is a great atmosphere within the sixth form community, with facilities like the common room and extra-curricular activities such as the annual school production, all acting as great social hubs. Going forward, I'm looking at studying geography and planning at university, to which all relevant members of staff have been very helpful in preparing me for. I have no regrets over choosing Balcarras Sixth Form for my post 16 education and I am looking forward to the rest of my time here.



Fergus Murray (Year 11 St Edward's)

Plans: gap year, then university to study drama or acting

I chose Balcarras because I felt that the subjects I wanted to explore at A-level used exam boards that I felt most effective in their content and exam formats. When I attended the Open Evening, I thought the teachers were warm and kind, being able to answer any concerns I had. As I lived in the local area, I already knew others who would be attending Balcarras in my year and as a result, I fitted into school life here. Academically, I feel I have progressed greatly, with my critical analysis of literature in various forms such as novels, plays, and poems, due to my studies of English and drama. My teachers have been very supportive. An example of this was when I was torn between dropping English or history. I coordinated with teachers, one from each subject, who gave me constructive advice, which I used to make my much-deliberated decision to drop history. Although my time at Balcarras has been overshadowed by the pandemic, I have done my best to get involved with extra-curricular opportunities. I was in the Year 12 branch of the choir, which like all the years, had to rehearse in year bubbles. I enjoyed my experience, especially when we recorded the songs using microphones. The recordings were combined with the rest of the years' recordings for all the choir to 'perform together' at what became an entirely online Midsummer Music. At this event, I also participated as a soloist, feeling that I was finally able to perform in the way I had wanted to for years. I also have taken part in both school productions. The Year 12 show as a film, which was fun, albeit an extremely hectic journey, with compromises occurring due to changing Covid restrictions. However, a well finished product was produced. Fortunately, this year's production will be live, and we are in rehearsals for what promises to be a great show. After sixth form, I intend to take a gap year by deferring a university place in acting or drama. In my gap year, I intend to audition for performance arts conservatories, and use my deferred place as a 'fallback' for 2023; I will also continue to perform as an amateur, in order to hone my skills for my future career path.



Jemima Spence (Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill)

Plans: to study maths at Oxford

When I was deciding where to go for sixth form, I knew that I wanted to go somewhere I could study four subjects and that offered the chance to take an EPQ. Balcarras was therefore the obvious choice for me. They were even very accommodating when I decided to change my subject choices only a week before my first day. Within my timetable, I really liked the idea of specific study periods that mean I can do homework and revision during the school day and the extra lessons specifically for help with university and post-18 options. The transition to a new school seemed daunting but Balcarras made it easy and now most of my friends are people I did not know before joining. I have applied for a maths degree at university, and throughout the application process, all the staff have been so helpful; I have lost count of the amount of people who have given me advice on my personal statement. All of my teachers have been excellent and are always available to give help and explain things that I do not quite understand. As well as this, my tutor is supportive and answered all of the questions I had about the school when just starting, which I really appreciated as it meant that I ended up not getting lost. Plus, I have found that I actually quite like having a uniform as it removes the hassle of trying to choose an outfit and is still flexible enough for self-expression.



Bea Obi (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: business apprenticeship

I chose Balcarras Sixth Form because it has an amazing reputation, and I knew that with the teachers and the community I could get the best results in GCSE and hopefully the same will come at A-level. During my time at Balcarras I have learned a lot about myself and have made many memories that will stay with me as I grow older. In particular I have valued the teachers helping me whenever I had a concern and I have been supported throughout my extra-curricular activities. Thanks to Balcarras, I have been lucky enough to compete at district level in athletics. I have also represented the school in netball, hockey and rounders which I thoroughly enjoyed. The PE department made it possible for me to join a netball club outside of school and we played at regional level netball which was a great experience for me. I have also participated in the school production when I was in Year 10 which contributed towards my GCSE drama. For my post 18 aspirations, I plan to do a business apprenticeship as this is an area I have found particularly interesting whilst at Balcarras, and I wish to pursue a career in this area in the future. I am grateful that the business department has supported me and given me guidance for my future plans.



Jicsaw Netnut (Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill)

Plans: gap year to travel and volunteer, then university

The transition stage from Year 11 up to Year 12 was challenging due to the changes in the learning environment, teachers and students. Balcarras lived up to its positive reputation and has given me encouraging guidance on the key areas that I was concerned about, and therefore made the transition stage comfortable. For example, I was mainly worried about starting subjects that I didn't take for GCSEs since the lack of knowledge and experience would affect my performances. The amount of support from various teachers however, reassured me that this wouldn't be the case, which gave me beneficial motivation. The school offers a various range of activities which allowed me to work with both internal and external students from different year groups and learn their approaches to different tasks. Despite the cancellation of the school production during Year 12, the school was very flexible and introduced a film production instead which was challenging at first, but the obstacles were sufficiently tackled with ease due to everyone's contribution. Filming tasks was something that most people (including me) had never experienced before, but this gave all of us an opportunity to increase our knowledge and learn something new. My post 18 plan is to take a gap year to volunteer and travel, then apply to university once I'm certain about which course to take. With Balcarras' tremendous support, I'm equipped to take the next step and succeed in the future.



George Smith (Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill)

Plans: gap year to travel, then university to study geography

When choosing which sixth form I would like to go to after secondary school, Balcarras was my first choice due to the fact that I felt the structure of the school environment was much suited to my learning style and would hopefully lead to reach my full academic potential. Once at Balcarras the environment was very welcoming, and I found the pupil and staff very friendly and helpful. The teachers were very approachable and were very passionate about their subjects. Having multiple study lessons a week allowed me to keep up with all my work. Studying 4 subjects in Year 12 was useful as it kept my options open in case I changed my mind on what I would like to study in the future. Before joining Balcarras Sixth Form I wasn't sure what it was I wanted to do afterwards and coming here has really helped me decide as the geography department really inspired me to follow it past A-level. The teachers helped establish a personal connection with me which made learning so much easier and their ability to explain to me in ways I could understand has really helped my grades improve much further than I expected. The help from the staff within the sixth form has helped me with my post 18 plans in which I would like a gap year to travel to various places. Once I finish travelling, I'm hoping to apply to university to study geography. I was previously worried about taking a gap year as, although it's what I really wanted to do, I felt like it would mean I would be left behind my peers. However after the futures lessons that we have throughout Year 12 and 13, I feel like I now have a better grasp on my future and I'm much more confident with my decision on taking a gap year.



Sebastian Harris (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study modern and medieval languages at Cambridge

It didn't take long for me to decide on Balcarras Sixth Form. I'd studied Russian since Year 8 and I wanted to continue it to A-level, so it was an easy choice. The languages department is brilliant too, and since I was going to study French anyway, a pretty excellent year was heading in my direction. Languages at Balcarras are taught by teachers who really love their subject and plenty of extra help is provided, including one on one weekly language conversation sessions with a native speaker, which is great if you want to develop your fluency like me. The ability to study 4 subjects in Year 12 was helpful in gaining a clearer idea of what I wanted to study, and the school is flexible so, if it is possible, you can switch in the first few weeks in case you change your mind. In short, it's a well-balanced and supportive working environment where everyone is welcome.

FRENCH

Syllabus title:

French A Level

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading & Writing	50% of A-level
Paper 2	Writing	20% of A-level
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of A-level

Studying A-level French

A-level French builds upon the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking which you have developed during your GCSE course. It will also extend your knowledge and understanding of France and other French speaking countries in the world, French life and culture.

In addition a good grasp of grammatical concepts will become increasingly important as you learn how the language works in order to produce accurate written and spoken French.

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as the internet, radio and television. Students will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently. You will learn how to use French in everyday conversation as well as in formal discussion and debate. A French assistant is employed so that students can have one-to-one speaking sessions for half an hour per week. These sessions are obligatory and form an important part of the course. You will gain a clearer insight into how language works and you will also have the opportunity to visit France and to take part in theatre visits and other cultural activities.

The course will interest students who are curious about life in other countries and want to equip themselves with the language skills that are increasingly valued in the global market.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved at least a grade 6 at GCSE-level in French.

FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Syllabus title:

Further mathematics

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

Paper 1	Core Pure Mathematics 1	1½ hrs	25% of A-level
Paper 2	Core Pure Mathematics 2	1½ hrs	25% of A-level
Paper 3	Further Statistics	1½ hrs	25% of A-level
Paper 4	Further Mechanics	1½ hrs	25% of A-level

Studying A-level further mathematics

Further mathematics would suit good mathematicians wishing to broaden their mathematics repertoire - further pure, further statistics and further mechanics being on offer, complementing the pure and applied offered in single maths. Students wishing to study engineering, physics or mathematics at university ought to consider this option very carefully. You may choose further maths as either a fourth or fifth A-level subject.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved a grade 8 at GCSE-level in mathematics. Students who have taken AO mathematics or any other further GCSE qualification would be well suited to this course but this is not essential. Students choosing further maths must also choose maths as one of their other A-level subjects.

$$0.2 + 0.1 + a + b =$$

$$a + b = 0.4$$

$$a + 2b = 0.7$$

$$\therefore b = 0.3$$

GEOGRAPHY

Syllabus title:
Geography

Examination board:
AQA

A-level

Component 1	Physical Geography	2 ½ hours	96 marks	40% of A-level
Component 2	Human Geography	2 ½ hours	96 marks	40% of A-level
Component 3	Geographical Investigation	3,000–4,000 words	35 marks	20% of A-level

Studying A-level geography

"There has never been a better or more important time to study geography. With growing interest in issues such as climate change, migration, environmental degradation and social cohesion, geography is one of the most relevant courses you could choose to study. Geographers are also highly employable. Whatever your passion for the world - fascination with landscapes or concerns about inequality - geography will provide you with knowledge and transferable skills that will reward you personally and advance you professionally." Dr Rita Gardner, Director of the RGS-IBG.

Through the subject we aim to develop an appreciation of the dynamic nature of geography with an interactive approach that examines the relationship between people and their environments. Equal importance is placed upon physical and human contexts, with an awareness of environmental issues and the application of geographical and fieldwork skills. Geography involves a variety of IT, field and laboratory analytical approaches including mastering techniques such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS). All of these skills are an integral part of the course. Prospective students should have an enquiring mind about landscapes and

the world around them whilst displaying a high level of literacy and numeracy.

There will be a variety of field day visits throughout the course to ensure that pupils can apply their learning and have the opportunity to experience data collection methods in preparation for the geographical investigation. A weekend residential to Dorset is an integral part of the A-level experience.

The department also runs a biennial residential trip; past destinations have included Iceland, North America and Italy. Each year the department has a range of successful students who decide to go on to study geography at a higher level. The skills from the course have enabled students to successfully study courses from oceanography, geology, geography, natural sciences, international development and urban planning.

A subscription to 'Geographical' magazine is recommended to supplement students' learning during the course, and we also encourage students to regularly read from wider sources in order to support their studies (full reading lists will be provided).

Entry requirements

Students will need to achieve a grade 6 at full course GCSE-level in geography.

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Syllabus title:

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care (equivalent to one A-level in Health and Social Care)

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Health and Social Care (equivalent to two A-levels in Health and Social Care)

This qualification will provide learners with the opportunity, through applied learning, to develop the core specialist knowledge, skills and understanding required in the health and social care sector. Learners will take units which provide the breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills to prepare them to study in a Higher Education Institution either on a health and social care-related degree course or to support an application for a range of other degree courses.

By the end of the two year course learners will have studied:

- Building positive relationships in health and social care
- Equality, diversity and rights in health and social care
- Health, safety and security in health and social care
- Anatomy and physiology for health and social care

Learners will also study two optional coursework units which will be decided by learners in Year 13.

This qualification is for learners who want to gain a deeper understanding of the industry. It allows learners a greater opportunity to complete coursework units as 46% of the final grade is made up of coursework marks. In addition to the units listed above learners studying the Technical Diploma will also take the following units:

- Infection control
- Personalisation and person-centred approach to care
- Safeguarding

Learners on this course will also study five optional coursework units over the two year course.

Entry requirements

Students do not need to have studied health and social care in Key Stage 4.

HISTORY

Syllabus title:

History

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Unit 1	Industrialisation and the People: Britain, 1783-1885	2½ hours	40%
Unit 2	The American Dream: Reality and Illusion, 1945-1980	2½ hours	40%
Unit 3	Historical Investigation	Non-exam assessment	20%

Studying A-level history

A-level history is a diverse course which allows students to study both British and world history. Small parts of our studies should be familiar to students from GCSE but there is plenty of new material to get stuck into! Unit 1 focuses on British history in the 18th and 19th century and looks at the great social, political and economic changes of that time period. Britain went through a massive transformation that led to it being the most powerful country in the world. Our course seeks to explore those changes in detail over the course of a 100-year period.

In unit 2 we turn our attention to a depth study in American history. The USA often boasts that it is the “land of the free”; however there has been a long history of prejudice and discrimination. Our study looks at the developments under

several Presidents in the second half of the 20th century.

Finally unit 3 involves an independent investigation that consists of a 3,500-4,500 word essay which looks at a historical question in the context of a 100-year period. This is an exciting new development in A-level history and gives plenty of opportunity for independent research and original thinking. The investigation element will allow students to pick a topic from a range of options in the second year.

Entry requirements

It is expected that A-level students will have achieved a grade 6 in history or better at GCSE-level. Students who have not studied GCSE history before are also welcome but we would expect them to have achieved a grade 6 minimum in English.

MATHEMATICS

Syllabus title:

Mathematics

Examination board:

Edexcel



A-level

Paper 1	Pure Mathematics	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level
Paper 2	Pure Mathematics	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level
Paper 3	Statistics and Mechanics	2 hrs	33.3% of A-level

Studying A-level mathematics

Mathematics at A-level is a course worth studying in its own right as well as serving as useful support for many other subjects. It is challenging but interesting and is a sought-after qualification for courses in higher education and for a variety of careers. The material builds on work that you will have met at GCSE but also involves new ideas that some of the greatest minds of the millennium have produced. Mathematics is a two year course consisting of pure mathematics (2/3) and applied mathematics (1/3). The pure mathematics builds on the algebra and problem solving from GCSE. Statistics allows students to analyse data and interpret probabilities. Mechanics is a branch of mathematics that deals with forces and motion. All students study both statistics and mechanics.

Entry requirements

Students must have achieved a grade 7 at GCSE-level in mathematics. An understanding and an enjoyment of algebra together with a neat, detailed and methodical style of working is a good indication of likely success at advanced level.

MUSIC

Syllabus title:

Music

Examination board:

WJEC Eduqas

A-level

Component 1 Performing	Option A: Minimum three pieces; 10-12 minutes total length	35%
	Option B: Minimum two pieces; 6-8 minutes total length	25%
Component 2 Composing	Option A: Two pieces; 4-6 minutes total length	25%
	Option B: Three pieces; 8-10 minutes total length	35%
Component 3 Appraising	Exam: 2hrs 15	40%

Studying A-level music

The music A-level course is an exciting and challenging balance of theory and practice, allowing individual students to develop all aspects of musicianship through appraising, performing and composing. The appraising is taught through three areas of study. The first area of study is The Western Classical Tradition and includes one set work (Symphony No.104 in D major, 'London' by Haydn). The second area of study will be decided by staff at the beginning of the course and will be from a rock and pop, musical theatre or jazz genre. The third area of study will be based on twentieth century music and will include two set works. Appraising is assessed through a written examination that will include set work analysis with a score, comparison questions, questions on unprepared extracts of music with and without the score and extended response questions. Performing and composing are both non-exam components.

With a music A-level, students can progress in to further education, higher education or employment. Music can be studied at many colleges and universities including highly acclaimed music colleges such as The Birmingham Conservatoire and The Royal Academy of Music. However, music A-level is highly regarded by all colleges and universities even for students wanting to follow a non-music course. Career pathways are wide and varied and include music teaching, whether instrumental or classroom based, sound-engineer, choreography, music publishing, backing singing, classical music, arts administration, television and radio production, stage or screen work, radio presenting, music journalism, music therapist, composing, events management, festival organisation and stage management.

Entry requirements

Students must have achieved a grade 6 or above at GCSE and have theoretical skills equivalent to grade 5 or above and performance skills of grade 4 or above. It is a requirement of the course that students are having lessons on their specialist instrument, whether in school or privately. A-level students are expected to participate fully in the extracurricular programme offered by the music department.

Students need to be open minded to a wide range of musical genres, particularly for the appraising component but also in composing and performing tasks.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Syllabus title:

Photography

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Unit 1	Portfolio unit supported by 1,000-3,000 words	60% of A-level
Unit 2	Practical examination	15 hrs 40% of A-level

Studying A-level photography

The course is structured similarly to GCSE art. It revolves around units of coursework and controlled tests set against four assessment objectives. As with GCSE art, much of the practical work is triggered by critical studies with written research acting as a diary of work undertaken. Students will respond to a range of stimuli including natural form, landscape and portraiture. Students will also have the opportunity to develop more conceptual approaches to this medium. Candidates must have their own digital camera. A knowledge of Adobe Photoshop® is useful but not absolutely essential. All work will be internally

marked and moderated by AQA. The controlled test in Year 12 should be seen as an opportunity for developing ideas and in Year 13 to develop a more fully realised project.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved a grade 6 in GCSE art. Students must demonstrate some proficiency in their use of written English, especially helpful at A-level. In some cases candidates with a grade 5 may be considered. Students who have not undertaken GCSE art will be asked to show a portfolio of photographs taken.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Syllabus title:

Physical education

Examination board:

OCR

A-level

Component 1	Physiological Factors Affecting Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied A&P • Ex physiology • Biomechanics 	90	2hr	30%
Component 2	Psychological Factors Affecting Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill acquisition • Sports psychology 	60	1hr	20%
Component 3	Socio-cultural Issues in Physical Activity and Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports & society • Contemporary issues in physical activity & sport 	60	1hr	20%
Component 4	Performance in Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance coaching • Evaluation of performance for improvement 	60	NEA	30%

Studying A-level physical education

The course provides progression from GCSE and a sound foundation for study in higher education. A-level PE is becoming an essential qualification for higher education in physical education and sports studies. The course provides an excellent foundation for students intending to pursue careers in teaching and coaching, the leisure industry, recreational management, the health and fitness industry and professional sport.

Entry requirements

Students will normally be expected to have GCSE grade 6 or above in PE and a grade 5 in science. Those who have not studied GCSE PE will be considered if they have reached a high standard in one sport.



PHYSICS

Syllabus title:

Physics

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

Paper 1	Further Mechanics Electric and Magnetic Fields Nuclear and Particle Physics	30%
Paper 2	Thermodynamics Space Nuclear Radiation Gravitational Fields Oscillations	30%
Paper 3	General Paper Experimental Methods	40%

Studying A-level physics

Since September 2015 we have been following the Edexcel physics specification which is designed to inspire you. Year 12 will give you a firm foundation of skills and in the second year you will be set free to explore the 'Wonders of the Universe' as we take a look at the vastness of space and then consider the minute particles that make everything work. The course will develop your fascination and enthusiasm for physics, and will equip you for a range of prestigious courses and careers. The course is content-led allowing lessons to be challenging as well as engaging. Content is laid out clearly in a series of teaching modules, as listed above. At the start of the course there will be an emphasis on communication and calculation skills required to make the transition from GCSE to A-level as smooth as possible. Although practical work will form a considerable part of the course, there is no assessed coursework component.

Entry requirements

Students wishing to take physics should have a grade 6 or above in physics or combined science and a grade 6 in maths. We strongly recommend combining this course with maths.

POLITICS

Syllabus title:

Government and politics

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

Component 3: Comparative Politics

Studying A-level government and politics

Government and politics is a well-respected A-level course because it offers a sound intellectual base for those wanting to study the arts, humanities or social sciences at university. Furthermore the skills covered, such as analysis and communication, are attractive to employers. On a broader level the subject encourages students to be aware of their role in society and their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

In Year 12 the course focuses on British politics. Students will study how the UK is governed and in particular will focus on the role of key institutions such as parliament and key roles such as the prime minister. This will obviously necessitate an approach whereby the students will have to apply theory to actual experience. Therefore we will study recent political history particularly focusing

on politics since the 1970s. Students will also study politics from the bottom up, looking at the role of ordinary people in the political process. In Year 13 the course will focus on the development of political ideas and how these ideas have affected modern politics.

Entry requirements

Many students will not have studied politics before. However, it is clearly desirable that you have an interest in politics and current affairs. If you are the sort of person who enjoys keeping up with topical issues then this might be the course for you. The course is open to all students who achieve a grade 6 or higher in English or any other relevant humanity subject.

PRODUCT DESIGN

Syllabus title:

Design and Technology: Product Design

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Paper 1	Written paper	2.5 hrs	30% of A-level
Paper 2	Written paper	1.5 hrs	20% of A-level
Non examined assessment (NEA)		45 hrs	50% of A-level

Studying A-level product design

The world we live in is becoming steadily more complex and technologically advanced. Users increasingly demand that everyday products be attractive and easy to use. The role of the product designer is gaining increasing importance as innovation and new technologies become more significant in the design process.

A-level product design looks at the transformation of ideas into successful products matched to the needs of the user and the market place. You will analyse a range of commercial products during the course and comment on their aesthetics, functionality, ease of use and how well they perform their intended role. Product design at Balcarras closely follows the work undertaken in product design courses at university.

The coursework component will give you the opportunity to use your creativity and imagination to design and manufacture solutions to problems that you have identified, problems that have not already been solved countless times by others. It is important to emphasise that you will not only be judged by the finished results but also by how you respond to the design process. In a creative process you will be expected to experiment with different constructions, materials, components and production methods in new combinations. Above all, there is an emphasis on innovation and new thinking. Eventually, you will produce functioning and

aesthetically attractive solutions, based upon how people use, and interact with, the product.

In addition to developing your designing and making skills, you will begin to consider the role and responsibilities of the professional product designer. This will involve developing an understanding of customer needs, concept generation and design for manufacture, both at an industrial level and within the school workshop. During the course you will consider contemporary and developing technologies and materials, and how they impact on the products we use everyday. The professional product designer works closely with industry and with the market and must be well acquainted with industrial working methods, the course is therefore multi-disciplinary - both artistic and technical in character.

The computer is a powerful and essential tool for the product designer. During the course, you will be introduced to specialist equipment, including sublimation printers, a laser cutter and rapid prototyping machines. You will be expected to submit your coursework in the form of an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio).

Entry requirements

Students should, ideally, have achieved a grade 6, or higher, at GCSE level in a technology subject. However grade 5 will be considered on an individual basis.

PSYCHOLOGY

Syllabus title:

Psychology

Examination board:

AQA

Studying A-level psychology

Psychology is defined as “the science of mind and behaviour”. When you begin to study this subject, you will be able to understand the reasons why people behave in the way that they do, and evaluate different theoretical perspectives in order to explain the behaviour.

The topics you will study are broad; the course ranges from social influence and biopsychology in Year 12 to forensic psychology at A-level.

During the course you will be expected to make presentations, debate from a particular perspective, scrutinise data and write both short and extended responses to questions.

Psychology can lead to careers in areas including social work, occupational psychology, teaching, marketing, personnel, nursing and care.

Entry requirements

Successful A-level psychology students need to have excellent communication skills and be confident using numbers.

A-level

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Influence • Memory • Attachment • Psychopathology 	2 hr written exam	96 marks	33.3% of A-level	Four compulsory sections all requiring written answers
Paper 2: Psychology in Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches in Psychology • Biopsychology • Research Methods 	2 hr written exam	96 marks	33.3% of A-level	Three compulsory sections all requiring written answers
Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Debates in Psychology • One from: Relationships; Gender; Cognition and Development • One from: Schizophrenia; Eating Behaviour; Stress • One from: Aggression; Forensic Psychology; Addiction 	2 hr written exam	96 marks	33.3% of A-level	One compulsory section. Three sections each offering a choice of three topics. Students answer one question from each section



RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Syllabus title:

Religious Studies

Examination board:

OCR 100% Essay exam

A-level

Paper 1: Philosophy	33% of grade
Paper 2: Ethics	33% of grade
Paper 3: Theology	33% of grade

Studying A-level religion, philosophy and ethics

Religious studies at A-level is a philosophy, ethics and theology course which allows you to ask some of the big questions in life. Is there a God? How did the universe come about? What is right and wrong? Why does pain and suffering exist? Do miracles really happen?

During this challenging course, you will develop your knowledge and understanding of a variety of philosophical arguments, ethical theories and religious ideas as well considering your own interpretations. The course covers the work of the great philosophers such as Plato, Kant, Aquinas and Descartes to more modern philosophical works. You will also be covering ethical theories and applied ethics, covering such topics as euthanasia and business ethics. As well as this you will also extend your understanding of the Christianity through the theology aspects of the course, considering its influence and history as well as the place that it has in today's world. You will develop research and analytical skills, as well as logical thinking skills and the use of reasoned argument. You

need to be prepared to question, think, criticise, analyse and take on board a wide range of ideas and opinions.

Philosophy, ethics and theology combines well with almost all other humanities subjects such as history and geography, but it is important to note that it is also an excellent choice with science and maths based subjects. Indeed, in many universities, you will find that philosophy is an option on science degree courses. This subject is highly regarded by universities due to the rigour and academic nature of the content and the essay writing skills you will be required to obtain.

Entry requirements

Successful A-level philosophy, ethics and theology students need to have strong communication skills and essay writing ability. Assessment will be through written responses in the form of essays, so a love of writing analytical and considered approaches is a must. There are no prior knowledge requirements for this A-level subject.

RUSSIAN

Syllabus title:

Russian

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading and Translation	40% of A-level
Paper 2	Written Response to Works and Translation	30% of A-level
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of A-level

Studying A-level Russian

A-level Russian builds on the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking which you have developed during your GCSE course. It will extend your knowledge of Russian culture and history as you study a range of topics including 'traditions and festivals', 'political and artistic culture in the Russian-speaking world' and 'the final years of the USSR'. The A-level course also involves the study of a literary text and film as you develop your exposure to authentic materials.

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as on-line articles, newspapers and video clips, as well as conventional text books. You will be encouraged to make use of such resources independently to develop your comprehension skills and vocabulary. You will also have the opportunity to participate in a visit to Russia and take part in theatre visits and other cultural activities relating to the course.

Throughout the A-level course you will also develop your understanding of grammatical concepts as you learn how the language works in order to produce

accurate written and spoken Russian. You will learn how to use Russian in everyday situations as well as in formal discussion and debate. Weekly one-to-one conversation classes with a native speaker form an integral part of the course and enable you to develop confidence with both speaking and listening.

The course will interest students who are curious about life in Russia and want to equip themselves with language and communication skills that are increasingly important in the global market. This course can lead onto the study of Russian or another language at university. The A-level Russian course will also give you the opportunity to learn and apply important transferable skills in critical thinking and analysis, which are highly valued by both universities and future employers.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved at least grade 6 at GCSE level in Russian.

SPANISH

Syllabus title:

Spanish

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading & Writing	50% of A-level
Paper 2	Writing	20% of A-level
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of A-level

Studying A-level Spanish

A-level Spanish builds upon the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking which you have developed during your GCSE course. You will not only extend your knowledge and understanding of Spain and Spanish life and culture but also of other Spanish speaking countries of the world as well. In addition, a good grasp of grammatical concepts will become increasingly important as you learn how the language works in order to produce accurate written and spoken Spanish.

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as the internet, radio and television as well as conventional textbooks. Students will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently. You will learn how to use Spanish in everyday conversation as well as in formal discussion and debate. A Spanish Assistant is employed so that students can have one-to-one speaking sessions for half an hour per week. These sessions are obligatory and form an important part of the course.

You will gain a clearer insight into how language works and you will have the opportunity to visit Spain and to take part in other cultural activities. The course will interest students who are curious about life in other countries and want to equip themselves with the language skills that are essential in the international business environment and also highly valued by academic institutions.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved at least a grade 6 at GCSE-level in Spanish.



TEXTILES

Syllabus title:

Art and Design (Textile design)

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

Unit 1	Personal Investigation	No time limit	96 marks	60% of A-level
Unit 2	Externally Set Assignment	Supervised 15 hrs	96 marks	40% of A-level

Studying A-level textiles

Textiles is an ever-evolving art form that is proving popular in the creative world as a credible medium of expression. A-level Textiles is a specialist subject with access to an excellent range of equipment, facilities, and resources. This multi-disciplinary course is an excellent opportunity for students to explore and develop their creative practise, combining all aspects of their art and design experiences.

You will explore the use of traditional and innovative materials, techniques, and processes to communicate and demonstrate your ideas through the use of a sketchbook. You will be pushed to be curious, experimental and to research a wide range of textile artists and designers to help you develop your own work which can take many forms, including a fine art piece (canvas, sculpture, installation), an innovative item of fashion/costume or interiors piece.

Year 12

Students will experience a wide range of textile workshops to gain the relevant skills needed for the course. These include a selection of traditional and contemporary

processes including fabric manipulation, numerous print and dye techniques, using patterns, hand and machine stitching, weaving, and other constructed textile processes.

Year 13

Students will develop their practise by directing their own work. A personal investigation using an in-depth study of a specific chosen theme or area of textiles will lead to a final piece. This component will include a written piece consisting of 1000-3000 words. The final element of this course is to respond to an exam board question where there are 10 weeks to prepare and then a 15-hour final outcome produced in exam conditions.

Entry requirements

At GCSE level a 6 or higher, in art, textiles or appropriate technology subject. Alternatively individuals may be considered on production of a portfolio demonstrating their skills and interests in the subject.

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

Syllabus title:

Extended Project

Examination board:

AQA

Completing the extended project qualification

The Extended Project is a Level 3 qualification and is intended to stretch and challenge students beyond their A-level choices; it is therefore highly regarded by universities and employers alike.

The EPQ allows each student to embark on a self-motivated and largely independent project. The students have freedom of choice over their project's title, subject to approval by the course coordinators, and the direction of its completion; our students find this highly rewarding.

The project topic is chosen entirely by the student and can take the form of an extended research based 5000 word report or an artefact with a research based 1000 word report. The artefact could encompass; planning and teaching a lesson, a performance, a sculpture or many other formats. All students at Balcarras Sixth Form begin their EPQ journey at the start of year 12 and most will have completed the qualification by the first half term of year 13. AQA encourages students' curiosity and creativity, and each year we are impressed by the huge range of inspiring and interesting ideas that the students come up with. Further to this, the freedom of the course enables students to develop their time management and organisational skills whilst the taught element provides students with vital skills such as referencing and source reviewing which prepares them for academic writing at university level.

Through the delivery of taught elements and through supervisor meetings teachers impart to students the key management and planning skills necessary for the completion of the project, and supervise and monitor students' progress. The EPQ involves extended autonomous work by the student. A supervisor will be assigned to each student and regular meetings will take place to advise and guide them through the process.

The EPQ is an extremely valuable course, preparing students for the challenge and rigour of university study or working life. In addition, an increasing number of universities are including the EPQ in their offers to students. Consequently some students have secured their preferred university through achieving an A in EPQ.

Students are required, with appropriate supervision, to:

- choose an area of interest
- draft a title and aims of the project for formal approval by the centre
- plan, research and carry out the project
- deliver a presentation to a non-specialist audience
- provide evidence of all stages of project development and production for assessment in the form of a log.

The Extended Project will develop and extend from one or more of the student's study areas and/or from an area of personal interest or activity outside their main programme of study.

Entry requirements

All year 12 students follow this course and have a timetabled lesson each week.

HOW TO APPLY

Making your choices

You must choose FOUR courses for which you wish to apply. Please read page 6 for guidance on combining courses.

Do not worry if you are unsure about your choices – you are not necessarily making a firm commitment at this stage.

However, your choice does have two important influences on our planning. First, choosing a course makes it more likely to run. Decisions on courses will be confirmed in April. Secondly, we will try to make sure that your chosen combination of courses is possible i.e. that they are not timetabled at the same time. This will be more difficult to ensure if you change your mind later on.

Application form

Please complete the Microsoft Form on our website www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk on the sixth form / admissions page.

You will receive an acknowledgement by return.

You will need to fill it in carefully. We will use it as the basis for your course consultation meeting. In particular, we will discuss whether your choices are consistent with your career or academic intentions. For students from other schools, we will contact your current school for a reference. No admissions decisions will be made on the basis of the application alone, but it will form the basis for discussion at the post-application consultation meeting.

If you are having any difficulties completing this Microsoft Form then please email or call the Sixth Form Administrator, LT@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk or 01242 545118.

Deadline

Applications should be submitted by 5th February. You may submit your application as soon as you wish.

Course consultation meeting

Consultations will take place between February and April. Parents are welcome to join students for these. The meetings will be a chance for you to ask questions and clarify options. Confirmation of places will follow these consultations for successful applicants.

Offers of places

Where an offer of a place in Balcarras Sixth Form is made, the conditions are most likely to be on the basis of GCSE grades.

Late applicants

Late applications may be considered. However, there are only a limited number of places, so late applicants cannot be guaranteed a place.





Diego Placide (Year 11 Cirencester Deer Park)

Plans : to study commercial aviation management at a Canadian university

To this day I am very pleased that I joined Balcarras after Year 11 results day. Though the leap from a secondary school to a sixth form seemed very unnerving, the friendly and comfortable environment Balcarras accommodates, helped me settle in very quickly. The choice of 4 subjects in Year 12 allowed me to gain an understanding of the subjects I was most interested in and has greatly helped me in choosing a suitable post-18 option. With the help of the amazing staff at Balcarras I realised the academic potential I held, encouraging me to work hard at being successful. The school itself offers many learning resources such as its study rooms and library, but also plethora of revision resources given to us by the subject teachers. Moreover, life as a pupil of Balcarras was always exiting due to the many extra-curricular activities it provided. I highly encourage future pupils to take part in the lunchtime table tennis club, though it does become a little competitive at times. Overall, I couldn't have asked any more from such an excellent sixth form and I want to thank all its astounding staff for making me the person I am today!



George Adamson (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study art and design foundation, then fashion design at Central Saint Martins

Being part of Balcarras for my whole lower school life was the main reason I chose Balcarras as a sixth form. I was given the opportunity to use all the exceptional facilities throughout my learning and was lucky enough to have phenomenal teaching staff guide me through the journey. The freedom of sixth form creates a great independent working environment. This newfound independence helps me to work to my best ability. The staff allow you to have your own thinking and work style, but are still always looking to support you as much as possible. Many times, I have contacted my teachers to get help and support outside of my lessons, and they are always more than willing to provide extra assistance. This aspect, along with the one-of-a-kind facilities, I think is what allowed me to flourish in my learning. I love practical and creative work and Balcarras has always put huge emphasis into this aspect of education. With a lot of sixth forms that have as high of an academic reputation as Balcarras, other more practical subjects (such as textiles or product design) tend to get less attention than the more popular subjects like maths and science. However, Balcarras is different. Taking chemistry and art-textiles myself, I have had the insight of studying two very different subjects' content wise, but each one was treated with the same value as the other. In chemistry I was able to take advantage of bi-weekly revision sessions and a huge amount of school provided resources, and then in art-textiles I could use sublimation printers and heat presses, hand dying processes and embroidery machines. In each subject I was guided through my learning by my teachers and was pushed to complete my work to the best of my ability. I plan to study fashion design at Central Saint Martins, after completing a UAL Art and Design foundation course. I've been encouraged to take the path that I've chosen and have been provided with extensive futures support along the way.



Ellie Bee-Stephens (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study chemistry at university

I spent a long time deliberating which sixth forms to apply for in Year 11. Eventually, despite all the other available sixth forms in the area, I chose Balcarras. What an amazing decision this was. Previously, I attended lower school here and I loved the atmosphere of the school, finding that we were like a community; everyone was always there to support one another. I loved all the activities that were available, and the great academic record also swayed my decision. With so many great teachers, there is no wonder why everyone does so well. I have improved from GCSE and, despite the large jump from GCSE to A-level, I have found the transition smooth. There is also plenty of help available for people struggling with mental health. In my time at Balcarras Sixth Form, I have taken part in a multitude of activities. I helped run Graveney's team for House Music which we somehow managed to win. I'm in the school chamber choir and take singing lessons here, both of which are run amazingly. Last summer I thoroughly enjoyed performing in the midsummer music concert. Our music and drama departments are outstanding. I'm even on my way to finishing my gold DofE as I completed my expedition in August 2021. When I leave Balcarras I plan to go on the university to study a chemistry degree, preferably a master's degree. This school has helped me so much to become the best version of myself and I hope that it can continue to do so for others in the future.



Jasmine Chambers (Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill)

Plans: gap year, then university to study primary education

Balcarras was the main interest for me in terms of post-16 studies due to the structured and supportive system there is in place. After looking around at the open evening, it became very clear that this was where I wanted to be; the teachers are so enthusiastic, the classrooms and studios are well equipped - it truly just brings a welcoming feel. Having access to regular study sessions has made me far more productive and motivated than I was expecting and makes completing homework and revision far less stressful. I took a range of subjects for my A levels; art, psychology, chemistry and an EPQ in which all departments are so supportive and understanding in wanting what's best for you and pushing you to achieve it. The enthusiasm from the teachers leads me to achieve the best I can and believing in myself that I had the ability to do so. In the future I am planning on taking a gap year where I plan to work in the education industry and gain some experience to then go to university and train to be a qualified primary school teacher.

Balcarras Sixth Form

2022



For more information contact:

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