

60th
FORM 2018

Balcarras Sixth Form





Holly Van Ryssen

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study English Literature at University

Having been at Balcarras since Year 7, I was never in any doubt that I wanted to study my A-levels here. Balcarras has a strong atmosphere of positivity and encouragement, which I find motivates me to achieve my full potential.

Studying English Literature, history and French has allowed me to develop my analytical voice, whilst at the same time gaining a greater understanding of the world in which we live. At A-level the class sizes are much smaller, allowing for seminar style discussion which ensures that lessons are always engaging.

Thanks to the support offered within the sixth form, I constantly feel that I am developing and progressing, not only as an academic student but as an individual too. Balcarras has certainly prepared me for the next stage in my life, giving me the confidence needed to embrace the challenges of university.

Highlights for me at sixth form, have been completing my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and participating in the paired reading scheme.



Yosra Soliman

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience at University

I was never in any doubt that Balcarras is where I wanted to complete my A-levels. The sheer encouragement and positivity offered by the teachers, I knew for a fact, would make for the perfect learning environment that would allow me to strive for what I want to achieve and ultimately reach my full potential. Involvement in the variety of elements that make up sixth form life has always been a huge attribute that made choosing coming back to Balcarras almost instant. From the formation of our Amnesty international group, to Bar Mock and the chance of leading house music, the opportunities for wider involvement have been everything I hoped for and have allowed me to truly have, what are shaping out to be, the two best years of my education. As much as my AS subject choice of psychology, English literature, biology and Spanish often caused much confusion between my peers and teachers, this unique variety has allowed me to develop a wide range of both academic and interpersonal skills that I know, no-doubt, will prove advantageous in my further study and life at University. Subsequently I cannot wait to begin my study of psychology and cognitive neuroscience at degree level next year, I hope I can adapt and apply all the skills and qualities I have learned from my time at Balcarras to my course and get the most out of my experience at university. The highlight of my academic life so far has undoubtedly been my travels to Central America on expedition - yet again a credit to the endless incredible opportunities the school has to offer.

Annalise Langdon

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AABC

Plans: to study Engineering at University

Having enjoyed my time in the lower school so much it seemed natural for me to continue my sixth form education here at Balcarras. The teachers are very supportive and it has such a positive and encouraging environment. As well as the strong academics and high quality of teaching, there is an abundance of extracurricular opportunities on offer at the sixth form. I particularly enjoyed being part of the Engineering in Education Scheme team - a fantastic programme where we got to work with a local engineering company on a real life project. My favourite part of this was spending a few days at Bath University working on the machines to manufacture our prototype. We had a very successful completed project, coming second in the County Final. I was also part of the Young Enterprise team where we got the chance to set up and run our own business. It was a great experience and we were fortunate enough to reach the Regional Finals. I also participated in the Gold D of E, completing the expedition over summer holidays. I learnt many valuable skills from these that I can take with me through university and beyond. Ultimately, Balcarras and the sixth form team have provided me with a wide range of possibilities, as well as an incredible amount of support and guidance helping me achieve my full potential.



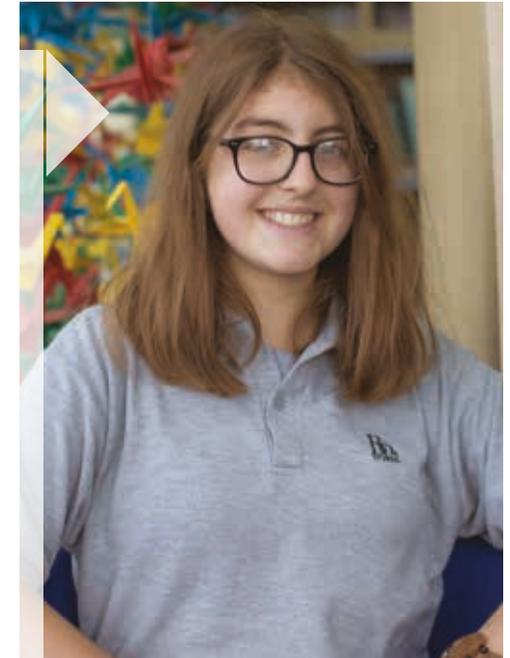
Teresa Etheredge

(Year 11 All Saints' Academy)

AS: AAAB

Plans: to study Psychology at University

When I first came to Balcarras in Year 12, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. However, the many opportunities, extra-curricular activities and school trips helped direct me toward studying Psychology at degree level. One of my favourite trips was to a conference in Bristol, where five ex-offenders including two murderers spoke to us about their experiences in the justice system. Another great aspect of Balcarras Sixth Form was the Boost programme, which encouraged students to aim high in their future plans, and supported me in my application to Cambridge University.





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 to Balcarras Sixth Form

A warm welcome to this guide about the courses available in the sixth form from September 2018.

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, led Ofsted to judge that we are one of the best sixth forms in the country.

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.

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

welcome



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

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. The recent renovation of the sixth form common room has added an extra dimension of quality and shows the commitment the school has to its sixth formers.

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, Miss Niblett, Mr Constance, Mrs Shute or me.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brett Jouny'.

Brett Jouny Head of Sixth Form

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Teachers are
experts in their
subjects. OFSTED

a supportive environment

Sixth form team

Mr Brett Jouny, the Head of Sixth Form, Mr Constance and Miss Niblett, 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 Jouny, Miss Niblett 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.



Miss Niblett



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 your attendance (our expectation is 100% attendance) and 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.



There are many friendly faces in the sixth form and Mrs Gill Dean is certainly one of them. She is the study supervisor for the state-of-the-art purpose-built study rooms and is often a good contact for students with many questions about sixth form life, as well as academic support for the EPQ and is a sixth form mentor.

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.

Administrative support

Mrs Lynda Shute provides administrative support for sixth form staff and students and would be delighted to aid you in any way.



Mrs Dean



Mrs Shute

a supportive environment

Careers and university advice

Progression to university is the goal of most students. Towards the middle of Year 12 the futures course is dedicated to university choices and the UCAS system. In addition to this, Mr Jouny, Miss Niblett 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 advisable). 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 July of Year 12. The Head of Careers co-ordinates 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 committee

There is an active sixth form committee, composed of Year 12 and Year 13 students who are elected in the autumn hustings. The committee meets every week, discussing issues affecting student welfare, uniform, accommodation, and most importantly, planning social events! Recommendations are made directly to the Head of Sixth Form and the Head of Year and changes often result.

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



A-levels offered at Balcarras

Twenty-four A-levels are available. Information on each, including the titles of the AS and A-level units, is on pages 12 to 41.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Art | Mathematics |
| Biology | Music |
| Business studies | Photography |
| Chemistry | Physical education |
| Computer science | Physics |
| Drama and theatre | Politics |
| Economics | Product design |
| English literature | Psychology |
| French | Religion, philosophy and ethics |
| Further mathematics | Russian |
| Geography | Spanish |
| History | Textiles |

We also provide vocational qualifications:

- Applied science
- Creative media
- Food science & nutrition
- Health and social care

the courses on offer

What is an A-level?

In Year 12 students complete AS courses. The new AS and A-levels have been decoupled. This means they have become two separate qualifications and the AS no longer counts towards the A-level. Students choose four (or occasionally five) AS courses (the EPQ will be taken in addition to these). Each course is taught for nine hours per fortnight. All students are expected to study four AS subjects for all of Year 12.

In Year 13 students will normally progress to A-level courses in three of their Year 12 subjects. In many cases students may complete four A-level courses and gain four A-levels. AQA Bacc is also available, see page 11.

Assessment

Each AS course and each A-level course comprises two or three units of work. These are usually assessed through examinations, coursework or a combination of the two. Assessments will take place in May/June of Year 12 and May/June of Year 13 only.

A-level courses will be harder than AS courses. This is so that over the two years students will be working up to AS and A-level standard and the progression from GCSE-level will be eased. In all courses grades A to E will represent a pass.

Choosing your courses

When choosing your courses, consider your academic strengths: which are your best subjects? You should select subjects you enjoy studying. 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 on the internet into which subjects are required to ensure all options are available.

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 alongside three arts subjects. Universities and employers will welcome such breadth.

Progression to A-level

Progression from AS to A-level courses is not automatic. It is dependent upon AS examination results and in a few cases students will have only been offered a one-year stay in the sixth form from the start. If students do not gain at least a pass grade in any AS-level then they will not be able to continue this course to A-level and it may be that their course of study is changed.

The vast majority of students, however, following four AS courses in Year 12 will usually progress into Year 13 to take three A-levels. The decision about which course to drop will be made at the end of Year 12. This decision will be made on the basis of discussion between students and teachers. Parents are welcome to be involved in the discussion if they so wish. It is expected that, in some cases, choices will be altered following the publication of AS results in August.

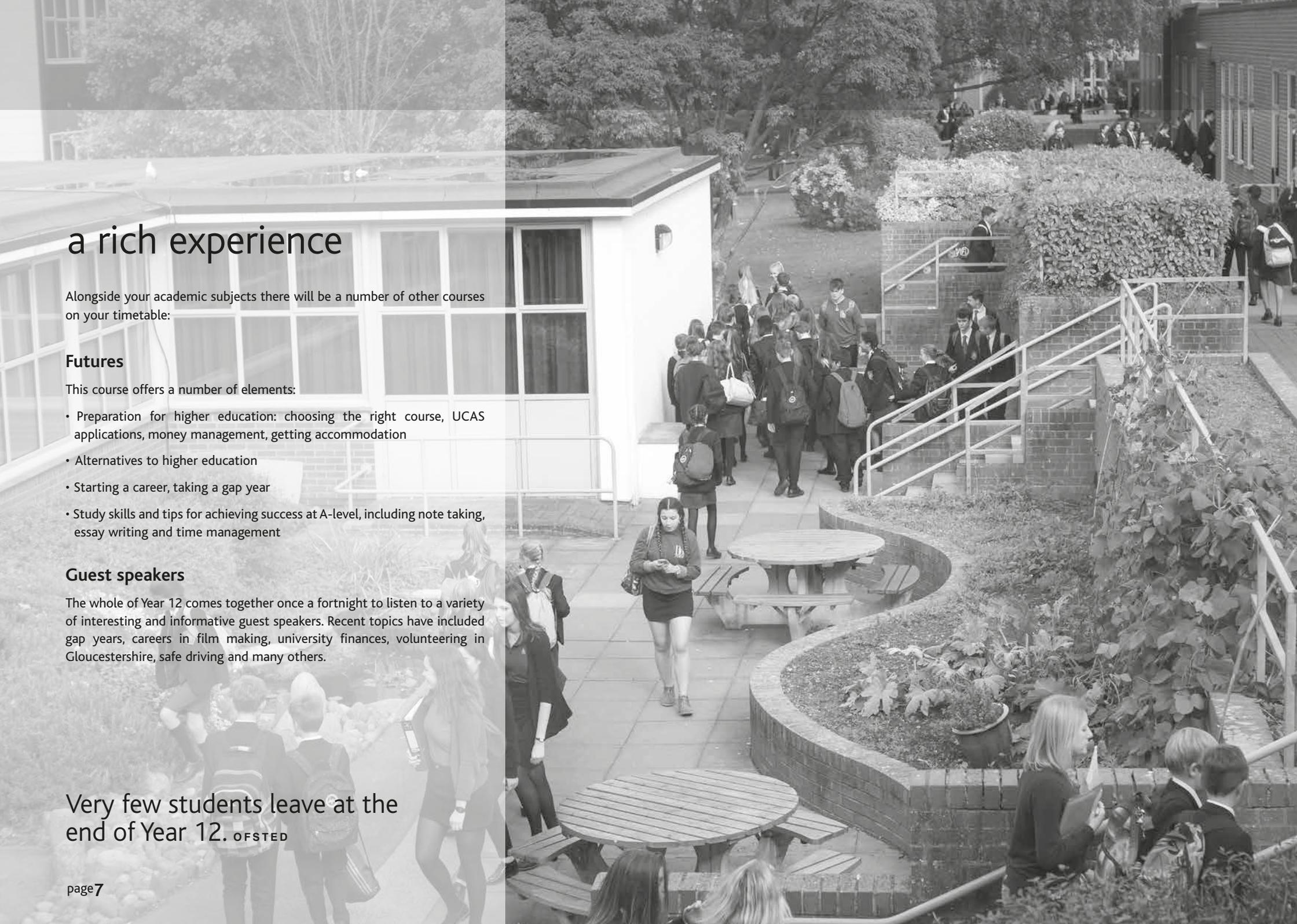
Entry requirements

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 number of elements:

- Preparation for higher education: choosing the right course, UCAS applications, money management, getting 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.

Very few students leave at the end of Year 12. OFSTED

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535

538

541

Students' confidence in knowing exactly where they are in their learning encourages students to ask questions of teachers rather than wait until questioned. This is particularly the case in the sixth form where the quality of debate and discussion is such it is hard to distinguish who is teaching whom. OFSTED

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 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, Bar Mock Trial, World Challenge, Model United Nations General Assembly, debating, school music competitions, drama productions and inter-school sports matches. Many of these activities can be used to contribute to the Enrichment component of the AQA Bacallaureate.

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 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 three within Gloucestershire for the past seven years and we have represented the county at the South West finals on no less than three occasions. There are over 2,000 schools that participate in the UK each year and our recent highlight was when Balcarras won the national award for producing a range of tea products. The Business department works hard and liaises with local businesses to ensure that students are motivated and supported in every aspect of running their businesses.

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.

Private study

Developing good 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. Both Year 12 and Year 13 students have purpose-built, fully supervised private study facilities, which are equipped with ICT workstations. In Year 13, once good habits have been developed, students have greater discretion in how they use this time. We see the effective running of the private study system as being the key to maximising academic success. All students who wish to apply to Balcarras Sixth Form must be committed to using study time effectively.

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.

Sixth form tutor groups are based in or close to the sixth form block.

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.

The recently upgraded common room provides a superb space in which students can socialise. It is well equipped for use by students at break and lunch, including TV, video and hi-fi facilities. In addition to vending machines there are new 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 and new sweatshirts.

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 Sweatshirt in black or grey
- Belts should be black, grey or brown

Training shoes, boots, scarves, jackets or coats may not be worn in the sixth form. Jewellery and make-up should be subtle.

Students should see their Head of Year if they are unsure about any item.

Buying uniform

The polo shirts and sweatshirts are available from "The Schoolwear Company" or gently worn from the Sixth Form Office.



baccalaureate

The **AQA Baccalaureate** is available to all students at Balcarras, alongside their A-level studies. Universities and employers increasingly see it both as a recognition of academic excellence and an indication that students are well-rounded, active individuals. The qualification is overseen by the AQA examination board and is suited to students who are strong academically and also participate in a number of events and activities beyond the prescribed curriculum. As this describes the majority of our students, we feel it is a perfect match for their aspirations.

In order to gain the **Baccalaureate**, all students must complete the following requirements:

- **Three subjects to A-level**
- **An AS-level in a subject not continued to A-level**
- **An extended project in an area chosen by the student**
- **Over a hundred hours of enrichment activities**

The Baccalaureate will be awarded in the following classifications:

- **Pass** (if the lowest A-level grade is an E or a D)
- **Merit** (if the lowest A-level grade is a C or a B)
- **Distinction** (if the lowest A-level grade is an A or an A*)

The Enrichment Scheme

All students will record their enrichment activities throughout Year 12. In order to qualify for the Baccalaureate, students must have completed over a 100 hours of activities in the areas:

- **Work-Related Learning**
- **Community Participation**
- **Personal Development Activities**

Students will keep an up-to-date electronic Enrichment Diary, which will be monitored by their tutor.



Syllabus title: Level 3 Certificate/Extended Certificate in Applied Science

Examination board: AQA

Certificate units in Year 12

Unit 1	Key concepts in science	External written examination	33.3% of Certificate
Unit 2	Applied experimental techniques	Internal portfolio	33.3% of Certificate
Unit 3	Science in the modern world	External written examination	33.3% of Certificate

Extended Certificate units in Year 13

Unit 4	The human body	External written examination	16.6% of Extended Certificate
Unit 5	Investigating science	Internal portfolio	16.6% of Extended Certificate
Unit 6	Optional unit (TBC)	Internal portfolio	16.6% of Extended Certificate

Studying level 3 Certificate/Extended Certificate in applied science

This is a vocational course that covers strands from biology, chemistry and physics with a focus on practical science and topical issues in science. In Year 12 learners will have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts across all three sciences, practise experimental scientific techniques and explore the ways in which scientific information is presented by the media. In Year 13 learners will extend their understanding of human biology, plan and carry out a scientific investigation of their own choosing and complete a portfolio based around one of three optional units. As the extended certificate is 50% internally assessed this course suits students that excel in coursework.

This course would work particularly well with health and social care, creative media, psychology or A-level PE.

Entry requirements

Students wishing to take applied science should have two grade 5's in GCSE combined science or equivalent.



art

Syllabus title: Art (Fine art)

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Unit 1	Portfolio unit		60% of AS
Unit 2	Practical examination	10 hrs	40% of AS

A-level

Unit 3	Portfolio unit supported by 1,000-3,000 words		60% of A-level
Unit 4	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 will 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 show proficiency in their use of written English, especially at A-level.



Syllabus title: Biology

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

2 papers, both covering topics 1-4, and lasting 1hr 30min. Each is worth 50% of the AS-Level

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 new 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 for AS and 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.

4 topics are covered at both AS and A-level:

- 1 - Biological molecules
- 2 - Cells
- 3 - Organisms exchange substances with their environment
- 4 - Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms

A further 4 topics are then covered only in the full A-level:

- 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 trip is also organised for the September of Year 13. It is recommended that all students studying the full biology A-level attend this trip as it covers important aspects of topics 5 and 7.

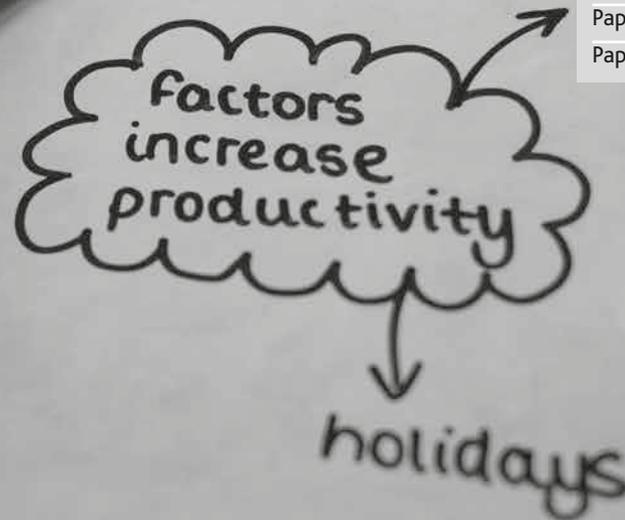
Entry requirements

Students wishing to take biology should have two grade 6's in GCSE combined science and grade 6 or above in maths.

business studies

Syllabus title: Business studies

Examination board: AQA



Students benefit from high quality, and often dynamic, teaching. They respond enthusiastically and work hard. OFSTED

AS-level

Paper 1	Business 1: Management and leadership	1½ hrs	50% of AS
Paper 2	Business 2: Decision making	1½ hrs	50% of AS

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

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 AS-level in Chemistry A specification content is divided into four teaching modules. Both exam papers assess all four 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

Learners studying the A-level study modules 1 to 4 and then continue with the A-level only 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 two grade 6's in GCSE combined science and grade 6 or above in maths. This A-level course will allow a co-teachable AS to be taken by Year 12 students.

AS-level

Unit 1	Breadth in chemistry	70 marks	1½ hrs	50% of total AS-level
Unit 2	Depth in chemistry	70 marks	1½ hrs	50% of total AS-level

A-level

Unit 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
Unit 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

computer science

Syllabus title: Computer Science
Examination board: OCR

AS-level

Unit 1	Computing principles	1¼ hrs written paper	70 marks	50% of total AS-level
Unit 2	Algorithms and problem solving	1¼ hrs written paper	70 marks	50% of total AS-level

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 challenging 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 mathematics and a 6 in GCSE computer science are both essential. All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

creative media

Syllabus title: Creative Media Production
BTEC L3
Examination board: Edexcel

Certificate

Unit 1	Pre-production Techniques for the Creative Media Industries
Unit 2	Communication Skills for Creative Media Production
Unit 66	3D Modelling
Unit 67	3D Animation

Subsidiary Diploma

Unit 3	Research Techniques for the Creative Media Industries
Unit 69	Drawing Concept Art for Computer Games
Unit 78	Digital Graphics for Computer Games

Studying creative media

The course is suitable for students who wish to develop their understanding of the creative media sector and progress into employment or a career in the games development industry. However, it is also beneficial for students who wish to go on to pursue a career in digital media, graphic design, film, fashion or television. Coursework projects have a real world focus and adopt the techniques and strategies used in industry including prototyping, researching, planning and pitching of ideas and concepts, working individually or in project teams.

Entry requirements

The course is open to all students who achieve the minimum entry requirements to the sixth form and have an interest in pursuing a career in games design or employment in the creative media sector.



drama & theatre

Syllabus title: Drama and Theatre

Examination board: Edexcel

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.

Both AS and A-level in drama and theatre are assessed through a combination of formal written exam, practical performances and coursework study. AS is a separate qualification but the content is a subset of the full A-level - so all students study AS first and then can opt to continue study to full A-level once they have weighed up their experiences of AS work.

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.

AS-level

Component 1	Exploration and performance	60% NEA (coursework based)	Students explore a play influenced by a practitioner and record this in a portfolio; they also perform an extract from this play. A separate monologue or duologue from a different play will be the other practical task.	Internally assessed and externally moderated
Component 2	Theatre makers in practice	40% Written exam	Sections based on practical engagement: evaluation of a production seen in performance and questions on a set text.	Exam 1 hour 45 mins.

economics

Syllabus title: Economics

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Paper 1	Operation of markets	1½ hrs	50% of AS
Paper 2	Economics in a global context	1½ hrs	50% of AS

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 both English language and mathematics are necessary.

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

They have access to very good resources, a highly supportive environment and regular supervised private study. OFSTED

english literature

Syllabus title: English literature

Examination board: WJEC

Studying A-level English literature

AS English Literature involves the study of the following texts:

- Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte (pre-1900 novel),
- Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys (post-1900 novel)
- Mean Time by Carol Ann Duffy (poetry)
- Lady Windermere's Fan by Oscar Wilde (play).

At the end of Year 12 there are two 2 hour exams: one prose exam (Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea) and one poetry/drama exam (Mean Time and Lady Windermere's Fan)

A-level English Literature involves the study of the following texts:

- The Merchant's Tale by Chaucer (pre-1900 poetry)
- The Whitsun Weddings by Philip Larkin (post-1900 poetry)
- King Lear (Shakespeare)
- Betrayal by Harold Pinter (post-1900 Drama)

At the end of Year 13, there are three separate 2 hour exams – Poetry, Drama and Unseen Texts (where you have to analyse previously unseen poetry and prose extracts)

During the year, you will also have to write a coursework essay comparing two prose texts: one of these novels must have been written before the year 2000 and the other must have been written after the year 2000. For your pre-2000 novel, the department recommends that you do either Jane Eyre or Wide Sargasso Sea as you will have studied these in Year 12. The department will give you a short selection of suggestions for your post-2000 novel.

Entry requirements

This is a challenging 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.

English literature A-level will stretch you both critically and creatively, but in order to be successful, students must have a genuine love of both reading and writing. A minimum of at least a 6 in either English language or English literature, but preferably in both.

AS-level

Component 1	Prose	2 hrs	50%
This exam will consist of one question on a pre-1900 novel and one question on a post-1900 novel.			
Component 2	Poetry & Drama	2 hrs	50%
This exam will consist of one question on a poetry text and one question on a drama text.			

A-level

Component 1	Poetry	2 hrs	30%
This exam will consist of one question on a pre-1900 poetry text and one question on two paired post-1900 poetry texts.			
Component 2	Drama	2 hrs	30%
This exam will consist of one question on a Shakespeare play and one question on a pair of plays (one pre-1900 and one post-1900).			
Component 3	Unseen Texts	2 hrs	20%
This exam will consist of one question analysing an unseen prose extract and one question analysing an unseen poetry extract.			
Component 4:	Prose Study	Coursework	20%
Students have to write a 2,500-3,500 word essay comparing two modern novels.			



Josie Robinson
(Year 11 Pittville School)

AS: AABC

Plans: to study Psychology at University

Having been an external student previous to starting Balcarras Sixth Form, I was apprehensive about what sixth form life would be like at Balcarras. The friendly environment and welcoming teachers made coming to Balcarras an enjoyable experience. Balcarras provides a supportive yet independent environment in which students can guide their own learning tailor and suit them. The teachers are always open to helping students external to class time, offering an excellent support network. Balcarras has provided me with a myriad of vital skills that are transferable to studying any degree at university. Studying biology, psychology and PE has given me such a broad understanding of the importance of physiological and psychological wellbeing and the processes.



Ewan Mennie
(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study Law at Bristol University or UCL

Having been at Balcarras since Year 7, I found the progression from lower school to sixth form very smooth, especially considering the academic step up. I have really enjoyed studying A-Levels, the freedom provided by independent study periods, combined with teachers who are willing to challenge you within subjects they specialise in alongside providing excellent pastoral help, has made the academic experience at Balcarras Sixth Form really engaging and worthwhile.

My highlight of sixth form was taking part in the Bar Mock Trial, the experience greatly heightened my excitement to study Law and despite not making it through to the next round, I found the day enjoyable nonetheless. The school has provided me with incredible extra-curricular activities that I'm so glad I took part in, including a month long expedition to Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, and a weeklong trip to New York as part of my History studies. Studying English Literature, History and Politics alongside taking part in valuable extra-curricular activities has really heightened my awareness of the society we live in and has certainly improved my analytical skills and I'm excited for future studies at University.

Jed Robinson-Wall

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study Materials Science and Engineering at Sheffield University

Continuing at Balcarras was a natural step for me, as being in a welcoming and familiar environment with proven exam success as well as diverse extracurricular activities has allowed me to develop and reach my potential. For A-level's I am studying chemistry, maths and physics with a view to studying Materials science and Engineering at Sheffield University. The quality of teaching is excellent with all my teachers stretching beyond the curriculum to reinforce deeper understanding and growth. During sixth form I was able to do DofE Gold which was a great experience. As well as this the boost programme was a great help in improving me as an academic to give me a better application for university and providing understanding of the application process.



Matt Stephenson

(Year 11 Kingshill)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to explore the world in my kayak

The sixth form team have been incredibly supportive throughout my time at Balcarras. They have made it very easy to pursue my passion for kayaking whilst still doing well in my subjects. The relaxed but focused environment, driven by the close relationship with your teachers in sixth form really allows you to enjoy and excel in your subjects.

Through studying geography, physics and chemistry I have developed an extensive knowledge of the world around us and love being able to apply this to pretty much anything I see. I feel very excited and prepared going out into the "real world".





Milo Keir

(Year 11 Winchcombe)

AS: AAAB

Plans: to take a year out to do a TEFL course and travel, then study Hispanic Studies and English (Joint Honours) at Liverpool

Choosing Balcarras Sixth Form was one of the best decisions I have made. As an external student from a small school without facilities for post-sixteen students I have immensely enjoyed the work ethic here, loved participating in all of the school traditions and could not see myself being more at ease anywhere else. I was originally nervous of the reputation this school has of being pressured, but soon found that everyone worked at a pace at which I simultaneously felt comfortable and challenged to improve myself. All the internal students I spoke to were friendly and welcoming while externals were accepted and within a couple of weeks I saw myself as fully integrated within the school's atmosphere with many new friends that I hope to keep in contact with for a long time. Balcarras was the perfect place for me to decide what I wanted to do after I completed my education, it gave me the skills I needed to progress in life and I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone considering going to sixth form.



Hannah Warren

(Year 11 France)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study English and Philosophy at the University of St Andrews

Having arrived to the school after spending 12 years in the French education system, A-levels seemed rather daunting and unfamiliar, but I could not have chosen a better place to welcome me. The lessons are always taught with enthusiasm and the teachers are always happy to help if you are struggling. As sixth form students, we are given a lot more freedom than lower years to research topics that interest us and to do independent work in our study periods, which I feel motivates people to challenge themselves and work as hard as they can.

Studying English literature, Spanish and philosophy & ethics has helped me have a broader understanding of the world and has challenged me to think in new and interesting ways. Each subject addresses issues that are of importance in the current world and examines them from different perspectives, which always keeps students engaged and interested. This means pupils leave the school as mature and well-rounded individuals.

Vinnie Upadhyay

(Year 11 India)

AS: BBB

Plans: to study Economics at UCL

Balcarras Sixth Form supported my transition while I settled back in the UK after relocating from India. I am really grateful to Balcarras Sixth Form for offering me the opportunity to learn. My favourite thing about Balcarras Sixth Form is that the learning here goes beyond the textbook theory. The teachers are absolutely enthusiastic to teach and have the in-depth knowledge to take learning to the next level. Balcarras has also provided me with the opportunity to aid the year 12 maths student through the "Maths ambassador" program.



Sam Shute

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: Distinction*, BC

Plans: Art and Design Foundation year course at Stroud College and then progress to an art/design degree or apprenticeship

Studying A-levels at Balcarras Sixth Form was an easy choice to make after achieving results that I was happy with in my GCSE's. The subjects I am interested in were available and the facilities and opportunities at Balcarras are great. I have followed my interest in art and design by taking creative media and photography, allowing me to explore these subjects further. My 3rd A-level is geography as I have always had an interest in this subject and it seemed a smart choice to make after achieving an A at GCSE. I feel that I am well supported by teachers but there is also a greater emphasis on independent learning. The art department has an open door policy allowing access during study periods to do photography work and the sixth form study rooms are supervised, allowing time to concentrate on homework and research. The common room is nice and has a relaxed atmosphere for break and lunchtimes where I can chat with friends. The sixth form has a lot of pupils join from other schools and it has been really nice to get to know some new people.



food science & nutrition

Syllabus title: Food Science and Nutrition

Examination board: WJEC

Year 12 Certificate in Food Science and Nutrition

Unit Number	Unit Title	Structure	Assessment
1	Meeting Nutritional Needs of Specific Groups	Mandatory	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	Mandatory	Externally marked - eight hour timed, supervised assessment
3	Experimenting to Solve Food Production Problems	Optional	Internal: responding through investigative and experimental work to a scenario based on a food production problem
4	Current Issues in Food Science and Nutrition	Optional	Internal: plan, carry out and present a research project on current issues linked to issues related to food science and nutrition.

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 either GCSE design technology: food technology, home economics or catering 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.

Syllabus title: French AS/A Level

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Paper 1	Listening, reading & writing	40% of AS
Paper 2	Writing	30% of AS
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of AS

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, reading & writing	40% of A-level
Paper 2	Writing	30% 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.

Cultural development is exceptionally good. OFSTED

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 7 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.

Syllabus title: Geography

Examination board: AQA

AS

Component 1	Physical geography and people and the environment	1½ hours	80 marks	50% of AS
Component 2	Human geography and geography fieldwork investigation	1½ hours	80 marks	50% of AS

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 examination response. A weekend residential to Dorset in the Autumn term of Year 12 is an integral part of this.

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

It is no surprise, therefore, that students achieve very high standards. OFSTED

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma (1 x A-level equivalent)

OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Health and Social Care (2 x A-level equivalent)

This extremely successful vocational qualification was introduced in the sixth form two years ago as students benefit from 100% internal assessment, meaning there are no exams at all in the assessment of this qualification.

The Level 3 Cambridge Technical (Introductory) Diploma has been chosen as it is a nationally recognised qualification with vocational learning; therefore work placements will be an integral part of both courses. They will enable students to develop skills needed to work in the health and social care sector including communication skills, teamwork, decision making and analysis of cause and effects in health and social care scenarios, together with the evaluation of concepts and ideas.

Over the course of two years all students will complete a mandatory unit:

- Developing effective communication in health and social care

The Diploma students will complete a further five mandatory units:

- Equality, diversity and rights in health and social care
- Health, safety and security in health and social care
- Development through the life stages
- Sociological perspectives for health and social care
- Psychological perspectives for health and social care

Other units will be taught to all students to amount to a further 50 credits and they could include: promoting health education; anatomy and physiology for health and social care; research methodology for health and social care; dealing with challenging behaviour and caring for children and young people.

Entry requirements

The minimum sixth form entry requirements apply. Students do not need to have studied health and social care in Key Stage 4.

Syllabus title: **History**
 Examination board: **AQA**

A-level

Unit 1	Revolution 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%

AS-level

The department also offers a 1-year AS course which looks at both units 1 and 2. Both of these units are 50% of the AS-level and the two exams are 1½ hours long.

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 3,000-4,000 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 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.

Syllabus title: Music
Examination board: WJEC Eduqas

AS-level

Component 1 Performing	Minimum two pieces; 6-8 minutes total length	30%
Component 2 Composing	Two pieces; 4.5-7 minutes total length	30%
Component 3 Appraising	Exam: 1hr 30	40%

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 AS/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, at A-level only, 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. AS/A-level students are expected to participate fully in the extracurricular programme offered by the music department.

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.

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

AS-level

Unit 1	Portfolio unit		60% of AS
Unit 2	Practical examination	5 hrs	40% of AS

A-level

Unit 3	Portfolio unit supported by 1,000-3,000 words		60% of A-level
Unit 4	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 at GCSE level in art, although in certain cases potential candidates with a grade 5 may be considered. Students who have not undertaken GCSE art will be asked to show updated sketchbooks or similar work. Students must show proficiency in their use of written English, especially at A-level.

physical education

Syllabus title: Physical education

Examination board: OCR

AS-level

Component 1	Physiological factors affecting performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied A&P • Ex physiology • Biomechanics inc. technology in sport 	70 marks	1hr 15mins	35%
Component 2	Psychological and socio-cultural themes in physical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill acquisition • Sports psychology • Sport & society 	70 marks	1hr 15mins	35%
Component 3	Performance in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance & coaching • Evaluation of performance for improvement 	60 marks	NEA	30%

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 two sports.

physics

Syllabus title: Physics

Examination board: Edexcel

AS-level

Paper 1	Mechanics Electricity Practical skills	50%
Paper 2	Materials Waves and light Practical skills	50%

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. The AS course 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 AS 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 two grade 6's in GCSE combined science and grade 6 or above in maths. We strongly recommend combining this course with AS maths.



Syllabus title: Government and politics
Examination board: Edexcel

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.

AS-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

A-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

Component 3: Comparative 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 the minimum entry requirements for the sixth form.

product design



AS-level

Paper 1	Written paper	1.5 hrs	50% of AS
	Non examined assessment (NEA)	35 hrs	50% of AS

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

Syllabus title: Design and Technology:
Product Design

Examination board: AQA

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.

Advanced 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 course. However, students with a grade 5, or who may not have studied a technology subject at Key Stage 4, may be considered on an individual basis.

psychology

Syllabus title: Psychology
Examination board: AQA



AS-level

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Influence • Memory • Attachment 	1½ hrs written exam	72 marks	50% of AS	Three compulsory sections all requiring written answers
Paper 2: Psychology in Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches in Psychology • Psychopathology • Research Methods 	1½ hrs written exam	72 marks	50% of AS	Three compulsory sections all requiring written answers

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.

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 at AS 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.

religion, philosophy and ethics

Syllabus title: Religious Studies
Examination board: OCR 100% Essay exam

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 religion, philosophy and ethics 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.



Syllabus title: Russian

Examination board: Edexcel

AS-level

Paper 1	Listening, reading and translation	40% of AS
Paper 2	Written response to works and translation	30% of AS
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of AS

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 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 Russia and Russian 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 Russian.

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as on-line articles, newspapers and video clips as well as conventional textbooks and grammar workbooks. You will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently.

You will learn to use Russian in everyday conversation as well as in formal discussion and debate. A Russian 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 Russia 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 grade 6 at GCSE-level in Russian.

spanish

Syllabus title: Spanish

Examination board: AQA

- 1 realización
- 2 brecha
- 3 gestiones
- 4 personas mayores
- 5 usuarios
- 6 perfil

1b Lee el artículo y comenta.
ntas.

Las personas mayores y el uso de Internet

Si bien el uso de las nuevas tecnologías para la realización de actividades es un fenómeno que se extiende de forma global en la sociedad actual, entre las personas mayores se refleja un uso menor y más lento. El análisis de este contenido de un estudio llamado "Barómetro de Mayores" que ha sido realizado por la compañía Simple Lógica para analizar el uso digital de los españoles. Entre las personas mayores que se manifiestan como usuarios de Internet, cada diez lo utilizan para informarse, prensa, noticias y documentos. Esta actividad la que más mayores realizan. No obstante la mitad de las gestiones tanto bancarias (51.1%) como administrativas (47.0%) se realiza entre las personas mayores es la de comprar por Internet. Se presta atención personal.

Si se analiza el perfil de los usuarios de Internet entre las personas mayores se caracteriza por...

AS-level

Paper 1	Listening, reading & writing	40% of AS
Paper 2	Writing	30% of AS
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of AS

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, reading & writing	40% of A-level
Paper 2	Writing	30% 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.

Syllabus title: Art and Design (Textile design)

Examination board: AQA

Studying A-level textiles

Textiles have always been an integral part of society and commerce, touching our lives every day. This subject can lead on to design or art courses and is a wonderful chance to explore the properties and possibilities of fabrics and related media. Textile design can be as diverse as a fabric surface design, an innovative piece of clothing, a piece of body adornment or a 3D sculpture.

At A-level you will have the chance to design new and innovative fabrics and products using a wide range of materials and techniques. At AS you will produce a portfolio, sketchbooks consisting of explorative and practical outcomes and made pieces. In your A-level year you will build on your acquired skills and knowledge, producing one challenging and self-motivated investigation with supporting practical work.

Topics covered by this course will include: the working properties and manipulation of materials; colour and pattern application techniques; pattern drafting; sketchbook and portfolio presentation and aspects of design and illustration. During the course you will be expected to be able to work independently producing quality work and to keep fully up to date with new developments and issues relating to textiles.

Entry requirements

Students should have achieved a grade 5 at GCSE-level in a textiles or art course. It would be an advantage if you are experienced in using a sewing machine.

AS-level

Unit 1	Coursework Portfolio	No time limit	96 marks	60% of AS
Unit 2	Externally set assignment	Supervised 10 hrs	96 marks	40% of AS

A-level

Unit 3	Personal Investigation	No time limit	96 marks	60% of A-level
Unit 4	Externally set assignment	Supervised 15 hrs	96 marks	40% of A-level

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 E.P.Q. 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 E.P.Q. 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 E.P.Q. 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 E.P.Q. in their offers to students.

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.

It contributes to programmes of study in two ways:

• **As a stand-alone qualification:**

Students may choose to take the Extended Project Qualification as an extension of their studies.

• **As part of the AQA Baccalaureate:**

The Extended Project Qualification is a compulsory part of the Level 3 AQA Baccalaureate.

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 course will be made in April. Secondly, we will try to make sure that your chosen combination of courses is possible i.e. that they are not timetables at the same time. This will be more difficult to ensure if you change your mind later on.

Application form

An application form is downloadable from our website www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk on the sixth form/admissions page. Please complete the form and email to lms@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk. You will receive an acknowledgement by return.

If you are unable to complete an application form online or have any queries please email Mrs Shute, Sixth Form Administrator on lms@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk or telephone 01242 545118.

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 decisions will be made on the basis of the application alone, but it will form the basis for discussion at the consultation meeting.

Deadline

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

Course consultation meeting

Consulations will take place between February and April. Parents will be 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, conditions are 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.

60th
FORM 2018

Balcarras Sixth Form

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