



Options 2020

**This book belongs to:**

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**The Options Form must be returned to your Tutor by**

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*Dear Member of Year 9,*

*You are about to start out on a new stage in your education.*

*So far, all the decisions about the courses you have followed have been made by the school. Now you have the chance to choose some of the subjects you will study in Years 10 and 11.*

*Start by reading this booklet carefully. Show it to your parents, too, so that they can help you in your decision-making. You will want to refer to it several times over the next few weeks so it would be a good idea to keep it with you.*

*If there is any further information you need, do not hesitate to ask your tutor, your subject teachers or any other member of staff you know well. We are all available and keen to help you decide upon the courses which will make your next two years as enjoyable and successful as possible.*

*Good luck.*

*Yours sincerely*



*Assistant Headteacher*

## Preparing for the Options

### Options Evening

This is a meeting for **parents**. They will be introduced to the scheme and the various steps which have to be taken. There will be information about the courses which pupils have not met before: business studies, health and social care, creative imedia, computer science and an opportunity to discuss individual concerns with Year 9 tutors.

### Year 9 Parents' Evening

This is the most convenient occasion for gathering advice from tutors, individual teachers, the individual learning department and our head of careers.

### The Options Form

Once the choices have been made, the forms are handed to the Year 9 tutors. We shall do our best to provide you with the courses that you have chosen, but it may be that we run out of spaces in a particular subject. If there is a problem of this kind, we shall discuss it with the pupils concerned. It is **essential** that all pupils nominate reserve subjects, so that we can do our best to accommodate pupils' wishes closely in the event that they may not be able to study their original choices. Notes on how to complete the Options Form are on page 24.

### Key Dates

- **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February:** Options Evening for Parents 7pm in the Hall
- **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February:** Year 9 Parents' Evening 4pm – 7pm
- **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March:** **Deadline for return of Options Forms**

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## ART

Pupils who choose to study art at GCSE level will be building upon the techniques and approaches which they met for the first time during Years 7, 8 and 9. The course also provides the students with access to a whole range of creative careers - such as graphic design, architecture, illustration, photography and many more. The course involves working in a range of two and three dimensional media and learning to use new processes as well as ones which are already familiar. The emphasis is upon practical work, with most of the time being given to creative or observational assignments, but there is also a small amount of written research.

The department is looking for pupils who have already shown that they can sustain a steady commitment to both homework and classwork. This exciting course rewards those with a consistent approach.

Both the coursework and the final examination allow time for careful preparation and preliminary work and pupils will be taught how to use this time effectively.

It is helpful to have the use of a range of graphic media. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT as part of the course.

The Arts are enormously varied and the career opportunities are huge. We see roughly between 15 to 20 students each year who want to pursue careers in the arts in some capacity.

Most of our students are pursuing the commercial arts ie: architecture, graphic design, illustration, computer gaming/ concept gaming, photography, animation, film, advertising, branding and marketing, fine arts, garden/ landscape design, car design etc. The route to these careers is through GCSE art and then A-level art. There are other sometimes longer routes but this is the most direct and traditionally where the pool of students come from. If anyone would like any more information then please contact us here in the art department. we have a booklet to give out with more information plus there is lots of information on line with regards to arts careers.



### Syllabus

#### Coursework

#### Final examination

### AQA Art

A portfolio of work  
(60% of total mark)

10 hours

(40% of total mark)

## **BUSINESS STUDIES**

Everything in life involves Business. Think about that new top you bought last week and then think of what businesses made it possible for you to be wearing it right now?

The obvious ones are the Shop and the Manufacturing plant but what about the cotton growers? The Label Makers? The Delivery company? Health & Safety? Even the companies that manage the finances of all those businesses. Thinking about all those processes and people allows you begin to understand about what Business Studies is all about. Business is a major part of everyone's life and anybody who has a good idea about how businesses work are at an immediate advantage in the future.

In the private sector, 89% of UK businesses employ fewer than 10 people and only 6,000 firms employ more than 250 people. However, these large firms account for over 50% of the turnover generated within the country. Businesses come in all shapes and sizes and over the two years pupils will learn about the key factors that lead to the success and, perhaps just as importantly, those that lead to the failure of a business. Factors such as objectives, finance, types of ownership, marketing and especially external influences will all be studied in detail and with relevant up-to-date examples from local, national and international businesses.

Business studies at GCSE level is a valuable starting point

for more advanced work in the subject, either studying for A-level economics or A-level business. It is also an important course for pupils wanting to move directly into employment and will help pupils understand the business basics that will be needed in working for any firm.

The course is assessed via two examinations at the end of Year 11 which is sat by all pupils and does not have any tiered level of entry. The first paper is worth 62.5% and consists of short answer questions and essay style questions based on stimulus materials covering the entire specification. The second paper is worth 37.5% and involves a series of data response questions covering the specification. Students will require a range of maths skills in this part of the examination. There is no coursework element to Business Studies.

Potential careers for students who study Business at university:

- Accountancy
- Advertising
- Banking, Investment and Financial Services
- HR/Personnel
- Management Consultancy
- Public Relations
- Retail Management

<b>Syllabus</b>	WJEC
<b>Final examination</b>	100%

## COMPUTER SCIENCE

Our GCSE in Computer Science is engaging and practical, encouraging creativity and problem solving. It encourages students to develop their understanding and application of the core concepts in computer science. Students also analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing and evaluating programs.

### Course Overview:

#### Component 1: Computer Systems (50%)

- Systems Architecture
  - Memory
  - Storage
  - Wired and wireless networks
  - Network topologies, protocols and layers
  - System security
  - System software
  - Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns
- Assessment: Written paper, 80 marks (90 minutes)

#### Component 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms & Programming (50%)

- Algorithms \*
  - Programming techniques
  - Producing robust programs
  - Computational logic
  - Translators and facilities of languages
  - Data representation
- Assessment: Written paper, 80 marks (90 minutes)

#### Component 3: Programming Project (N/A)

- Programming techniques
- Analysis
- Design
- Development
- Testing and evaluation and conclusions

Assessment: N/A, but students complete a 20-hour project

### Routes for Progression:

Pupils will have the opportunity to continue the course in our sixth form, by selecting our OCR A-level computer science course. This will give them the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue a higher education in computing, with the majority of our pupils selecting subjects at university in areas such as computer science, robotics, artificial intelligence and cyber security. Pupils also have the option of apprenticeships, with many opportunities in the ever-growing field of computing. Even if pupils do not wish to study the subject further, they will be well set up for our technological world no matter which industry they chose.

<b>Syllabus</b>	OCR
<b>Coursework</b>	20 hr project
<b>Final examination</b>	100%



## CREATIVE I MEDIA

Our OCR Level 2 Cambridge National in Creative iMedia equips students with the wide range of knowledge and skills needed to work in the creative digital media sector. They start at pre-production and develop their skills through practical assignments as they create final multimedia products. Using the Adobe suite, they will create digital graphics, a multipage website and a digital animation.

### Course Overview:

The course consists of four units. Two completed each year. Three are coursework based and one is assessed with an exam.

#### **Unit R081: Pre-production Skills (25%) – Year 10**

This unit will enable learners to understand pre-production skills used in the creative and digital media sector. It will develop their understanding of the client brief, time frames, deadlines and preparation techniques that form part of the planning and creation process.

Assessment: Written exam – OCR set and marked, 60 marks (1 hour 15 mins)

#### **Unit R082: Digital Graphics (25%) – Year 10**

On completion of this unit, learners will understand the purpose and properties of digital graphics, and know where and how they are used. They will be able to plan the creation of digital graphics, create new digital graphics using a range of editing techniques and review a completed graphic against a specific brief.

Assessment: Centre assessed tasks – OCR moderated, 60 marks (10 hours)

**\*The following options could be subject to change:**

#### **\*Unit R085: Multipage Website (25%) – Year 11**

This unit will enable learners to understand the basics of creating multipage websites. It will enable learners to demonstrate their creativity by combining components to create a functional, intuitive and aesthetically pleasing website. It will allow them to interpret a client brief and to use planning and preparation techniques when developing a multipage website. Assessment: Centre assessed tasks – OCR moderated, 60 marks (10 hours)

#### **\*Unit R086: Digital Animation (25%) – Year 11**

This unit enables learners to understand the basics of digital animation for the creative and digital media sector. Learners will be able to plan a digital animation to a client brief, use animation software to create the animation and be able to store, export and review the final product.

Assessment: Centre assessed tasks – OCR moderated, 60 marks (10 hours)

**Routes for Progression:** This course will provide pupils with essential knowledge, transferable skills and tools to improve their learning in other subjects with the aims of enhancing their employability when they leave education, contributing to their personal development and future economic well-being. Students going into Apprenticeships will clearly be able to show employers and trainers the level of their creative computing competence using a recognised qualification.

<b>Syllabus</b>	OCR
<b>Coursework</b>	75%
<b>Final examination</b>	25%

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design your future... careers in design technology are creative, demanding and fun, and can lead to an exciting future. Design today has become very fashionable with many popular television programmes devoted to design in the home and the clothes we wear. Many everyday products including sportswear, electronic goods and furniture are designed and manufactured to give the maximum performance and visual impact.

*Products designed by Balcarras pupils regularly win design and engineering competitions, including the 'Gloucestershire Schools STEM Awards' and the National TDi awards. Students have also been highly successful in 'Young Engineer' competitions.*

### D&T PRODUCT DESIGN

This course will involve you in evaluating existing products and developing an understanding of how designers work. You will design and make prototypes of the products of the future, using a range of new and emerging technologies.

Products could include:

- 'concept' models
- working prototypes, which may include electronic and/or mechanical systems
- packaging and promotional materials, developing your graphical skills to professional standards

You will be expected to work with a range of new materials and techniques, using the latest manufacturing equipment and processes, including laser printing, sublimation printing and rapid prototyping (3D printing).

### Syllabus

Design & Technology AQA

### Non-examined assessment

50% of the final award

### Final examination

50% of the final award

**Where does product design lead?** The UK has the second-largest design sector in the world and the largest design industry in Europe. There are a wide range of possible career options including product design, graphic design, architecture, engineering and computer aided design. Balcarras has fantastic facilities for pupils to develop skills in a wide range of areas and develop transferable skills which are attractive to employers. These include team work, time management and problem solving. D&T product design offers something that a lot of other subjects cannot - the chance to combine scientific theory and creative flair to produce functional working products.

### D&T TEXTILES

Textiles allows you to have the creative freedom to develop your own unique style of design work. Pupils will be offered ample opportunity to further their practical skills with two mini projects which run through Year 10. If you enjoyed the practical lessons in Year 9 this is the subject for you, with skill lessons set for every week, we encourage learning through doing. The GCSE is split into two main components; an Exam which is sat during the summer of Year 11 and a non-exam assessment which we start in June of Year 10 and finish by February of Year 11.

This GCSE allows pupils to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. Pupils will investigate social, cultural, environmental and economic influences on design and technology, whilst enjoying opportunities to put their learning into practice by producing a range of prototypes.

**Where could D&T textiles lead?** This creative and thought provoking GCSE gives pupils the practical skills, theoretical knowledge and confidence to succeed in a number of careers. Especially those within the design, textiles and creative sectors. Pupils will gain a real understanding of what it means to be a designer, alongside the knowledge and skills sought by higher education and employers.

<b>Syllabus</b>	Design Technology (Textiles) AQA
<b>Non-examined assessment</b>	50% of the final award
<b>Final examination</b>	50% of the final award

## FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION

This exciting course offers you an opportunity to learn important concepts about food. The key concepts covered by this course will be:

- Food commodities - understanding the main food products
- Principles of nutrition - including the role of fat, protein, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals
- The science of food - the effects of cooking food, food hygiene and spoilage

- Where food comes from - food provenance and food manufacturing
- Cooking and food preparation - developing and making a wide range of products

In Year 11 you will complete two assessed tasks — a Food Investigation and a Food Preparation Assessment. To meet the needs and interests of budding chefs, the preparation assignment offers students situations to enable them to showcase their culinary skills as well as modifying and developing products from different culinary traditions. The course will involve far more practical work than in Key Stage 3; you will have the opportunity to develop a higher level of practical skills to make a variety of products. You will frequently be expected to bring ingredients to lessons.

**Higher Education:** pupils who have studied food preparation and nutrition are currently following undergraduate courses in:

- Food Product Development
- Food Marketing and Management

**Careers:** the **food** industry is a major employer and includes associated careers such as advertising, food product development and marketing, business management, journalism, hotel and catering management, consumer education, health and dietetics and teaching.

<b>Syllabus</b>	Food Preparation & Nutrition	EDUQAS
<b>Non-examined assessment</b>	50% of the final award	
<b>Final examination</b>	50% of the final award	

## DRAMA

This subject offers students so many opportunities to develop skills for both drama and life! Pupils who are successful build up a detailed knowledge of a wide range of practical techniques and strategies whilst learning how to apply them in varied circumstances. Some of the work is problem solving, requiring candidates to develop their organisational and independent learning skills whilst other activities involve working imaginatively in group situations. It is hardly surprising that drama students go on to success in a wide range of careers not just the arts.

Projects include producing devised, improvised and scripted pieces.

All candidates are assessed individually, but frequently within a group context. There is a monologue task but all other practical work is in small groups. These coursework modules have no formal written element. However, there will be a need to keep some record of activities so as to prepare for written exam questions. This written exam requires students to answer a series of questions on various aspects their own work and a piece of script. Although 150 minutes, this time allows candidates the opportunity to express themselves in detail and with flair.

Usual homework tasks will be rehearsing, sometimes learning lines, writing up notes, and occasionally visiting shows.

Drama suits pupils who are enthusiastic, energetic and prepared to work creatively with other people. It may also be very helpful to those who want to develop their confidence, self-expression, public relations and people management skills.

**Extra-curricular aspects:** For practical assessments, pupils will sometimes be expected to rehearse out of lesson time [some lunch times, after school, and perhaps a Sunday in Year 11].

Please note that we feel it vital for our students to get a range of interesting experiences of the art form. We therefore expect pupils to attend theatre events that we arrange - and to sometimes make a brief record of these experiences. These visits stimulate ideas for student projects, written exam responses and provide insights into professional practice. To keep costs down, we limit the number of trips out to a maximum of 3 per year (usually 2) and seek the cheapest available deals. We have a good relationship with local theatres and visiting companies so excellent show tickets are usually priced between £10 and £25, workshops are mostly free.

Many of our students simply apply skills learnt in drama to their life in general - improving their interview techniques, problem solving, working with people, and projecting a carefully confident demeanour. Ex-students at KS3, GCSE and A-level have enjoyed success in almost every career area. However, the UK remains a major player in international arts and we are pleased to see that a substantial number of our students have progressed into media careers as actors, writers, directors, technicians or designers. We currently have alumni working around the world, including in the US, and the West End. Some are regularly working in television, some are more locally based professional theatre practitioners.

Syllabus	Cambridge IGCSE
Coursework	60% of overall assessment
Final examination	40% of overall assessment

## ENGLISH

### GCSE English

The English course consists of two separate GCSEs (English Language and English Literature) and these will be taught alongside each other throughout Years 10 and 11. Students will begin their study of GCSE poetry in the summer term of Year 9. They will also prepare and be assessed on a speech that they have to give for the speaking part of the award.

Our aim throughout the course is to develop students' critical reading skills in order to make them more confident at responding to texts, both fiction and non-fiction, from a range of periods. We will also be developing students' written skills so that they become confident at creating and adapting their own texts for a variety of audiences and purposes.

### English Language

There are two exams in English Language both lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes each:-

- The first exam *Explorations in creative reading and writing* will test students' ability to respond to a fiction extract through a range of targeted questions. Students will then follow this up by producing a piece of their own creative writing.
- The second exam *Writers' viewpoints and perspectives* will test students' ability to respond to non-fiction texts and will then ask them to produce a piece of functional writing such as a formal letter, leaflet or article.

### English Literature

There are also two exams in English Literature:-

- The first exam *Shakespeare and the 19<sup>th</sup> century novel* lasts for 1 hour and 45 minutes. Students will have to answer two extract style questions: one on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the other on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.
- The second exam *Modern texts and poetry* lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes. Students will have to answer one essay question on a play (*An Inspector Calls*); they will then have to write an essay comparing two poems selected from an anthology of 15 poems previously studied in class; they will then have to answer questions on two unseen poems (i.e not studied in class).

English is a lively and invigorating subject and there is something in it for everyone. It can also take you into a broad range of careers such law, journalism, film and theatre, education or business. By the end of Year 11, students will have read novels and plays that they will know for life, be able to de-construct texts and will have had their creative imaginations stretched and challenged.

<b>English Language Syllabus</b>	AQA
<b>Final Examination</b>	100% of overall assessment
<b>English Literature Syllabus</b>	AQA
<b>Final Examination</b>	100% of overall assessment

## FRENCH

GCSE in French aims to develop pupils' ability to understand the language and to communicate effectively with French-speaking people, as well as offering an insight into the way of life of countries where French is spoken.

The course is assessed on the four skills of language learning: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Each skill is equally weighted and worth 25% of the final grade. There will be an exam in each skill at the end of the course. There are no controlled assessments.

Activities will include listening to conversations, presentations, public announcements, songs and extracts from the radio. Reading comprehension is based on a number of sources including advertisements, newspaper and magazine articles and French literature. The course will have reference to a text book but increasingly we use internet resources as well as other materials prepared by the teacher to supplement lessons and to ensure that lessons are both stimulating and accessible to all.

In class, pupils will study topics ranging from local and global areas of interest, to school and jobs. A large amount of lesson time is spent on equipping pupils with the necessary vocabulary and grammar so that they are able to communicate effectively within these topic areas in French.

Pupils who are aiming for the higher GCSE grades will need to understand grammatical structures and be able to apply them in practice. All pupils will need to get into the habit of learning vocabulary on a regular basis.

Pupils following this course will find internet access very helpful and will all be expected to have their own pocket bilingual dictionary and/or access to [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com)

Languages can be a springboard to many different careers, ranging from international business & management to journalism to public relations. Check out the following website in order to see other options as to where languages can take you: [www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk](http://www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk)

*“Languages are a life-long skill - to be used in business and for pleasure, to open up avenues of communication and exploration, and to promote, encourage and instil a broader cultural understanding.”*

The Department for Education

**Syllabus**

AQA

**Final examination**

100% of overall assessment

## GEOGRAPHY

“Geography students hold the key to the world's problems”- Michael Palin *President of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)*.

Pupils will come to this contemporary and popular course having already learned that geography helps them to understand the complex world that we now live in; how the human and physical landscape work alongside each other and are interconnected. The GCSE course will explore these links and connections through a variety of topics across the two years. Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring contemporary issues and themes in the United Kingdom (UK), higher income countries (HICs), newly emerging economies (NEEs) and lower income countries (LICs).

Topics of study include natural hazards, physical landscapes, ecosystems, the changing economic world, urban issues and challenges, and the challenge of resource management. Within these topics students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes throughout. During the course students will be taught a range of geographical, analytical and literacy skills which are useful when investigating geographical issues and problems.

There will be a variety of fieldwork opportunities within the course, including two compulsory fieldwork day experiences in at least two contrasting environments. This is preparation for a skills examination at the end of Year 11. An optional annual residential runs to Snowdonia covering many aspects of the glacial landscapes topic as well as fieldwork skills. We

also organise an optional biannual foreign residential which allows the pupils to ‘see’ some of the landscapes and processes that they have studied within lessons. Previous locations have included; Iceland, west coast of America, and Italy.

The geography course aims to be as current and contemporary as possible. If geographical issues arise during the course we take time out to study and debate them. This combined with the analytical skills the subject develops prepares pupils for the progression to A-level geography.

**Where will Geography take me? This is the question that many students ask.....**

- Geography could lead you to a variety of exciting career prospects and the list is almost endless! The skills that pupils gain are all incredibly important, and many don't realise that geography also equips them with a broad range of personal learning and thinking skills (PLTs) such as teamwork, independent enquiry and creative thinking - all highly valued by employers. Geography at Balcarras achieves excellent examination results and consistently performs well above the national average for geography preparing students well for future studies and careers.

- Geography is classified as a science as well as a facilitating subjects in many universities when studied at A-level

- Look on the Geographical association careers page for a comprehensive list of careers which Geography is useful for! *If you are colour blind and considering taking geography as an option please to let Mrs Lambert-Masters and Mrs Young know.*

### Syllabus

AQA Geography

### Final examination

100% of overall assessment (3 papers)

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The OCR level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Health and Social Care is a vocationally related qualification that takes an engaging, practical and inspiring approach to learning and assessment. It is industry relevant, geared to key sector requirements and it suits such a broad range of learning styles and abilities.

Cambridge Nationals in Health and Social Care use both internal and external assessment and are recognised by the recently published DfE Performance tables.

They will equip learners with sound specialist knowledge and skills for everyday use. They will also challenge all learners, including high attaining learners, by introducing them to demanding material and skills; encouraging independence and creativity; providing tasks that engage with the most taxing aspects of the National Curriculum.

At the end of the course students will achieve a Level 2 Distinction\*, Distinction, Merit or Pass grade (GCSE equivalent grades A\*-C) and if students do not achieve this they will gain a Level 1 qualification (GCSE equivalent grades D-F). There are four units every student will complete:

### **Unit R021: Essential values of care for use with individuals in care settings**

This mandatory unit focuses on the rights of individuals and will instil the values of care to be used when working in a health, social care or early years environment.

All good practice is based on these values and enables those who use and work in care settings to apply quality practice. The unit also provides an overview of legislation and its impact on the care settings and covers the hygiene, safety and security matters that relate to promoting a healthy and safe environment.

### **Unit R022: Communicating and working with individuals in health, social care and early years settings**

This unit will provide learners with the underpinning knowledge and understanding of how to communicate effectively and what personal qualities will contribute to the creation of a caring environment when working with individuals in a health, social care and early years setting.

### **Unit R027: Creative activities to support individuals in health, social care and early years settings**

In this unit learners will have the opportunity to explore the different types of creative activities that are available to individuals in health, social care and early years settings. They will understand how important it is to promote creative activities, so that the needs of the individuals are met as well as ensuring that those involved enjoy the experience and gain personal value from participating.

### **Unit R023: Understanding body systems and disorders**

This unit will provide learners with the underpinning knowledge and understanding of three major body systems: respiratory, digestive and cardiovascular. The interaction of our body systems and the structure and function that they provide allow humans to breathe, move, experience taste, touch and smell the amazing world we live in. These systems enable us to survive and thrive, with them we can live to our full potential as human beings. Technology and advances in medicine allow for us to treat illness and disease and research the ill effects of lifestyle choices. Through this unit learners will have gained the knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of three body systems and three separate illnesses that may affect these systems.

Qualifications in health and social care can open doors to a variety of opportunities in the industry. These include higher/ further education, apprenticeships, work in the health sector (including mental health, e.g. hospitals and medical centres), the social care sector, (e.g. social services or care homes), and in the early years sector (e.g. education or children's centres). The sector is so vast and developing all the time it's a great time to study this subject area!

<b>Syllabus</b>	OCR
<b>Coursework</b>	75%
<b>Examination</b>	25%



## HISTORY

At GCSE we study a variety of history topics from across a range of periods. The course is designed to help young people explore both British and world history and to develop a range of important skills.

In unit one we study 20<sup>th</sup> century international history looking at important events that have shaped the world. We start by studying German history from 1890 to 1945. This includes Imperial Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II, Weimar Germany and the rise of the Nazis. The course enables students to understand the causes, events and consequences of one of the most controversial periods in 20<sup>th</sup> century history. In the second part of the unit we continue our focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century by studying the Cold War between 1945 and 1972. This unit helps students to understand the causes of this important 20<sup>th</sup> century conflict and to consider the significance of many key developments within it such as the “Space Race” and the Cuban missile crisis. This topic is particularly useful for helping students to understand the West’s current relationship with Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the second unit we study earlier periods of history in order to give our students a much broader range of understanding and to enable them to consider change and continuity across the past. This unit is much more focused on British history and covers a variety of interesting topics. For example students will study a thematic course on British history from 790AD to the present day looking at the impact of immigration and the

rise and fall of the British Empire. This is a very relevant topic and very useful for understanding the origins of modern Multicultural Britain today. Finally in this unit students will complete a depth study on Restoration England 1660-1685 looking at key developments under Charles II and James II.

GCSE history is taught with the help of a wide range of resources, many of them dating from the period of study. These include extracts from diaries, speeches and newspapers as well as pictures, cartoons and a good deal of film footage and YouTube clips. The VLE is also used extensively as a student resource, including exemplar work and self-assessment opportunities.

In Year 10 pupils have the chance to take part in a six day trip to Berlin to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Germany and Conflict & Tension topics.

Overall the course is designed to be complete in itself, but it also proves an excellent preparation for a range of specialised courses at A-level and in further education.

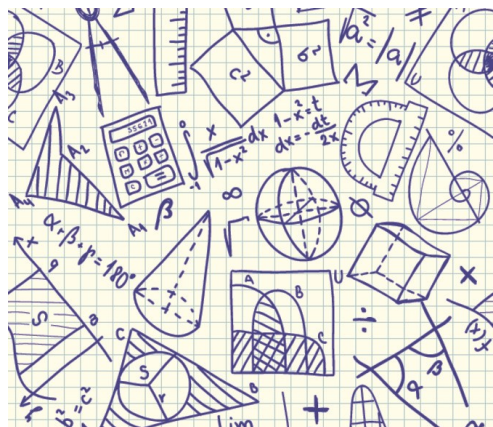
History can lead to a great number of excellent diverse careers such as media, security services, government, heritage organisations, conservation, teaching, museums, the police and law.

<b>Syllabus</b>	AQA
<b>Final examination</b>	100% of overall assessment

## MATHEMATICS

During this course we seek to foster a positive attitude towards mathematics, encouraging pupils to approach the subject with confidence and tackle its problems with perseverance. They will be taught to see the relevance of mathematics to a range of other subjects and to their work and study beyond school.

The syllabus is designed to develop skills in a range of areas of the subject: number and algebra, geometry and measures, statistics, probability and functional mathematics. Pupils will learn to investigate mathematical ideas and test their own hypotheses, to approach problems with precision and creativity and to communicate them in ways that are effective and appropriate.



There are two levels of entry in GCSE mathematics: foundation and higher. Each pupil is monitored during the two years of the course and entered for the level which is thought to be most suitable. Every pupil has the opportunity to gain at least a level 5 grade. At each level there are three written papers, one non-calculator paper and two calculator papers. All papers are for 90 minutes and the overall total for the three papers determines the grades.

There is no coursework requirement for mathematics.

### Where does GCSE Maths lead?

Mathematics leads into a wide variety pathways....

Mathematics leads to careers in a wide variety of areas. The following degree subjects recommend strong qualifications in mathematics:

- Actuarial Science
- Engineering (General)
- Accountancy
- Computer Science
- Biochemistry
- Dentistry
- Environmental Science/Studies
- Medicine
- Physiotherapy
- Sports Science/Physical Education
- Veterinary Science

<b>Syllabus</b>	Edexcel
<b>Final examination</b>	100% of overall assessment

## MUSIC

Music GCSE is an exciting, varied and challenging GCSE subject giving you the opportunity to use and develop your musical skills and knowledge in creative ways. It is designed to appeal to musicians of all styles. You need to be open minded to listening and studying music of various styles but there are also opportunities for complete creative freedom in both composition and performance!

Whilst it is not imperative to already be learning an instrument (including voice) before starting the course, it is obviously of huge benefit. However, students who embark on the GCSE Music course are expected to have **instrumental or vocal lessons from the start of Year 10 if not before**. These lessons can obviously include private tuition out of school. Lessons provided in school are subsidised.

There is also an expectation that all GCSE Music students **regularly attend at least one Music Department extracurricular activity**.

The course is divided in to three components and taught through four Areas of Study. It is assessed as follows:

**Performing (30%):** minimum of two pieces, total playing time four to six minutes; one **must** be an ensemble performance of at least one minute; other piece(s) can be solo and/or ensemble; assessed throughout the course by means of class performances; final assessment before Easter of Year 11. Internally assessed and externally moderated.

**Composing (30%):** compose two pieces of music, total duration of three to six minutes; one in response to a brief set by the exam board; other is a free composition;

various composition tasks completed throughout course with the two compositions to be submitted being completed in Year 11; final submissions have to be made by Easter of Year 11. Internally marked and externally moderated.

**Appraising (40%):** study of music from four Areas of Study: Musical Forms and Devices, Music for Ensemble, Film Music and Popular Music. Two sets works: the final movement of Badinerie by J.S.Bach (Area of Study 1 – Musical Forms and Devices) and Toto's Africa (Area of Study 4 – Popular Music). Assessed in an exam of one hour fifteen minutes in May or June of Year 11: eight questions, two on each Area of Study, each requiring the students to listen to musical extracts and answer questions about what they have heard.

**Where does GCSE Music lead:** to a wide variety of career pathways. These include music teaching, sound-engineer, choreography, performing, musician within the armed forces, music publishing, backing singing, classical music, arts administration, television and radio production, stage/screen work, radio presenting, music journalism, music therapist, composing, events management, festival organisation, stage management and many more!

<b>Syllabus</b>	EDUQAS
<b>Non-exam assessment</b>	30% Composing 30% Performing
<b>Written examination</b>	40% Appraising

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Core)**

Pupils come to this course having already been introduced to the major traditional games during Years 7, 8 and 9. In Key Stage 4 the teaching emphasises the value of physical activity to all individuals and its importance as part of adult life.

The course continues to teach the major games - in particular athletics, basketball, cricket, football, rugby, hockey, netball, rounders and tennis. It seeks to extend the capabilities of every pupil, to broaden interests and to encourage the skills of communication and informed observation. This course is complete in itself and does not lead to a formal examination. Pupils who are keen to develop further are able to take the GCSE course which is described below.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (GCSE)**

This course is for pupils who wish to make a more thorough and intensive study of physical education than is possible in the time which the core allows. It builds on that basic programme by concentrating upon a choice of three practical activities chosen to represent a range of different physical accomplishments. Each activity is studied so as to develop individual and group skills, a knowledge of the relevant rules and regulations and an ability to make constructive criticism of one's own and others' performance.

Assessment objectives include an understanding of factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity. Pupils must be able to demonstrate, apply, analyse and evaluate factors important in a range of physical activities. A thorough understanding of the biology of the body is a key part of the theoretical concepts covered in this course.

It is anticipated that pupils will represent the school in at least one chosen activity.

Pupils who have been successful in GCSE physical education in the past have gone on to study the subject at A-level.

Where does PE lead? BTEC Highers in sport and PE and careers in coaching, PE teaching, sports science, sports management, physiotherapy and NHS sports rehab.

<b>Syllabus</b>	AQA
<b>Practical</b>	40% of overall assessment
<b>Final examination</b>	60% of overall assessment

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

GCSE Religion, Philosophy and Ethics involves study of both Philosophical and Ethical issues in relation to religious interpretations.

The course covers a broad range of interesting and challenging topics including, life after death, religious experience, evil and suffering, relationships, and the relationship between religion and science. Within each of these topics pupils will be required to think about their opinions on a range of ethical issues and fundamental questions as well as consider what other views people may hold and why. This course is an excellent choice for pupils who want to develop their skills in discussion and debate as well as improve in writing reasoned, thought-provoking arguments.

During this course pupils will be encouraged to adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion and consider their own values, opinions and attitudes as well as reflect on fundamental questions that will enhance pupils spiritual and moral development.

This course is split into three parts. Christianity, Buddhism and Philosophy and Ethics. The information studied on each of these aspects will give pupils an in-depth religious knowledge as well as giving them the evaluative skills to question and critique these approaches.

The course is exam based and all pupils will complete exams at the end of Year 11 in both Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. During these exams they will be expected to recall key terms and theories as well as consider their own beliefs and values and justify these with reference to different points of view including religious interpretations.

This course is ideal for pupils who might be thinking of going on to do Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at A-level or want a means of challenging themselves and others about current moral issues.

This is an excellent course for a wide variety of A-level, University and career options due to the varied and useful skills you will acquire. Possible career paths include politics, charity organisations, public relations, teaching, clergy, the police and law, medical professions, the list could go on. This is a subject that demonstrates you are engaged with social issues, can critique ideas and think for yourself, what employer wouldn't want to hire you!

<b>Syllabus</b>	OCR
<b>Final examination</b>	100%

## RUSSIAN

GCSE in Russian aims to develop pupils' ability to understand the language and to communicate effectively with Russian-speaking people, as well as offering an insight into the customs, culture and everyday life of this fascinating country.

The course is assessed on the four skills of language learning: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Each skill is equally weighted and worth 25% of the final grade. There will be an exam in each skill area at the end of the course.

Topics ranging from 'Identity and culture' to 'Future aspirations, study and work' are included in the GCSE course. Much of the lesson time is spent on equipping pupils with the necessary vocabulary and grammar so that they are able to communicate effectively within these topic areas in Russian.

Pupils will regularly take part in conversations and role plays to learn how to narrate events and express and justify their opinions in the spoken language. They will also learn how to adapt their writing for different purposes and this will include formal and informal letter writing and translations from English into Russian.

To develop their comprehension skills pupils will regularly listen to online recordings and also read a wide range of texts, including some authentic material. The GCSE course is also supplemented by an electronic textbook available on the VLE.

Pupils who are aiming for the higher GCSE grades will need to understand grammatical structures and know how to apply them in practice. All pupils will need to get into the habit of learning vocabulary on a regular basis and will be expected to have their own pocket bilingual dictionary and/or reference to [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com)

In our society today the ability to communicate in another language is highly valued by employers. This course will foster an enjoyment of language learning and enable a deeper understanding of the Russian culture and how the Russian language works.

Languages can be a springboard to many different careers, ranging from international business & management to journalism to public relations. Check out the following website in order to see other options as to where languages can take you:  
[www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk](http://www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk)

*"In the knowledge society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, language competence and inter-cultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen."*

The Department for Education

**Syllabus**

Edexcel

**Final examination**

100% of overall assessment

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## SCIENCE

All of our students complete a combined GCSE in science that covers areas of biology, chemistry and physics. Students obtain two GCSE's on completion of this course. The grades are awarded on a 17 point scale with 9-9 being the highest grade, 9-8 next and so on, to the lowest grade 1-1.

Higher and foundation tier papers are available. Students taking the higher tier are able to achieve grades 9-9 to 4-4 while students taking the foundation tier are able to achieve grades 5-5 to 1-1.

Pupils start studying for their combined science GCSE in Year 9. They complete units in biology, chemistry and physics that will be examined at the end of Year 11.

They continue to study units in all three areas of science throughout Years 10 and 11 with all six external examinations in the summer term of Year 11.

As well as studying theoretical science students will also develop their practical skills via a series of exam board required practicals. The knowledge and skills developed in these practicals will be examined as part of the written assessment for the course. The information from the practicals is recorded in a booklet that students keep throughout Years 9, 10 and 11 and then use along with their classwork and

revision guides in order to prepare for their exams.

As the course covers aspects of biology, chemistry and physics it prepares students to take A-levels in any of these subject areas. In Year 11 students are taught by three different subject specialists allowing them to develop a good understanding of what each of the areas involves and so make informed A-level choices.

### Futures in?

The combined science GCSE course also prepares students well for more vocational courses, such as Applied Science that Balcarras also offer in the Sixth Form. Students gaining a good pass in GCSE Science can also access some excellent apprenticeship schemes in areas such as engineering and healthcare.



**Syllabus**

AQA Combined Science Trilogy

**Final examination**

100% of overall assessment

## SPANISH

GCSE in Spanish aims to develop pupils' ability to understand the language and to communicate effectively with Spanish-speaking people, as well as offering an insight into the way of life of countries where Spanish is spoken.

The course is assessed on the four skills of language learning: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Each skill is equally weighted and worth 25% of the final grade. There will be an exam in each skill at the end of the course. There are no controlled assessments.

Activities will include listening to conversations, presentations, public announcements, songs and extracts from the radio. Reading comprehension is based on a number of sources including advertisements, newspaper and magazine articles and Spanish literature. The course will have reference to a text book but increasingly we use internet resources as well as other materials prepared by the teacher to supplement lessons and to ensure that lessons are both stimulating and accessible to all.

In class pupils will study topics ranging from local and global areas of interest, to school and jobs. A large amount of lesson time is spent on equipping pupils with the necessary vocabulary and grammar so that they are able to communicate effectively within these topic areas in Spanish.

Pupils who are aiming for the higher GCSE grades will need to understand grammatical structures and be able to apply them in practice. All pupils will need to get into the habit of learning vocabulary on a regular basis.

Pupils following this course will find internet access very helpful and will all be expected to have their own pocket bilingual dictionary and/or access to [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com)

Languages can be a springboard to many different careers, ranging from international business & management to journalism to public relations. Check out the following website in order to see other options as to where languages can take you:  
[www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk](http://www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk)

*“Employers and employees with language skills improve employability and economic competitiveness, enabling the country to prosper in the global economy.”*

The Department for Education

**Syllabus**

**Final examination**

AQA

100% of overall assessment

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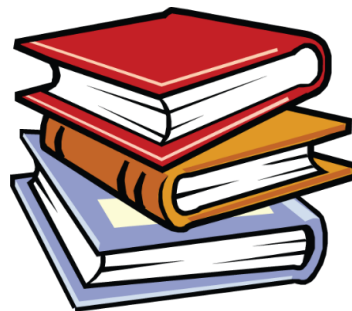


## **STUDY SUPPORT**

Pupils are given the opportunity to receive additional support to improve attainment levels in their examination subjects. They are encouraged and helped to become independent learners and to organise homework and school work in an effective and productive manner.

Pupils have access to IT and teaching support. Revision advice will be given at appropriate times. There is no examination for this course.

**Only pupils who have been invited by the Individual Learning Department are able to choose Study Support in either Block B or Block E.**



## English Baccalaureate

### What is it?

The English Baccalaureate is a way of reporting academic achievement and has been in use since 2014. The Government's aim is to encourage pupils to study a broad curriculum of GCSE subjects.

### What subjects do I need to study to achieve it?

To achieve the English Baccalaureate pupils will need to gain a GCSE grade 5 or better in:

- English
- Maths
- Two sciences
- History or Geography
- A language

### Do I have to try and achieve it?

No, it is not compulsory. However, we believe this is an important overarching qualification and we would recommend that any pupil who is capable of achieving a grade 5 or higher in the required subjects should seriously consider doing so.

### What impact might it have on my future?

At present we have no plans to change the entry requirements for admission to the Sixth Form. However, pupils and parents should be aware that many universities are increasingly recognising the English Baccalaureate as an important qualification, when offering places on their degree courses. It is possible in the future that some employers may also consider the English Baccalaureate as a requirement.

### Where can I get more information?

The Department for Education website provides more information on the English Baccalaureate.

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## How to Complete the Options Form

### Core subjects

There are some courses which all Balcarras pupils follow. They are:

- GCSE courses in English, maths and science
- Additional courses in physical education, PSHE (Personal Social Health Education including religious education) and careers.

### Optional courses

The rest of your timetable will comprise a range of other courses. These are listed on the options form.

- (a) You will need to choose five full course subjects.
- (b) There are no compulsory options.
- (c) You can choose a maximum of two from Art, Music and Drama.

***Please note we are asking for reserve choices in case there are insufficient spaces in one of your first choice subjects.***

Use this page to make your own record of your Option choices

**Options 2020**

You need to choose **one** subject from each column.

- There are no compulsory options.
- You can choose a **maximum** of two from Art, Music and Drama.
- If you aspire to achieve the English Baccalaureate, success in the sixth form and in higher education, it is **highly recommended** that you choose a Language and History or Geography.
- You **can not** choose both product design and textiles.

**OPTION 1**

ART
D&T: FOOD
D&T: PRODUCT DESIGN
DRAMA
GEOGRAPHY
HISTORY
MUSIC
CREATIVE IMEDIA

**OPTION 2**

FRENCH
SPANISH
RUSSIAN
BUSINESS
STUDY SUPPORT (FOR SELECTED STUDENTS BY INVITATION ONLY)

**OPTION 3**

ART
BUSINESS
DRAMA
FRENCH
GEOGRAPHY
PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

**OPTION 4**

ART
BUSINESS
CREATIVE IMEDIA
HISTORY
PE
PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS

**OPTION 5**

D&T: FOOD
D&T: PRODUCT DESIGN
D&T: TEXTILES
GEOGRAPHY
HISTORY
COMPUTER SCIENCE
STUDY SUPPORT (FOR SELECTED STUDENTS BY INVITATION ONLY)

**Choice : Option 1**

**Choice : Option 2**

**Choice : Option 3**

**Choice : Option 4**

**Choice : Option 5**

**Reserve subject:**

## **Beyond Year 11**

Most Balcarras pupils achieve very good GCSEs and go on to study in Balcarras Sixth Form.

You or your parents may have concerns about how the GCSE choices you make now may affect your options after Year 11. In most cases your choices at this stage will not restrict your A-level options, but there are some fairly obvious exceptions, so check with Mr Leatherbarrow if you are not sure.

You will hear much more about the sixth form nearer the time, but there are two further points to consider.

The first is about the even greater choice you will have at 16. By the time that you have taken your GCSEs you will probably have learned quite a lot about your individual talents and interests. This is important because the range of possible courses facing you at 16 is very much greater than we can put before you in Year 9. There are no core subjects at that stage, so you can choose from a very long list of options.

The second point is about the habits of study. Developing the right approach to work and a high level of commitment will be crucial to your success at GCSE. It will also prepare you well for life in the sixth form where pupils have more freedom and good independent study habits are even more vital to success.

Later in Key Stage 4 you will have a lot of information and advice about the next step in your education. If you have any questions in the meantime you must not hesitate to ask Mr Leatherbarrow, your tutor, or other members of staff here at the school.

## Notes



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**Baccarras**  
From strength to strength