



BALCARRAS
From strength to strength

NEWSLETTER

Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

What a joyous feeling it is to arrive at the summer holiday. It has been another busy and successful year at Balcarras and everyone now deserves a well-earned break. I would like to start this last newsletter by thanking you for your support over the course of the year. I would also like to say what a privilege it is to educate your children. The pupils of Balcarras continue to be a delight to work with and for.

I can't quite believe another year has passed so quickly. It seems like the older you get, the quicker the time flies! It has been a very successful year for the school. Ofsted came and went, leaving us with a report any school would be proud of. The school year has been punctuated with all sorts of events and activities deliberately designed to make school life fun and engaging. I am delighted that so many pupils have been involved in this rich extra-curricular activity. Recently we've been through the exam season, and everything transpired as we would hope. Now fingers crossed for the results!

There has been all sorts going on these last few weeks—activities week, Year 10 work experience, the cinema trip, Midsummer Music, House Dance, the Key Stage Three production of Luna and the Skyrocket, the Sixth Form Prom and several residential trips. My thanks to the staff of the school for putting all of this on. A particular shout out to Mrs Massey who organises Activities Week and Mrs Lewis and Mrs Towers who oversee work experience.

Keep up to date on all our news:

WWW.BALCARRAS.GLOUCS.SCH.UK

Of course, this time of year is tinged with sadness as we say farewell to colleagues who are leaving the school—many of them have done long stints here!

Mr Dean has taught maths and PE at Balcarras since 1987 and he has organised the school ski trip since 2000, as well as doing all sorts of other jobs in the school. 38 years service is quite remarkable! He is one of a kind and Balcarras owes him a huge debt. On a personal level I think Mr Dean is one the kindest people I've ever worked with. Under that gruff Welsh exterior there is a heart of gold!

Stuart Brotherton is leaving after 33 years' service to the school, for most of that time as Head of Chemistry. Like Mr Dean, Mr Brotherton has done a wide variety of other roles in the school. It is though for his teaching and passion for learning that he will be most remembered. If you've been taught by Mr Brotherton you'll know what I mean! Mrs Williams is also leaving having worked in the Individual Learning Department here for 21 years. For many years Mrs Williams was the school's SENDCo and performed that role with distinction. I think she is one of the most dedicated teachers I have ever worked with and her commitment to inclusion was absolute.

We are facing the end of an era in the Drama Department as Tony Bennet folds up his Director's Chair for the last time. Tony joined us in 2004 and his impact on the performing arts at Balcarras is the stuff of legend. His level of creativity and charisma is off the scale and we will miss him greatly. Balcarras' reputation as a centre for the performing arts is to a large extent Tony's legacy.

Jane Denyer is leaving after 22 years working in the Food department. She is an incredibly hard working and caring person and countless pupils will always have very fond memories of cookery club. Jane is a wonderfully kind person and she is famous at Balcarras for arranging our wonderful Macmillan cake sale at Balcarras which during Jane's time has raised nearly £20k over the years!

Completing the list of long serving staff leaving is Gill Dean who has worked in the Sixth Form study and pastoral team since 2009. Gill is such a caring and considerate person—she sort of carved out a position as school Mum in the sixth form. Countless pupils will remember her for her care and compassion.

Also leaving us are Dr Ben Millard in maths and Dr Kristi Praki in science. Both are fine teachers and we wish them well for the future. Alison Shaw is leaving her role on reception after 8 years sterling work. Sam Clarke, Lorna Lythgoe and Emma Smith are leaving Individual Learning whilst Kieran Hurley and Callum Hughes are leaving the finance office. Cam Davis is leaving his role as performing arts technician whilst Jo Haslam is retiring after many years teaching the violin. Finally, Tim Blakey is leaving his role as Maths Hub Coordinator. We wish all of them well. In addition to this, two colleagues are leaving on a one-year sabbatical—Jeanette Corinaldi and Christina Hall.

Changes to SEND Team

Jeanette Corinaldi (SENDCo) will be taking a 12 month sabbatical starting September 2025 to travel the world. Catherine Williams (Assistant SENDCo) will be retiring at the end of this academic year. The new SEND Team, Adrienne Niblett and Inger Bourne can be contacted using the email address sendco@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk. Catherine Williams would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to parents who have worked collaboratively with the school to ensure we have met the needs of their children. She wishes all the children the very best of luck throughout their journey through education.

Pastoral & Wellbeing

For one year Mrs Ella Whiteland will become Head of Selvey House.

Ms Bourne has done an outstanding job as the wellbeing supervisor for the school. Her work in the wellbeing room over the last two years has helped support and guide numerous pupils across all ages.

We are delighted that Ms Bourne is taking on a role in the SEND department next year, to further support pupils at the school with their educational and emotional needs. The wellbeing room was set up by the school in the wake of the COVID pandemic, in response to the additional needs that the pandemic caused in our pupils. It has done a fantastic job. But educational funds continue to be cut and there is no funding in the schools' budgets for these support structures. So, from September the wellbeing room will close. Pupils will still receive outstanding pastoral support, from their tutors, the school nurse, the House team and the SEND department.

We wish Ms Bourne every success in her new role – there is no doubt that she will continue to be a huge support to all pupils that meet her around the school.

Funding

I have been busy lobbying as hard as I can for improved school funding. I am grateful to our MP Max Wilkinson who has raised several questions in the House based on conversation with ourselves and the other Cheltenham schools. I did an interview with BBC Radio Gloucestershire and it was picked up by the BBC Education page. Please see article here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gr7lkmkzjo>



[Sixth form sector at 'breaking point'. says head - BBC](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gr7lkmkzjo)

Mr Burke said funding to school-based sixth forms had been cut by 20%, which was putting pressure on all areas of Balcarras School. He said the £30,000 of capital funding allocated to Balcarras ...

www.bbc.co.uk

It is not just sixth form funding that is in crisis. The main school allocation is also reducing considerably in real terms year on year. For example, next year our core per pupil funding increases by 0.5% but inflation is much higher. The grant we have been given to pay for the increase to teacher wages in no way funds the actual cost. In the recent spending review the government committed to increase per pupil funding by 0.9% per year. It seems unlikely that our costs will increase at the same level. If our costs increase by 3.6%, the reduction to our real terms funding will be approaching £1 million over three years.

If your real income reduces dramatically the only realistic way you can make the sort of savings necessary is by reducing staffing.

You have my absolute commitment that we will do everything in our power to chart these perilous waters as skilfully as we can. We will always prioritise the pupils of the school and work tirelessly to ensure that our shrinking resource is put to the best possible use.

I think we should all rally against what is happening to education funding in this country. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies education spending has fallen as a share of national income, from 5.6% in 2010 to 4.1% in 2024. Reducing our investment in this way is bound to make the country poorer in the future. It is a foolish mistake.

Balcarras' Wider role in the Educational Landscape

Some parents might not be aware, but Balcarras plays an important role in leading the education system in the southwest. We run The Teaching School Hub for Cheltenham Stroud and The Cotswolds which covers some 170 schools. The hub coordinates the induction of Early Career Teachers, organises many National Professional Qualifications and also acts as an Appropriate Body for the accreditation of new teachers. We are also the lead school in the GLOW Maths Hub which leads the development of maths education in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. In addition to all of this Balcarras is the lead school for the Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership which is a secondary teacher training course based across the county. I would like to pay tribute to all of the staff who work on these initiatives. Each one is crucial to the development of education in the region and it is great that Balcarras is at the centre of the action.

A special thanks to the governors and trustees

I would like to thank the governors of Balcarras and the trustees of the Balcarras Trust. Together they do fine work for the school and of course all of it as volunteers. They offer support and challenge and always have the school's best interests at heart.

My best wishes for a lovely summer

Very finally I wish you all the best for a lovely summer holiday.

Dominic Burke

EASYFUNDRAISING

Balcarras School



Just letting you know that Balcarras School are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment. Scan the QR code to start fundraising!

Thank you so much!

PTFA NEWS

A huge thank you to everyone who came to support Midsummer Music, we raise an enormous amount of money - £7,322!!! Thanks to all that bought drinks and attended!

A massive thank you to our sponsors:



With their help, we were able to fund the outdoor staging area.

We also raised over £765 at the second hand uniform sales held this month – thank you to all who donated items. School reception is always happy to receive unwanted uniform items.

Upcoming Events

Please do come along and support the school!

PTFA Meeting	3 rd September 2025	7 pm first day
PTFA Second hand uniform sale	12 th September 2025	5.30-7pm
Icebreaker Disco (Year 7's & Parents)	12 th September 2025	7-8.30pm
PTFA AGM	24 th September 2025	7 pm
PTFA Event	10 th October 2025	7 pm
PTFA Clothes Swap Evening	17 th October 2025	7-9.30 pm
PTFA Meeting	12 th November 2025	7 pm
Carol Concert	3 rd December 2025	7 pm

MUSIC DEPT UPDATE

JANE WATTS

This has been an incredibly busy summer for the Music Department.

Before Half Term

We took Balcajazz to perform at the annual Cheltenham Jazz Festival on Saturday May 3rd. This is a very high-profile event. They took the Festival by storm and we were extremely proud of them. Congratulations to them for a very busy and productive year,

The day before, we were privileged to have a special workshop from Max O'Hara, a well-known session musician who was in Cheltenham to perform in the Festival and came in to school especially to work with our students. His workshop was fascinating and consisted of three main sections: Life as a Session Musician, Expanding Harmonic Chord Progressions and an Improvisation Workshop/Performance Techniques session.

And, to top all of that, we also hosted (the same weekend!) a party of young Finnish flute players and some of their teachers and parents. This was part of an exchange programme which has been put together by our wonderful Flute Teacher, Mrs Nicola Hopkins. The concert on the Friday night was a joint one, with the Finnish and British players playing together for some of the items. A huge vote of thanks for Mrs Hopkins for making this happen (and for wrangling a complicated pizza order!). We look forward to future joint ventures with our Finnish partners.

Midsummer Music 25

Friday 20th June saw an absolute highlight of the school year: Midsummer Music. This was as vibrant and rich in variety as ever. Thanks to financial support from **BAM Agency** (our Main Sponsor) as well as **My Stage School and Dee & Griffin Solicitors**, we were able to go ahead and hire an outdoor stage for the event. We had a record crowd in, who were treated to a sumptuous evening of music from just about every genre imaginable. The choirs, orchestras, instrumental ensembles, bands, solo singers and instrumentalists were all on top form... and there were some great collaborations from students across differing Year groups, which was particularly lovely to witness! All of the student musicians were just wonderful!

Huge thanks to our expert team of **Visiting Music Teachers**, who helped to make this happen, together with **Mr Howell, Mr Douglas and Mr Bennett** as well as **Mrs Watts and Mr Armstrong** who put the whole event together. The event was also supported by Balcarras PTFA and the Expedition teams – we're very grateful for everyone's help. This is a real community enterprise – and we couldn't achieve what we do each year without the 'unsung' heroes behind the scenes... This includes our **Reprographics Department, our cleaners, Site Team** (the place looked immaculate!) and our super-supportive **Head and SMT!**

Finally, absolutely none of this would be possible without a superb Tech Team: Massive thanks to Alumni **Matthew Chestney, Caleb Horne and Cam Davis** and an amazing team of hard-working student crew, without whom there could be no Midsummer Music as we know and love it!

Longborough Festival Opera Dress Rehearsal

The week following Midsummer Music, a group of Year 12 and Year 13 musicians were lucky enough to attend the Dress Rehearsal of Longborough Festival Opera's 2025 production of Debussy's 'Pelleas et Melisande'. We travelled over to Longborough in glorious sunshine and were given true VIP treatment, including a special Q&A session with the Artistic Director, Polly Graham. We were made to feel very welcome indeed and were joined by many of the Festival Opera's artistic and management staff. The performance itself was riveting and the students widened their experience of twentieth century French composition and orchestral timbres... as well as enjoying a lovely bring-your-own picnic in the interval! Many thanks to Mrs Crowley from the 6th Form team for keeping us company on this very special trip.



Outreach

We continue to build on our relationships with some of the local primary schools. Recent initiatives have seen us taking a brass ensemble to play for Charlton Kings Junior School students, a rock band to the whole school at Charlton Kings Infants School and our third year of collaboration with the orchestral musicians of CKJS joining in playing with Balcarras Main Orchestra at Midsummer Music. We look forward to expanding this and creating opportunities at other schools.

End of term

As I write, we are looking ahead to a large number of exciting events for the 2025-2026 academic year. Mr Armstrong has also been producing some exceptional performance videos, featuring Balcarras musicians (more on these at a later date!).

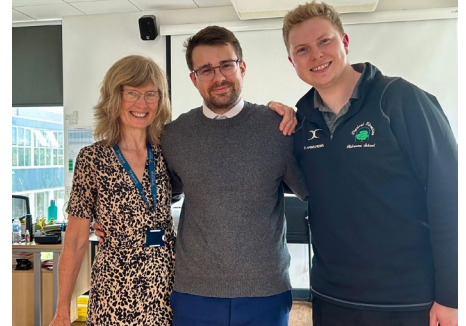
However, we have to say 'au revoir' to the following Y13s and a massive THANK YOU for their outstanding contribution to musical life at Balcarras. We're really going to miss you.... Good luck in your next chapters – and stay in touch, please! Thank you for everything!

Matthew Arraya, Jack Bee-Stephens, Nigel Boateng, Timothy Cowling, Freddie Cox, Holly Cox, Joe Dutton, Matthew Fawcett, Amber Forde, Alex Foster, Martha Gale, William Gavin, Henry Hockenhull, Robyn Millington, Mark Tarnavskyi, Barney Vacher, Arianwen Williams.

We are also this week preparing a send-off for a number of very special colleagues whose contribution to the school is without parallel. We can't let this occasion pass without wishing an extremely happy and productive (!) retirement to **Mr Tony Bennett**. As you know, the Drama and Music Departments work very closely together and the best illustration of this is the annual school production. In the past eleven years or so, Bennett & Watts productions have entertained audiences in their own inimitable way... (The 39 Steps/City of Angels/It's a Wonderful Life/Grease/We Will Rock You/Singin' In The Rain, to name but a few!). Mr B's directorial style is collaborative and inclusive and brings

an energy which is beyond description. Whilst we look forward to exciting productions in the future, we salute Tony for his incalculable contribution to the cultural life and reputation of the school, as well as his continuing support of both Drama and Musical alumni. Thanks Tony!

We also said 'farewell' to **Mrs Jo Haslam**, who has retired after very many years teaching violin here. We wish her a very happy new chapter and thank her for her amazing, encouraging and supportive work as a Visiting Music Teacher. She will be much missed.



Happy Holidays – and Exam Successes

So, now it just remains for me to wish everyone a very happy Summer Break from the whole Music Team. Thank you for your continued support of all our musical endeavours. We leave you with some lovely exam successes. Look forward to seeing you in September!

Congratulations to the following:

Beth Hill (Y8) – Lever Harp – ABRSM Grade 3

Mrs Victoria Burge – ABRSM Cello

Eloise Pleasant (Y8) - Grade 3 - Merit

Mrs Nicola Hopkins – ABRSM Flute

Imogen Lamb (Y10) – Grade 3 – Pass

Ellie Heppenstall (Y9) – ABRSM Flute Silver Medal

Mrs Jo Haslam – ABRSM Violin

Hope Lamb (Y8) – Grade 2 - Merit

Mrs Tracey Vacher – ABRSM Piano

Finlay McCanna (Y12) - Grade 5 - Merit

LIBRARY UPDATE

MEGAN KELLY, LIBRARIAN

As the school year winds down, I've been asked by staff, students, and parents about reading recommendations. Here are some fiction recommendations as well as sources for more inspiration. Book recommendations are for various age groups and interests.

'The Eye, the Ear, and the Arm' Nancy Farmer

'Bound' by Donna Jo Napoli

'Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie' Alan Bradley

'Ruby in the Smoke' Philip Pullman

'Record of a Spaceborn Few' Becky Chambers

'Howls Moving Castle' Diana Wynne Jones

'Inkheart' Cornelia Funke

'Fireborn' Aisling Fowler

'The Scorpion Rules' Erin Bow

For other reading recommendations:

The public library in Charlton Kings. Their staff are great readers, and they have a wide range of young adult books to browse and borrow. They also are hosting a Summer Challenge.

The Reading Agency is doing a Summer Reading Challenge, which is online, and more self-directed.

Your local independent bookstore like Rossiter Books in Montpellier Cheltenham or Mr Bs. Emporium in Bath have a wealth of staff to give recommendations.

I could fill this newsletter with recommendations for historical novels and cookbooks, graphic novels and art history, history of the telephone and art heists. I encourage you to read widely and read for delight. May I suggest reading the Guardian article 'Choose comfort, ditch boring and prioritise pleasure – how to find the perfect beach read' by Daisy Buchanan (2 Jul 2025) to inspire you to read with 'a dose of delight' this summer.

THE D&T Y12 PRODUCT DESIGN 'GRAND DAY OUT' TO THE MINI PLANT GAVIN JOHNSON, PRODUCT DESIGN

One of the most pleasing things, from a department perspective, that the Ofsted inspection celebrated earlier this year was the way in which D&T prepares A Level students for a future career in design (one of the reasons why we believe we have one of the most popular A Level courses in the country!). Factors included the focus on the design development stages, with the sketching workshops that Hurricane Design run, and experiences such as the annual trip to the BMW MINI plant in Oxford.



This year, because of the numbers studying D&T, the trip was spread over a few weeks (BMW restrict the size of groups because of the logistical challenges of showing people around a working plant), but the subsequent feedback confirmed that both groups yet again found the experience fascinating and relevant.

No matter how many times you visit, it is hard not to be impressed by the way in which the tour starts. Within a few minutes of arriving, you walk straight into a building ('Body in White') - at over 100,000 square metres, it is the size of 12 football pitches - where there are few people but over 1200 robots, all working with a real intensity to produce the approx. 1000 cars that they aim for each day while at full capacity.

Perhaps the most important aspect, however, is that direct connection that the experience has to the A Level curriculum and it is arguably the best way of bringing some of the manufacturing theory to life. It is certainly the case that the concept of Just-in-time (and Just-in-sequence as BMW also like to stress) is made much easier to understand when you can see the basic chassis of a MINI slowly being built-up using components (including windows and wheels) that are arriving on the factory floor with often only minutes to spare - all coordinated by some very powerful software and a little black box, the transponder, that is stuck to the bonnet throughout the manufacturing process.

In a very short period of time the experience has become an essential part of the Product Design program, even though it has one unique challenge: BMW only release dates a couple of months in advance, to fit in with their production schedules, so unlike most school trips (which are set-in-stone 12 months in advance!) this is one where you simply have to jump quickly when the opportunity arises!

A SUMMER OF FIELDWORK IN THE GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT!

AMY SEARLE, HEAD OF GEOGRAPHY

Year 7 visited Cheddar Gorge

Year 7 students enjoyed an exciting and educational visit to Cheddar Gorge on the 18th and 25th June. Across both days, students visited Gough's Cave, the Cheddar Museum, Jacob's Ladder, and of course, the ever-popular gift shop.

Throughout the trip, pupils impressed staff with their excellent behaviour and enthusiasm. They learned about the fascinating history of Cheddar Man, discovered how the gorge was formed, and carried out fieldwork activities in Cheddar town as part of their geography studies.

The sweet shop proved to be a definite highlight for many!

A big thank you to all staff who supported the trip.



Year 8 explored the microclimates of Balcarras

Year 8 students recently put their geographical skills to the test by exploring microclimates around the school site following the route to enquiry approach.

The enquiry began with students setting their own hypotheses, such as "The temperature will be highest on the playground" or "wind speed will be greater in open spaces than near buildings." With their questions in mind, they headed out around the school grounds to collect primary data on temperature, wind speed and direction and cloud cover at various locations.

Back in the classroom, students used their data to produce graphs, helping them to visualise patterns and compare different microclimate zones across the site. They then drew conclusions based on the evidence they had gathered—linking their results to concepts like aspect, surface type, and proximity to buildings.

To complete the enquiry, pupils evaluated the reliability of their methods and considered how they could improve the investigation in future. It was fantastic to see Year 8 students taking ownership of their learning and working as real geographers - well done to all involved!

Year 9 investigated biodiversity around the school site

Year 9 geographers have been exploring biodiversity on the school site. The focus of their investigation was to compare the variety and quality of habitats using a biodiversity bipolar survey, helping them to assess how suitable different areas are for supporting plant and animal life.

Students worked in groups to survey multiple locations around the school, recording data on factors such as plant variety, ground cover, and human impact. They also practised their field sketching skills, carefully observing and illustrating the features of each habitat to support their findings. After analysing their results, they discussed how the school grounds could be improved to support more wildlife - suggesting ideas such as wildflower planting, creating bug hotels, and reducing paved surfaces.

Year 10 investigated changing river characteristics of Blackpool Brook and assessed the success of regeneration in Bristol's Temple Quarter

As part of the AQA GCSE Geography course, Year 10 students recently completed two exciting fieldwork investigations—one focusing on physical geography and the other on human geography.

For their physical fieldwork, students visited Blackpool Brook to investigate how river characteristics change downstream. They measured river width, depth, velocity, and the size and roundness of bedload at multiple sites along the brook. Particular attention was given to the impact of a weir on flow and channel shape. This hands-on experience allowed students to apply key concepts from the river landscapes topic and practise collecting and analysing geographical data in a real-world environment.

For their human geography fieldwork, students travelled to Bristol's Temple Quarter to assess the success of regeneration in the area. Using techniques such as Environmental Quality Surveys (EQS) and a building decay survey, they gathered data on land use, urban design, and investment. A guided boat trip through Bristol's historic harbour gave students a unique perspective on the city's transformation and regeneration challenges.

Both trips gave Year 10 valuable experience with fieldwork methods and data interpretation—essential preparation for the Paper 3 exam. Well done to all students for their enthusiasm, teamwork, and careful data collection!



Year 12 develop their fieldwork skills around Cheltenham

In early June, our Year 12 Geography students took part in a fieldtrip around Cheltenham to develop key skills for their Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) and to explore real-world geographical issues. The day focused on urban regeneration, microclimate patterns, and the concept of place – all essential themes in the A-level course and potential NEA themes.

The morning was spent comparing two contrasting parts of the town: the regenerated Brewery Quarter and the Lower High Street. Pupils used a variety of fieldwork techniques, including an Environmental Quality Survey (EQS), a regeneration survey, and a Clone Town survey, to assess the success and impact of regeneration. This hands-on approach allowed students to critically evaluate how investment and planning have reshaped urban spaces.

From there, students followed a transect route from the town centre back to school, recording microclimate data at set points. Using handheld equipment, they measured temperature, wind speed and direction, and air pollution levels. This enabled them to explore how the urban environment influences climate at a local scale and how these factors change with distance from the CBD.



In the afternoon, the group visited Charlton Kings to explore the concept of local place. Pupils reflected on how local identity is shaped by factors such as the built environment, land use, and open spaces.

The fieldtrip not only reinforced classroom learning but also provided students with the confidence and skills to begin planning their own NEA projects, each centred around a geographical theme of their choice. Well done to all the students for their excellent engagement and thoughtful fieldwork throughout the day.

CHELTENHAM HALF MARATHON

A large group of staff are going to be running the Cheltenham Half Marathon this September. We are raising funds for Sue Ryder Leckhampton Hospice. We are runners (or not) of all different levels, ages, and paces, but we are united in our quest to raise as much as we possibly can for this fantastic local charity.

If you're keen to support, please follow the link below. Many of us have chosen to run in memory of a close former colleague of ours.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/jon-pearce-9?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015

KEY STAGE 3 DRAMA CLUB

HANNAH WENT, ACTING HEAD OF DRAMA

On the 11th July our KS3 Drama club performed to both Year 5 students from Charlton Kings Junior School and an audience of parents and teachers. This year, thanks to support from the PTFA, we were able to fund a junior musical called Luna and the Skyrocket which was packed full of catchy songs. It was a very warm evening in the hall, but the students really rose to the occasion and performed wonderfully. Thank you to all parents who are helping to support new opportunities for KS3 students in drama. Well done drama club, you were fantastic!



LOCKERS

SUE DAVIS, FINANCE

Please remind your child to remove their lock and empty their locker before the end of term.

If you want to rent a locker from September, please pay £4 on Scopay by August 1st. Deposits received after this date will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

START OF AUTUMN TERM

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

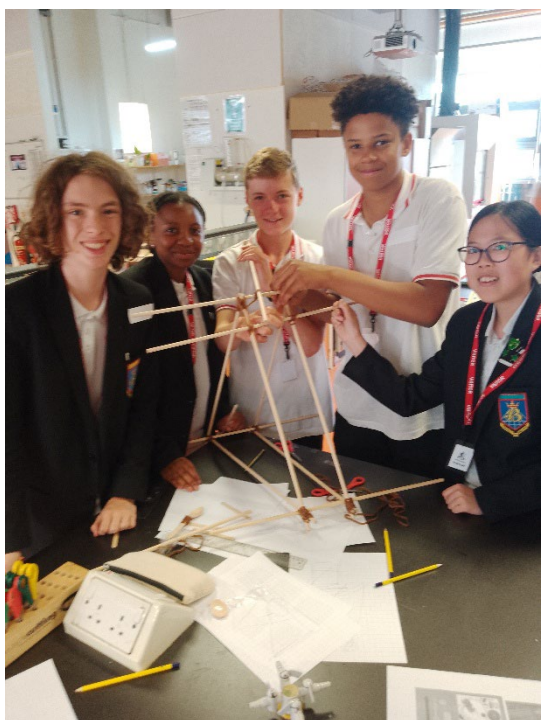
Mon 1 st Sept	INSET for all staff. Pupils are not in school
Tues 2 nd Sept	Year 7 and Year 12 pupils only in school
Weds 3 rd Sept	All pupils in school
Thurs 4 th Sept	All pupils in school
Fri 5 th Sept	School finishes early for all pupils at 12:15pm

CHELTENHAM EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP (CEP)

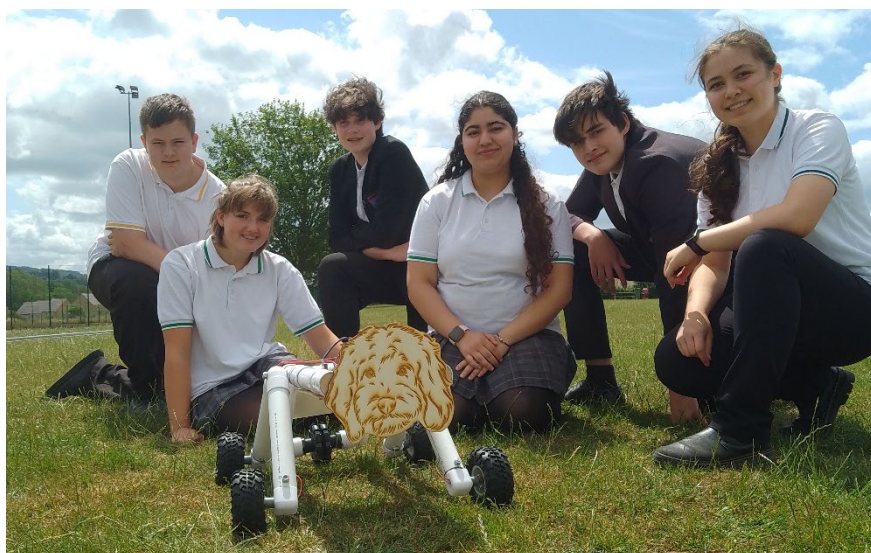
JEREMY NIBLETT & GAVIN JOHNSON

Our Year 9 scientists built this magnificent catapult (which was scarily powerful) at an event called 'Labmaster'. It was a bit like Taskmaster except with science experiments. They loved it.

Here are some Year 10 students with a Mars Rover called BUDDIE (Balcarras Unit Designed for Development Innovation and Exploration) that they built. We tested it across the arid sandpits of Winchcombe alongside other rovers from all over Cheltenham. It won the 'Best Design' award, helped by its lasercut image of the school dog, Buddy.



The future for the CEP is bright. We have recently been registered as an incorporated charity and we have appointed a very impressive new co-ordinator called Loise Forey.



The 2025 CEP 'Wearable Art' Challenge

Over the last few weeks, as we headed towards the end of the academic year, all of the CEP challenges (Cheltenham Educational Partnership) reached a climax and recently, not to be outdone by the STEM events, it was the turn of our Y10 D&T Textile students, who have been taking part in this year's Wearable Art Challenge, to have their moment in the limelight with the presentation evening, which this year was held at The Wilson, the art gallery and museum in Cheltenham.

The CEP is a joint venture between the state and independent schools in Cheltenham (plus other interested organisations such as the Council, The Festivals and the University) and was established with the specific aim of offering opportunities to our students that they wouldn't otherwise be able to access. And in that respect, not

dissimilar to the recent Young Poets 'Slam' poetry competition, the Wearable Art challenge was a great showcase for what the CEP can do. The students were as normal involved in a number of workshops over the course of the year, based at different schools (with the initial one actually hosted by Balcarras back in September), which have all been geared towards the students developing their finished garments, right the way through from the initial concepts to the actual creation of the designs. Kate, the visiting expert (a local costume designer who works in film and television), also used her extensive list of contacts to have a number of 'guest' experts drop into the workshops, including a designer from Turnbull and Asser, the famous Saville Row tailors who have one of their factories in Gloucester.



The evening itself was the culmination of the whole year's work and was based around a fashion show with the students themselves modelling the designs. Considering the core theme of 'man verses nature' and the choice of materials, all of which had to be from recycled sources, it was perhaps inevitable that the designs were utterly unique and looked absolutely amazing - especially when the make-up artists had finished weaving their magic. The Wilson proved to be a great venue, and the wow factor was magnified by the use of the main staircase as the runway for the night!

Immediately afterwards, the University of Gloucester also held a fashion show, involving students from the degree course. And the fact that

nobody seemed to be able to tell the difference between the CEP students and the undergraduates again underlined the level of creativity on show from the CEP students.

BALCARRAS CROQUET CLUB

LAURA THOMSON

I would like to introduce the Balcarras Croquet Champions! (they didn't come first but played like champions!)

They competed against teams from all over the country and played with skill, determination and above all were great team players (even giving advice to the other competitors!)



CHESS CLUB

PAUL GODFREY, SCIENCE TEACHER

Back in June, we ran an interform chess competition for Year 7.

Teams of 3 from each tutor group took part in a knockout competition with 7G1 and 7S2 making it to the final. After some intense chess the final team score was 1.5 points each. However, 7G1 won overall, but it doesn't get any closer than that!

Next year we are planning on running house chess competitions for each year to participate in. If you want to learn and/or improve your chess, chess club runs every Monday lunchtime.



P AND Q BANDS – YEARS 7,8 AND 9

GARY TOWERS, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

Year 8

As pupils move into Year 8 and so are more familiar with the school, they are mixed with others from across the year group for their teaching classes. In order to do this, pupils are placed randomly on the P or Q half of the year. This placement is checked by the Heads of House and the individual learning department to make sure it is appropriate.

This means pupils will not be in their tutor groups for lessons. We do this to allow pupils to develop their social skills (working and interacting with new people) in a controlled classroom environment. Pupils remain in their tutor groups for tutor time and personal development lessons.

Year 9

As pupils move from Year 8 into Year 9 they stay in the same band (P or Q). Within this band the mix of pupils within each class will change based on the learning needs identified by each subject area.

Year 10

For option subjects pupils will be taught in classes made up of pupils from across the Year group based on the options they have selected.

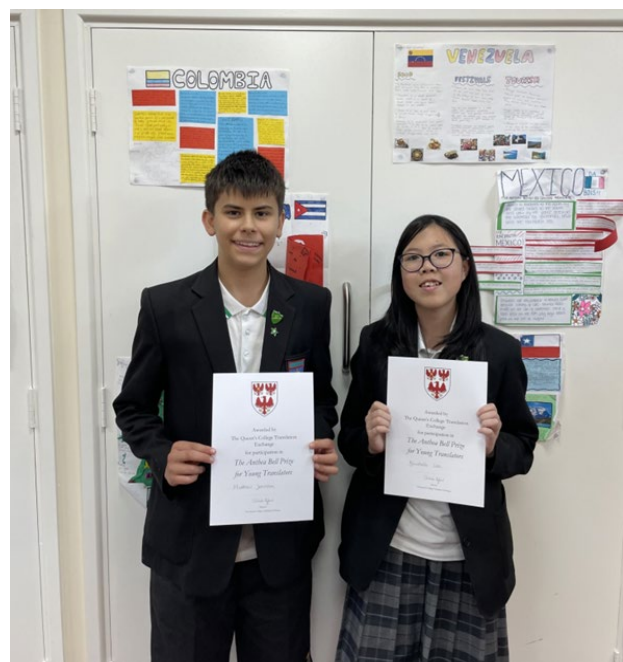
In core subjects, pupils will be mixed with others from the same band they are in (P or Q). Pupils are placed randomly on the P or Q half of the year. This placement is checked by the Heads of House and the individual learning department to make sure it is appropriate. The band they are in this year may be different from last year and this mixing is intentional. This is to allow pupils to develop their social skills (working and interacting with new people) in a

controlled classroom environment. Pupils remain in their tutor groups for tutor time and personal development lessons.

We would encourage parents to talk about this with their children over the summer. For most pupils the opportunity to work with a new group of people is exciting but some can be a little nervous.

ANTHEA BELL PRIZE LEWIS FOAKES, HEAD OF SPANISH

Each year the language department takes part in the Anthea Bell prize for young translators. This year saw the largest number of entries from our school. We are so pleased to announce that Kitti Luck (Year 9) is an area winner for Russian translation and Joseph Sheppee (Year 7) is an area winner for French translation. This is a huge achievement. Over 22,000 students from across the UK took part in the competition this year. Entries were judged by professional literary translators and modern languages students at the University of Oxford. The judges commended the impressive balance of accuracy and creativity as well as the extremely high standards they saw this year. The languages department is thrilled with the results and the level of engagement. A very well done to all involved...now on to next year's competition!



SKIPPING YEAR 7

This year we raised £1,743 which is shared between Winston's wish and Gloucestershire Young Carers. Thanks to all that contributed.

NEWSLETTER



The newsletter will now be distributed by email and available to view on our VLE (Firefly) as well as on the school website.

It is incredibly easy and will save the school a lot of paper and the planet a lot of trees!

If you would still prefer a hard copy, please contact Karen Adkins
ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @balcarras and Facebook, Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher



The
Balcarras
Trust



Balcarras
From strength to strength

Maths Hub GLOW Project Co-ordinator

To start as soon as possible after successful interview.

Full time, term time only.

Salary: Point 18-21 (depending on experience and qualifications).

Salary range FTE: £30,559 - £32,115.

Actual salary (pro-rata): £26,256 - £27,592

We are looking to appoint an enthusiastic Co-ordinator from within or outside education, who has experience providing operational support to project managers/ project teams. In this role, you would work closely with the Maths Hub Project Manager to provide operational support to the GLOW Maths Hub Lead and wider management team. The successful candidate should have excellent interpersonal and communication skills and a commitment to working as part of a team.

It is a very exciting and rewarding time to be working at Balcarras.
 Ofsted assessed Balcarras in 2005, 2009, 2014 and 2025 as "Outstanding" in every category.

Application

Further information including a job description can be found in the Applicant Pack www.thebalcarrastrust.co.uk. To apply, please complete an application form and send completed application forms to jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Closing Date for applications: Friday 12th September 2025, 9am

Interviews will be on a rolling basis as and when suitable candidates apply.

Interested applicants are advised to apply straight away.

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Don't let all the younger ones have all the fun
Join in with the

TEEN SUMMER PROGRAM

COME AND HAVE FUN WHILE THE SUMMER LASTS

LINO PRINTING WORKSHOP
A fun way to express your creativity
Fri 1 August
13.00-15.30 15-18YO
CKPC office, Conference Room

YOGA
The perfect way to relieve the stress of being a teenager
Fri 1 August & Mon 4 August
14.00-15.00 12-18YO
Stanton Hall

CHES
A competitive drive for your brain while school's out
Fri 1 August
10.30-12.30 8-14YO

CHES COMPETITION
Tue 5 August
13.00-17.30 8-14YO
Stanton Hall

SCAN TO BOOK TICKETS FOR THE BEST SUMMER!!!

CREATED & DESIGNED BY OUR BALCARRAS WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENT

Flyers/posters designed by a Balcarras Pupil in Year 10 on Work Experience at the Parish Council.

SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMME

28TH JULY - 8TH AUGUST 2025

MON 28 JULY
Multi Sports
9.30-10.15 | 2.5-4yo
10.30-11.15 | 4-6yo
Magic Show themed party
10-11 | 5-8yo
11-12 | SEN children
Sing Along
14.00-14.45 | 3-7yo

MON 4 AUG
Fun Dance
10-10.45 | 4-8yo
Yoga
14-15.00 | 12-18yo

TUE 29 JULY
Football
9.30-11 | 7-9yo
11-12.30 | 5-7yo
Forest School
10-12 | 4-8yo
13.30-15.30 | 9-12yo
Physical Play
10-10.45 | w/kg-2yo
11-11.45 | w/kg-2yo
Mountain Bike Skills session
15-17.00 | 11-16yo

WED 30 JULY
Cupcakes Decorating
12.30-13.30 | 11-16yo
14.00-15.00 | 6-11yo
Drumming workshop
10-11 | 8-10yo
11.15-12.15 | 8-10yo
Read to dogs
14.30-15.15 | 5-11yo

THU 31 JULY
Football
9.30-11 | 7-9yo
11-12.30 | 5-7yo
13.30-15.00 | 9-11yo
Lino Printing workshop
10-12.30 | 10-14yo

WED 6 AUG
Cooking Class
14-15.00 | 11-18yo

THU 7 AUG
Sewing Workshop
10-11 | 7-12yo
12.30-13.30 | 7-12yo
Read to Dogs
14.30-15.15 | 5-11yo

FRI 1 AUG
Forest School
10-12 | 5-10yo
Chess
10.30-12.30 | 8-14yo
Lino Printing workshop
13.00-15.30 | 15-18yo
Football
13.30-15.00 | 9-11yo
Yoga
14-15.00 | 12-18yo

FRI 8 AUG
Musical Theatre
Fitness
10-10.45 | 8yo+
13-13.45 | 8yo+
Forest School
10-12 | 4-10yo
Acting & Singing session
14-14.45 | 7-12yo

FREE ACTIVITIES FOR CK KIDS & TEENS
SCAN TO BOOK TICKETS

WWW.CHARLTONKINGSPARISHCOUNCIL.GOV.UK

These sessions are organised & funded by Charlton Kings Parish Council for Families & Children within our Parish.

Padel Shift

Junior Coaching at Elkstone Studios

Looking for something active, exciting and fun for your kids? Join our Junior Coaching sessions!

Led by a passionate, expert coach, these sessions are full of energy, games and skill-building.

Padel is the fastest growing sport in the world because it's fast-paced, sociable, and great fun to play. Whether your kids are completely new to padel or looking to improve, all abilities are welcome.

Come and join the fun!



Price:
£12 per person

When:
Sundays 11am - 12pm

Get in touch to book
hello@padelshift.com



Battledown Welcome back Autumn Fair

**Saturday 20th September
12 to 3 pm**

Everyone is welcome to join us for some family fun.....

A variety of craft, food & gift stalls

Toys, books & bric-a-brac

Live Music

BBQ

Games for the children

Cream Teas

Raffle

Tombola

Fire Engine

Arts & Crafts

and so much more.....

Entry

Adults: 50p

Children: Free

Battledown Centre for Children & Families, Harp Hill, Cheltenham, GL52 6PZ



Summer YOUTH SPORTS ACADEMY

AGE 11-16

CHARLTON KINGS & CHELT VENUES

FITTER FASTER STRONGER

IN 5 WEEKS

STARTS 28.07.25 UNTIL 29.08.25

UNLIMITED SUMMER PASS ONLY £99*

- Unlimited access to all summer academy sessions - set YOUR schedule to suit you
- Membership of Teambuildr app to track progress
- Sports nutrition mastery workshop - exclusive access to advice and tips from Adam Lloyd MSc sports performance nutritionist
- Sports nutrition download pack
- Priority booking for summer functional testing events
- Future Athletes sports bag (first 25 only!)

***PRIORITY BOOKING WINDOW 04 - 16 JULY**

SAVE £50 - STANDARD PRICE £149

BOOK: futureathletes.co.uk
FOLLOW: @futureathletes_hq

THE CALM CLUB'S

Summer Yoga & Craft Camps!

Cheltenham 2025

What, where, when?

Tired of chaotic holiday clubs? Give your child calm, confidence and connection this summer.

"MY DAUGHTER WAS NERVOUS WHEN WE ARRIVED, BUT SHE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE AT THE END. SO CALM AND WELCOMING."

A day at camp...

- Yoga adventures taught by certified children's yoga teachers
- Mindful crafts with a calming, creative twist
- Outdoor play in beautiful, peaceful settings
- Homemade lunch + make-your-own food!
- Small groups for deeper connection and safety
- Trauma-informed, First Aid-certified team trained in SEN

Who is it for?

Two age groups:

- Children aged 4 - 8 years
- Tweens and teens aged 9 - 15 years

Only 5 paid spots per location. FREE spaces go fast!

LOCATIONS:

- CHEL TENHAM PRIORS PARK JULY 28 - 31
- CHEL TENHAM PRIORS PARK AUGUST 11 - 14

Book now! www.thecalm-club.co.uk/summer-camps
Use SUMMER10 for 10% off paid spots

info@thecalm-club.co.uk

SCAN ME



Harmonise Youth Choir
For ages 13-18

Wednesday evenings
Bethesda Church Hall,
Great Norwood
St. Cheltenham

Part of Cheltenham Children's Choir
A welcoming, inclusive, musical community

www.cheltenhamchildrenschoir.co.uk [@cheltchildrenschoir](https://www.facebook.com/cheltchildrenschoir)
e: admin@cheltenhamchildrenschoir.co.uk



Join Our Yoga Class

FREE DROP-IN SESSIONS **LAST SAT OF EVERY MONTH**

Join Helena from Sixways Yoga for FREE monthly Yoga sessions.

2:15 - 3:15 pm **Stanton hall**
Last Saturday of the month **For Girls aged 12-18yrs**

www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk



ULTIMATE ACTIVITY CAMPS

GET SET FOR ULTIMATE SCHOOL HOLIDAY FUN!

Exceptional activity camps for children aged 4 to 14 at
Dean Close Prep School, Cheltenham

ULTIMATEACTIVITY.CO.UK