





Alice Twine

(Year 11 Winchcombe School)

AS: AABC

Plans: to take a gap year before getting an apprenticeship as a researcher in a media company.

The positive atmosphere, the great relationship between teachers and students and the academic results, made Balcarras my first choice for sixth form, a decision I don't regret. When I first joined Balcarras in Year 12, I did not know what I wanted to do after, but through help from my teachers and a wide variety of post-sixth form options provided by external speakers, I have now become drawn to the idea of journalism and am aware of possible routes to become one, information I did not know before. Before sixth form, I was set on the belief that I would go to university yet Balcarras has showed me that there are plenty of other credible options such as degree-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, courses abroad and gap years which may be more suited to me and still allow me to do what I want. This has been invaluable help for me as I now feel more positive about the future and feel confident that I will be able to experience lots of exciting new things along the way. Balcarras has prepared me with this information, support and freedom not only for A-levels, but also for whatever the future throws at me!



Sophie Wheeler

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AACC

Plans: to study business management at Bristol University.

Continuing my studies here at Balcarras was the obvious option for me, due to my experiences with the focussed yet encouraging environment, I learned of in lower school. Balcarras offers an opportunity for independent study alongside high quality teaching which allows students to reach their full potential. The sixth form provides a broad variety of extracurricular opportunities for all students; a highlight for me was being a part of the Young Enterprise team. I enjoyed every moment of the process, and it gave me a great insight into the day to day life of running a business. Having created a product that we were passionate about, it motivated us to work really hard. We were fortunate enough to reach the South West Finals of the competition, making it a fulfilling experience. For A-level I am studying economics, business and Russian. I believe that the enthusiasm of the teachers to help wherever possible, combined with the motivating study environment has kept me on track to achieve my aspirational grades. I truly enjoy studying my chosen subjects and believe that the sixth form has supported me in guiding my future.

Hannah Slack

(Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill School)

AS: AABBB

Plans: to study anthropology and archaeology at university.

I chose Balcarras when I was in Year 11 as I believed the structure, support and the quality of teaching here would help me achieve my full academic potential. When I arrived at Balcarras in Year 12 I knew very few people and was nervous about settling in but the relaxed atmosphere created by Balcarras helped me and many other external pupils integrate easily into the school. In addition to the obvious academic benefits there are a wide range of extracurricular activities on offer, for example in Year 12 I joined Boost and began the Gold Duke of Edinburgh award, allowing me to meet new people outside of my classes.

My highlights at Balcarras have been the Duke of Edinburgh expeditions to Dartmoor and the Peak District as they have allowed to try something completely new and put me out of my comfort zone whilst giving me more confidence, a sense of independence and develop a wide range of skills that will assist me throughout my life and further education.



Rachel Farr

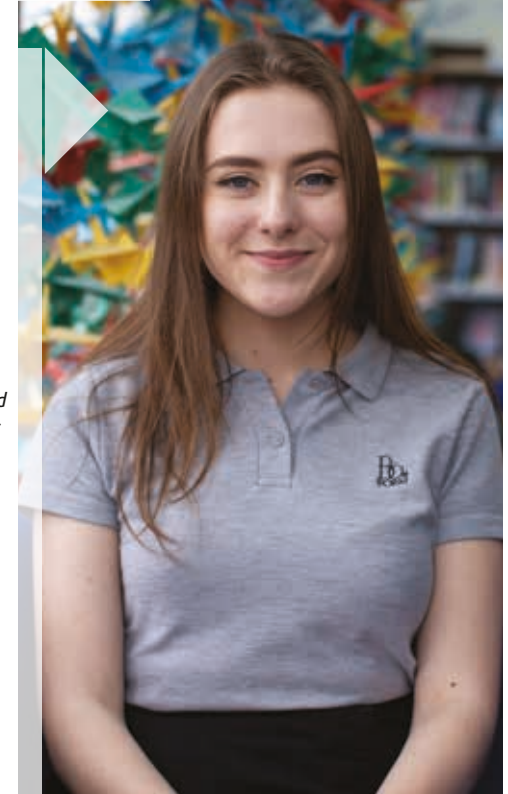
(Year 11 Cleeve School)

AS: ABB

Plans: to study economics at Warwick

I joined Balcarras in Year 12 as an external student after being impressed by their study facilities and the opportunity to gain additional UCAS points with and EPQ and AS level qualification. I have never been an outgoing person, and starting a new school wasn't something I was completely comfortable with, however in hindsight I'm glad I did. I feel that joining Balcarras' Sixth Form has enabled me to really build my confidence and meet an abundance of wonderful people. The idea of being a new student was something I found daunting but when I joined the sixth form, the team was eager to help new students settle in, with team building exercises within tutor groups and meetings with externals to address any concerns. As well as this, external and internal students are provided with plenty of opportunities to get involved with the sixth form, for example, expeditions to various countries, the Duke of Edinburgh award and Young Enterprise.

I have found that the school has an excellent support network for those looking to further their education after sixth form. I feel that joining the school has helped me develop my confidence within myself and these abilities will be vital when transferring to university.





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

welcome to Balcarras Sixth Form

A warm welcome to this guide about the courses available in the sixth form from September 2019.

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

As well as superb facilities for academic study, there is a wealth of extracurricular activities, along with consistent support and guidance throughout your two-year programme.

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

Dominic Burke Headteacher

welcome



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

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

The quality of the teaching in the sixth form is exceptional and the experience you will have as a Year 12 and Year 13 student is, I believe, unrivalled. The exciting and positive atmosphere in our purpose-built sixth form building is tangible. The recent renovation of the sixth form common room has added an extra dimension of quality and shows the commitment the school has to its sixth formers.

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

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

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

Darren Leatherbarrow Head of Sixth Form

Teachers are
experts in their
subjects. OFSTED

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a supportive environment

Sixth form team

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

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



Mrs Derrick



Mr Constance

Tutors

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

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



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

Teachers

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

Administrative support

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



Mrs Dean



Mrs Shute

a supportive environment

Careers and university advice

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

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

Reports and parents' evenings

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

The sixth form committee

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

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



A-levels offered at Balcarras

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

Art

Biology

Business studies

Chemistry

Computer science

Drama and theatre

Economics

English literature

French

Further mathematics

Geography

History

Mathematics

Music

Photography

Physical education

Physics

Politics

Product design

Psychology

Religion, philosophy and ethics

Russian

Spanish

Textiles

We also provide vocational qualifications:

Applied science

Food science & nutrition

Health and social care

the courses on offer

What is an A-level?

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

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

Assessment

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

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

Choosing your courses

When choosing your courses, consider your academic strengths: which are your best subjects? You should select subjects you enjoy studying. If you have a firm idea about your future career or a subject you wish to study at university, then you are strongly advised to do some careful research on the internet into which subjects are required to ensure all options are available.

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

Progression to A-level

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

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

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



a rich experience

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

Futures

This course offers a number of elements:

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

Guest speakers

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

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

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

Sixth form games

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

Extracurricular activities

Students participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities including: The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Young Enterprise, the paired reading scheme, Engage discussion forums, Bar Mock Trial, World Challenge, Model United Nations General Assembly, debating, school music competitions, drama productions, inter-school sports matches and regular intra-tutor competitions. Many of these activities can be used to contribute to the Enrichment component of the AQA Baccalaureate.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)

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

Young Enterprise

The success of the Young Enterprise scheme at Balcarras has been exceptional. Students have formed their own companies, producing and selling a range of goods and services in recent years. Each business is judged on its trading activities, the quality of production and a financial report at the end of the year. As a team we have finished in the top three within Gloucestershire for the past seven years and we have represented the county at the South West finals on no less than three occasions. There are over 2,000 schools that participate in the UK each year and our recent highlight was when Balcarras won the national award for producing a range of tea products. The Business department works hard and liaises with local businesses to ensure that students are motivated and supported in every aspect of running their businesses.

The paired reading scheme

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

Private study

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

A black and white photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a young man is looking down, focused on his work. Behind him, another student is visible, and in the background, a girl is leaning over a desk. The walls are covered with various papers and notices, creating a busy academic environment.

outstanding facilities

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

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

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

There are two large study areas, with over 120 computer terminals and study carrels at which you can work. These are used for supervised private study in both Year 12 and Year 13.

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

uniform

The idea

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

The design

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

The uniform

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

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

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

Buying uniform

The polo shirts and sweatshirts are available from "The Schoolwear Company" or gently worn from the sixth form office.



baccalaureate



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

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

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

The Baccalaureate will be awarded in the following classifications:

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

The Enrichment Scheme

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

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

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

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

Examination board: AQA

Certificate units in Year 12

Unit 1	Key Concepts in Science	External written examination	33.3% of Certificate
Unit 2	Applied Experimental Techniques	Internal portfolio	33.3% of Certificate
Unit 3	Science in the Modern World	External written examination	33.3% of Certificate

Extended Certificate units in Year 13

Unit 4	The Human Body	External written examination	16.6% of Extended Certificate
Unit 5	Investigating Science	Internal portfolio	16.6% of Extended Certificate
Unit 6	Optional unit (TBC)	Internal portfolio	16.6% of Extended Certificate

Studying level 3 Certificate/Extended Certificate in applied science

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

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

Entry requirements

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



art

Syllabus title: Art (Fine art)

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

Unit 3	Portfolio unit supported by 1,000-3,000 words		60% of A-level
Unit 4	Practical examination	15 hrs	40% of A-level

Studying A-level art

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Biology
Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level biology

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

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

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

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

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

- 5 - Energy transfers in and between organisms
- 6 - Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- 7 - Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
- 8 - The control of gene expression

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

Entry requirements

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

business studies

Syllabus title: Business studies

Examination board: AQA

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

AS-level

Paper 1	Business 1: Management and Leadership	1½ hrs	50% of AS
Paper 2	Business 2: Decision Making	1½ hrs	50% of AS

A-level

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

Studying A-level business

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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



chemistry

Syllabus title: Chemistry A

Examination board: OCR

Studying A-level chemistry

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

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

Module 1 – Development of practical skills in chemistry

Module 2 – Foundations in chemistry

Module 3 – Periodic table and energy

Module 4 – Core organic chemistry

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

Module 5 – Physical chemistry and transition elements

Module 6 - Organic chemistry and analysis

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

Entry requirements

Students wishing to take chemistry should have two grade 6's in GCSE combined science and grade 6 or above in maths. This A-level course will allow a co-teachable AS to be taken by Year 12 students.

AS-level

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

A-level

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

computer science

Syllabus title: Computer Science

Examination board: OCR

AS-level

Unit 1	Computing Principles	1¼ hrs written paper	70 marks	50% of total AS-level
Unit 2	Algorithms and Problem Solving	1¼ hrs written paper	70 marks	50% of total AS-level

A-level

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

Studying A-level computer science

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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





drama & theatre

Syllabus title: Drama and Theatre

Examination board: Edexcel

Studying A-level drama and theatre

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

To be a high achiever in drama, candidates are expected to work co-operatively and sensitively with others. Students should also be able to give up significant time outside school hours, and to have a genuine interest in drama. A willingness to experiment with new ideas and a sense of fun are also very important.

Entry requirements

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

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

A-level

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

AS-level

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

economics

Syllabus title: Economics
Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Paper 1	Operation of Markets	1½ hrs	50% of AS
Paper 2	Economics in a Global Context	1½ hrs	50% of AS

A-level

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

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

Studying A-level economics

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

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

Entry requirements

Successful A-level economics students need to have good communication skills and be confident using numbers. Consequently, a GCSE grade 6 in both English language and mathematics are necessary. A grade 6 in English literature is not accepted.

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

english literature

Syllabus title: English Literature
Examination board: WJEC

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level English Literature

AS English Literature involves the study of the following texts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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



Maria Soares

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study HSPS at university (Human, Social and Political Sciences)

For me it was an easy and natural choice to continue my studies at Balcarras Sixth Form. My experience of lower school was positive, but the facilities, standard of teaching and aspirational environment, are even more appealing in the Sixth Form. Balcarras is a great example of a school that provides the highest quality of education and opportunity to all students, regardless of their background and circumstances. I have found the regular study sessions really helpful in enabling me to stay up to speed with my work. I appreciate the positive atmosphere and the freedom and respect students are given. There is a strong work ethic here and a good support network for students, but we are also encouraged to show independence and responsibility, in order to prepare us for University and the world of work. Studying biology, philosophy and ethics and Spanish has provided me with a good breadth of learning and knowledge, allowing me to keep my options open. As my courses have progressed my ideas and direction have begun to crystallise, and studying these subjects has fired my interest in society, politics and the world around us, challenging me to be part of the difference we can make as human beings.



Bilaal Rashid

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AAAB

Plans: to study computer science at the university of Cambridge

Having enjoyed my time at Balcarras in the lower school, I did not consider any other places to study my A-levels. The teachers are very supportive and the school has such a positive and encouraging environment. As well as the strong academics and high quality of teaching, there is an abundance of extracurricular opportunities on offer at the sixth form. One club that I have enjoyed since Year 7 is our archery club, where every year we have competed, and often won, in the county finals. I plan to study Computer Science at the University of Cambridge when I leave the sixth form and I have found that the school has given me all of the support that I needed, along with high quality teaching, to make a strong application for the course. Ultimately, Balcarras and the sixth form team have provided me with a wide range of possibilities, as well as an incredible amount of support and guidance helping me achieve my full potential.

Maria Ana Goncalves

(Year 11 Cleeve School)

AS: AABC

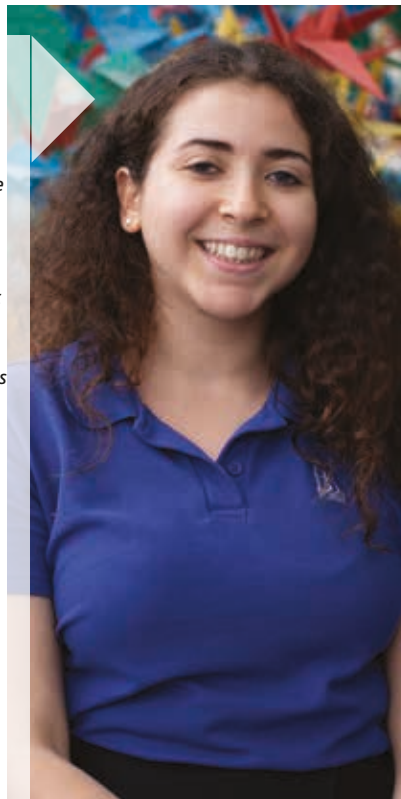
Plans: to study chemistry in Edinburgh

As an external student, having joined Balcarras Sixth Form in Year 12, was the best decision I could have made. The transition to a new school environment was positive due to the uplifting and engaging atmosphere surrounding our sixth form.

Studying biology, chemistry and mathematics has allowed me to develop great transferable skills such as: problem-solving, analytical and teamwork which will be useful for future employability. It has also expanded my knowledge and understanding of all life around us at a microscopic level. Having smaller classes at A-level certainly improves communication between teachers and students, and as a result, any issues regarding subject content can be comfortably discussed. Having teachers who are also passionate about their subjects constantly motivates me to achieve my full academic potential; and their support through my A-levels has proven their dedication for their pupils.

I believe Balcarras School has helped me grow, not only as an academic student, but also as an individual by giving me guidance and raising my confidence in preparation for my next stage of university life.

Highlights for me at sixth form have been joining the BOOST Programme, being involved in the Paired Maths Scheme and producing a Portuguese Workshop for lower school.



Cameron McIntosh

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAB

Plans: to study medicine at Cardiff university

Continuing to study at Balcarras in the 6th form was always my intention upon joining the school in Year 7. Even despite not knowing what I wanted to do after school, I knew that between the high quality teaching and well equipped study facilities that Balcarras would be a good fit for me, no matter what I decided I wanted to do.

Being able to study an extra subject and receive an AS -level was perfect for me as it allowed me to study a different type of course to my other subjects. Studying Spanish for my first year of 6th form gave me time to relax and study in a completely different way to science, and it was reassuring to know that I had a backup subject if I suddenly decided I wanted to study something different at university.

Having studied at Balcarras, I now feel fully equipped to apply to university and I look forward to the rest of my time in 6th Form.





Simon Fleet

(Year 11 Cotswold School)

AAAA

Plans: to study physics at university

Balcarras has exceeded my expectation as a school, the teachers are motivating and inspiring, driving my desire to succeed and the sixth form team have been incredibly supportive. The innovative and enthusiastic physics department have inspired me to study physics at university. All of the internal students I spoke to were friendly and welcoming and within a couple of weeks I saw myself as fully integrated within the school's atmosphere with new friends that I hope to keep in contact with for a long time. I am currently studying maths, further maths, chemistry and physics, and look forward to continuing my studies at university next year.



Ben Partridge

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AABD

Plans: to study Jazz at a conservatoire

Coming to Balcarras was an easy choice having come up through the lower school, and the transition from Year 11 was seamless. The dynamic, enthusiastic teachers and quality facilities (especially the brand-new music block) have given me the perfect platform to pursue my interests, and the exceptional extra-curricular opportunities offered extend and stimulate the sixth form experience. Particular highlights include leading Ottewell House to victory (twice) in the House Music competition (which sixth formers run), playing in the band for the annual School Production, and taking part in the inter-tutor debate competition, which is fiercely contested every year. The new external students also provide a welcome addition, adding character and fresh faces among the ones you've studied with for years.

My A-level choices of Music, History and Politics have stretched my interests above and beyond my expectations, and your development in each subject is plain to see and pushes you onto even more. The smaller class sizes mean you get more individual attention, and you clearly benefit from the expert guidance they give you. While my further education choice is obscure, and gave me a lot of explaining to do for peers and staff, Balcarras have done a brilliant job adapting to and meeting the needs for my application, and taken my love for music and encouraged me to take it beyond the curriculum and into the profession, pointing me towards the highly specialised and performance-based Conservatoires.

Henry West

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: BBC

Plans: to gain an academic and athletic scholarship to an American University through tennis

Since Year 7, the school has provided a great working and social environment. This has only continued through to sixth form with the help of the supportive teachers and excellent facilities such as the common room and Year 13 study room.

The school have encouraged me in trying to achieve my individual goals. In order for me to achieve this goal I am required to take an external exam. Balcarras and the heads of sixth form has supported me through this process allowing extra study time which has enabled me to achieve the best possible score I could get.

In addition to the external exam, I have had to train and compete extensively in order to try achieve an athletic scholarship. The school have also encouraged and supported this. All of the help the school have given me will hopefully help me achieve my goal of getting to the states.



Tom Hindson

(Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill School)

AS: AAAB

Plans: to study biology at university

I joined Balcarras in Year 12 as an external student and feel like it was a great decision. Initially I was nervous about starting here, but the friendly pupils and teachers helped me to settle in right away. I am currently studying maths, biology and business. During my time in sixth form I have been able to do Gold DoFE which was a great experience. I really like the structure of the school days and it helps to keep myself organised, as the study periods allow you to complete most of your homework, so you have more free time at home.

Next year I am planning to have a gap year and then go to university to study biology. The sixth form have been very helpful in applying to university to give everyone the best possible chance of getting the places they want.



food science & nutrition

Syllabus title: Food Science and Nutrition

Examination board: WJEC

Year 12 Certificate in Food Science and Nutrition

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

Year 13 Diploma in Food Science and Nutrition

2	Ensuring Food is Safe to Eat	Mandatory	Externally marked - eight hour timed, supervised assessment
3	Experimenting to Solve Food Production Problems	Optional	Internal: responding through investigative and experimental work to a scenario based on a food production problem
4	Current Issues in Food Science and Nutrition	Optional	Internal: plan, carry out and present a research project on current issues linked to issues related to food science and nutrition.

Studying food science and nutrition

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

The WJEC Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition qualification allows pupils to gain a wealth of knowledge about the food and nutrition industry. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the relationship between the human body and food as well as practical skills for cooking and preparing food. It has been designed to provide pupils with knowledge, understanding and skills to progress to further study and training. It is assessed through a combination of coursework, written examinations and timed extended assignments.

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: French AS/A Level

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading & Writing	40% of A-level
Paper 2	Writing	30% of A-level
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of A-level

Studying A-level French

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

Cultural development is exceptionally good. OFSTED

further mathematics

Syllabus title: Further mathematics

Examination board: Edexcel

A-level

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

Studying A-level further mathematics

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Geography

Examination board: AQA

AS

Component 1	Physical Geography and People and the Environment	1½ hours	80 marks	50% of AS
Component 2	Human Geography and Geography Fieldwork Investigation	1½ hours	80 marks	50% of AS

A-level

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

Studying A-level geography

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

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

There will be a variety of field day visits throughout the course to ensure that pupils can apply their learning and have the opportunity to experience data collection methods in preparation for examination response. A weekend residential to Dorset in the Autumn term of Year 12 is an integral part of this.

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

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

Entry requirements

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

health & social care

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Developing effective communication in health and social care

The diploma students will complete a further five mandatory units:

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

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: History

Examination board: AQA

A-level

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

AS-level

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

Studying A-level history

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

In unit 2 we turn our attention to a depth study in American history. The USA often boasts that it is the "land of the free"; however there has been a long history of prejudice and discrimination. Our study looks at the developments under several Presidents in the second half of the 20th century.

Finally unit 3 involves an independent investigation that consists of a 3,000-4,000 word essay which looks at a historical question in the context of a 100-year period. This is an exciting new development in A-level history and gives plenty of opportunity for independent research and original thinking. The investigation element will allow students to pick a topic from a range of options in the second year.

Entry requirements

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



mathematics

Syllabus title: Mathematics

Examination board: Edexcel

A-level

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

Studying A-level mathematics

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

Entry requirements

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



music

Syllabus title:

Music

Examination board: WJEC Eduqas

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level music

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

With a music A-level students can progress in to further education, higher education or employment. Music can be studied at many colleges and universities including highly acclaimed music colleges such as The Birmingham Conservatoire and The Royal Academy

of Music. However, music A-level is highly regarded by all colleges and universities even for students wanting to follow a non-music course. Career pathways are wide and varied and include music teaching, whether instrumental or classroom based, sound-engineer, choreography, music publishing, backing singing, classical music, arts administration, television and radio production, stage or screen work, radio presenting, music journalism, music therapist, composing, events management, festival organisation and stage management.

Entry requirements

Students must have achieved a grade 6 or above at GCSE and have theoretical skills equivalent to grade 5 or above and performance skills of grade 4 or above. It is a requirement of the course that students are having lessons on their specialist instrument, whether in school or privately.

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

photography

Syllabus title: Photography

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

Unit 3	Portfolio unit supported by 1,000-3,000 words		60% of A-level
Unit 4	Practical examination	15 hrs	40% of A-level

Studying A-level photography

The course is structured similarly to GCSE art. It revolves around units of coursework and controlled tests set against four assessment objectives. As with GCSE art, much of the practical work is triggered by critical studies with written research acting as a diary of work undertaken. Students will respond to a range of stimuli including natural form, landscape and portraiture. Students will also have the opportunity to develop more conceptual approaches to this medium. Candidates must have their own digital camera. A knowledge of Adobe Photoshop® is useful but not absolutely essential. All work will be internally marked and moderated by AQA. The controlled test in Year 12 should be seen as an opportunity for developing ideas and in Year 13 to develop a more fully realised project.

Entry requirements

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

physical education

Syllabus title: Physical education
Examination board: OCR

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level physical education

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

Entry requirements

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

physics

Syllabus title: Physics

Examination board: Edexcel

AS-level

Paper 1	Mechanics Electricity Practical Skills	50%
Paper 2	Materials Waves and Light Practical Skills	50%

A-level

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

Studying A-level physics

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Government and politics
Examination board: Edexcel

Studying A-level government and politics

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

In Year 12 the course focuses on British politics. Students will study how the UK is governed and in particular will focus on the role of key institutions such as parliament and key roles such as the prime minister. This will obviously necessitate an approach whereby the students will have to apply theory to actual experience. Therefore we will study recent political history particularly focusing on politics since the 1970s. Students will also study politics from the bottom up, looking at the role of ordinary people in the political process. In Year 13 the course will focus on the development of political ideas and how these ideas have affected modern politics.

AS-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

A-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

Component 3: Comparative Politics

Entry requirements

Many students will not have studied politics before. However, it is clearly desirable that you have an interest in politics and current affairs. If you are the sort of person who enjoys keeping up with topical issues then this might be the course for you. The course is open to all students who achieve the minimum entry requirements for the sixth form. Due to the literacy aspect, a secure 5 or ideally a grade 6 in English is recommended but not essential.

product design



Syllabus title: Design and Technology:
Product Design

Examination board: AQA

Studying A-level product design

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

AS-level

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

A-level

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

psychology

Syllabus title: Psychology
Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level psychology

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

religion, philosophy and ethics

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

Studying A-Level religion, philosophy and ethics

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

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

board a wide range of ideas and opinions.

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Russian

Examination board: Edexcel

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level Russian

A-level Russian builds upon the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking which you have developed during your GCSE course. It will also extend your knowledge and understanding of Russia and Russian life and culture. In addition, a good grasp of grammatical concepts will become increasingly important as you learn how the language works in order to produce accurate written and spoken Russian.

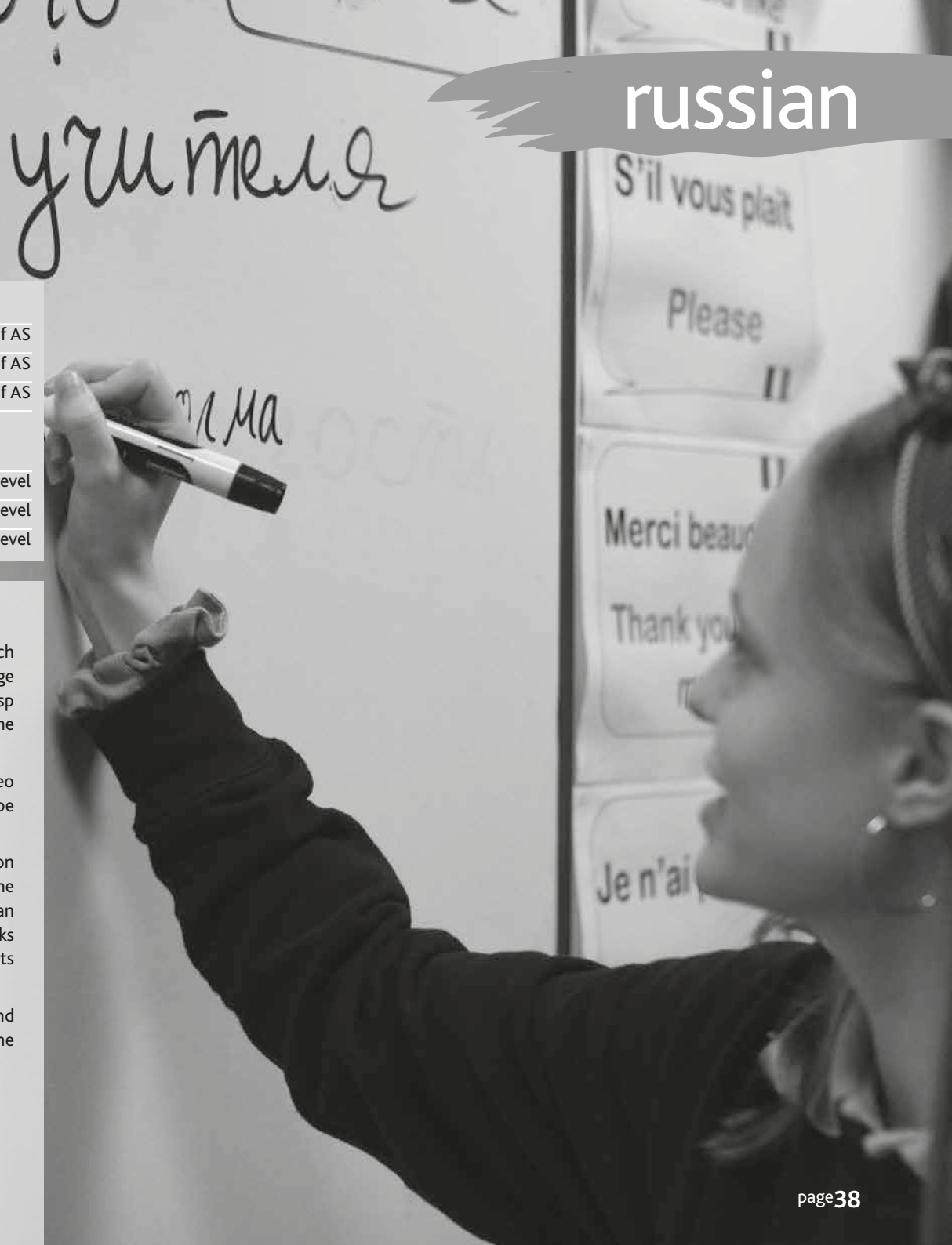
We use a range of up-to-date sources such as on-line articles, newspapers and video clips as well as conventional textbooks and grammar workbooks. You will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently.

You will learn to use Russian in everyday conversation as well as in formal discussion and debate. A Russian assistant is employed so that students can have one-to-one speaking sessions for half an hour per week. These sessions are obligatory and form an important part of the course. You will gain a clearer insight into how language works and you will also have the opportunity to visit Russia and to take part in theatre visits and other cultural activities.

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

Entry requirements

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



spanish

Syllabus title: Spanish

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading & Writing	40% of A-level
Paper 2	Writing	30% of A-level
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of A-level

Studying A-level Spanish

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

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as the internet, radio and television as well as conventional textbooks. Students will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently. You will learn how to use Spanish in everyday conversation as well as in

formal discussion and debate. A Spanish Assistant is employed so that students can have one-to-one speaking sessions for half an hour per week. These sessions are obligatory and form an important part of the course.

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Art and Design (Textile design)

Examination board: AQA

Studying A-level textiles

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

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

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

Entry requirements

Students should, ideally, have achieved a grade 6, or higher, at GCSE level in a technology subject. However grade 5 will be considered on an individual basis. It would be an advantage if you are experienced in using a sewing machine.

AS-level

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

A-level

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

extended project qualification

Syllabus title: Extended Project
Examination board: AQA

Completing the extended project qualification

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

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

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

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

The EPQ is an extremely valuable course, preparing students for the challenge and rigour of university study or working life. In addition, an increasing number of universities are including the E.P.Q. in their offers to students.

Students are required, with appropriate supervision, to:

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

It contributes to programmes of study in two ways:

• **As a stand-alone qualification:**

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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



how to apply

Making your choices

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

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

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

Application form

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

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

You will need to fill it in carefully. We will use it as the basis for your course consultation meeting. In particular, we will discuss whether your choices are consistent with your career or academic intentions. For students from other schools we will contact your current school for a reference.

No decisions will be made on the basis of the application alone, but it will form the basis for discussion at the consultation meeting.

Deadline

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

Course consultation meeting

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

Offers of places

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

Late applicants

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

Balcarras Sixth Form

for more information contact:

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