

Balcarras Sixth Form

2023





Alicia Marshall (Year 11 Bournside)

Plans: university to study English and drama

I joined Balcarras Sixth Form last year and was welcomed with a supportive and inclusive community despite being an external student. The teachers have encouraged me in my areas of strength to achieve and develop skills that I will carry into university and helped me to thrive both academically and creatively. As a student who was drawn to the dramatic arts, I found the department to be vibrant and stimulating, preparing me for the professional environment I hope to potentially work in one day. Lessons are engaging and being given the opportunity to utilise study periods keeps me focused and productive.

My time at Balcarras Sixth Form has had a massive positive impact on my ability to problem solve and collaborate with my peers, as well as enhanced my drive to succeed at a university level. In the future I plan to study English and drama and have found the sixth form to be supportive when it comes to applying to UCAS, providing us with informative discussions and assemblies.

This year I have participated in the school play attaining a lead role, learning cooperation with other cast members as well as strengthening my individual performance skills. Balcarras offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities for all subject groups, I have participated in the Duke of Edinburgh Gold award as well as the Cheltenham College Literature Society which have built up my discussion skills and helped me discover passions for my subjects beyond the school curriculum. DofE has also helped me put my geographical skills into action outside of the classroom, giving me a fresh approach to academic learning within school.



Jacob Bruton (Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill)

Plans: university to study stage management

Balcarras was the main interest for me as a post-16 option due to the structured and supervised system that they have in place. This suited my learning style and would hopefully lead to me reaching my full academic potential. After looking around on a tour it became very clear that this was the place that I wanted to be, the teachers were enthusiastic and the classrooms were very well equipped, especially in the drama studios and in the main hall stage. The sixth form environment was welcoming with lots of support available for you if you needed it. Having regular access to study sessions allowed me to focus and made the homework and revision a lot less stressful. The lessons are well structured, and there is lots of support available if you need it in all subjects. Furthermore, there is pastoral support available from the sixth form team, which has helped me find out about how to apply to drama schools, and when the deadlines are for applications.

Every year there is a school production, this is a very exciting event in the school year, as it lets everyone in the school to work together and produce a performance. The production is run professionally, which lets students be able to experience what it would be like to work in theatres. There is also a large technical team behind all these productions which is mostly student led, which is what I am a part of. These experiences are very memorable and have also let me gain knowledge in lighting, sound, and stage management. The drama department is very organised and well equipped, which allows us to put on sell out shows each year. All these experiences in drama have also been very beneficial as it shows that I have experience in working in theatres.

Drama has also helped me a lot in deciding what I want to do post-18. The teachers have given me suggestions and assisted me with my applications and my portfolio. This support has helped me decide that in the future I want to work in theatres as a stage manager.



Jacob Harris (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: university to study design engineering

I always knew that I would end up at Balcarras Sixth Form, even from Year 7. You would always see the taller and smarter sixth formers walking around talking about some advanced math concepts, and I wanted to be one of them. I ended up choosing Balcarras for a variety of reasons, but ultimately the biggest selling point for me was the outstanding equipment in the science and tech labs. I chose to study maths, physics and product design, all of which I love. Whenever I'm stuck on a design or question, I know that the teachers will be able to help and explain it to me. When I first joined, I found sketching in product design difficult, but now almost halfway through Year 13 I can confidently sketch any designs I come up with. This is due to the helpful guidance and teaching and constructive advice that helps. I really appreciate the way teachers help you to start achieving things that you may need for future careers and help you think about the best career choice for you. For example, when I first discovered my love for sketching and designing, I was put up for all sorts of extra-curricular activities such as being a STEM ambassador and a member of the Young Enterprise team. Not only did this help fuel my enthusiasm for engineering and design, it also gave me real world experience in communicating with groups in a project.

When I first joined, I wanted to do mechanical engineering, but with the help of school and teacher advice I am now applying for design engineering courses with the aspiration to join a design firm in the future.



Yasmin Mohamed Ali (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: university to study Arabic and politics

I chose Balcarras Sixth Form as I really enjoyed my time here during all five years of secondary school as well as the fact that I live up the road! I definitely feel that I have progressed academically and now love to learn more independently – therefore the study periods are some of my favourite lessons now. Study offers the opportunity to really establish a study routine, and also have academic and pastoral support on hand should you ever need it. In addition to that, in the sixth form I have really valued the aspect of having smaller classes, as its easier to have sophisticated and adult class discussions and there are more opportunities to ask more questions. In addition, my weekly one to one speaking sessions for my Spanish A-level have been significantly helpful for my pronunciation and confidence.

Throughout my secondary education I participated in many extra-curricular opportunities, and this has carried on throughout my sixth form experience. I have participated in the school production as well as the Boost programme and Duke of Edinburgh Gold award. All of these have all been valuable experiences that I have been lucky to be a part of, and have helped me a lot when beginning to write my personal statement. After Balcarras Sixth Form, I hope to go to university to study Arabic and politics.



Welcome to Balcarras Sixth Form

A warm welcome to this guide about the courses available in the sixth form from September 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

Dominic Burke Headteacher

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

Welcome



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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

A supportive environment	4
The courses on offer	6
A rich experience	7
Outstanding facilities	9
Uniform	10
Art	11
Biology	12
Business studies	13
Chemistry	14
Computer science	15
Drama & theatre	16
Economics	17
English literature	18
Environmental science	19
Food science & nutrition	20
French	23
Further mathematics	24
Geography	25
Health & social care	26
History	27
Mathematics	28
Music	29
Photography	30
Physical education	31
Physics	32
Politics	33
Product design	34
Psychology	35
Religion, philosophy and ethics	36
Russian	37
Spanish	38
Textiles	39
Extended project qualification	40
How to apply	41

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Sixth form team

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

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



Mrs Derrick



Mr Constance

Tutors

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

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

Administrative support and UCAS guidance

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



Mrs Crowley



Mrs Dean

Study supervision and mentoring

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



Mr Boughton

Teachers

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



Miss Shields

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Careers and university advice

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

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

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 three 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.

Sixth Form Councils

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

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



A-levels offered at Balcarras

Twenty-five A-levels are available. Syllabus information is available on pages 11 - 40.

Art

Biology

Business studies

Chemistry

Computer science

Drama and theatre

Economics

English literature

Environmental science

French

Further mathematics

Geography

History

Mathematics

Music

Photography

Physical education

Physics

Politics

Product design

Psychology

Religion, philosophy and ethics

Russian

Spanish

Textiles

We also provide vocational qualifications:

Food science & nutrition

Health and social care

THE COURSES ON OFFER

What is an A-level?

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

Assessment

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

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

Choosing your courses

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

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

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

Progression

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

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

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

A RICH EXPERIENCE

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

Futures

This course offers a variety of elements:

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

Guest speakers

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

Sixth form games

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

Extracurricular activities

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



The Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)

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

Young Enterprise

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

The paired reading scheme

Year 12 students are invited to take part in the paired mentoring schemes run by the learning support and English and Maths 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, literacy and numeracy. There are similar opportunities to support Y7 and Year 8 pupils at The High School Leckhampton. Paired mentoring proves to be extremely rewarding for both the mentor and the mentee.

Extended Project Qualification

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



OUTSTANDING FACILITIES

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

Private study

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

sixth form. Most students will have about one hour a day private study time. There are three large study areas, with over 150 computer terminals and study carrels at which you can work. These are used for supervised private study in both Year 12 and Year 13. In addition to this, students are able to sign out of the main study facilities and conduct their private study in additional subject-specific venues such as 'The Hive' in Product Design.

Sixth form common room

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



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

UNIFORM

The idea

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

The design

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

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
- Belts should be black, grey or brown

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

Sixth form games kit

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



Buying uniform

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

ART

Syllabus title:

Art (Fine art)

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level art

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

Entry requirements

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

BIOLOGY

Syllabus title:

Biology

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level biology

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

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

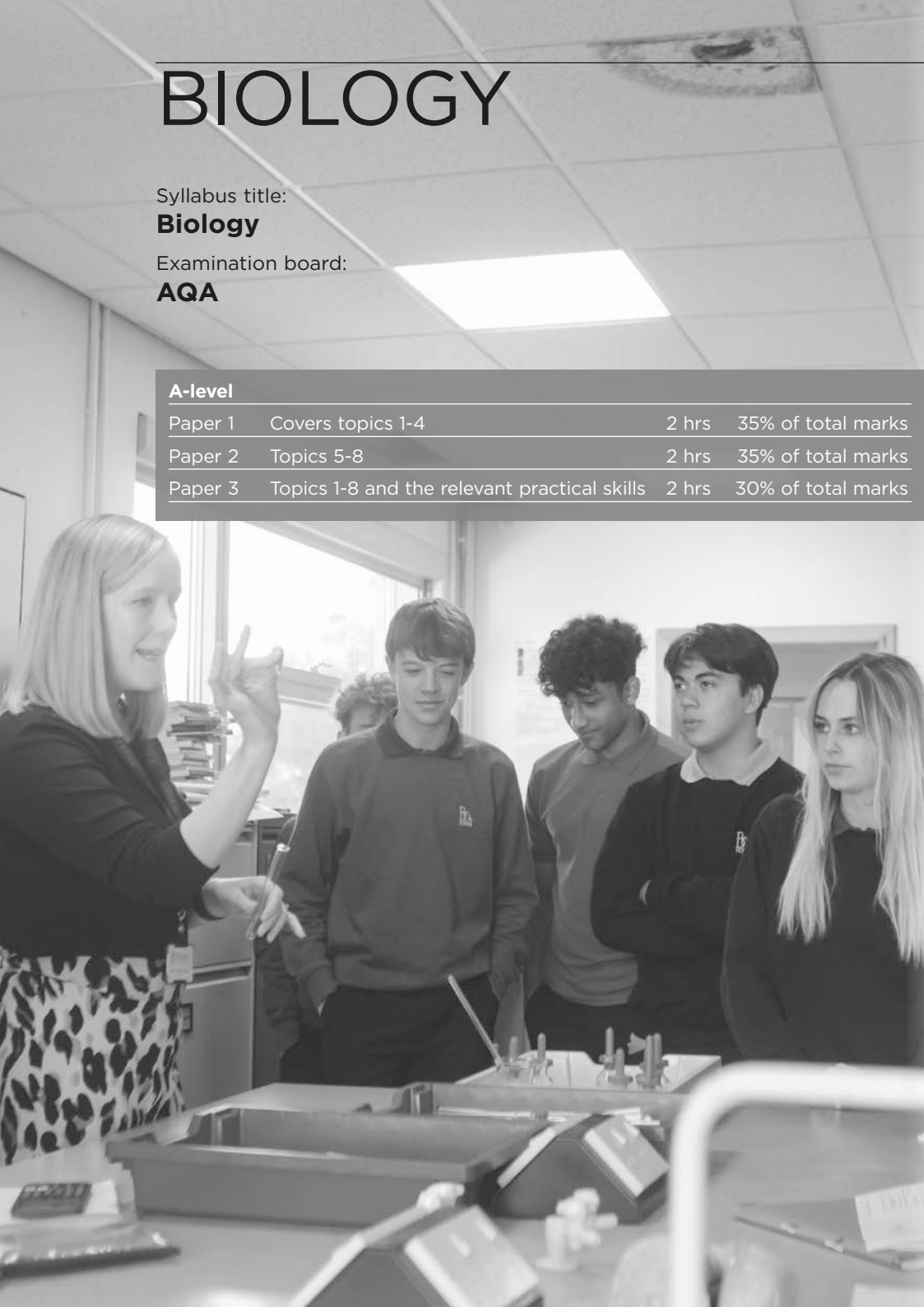
8 topics are covered at A-level:

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

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

Entry requirements

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



BUSINESS STUDIES

Syllabus title:

Business studies

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level business

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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



CHEMISTRY

Syllabus title:

Chemistry A

Examination board:

OCR



A-level

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

Studying A-level chemistry

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

The Year 12 course is divided into four teaching modules.

Module 1 - Development of practical skills in chemistry

Module 2 - Foundations in chemistry

Module 3 - Periodic table and energy

Module 4 - Core organic chemistry

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

Module 5 - Physical chemistry and transition elements

Module 6 - Organic chemistry and analysis

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

Entry requirements

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

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Syllabus title:

Computer Science

Examination board:

OCR

A-level

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

Studying A-level computer science

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

DRAMA & THEATRE

Syllabus title:

Drama & Theatre

Examination board:

Edexcel



A-level

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

Studying A-level drama and theatre

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

ECONOMICS

Syllabus title:

Economics

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level economics

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Syllabus title:

English Literature

Examination board:

Edexcel

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

Studying A-level English Literature

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Syllabus title:

A-level Environmental Science

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level environmental science

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

What will I study?

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

Learners will study all modules.

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

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

Career Opportunities:

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

Entry requirements

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

FOOD SCIENCE & NUTRITION

Syllabus title:

Food Science & Nutrition

Examination board:

WJEC

Year 12 Certificate in Food Science and Nutrition

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

Year 13 Diploma in Food Science and Nutrition

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

Studying food science and nutrition

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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



Amena Ireland (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: university to study design engineering

The reason I continued my education at Balcarras was due to the incredible art and maths department and facilities that it offers, as well as being close to home. Studying art was my main priority so I had to be sure that I would be given adequate guidance and support as I developed my own style and work. Initially, I studied chemistry and biology (as well as maths and art) at the start of Year 12 as I was interested in studying neuroscience. I realised, however, that my passion lay in art and design and the world of digital art and technology. With the support from my teachers and especially my tutor, I was able to swap these subjects and instead picked up product design. Whilst this is a heavily male-dominated subject, I felt confident and was inspired by my excellent female teacher. Thanks to all the support I received I was able to quickly pick up the subject with absolutely no problem.

My aim for further education is to enter the world of digital technology and use my art and designing skills to develop programmes and worlds in applications such as VR - which is very exciting! The knowledge and guidance from my art, design, and maths teachers, as well as the extensive help and facilities on offer have given me the confidence to continue in this field of work. If you are passionate in continuing study in subject such as art and design technology, then Balcarras is a very fitting choice.



Caleb Horne (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: gap year followed by university to study music

Having attended Balcarras since Year 7, I knew I wanted to continue into the Sixth Form. This was an easy decision for me to make due to the incredibly high standard of teaching, whilst all the teachers are supportive, encouraging, knowledgeable and helpful. Balcarras also offered subject choices covering a wide range of my interests. I am currently studying music, business studies and environmental science. I chose these subjects because they reflected my interests - at the time I was unsure of my post-18 destination. The whole sixth form team do everything they can to ensure you are confident and comfortable with the process of applying to universities, conservatoires and apprenticeships. This is extremely valuable during a process that can seem very daunting. Being a more creative student, I have always had to work that little bit harder than normal in order to excel in any examination. However, the support I have received has been consistent and constructive.

The extra-curricular opportunities at Balcarras are rich and diverse. Every year the school production is led and run as professionally as can be achieved inside a school setting; this makes those interested in the creative sector as aptly prepared as possible. Multiple choirs are run with multiple opportunities to perform at events throughout the year. The largest of these would be Midsummer Music. Midsummer Music is Balcarras's very own music festival where students throughout the school can perform as soloists, as a band with their peers or as part of any school choir or ensemble. It is these opportunities that enthused and encouraged me to pursue music further.

After sixth form I intend to take a gap year and defer a university place. This is to explore opportunities within the local music industry as well as giving me time to write more material and perform. I am excited to see what the future holds and I'm confident in saying that Balcarras has helped me find a pathway that is right for me.



Hannah Marsh (Year 11 Winchcombe)

Plans: university to study veterinary science

Balcarras Sixth Form not only develops high academically achieving pupils, but holds a sense of community and support within its students and sixth form team, making it an obvious first choice of for me. Joining from an external secondary school was a jump outside of my comfort zone but was much helped by the warm atmosphere I was greeted with from fellow peers and teachers. I am currently studying chemistry, maths and biology, which are demanding but are made more attainable by the staff who are approachable and dedicated, going to great lengths to help you achieve your goals - from exploring your subjects in depth to advise on writing personal statements. All lessons are engaging and challenge your understanding.

To further develop my knowledge and university application I joined Boost, a programme designed to help students applying for competitive post-18 courses. From the help of Boost and the sixth form team, I have not only been provided with the skills to progress into higher education, but it has developed me as a person, and I feel prepared for future opportunities which I will encounter after Balcarras.



Lucille Vaillant (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: university to study business management

Joining Balcarras in Year 8, I settled into the school rhythm very quickly and was made to feel very welcome by both teachers and students. The support provided by Balcarras during the lower years made me wish to remain at Balcarras for sixth form. During both lower school and sixth form, all teachers have been so supportive and have continuously provided us with mentoring and additional help whenever required. Something I really valued at Balcarras was the passion that every teacher has for their subject, which is evident to all students as they have this amazing approach and desire to share their passion with every student they teach. At Balcarras, teachers have high standards regarding our work as they really push us to achieve our full potential, which is something I have really valued as it kept me motivated to put in the work. By studying four A-levels during the first year, it allowed me to broaden my choices and gives me the chance to change my mind at the end of the year if required. The EPQ project also allows you to develop skills for university. Through having this option, I decided to continue studying all of my subjects and I have really enjoyed every one of them, studying business, psychology, art, PE and French throughout both Year 12 and 13. At first, I thought these were very different and hard to link together but I have found a lot of the content overlaps and they have been the perfect combination for me. I have since made the decision to study business management at university as I have really enjoyed studying leadership in business, with links from psychology with the way our brain works and links from PE as we have looked at coaching and leadership.



Amelie Powys (Year 11 Winchcombe)

Plans: to study speech and language therapy at university

Since transitioning to Balcarras Sixth Form I have been able to achieve beyond any of my previous expectations, thanks to the incredibly high standard of teaching and the warm, welcoming atmosphere that has put me at ease very quickly at this school. This enthusiastic and engaging teaching has really helped me to develop a strong passion for my subjects, particularly biology and chemistry due to the practical and proactive teaching.

In addition, this sixth form offers a myriad of different opportunities to students, such as the Young Enterprise scheme, bar mock trial, mentor buddy and STEM ambassador scheme. I have been both a STEM ambassador and mentor buddy here, which were both really rewarding experiences as I was able to make a difference in the school community.

In the future I hope to study speech and language therapy at university, something that I feel well equipped for due to the support from my teachers and the provision of futures lessons throughout my time here, which have been very informative. Even though I have only been at this school for just over a year I feel like part of the community and have an important voice in sixth form life, as do all of the other students in this sixth form. This school also provides many experiences such as sixth form dress up day, that are particularly enjoyable and take the pressure away from studying A-levels.

I do not regret choosing to study at Balcarras Sixth Form at all - it was absolutely the right choice.



Georgia Abiona (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: university to study geography and economics

I have been a student at Balcarras since Year 7 and I stayed on to join Balcarras Sixth Form due to the positive experiences that I had in the lower school. Many of my friends were staying at Balcarras but I have also made many new friends amongst those that joined from other schools.

At Balcarras, you study four A-level subjects in Year 12 and have the option to study three or four subjects in Year 13. This gave me both the confidence and the breadth of choice to select two brand new subjects together with two familiar subjects. I am currently studying geography, economics and psychology A-levels and studied biology in Year 12. The high standard of teaching and support from my teachers means I enjoy studying my chosen subjects.

Aside from academic studies, Balcarras encourages all students to get involved in wider school activities. There is a real sense of belonging at Balcarras and lots of opportunities to get involved in extra-curricular activities including sports. I am in the hockey and netball teams and regularly enjoy fixtures against other colleges and schools. An annual highlight for me is the school production, this is open to all the school years so creates a great sense of community throughout the school.

My next step will be to go to university to study geography and economics and I believe Balcarras has given me a sound academic background together with many other important life skills.



Joel Martin (Year 11 Pittville)

Plans: university to study philosophy and politics

After finishing Year 11 I did not feel very sure on what the next step of my life would be, however Balcarras Sixth Form made that choice much easier for me. What first intrigued me about Balcarras was how friendly the teachers were. I met a couple of teachers from Balcarras beforehand in an interview and it made me want to go more after talking to them. Now I am in Year 13 and I believe my decision to be the right one, this comes down to the incredible ethos Balcarras has which has boosted me to aim higher and learn to focus on myself academically, As well as this I have never had to worry about a lesson being "bad" because the atmosphere is incredibly supportive. I am studying drama, politics and philosophy and ethics, and I believe I can honestly say I am profoundly grateful for the teachers' attitude towards us whilst learning these subjects. It is dynamic, and they push us to see our goals and aim higher, whilst always having respect for us as sixth form students. Coming from an external school I latched onto a subject I liked (drama) and found that the facilities and the teaching were incredible, and it genuinely made me look forward to lessons. Doing A-level drama at Balcarras Sixth Form may be one of the things I will cherish most in life. However, the support provided by my other subjects enabled me to see past my younger ambitions and enjoy other passions in which I want to persevere. It was evident from the start that in philosophy and ethics the teachers were unique and very inclusive of the class, because you could tell they were genuinely interested in your opinions and wanted to hear them. And with politics my interest only grew as the course went on due to how engaging and encouraging the teachers were and this allowed me to push harder in my academic pursuits and standards.

Balcarras also granted the opportunity for me to enjoy extracurricular activities such as the school production and sporting fixtures. As a whole, Balcarras Sixth Form is a wonderful place to thrive in a productive and friendly environment.



Matthew Baxter (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: to study mathematics at Cambridge University

The amount of respect you have from your teachers when you move into Balcarras Sixth Form is immense, it completely alters the feeling of a school day from a non-stop, busy environment to something much more focused. It is fully acknowledged that when you reach Year 12, you're in that classroom because you chose to be, not because you have to be. As a result, I have been able to fully dedicate myself to the areas of academic life I really enjoy. My subject teachers have really helped rationalise the decisions I need to make for when I leave school. Whilst the pastoral support has been truly significant, it was the subject teachers who really knew my ability to perform and have since provided me with invaluable insights into the subjects I study and where they should lead me. I currently study maths, further maths and physics, although I took history up to October half term in Year 13.

The teaching standards are excellent, and the extra-curricular opportunities are just as great. When you enter sixth form, not only do you get to participate in events such as the school production and tischtennis club, as I did, but you can start your own groups for areas you are really passionate about (assuming that you okayed it with staff beforehand). My friends and I have played spike ball at lunchtime, table tennis in the gym and met to discuss developed ideas in our subjects - all on our own accord.

Balcarras is responsible for getting me to where I am, applying to Cambridge with high grades and a great mindset.

FRENCH

Syllabus title:

French A Level

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level French

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

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

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as the Internet, magazines, 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. 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. French as a foreign language is the second most frequently taught language in the world after English. The International Organization of Francophone has 56 member states and governments. Of these, 28 countries have French as an official language. French is the only language other than English spoken on five continents, making it a truly global language.

French would open up the global market as it is the official language of a number of international organisations, such as the United Nations, UNESCO, NATO, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Olympic Committee, the European Union and the International Red Cross.

Entry requirements

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

FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Syllabus title:

Further mathematics

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

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

Studying A-level further mathematics

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

Entry requirements

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

GEOGRAPHY

Syllabus title:
Geography

Examination board:
AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level geography

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Syllabus title:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

HISTORY

Syllabus title:

History

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level history

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

MATHEMATICS

Syllabus title:

Mathematics

Examination board:

Edexcel



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

Studying A-level mathematics

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

Entry requirements

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

MUSIC

Syllabus title:

Music

Examination board:

WJEC Eduqas

A-level

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

Studying A-level music

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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



PHOTOGRAPHY

Syllabus title:

Photography

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level photography

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

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

Entry requirements

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

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Syllabus title:

Physical education

Examination board:

OCR

A-level

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

Studying A-level physical education

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

Entry requirements

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

PHYSICS

Syllabus title:

Physics

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

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

Studying A-level physics

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

Entry requirements

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

POLITICS

Syllabus title:

Government and politics

Examination board:

Edexcel

A-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

Component 3: Comparative Politics

Studying A-level government and politics

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

PRODUCT DESIGN

Syllabus title:

Design and Technology: Product Design

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level product design

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

PSYCHOLOGY

Syllabus title:
Psychology

Examination board:
AQA

Studying A-level psychology

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

A-level

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



RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Syllabus title:

Religious Studies

Examination board:

OCR 100% Essay exam

A-level

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

Studying A-level religion, philosophy and ethics

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

RUSSIAN

Syllabus title:
Russian

Examination board:
Edexcel

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

Studying A-level Russian

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

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as on-line articles, newspapers and video clips, to understand the current situation in the Russian-speaking world. You will be encouraged to make use of such resources independently to develop your comprehension skills and vocabulary. You will also have the opportunity to participate in theatre visits and other cultural activities relating to the course.

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

SPANISH

Syllabus title:

Spanish

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level Spanish

A-level Spanish builds upon the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking that you 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 around 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, television and magazines, as well as conventional textbooks. Students will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently. You will learn how to use Spanish in everyday conversation as well as in formal discussion and debate. A Spanish Assistant is employed so that students can have one-to-one speaking sessions for half an hour per week. These sessions are obligatory and form an important part of the course.

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

Entry requirements

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



TEXTILES

Syllabus title:

Art and Design (Textile design)

Examination board:

AQA

A-level

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

Studying A-level textiles

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

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

Year 12

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

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

Year 13

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

Entry requirements

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

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

Syllabus title:

Extended Project

Examination board:

AQA



Completing the extended project qualification

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

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

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

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

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

Students are required, with appropriate supervision, to:

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

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

Entry requirements

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

HOW TO APPLY

Making your choices

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

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

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

Application form

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

You will receive an acknowledgement by return.

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

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

Deadline

Applications should be submitted by 5th February 2023. You may submit your application as soon as you wish.

Course consultation meeting

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

Offers of places

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

Late applicants

Late applications may be considered. Please do contact us. However, there are likely to be only a limited number of places, so please be aware that late applicants cannot be guaranteed a place.





Charlie Jones (Year 11 Cirencester Kingshill)

Plans: to study physics at Oxford University

When I was deciding where to go for sixth form, I knew that I wanted to go somewhere I could study four subjects in a supervised and supportive environment. Balcarras was therefore the obvious choice for me.

I have really enjoyed the opportunity provided by the supervised study periods that mean I can do homework and revision during the school day and the extra lesson specifically for help with university and post-18 options.

I have applied for a physics degree at university and throughout the application process all the staff have been so helpful; I have lost count of the amount of people who have given me advice on my personal statement, from Mr Niblett, my tutor and the leader of the school's Boost programme, to teaching staff, and my Head of Year and Head of Sixth Form. All of my teachers have been excellent and are always available to give help and explain any topics I do not fully understand.

So, in summary I came to Balcarras daunted at the prospect of the change of scenery, but I have really enjoyed the feeling of community and togetherness that it bathes in, and that you aren't alone in anything.



Edie Guest (Year 11 Wycliffe College)

Plans: university to study geography

I was drawn to Balcarras because of its supportive environment and academic reputation. Moving schools at sixth form was something I was nervous about, but I felt confident that Balcarras would be the right choice for me. Academically I was excited about taking four subjects in Year 12 and it gave me a chance to explore areas I was passionate about, in greater depth. I also got the opportunity to take psychology which I had not taken at GCSE. I have valued the EPQ programme. It was a great tool to learn techniques such as referencing and being independent about my study, which is important for university. Balcarras strive for academic brilliance and are dedicated to supporting you individually to reach your potential.

I have found over my time at Balcarras that the teachers and sixth form team are exceptionally friendly and make the effort to create a caring and welcoming community. I have loved being part of the hockey team – it was an important escape for me from work, also giving me a chance to get to know more people from outside my lessons and working together as part of a team is enriching.

Balcarras has supported me with the next step which I have found tricky. The Careers department and the Futures programme have been really helpful and has given me the support and confidence to pursue geography at university.

I can honestly say I will look back on these two years as the most challenging but happiest times of my educational journey so far and I have made friends for life.



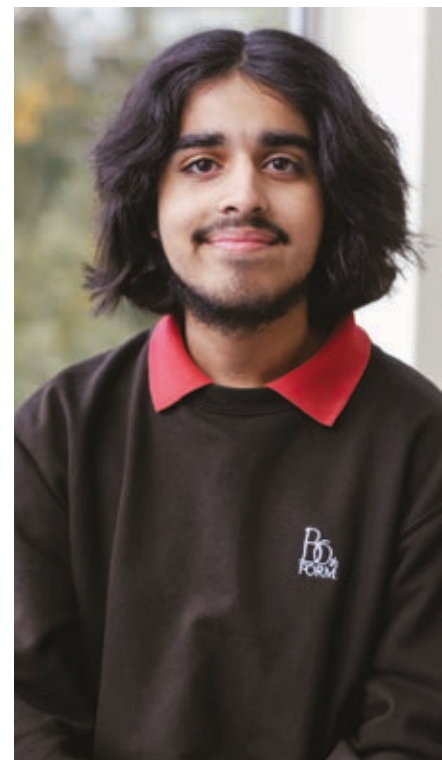
Gemma Newman (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: business apprenticeship

Completing my GCSEs at Balcarras was the main reason I chose Balcarras Sixth Form. During my lower school experience here, I was given many opportunities to develop my learning by using the facilities and was fortunate in receiving exceptional teaching and support to guide me through secondary school. Currently, I am studying business, economics and psychology, where the high standard of teaching continues. The newfound independence of sixth form has helped me to study and work to the best of my ability. Having access to regular study sessions in my timetable has made me far more productive and motivated to understand my subjects and complete my work. The staff allow you to think for yourself and create your own work style but are always willing to support you as an individual.

Outside of my studies, Balcarras provides many extra-curricular opportunities and I have participated in netball tournaments and the school production. I was also lucky enough to be selected for Young Enterprise and represent Balcarras Sixth Form at county level. As a business, we worked as a team to create a product and eventually sold our product. This was an amazing opportunity as it furthered my interests in my post-18 plans.

Going forward, I plan to do a Business Apprenticeship to develop my working skills while learning. Balcarras have been extremely supportive of me choosing this route rather than going to university. They have allowed me to do work experience with companies that have interested me and supported me through making decisions that best suit my interests.



Husaam Rashid (Year 11 Balcarras)

Plans: university to study computer science

When considering what sixth form to attend it was obvious to pick Balcarras and I did not even consider anywhere else. All subjects are treated equally at Balcarras, and every subject has exceptional facilities. The teachers are all supportive and create a friendly environment in every lesson. Every teacher is passionate and an expert in their subjects making lessons engaging and interesting. The school supports people of all academic abilities to help them achieve highly, I especially appreciate every teacher's encouragement and belief in your academic ability. There is always a large amount of support from the school with teachers always being available for both academic and pastoral help. It is amazing to always have support available at any time even when you're not in school.

The school also offers lots of extracurricular activities and opportunities, some that I've participated in have been the archery club and table tennis. The school also offers a large range of opportunities in the arts even if you don't study them such as the annual school production and music groups like the choir.

My post-18 plans include to study computer science at university. With my application to Cambridge the school have offered an immense amount of support, with several teachers giving me advice on my personal statement and helping prepare for interviews. Overall, the school has fully supported me to make a strong application for my future studies and aid me in reaching my full potential as a student.

Balcarras Sixth Form

2023



For more information contact:

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