

Balcarras School Curriculum Content – Year 8

2026-2027

Dear Parents

This letter has been written as a guide to the courses your child will follow through Year 8. All curriculum content is linked to the Curriculum Maps on the school website. For further detail on the curriculum please contact the head of department for that curriculum area and take a look on the school website:

www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk > Learning at Balcarras > Subject Areas.

In Year 8 some teaching groups are sorted by prior attainment, others are not. Any setting took place before the summer break. It will be reviewed throughout the year, once assessments have taken place.

This is another vital year in your child's education; I hope that we will continue to work closely together to ensure that they are as successful as possible.

Yours sincerely

Harriet Ebanja

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'hebanja'.

Associate Assistant Headteacher

September 2026

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Subject	Curriculum content	Graded Assessment
Art	- Baseline: Natural forms - Vessels and containers - Pattern and print - Adornment	Pupils are assessed during and at the conclusion of each topic. A marksheet for each can be viewed in their sketchbook and clearly outlines the knowledge and skills that are being developed and assessed and how your child is progressing in line with their target.
Computing	DataFace – creative data science Dream Team – kit design project Bebras Challenge Introducing programming in Python	Pupils will receive a grade for each unit they complete, along with comments on how they can improve where appropriate. Grades will use a 9–1 scale, except for the Bebras Challenge, which uses its own external grading system.
Design and Technology	- Pinball project - Chocolate project - Eating for health - Food analysis – understanding nutrition - Felt shop project	Pupils are assessed at the end of each rotation, with feedback recorded in their D&T passport. Your child will receive an effort grade, progress information (for example, working towards target, meeting target, or above target), and written feedback explaining how they can improve.
Drama	- Improvisation - Musical theatre - Melodrama	Pupils will be assessed twice in Year 8. The first assessment is after the 'Improvisation' unit of work. Pupils will be assessed on their ability to 'respond'. This assessment includes a class discussion and a written response. The second assessment is after the 'Melodrama' unit of work. Students will create their own mini melodrama and perform in front of the class. They will be assessed in two areas 'creating' and 'performing'.

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English	- Fairytales and horror - Greek mythology - Animal farm - War poetry - Criminal minds	Pupils will complete 3 graded assessments (Writing, Reading and Speaking & Listening). In year 8 the assessments are writing a short horror story, an analytical essay on 'Animal Farm' and a persuasive speech. Students will also complete knowledge tests within the year.
Geography	- What is the future of Antarctica? - Why is the weather so changeable? - To what extent are regions of Africa and Asia similar or different? - Do the benefits of living near tectonic hazards outweigh the risks? - Will the planet continue to get hotter and hotter? - How are populations and levels of development changing?	Pupils will sit 3 graded assessments which assess geographical knowledge, skills and application. In Year 8, the assessments are in the population & development, tectonic hazards and weather topics.
History	- The Making of the UK - Industrial Britain and the 19th Century - The Qing Dynasty	Students will have 3 skill based assessments. 3 frequent, formative low stakes knowledge tests. 1 of which will be written test 1 Evaluative essay on the Tudors, 1 source analysis and 1 historian analysis throughout the year.
Mathematics	- Product of Primes and standard form - Calculating with negatives - Index laws, factorising and changing the subject - Enlargement and bearings - Probability language and notation - Converting FDP - Ratios and proportion - Linear sequences - Parallel lines and polygons - Multiplier method - Solving equations - Circles - Straight line graphs - Probability diagrams and trees - Statistics	In maths students will sit 3 graded assessments in November, March and June. Students will receive a progress grade for each together with areas to work on to improve.

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Modern Foreign Languages - French	- Free time - Home and town - Holidays	In French, pupils are assessed at the end of each topic to measure their progress. Throughout the year, they are assessed across all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and their assessment grades are recorded in their Learning Journey at the front of their exercise book.
Modern Foreign Languages - Spanish	- Greetings and introductions - Festivals - Family and pets - Where I live - Free time	In Spanish, pupils are assessed at the end of each topic to measure their progress. Throughout the year, they are assessed across all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and their assessment grades are recorded in their Learning Journey at the front of their exercise book.
Modern Foreign Languages - Russian	- Cyrillic alphabet 1 - Cyrillic alphabet 2 - Basic greetings - Numbers and ages - Family and pets - Where I live - Places in town - Weather	In Russian, pupils are assessed at the end of each topic to measure their progress. Throughout the year, they are assessed across all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and their assessment grades are recorded in their Learning Journey at the front of their exercise book.
Music	- Composition Skills Vol. 2 - Rhythmic Notation - Vocalise - Baroque music - World music - Keyboard skills Vol. 2	
Personal, Social, Health, Economic education	- Relationships Education - Health Education - Living in the Wider World	

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Physical Education	- Develop and embed core skills through invasion games and gymnastics - Develop and understanding of 'Fitness for life' through HRF - Embed consistence of core skills and develop game understanding through invasion games and net games - Develop and embed consistence of core skills and understanding of striking/fielding games, net game and athletics	
Religious Education	- Hinduism - Buddhism - Sikhi	In RE we assess pupils on five key skills, in year 8 this will be done through a speech 'God is hard to understand', an exam paper on Buddhism and a key term test at the end of the year.
Science	- The body - DNA and inheritance - Properties of elements - Chemical reactions and the Earth - Electricity and magnetism - Energy	Pupils have two standard homework's for each topic which are marked and give improvement tasks. At the end of each topic there is a graded test for which verbal feedback will be provided. Finally, there is a terminal exam testing on content learnt throughout the Year.