





Daniel Tierney

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: BBCD

Plans: to be a Pilot in the Royal Navy

I joined Balcarras in Year 8 after living overseas. Balcarras was a big change for me from my old international school, however, the staff were accommodating and understanding. My new school life was a great challenge and was an easy decision to stay at Balcarras and study my chosen A-levels of maths, physics, business and Russian.

6th form was very intense but also offered more independence where I was able to take control of my own studies. The freedom that 6th form at Balcarras offers has allowed me to become more involved in the steep learning process of my A-levels where I am able to speak to teachers outside of lesson time in order to go over material and ask any questions I may have. This I take great advantage of and ensures I can keep up to speed with my work.

Balcarras has given me a big advantage in not only my education but outside of 6th form too. By giving me transferable skills such as good communication and organisation that I am able to apply to other aspects of my life. Outside of 6th Form I enjoy playing rugby and flying at my club (BGGC) while also being a member of the Royal Naval Reserves, which have all enabled me to continue step by step in the application process to be a pilot in the Royal Navy that I have now reached the final stage.



Lydia Shute

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AABC

Plans: to study Fashion Promotion and Imaging at the University for the Creative Arts in London

When the end of Year 11 came I did not consider any other sixth form except for Balcarras. I was not completely sure what I wanted to do at that stage so chose the subjects I most enjoyed and fully trusted that the school and hardworking staff, who had already got me a great set of GCSE's, will support me in achieving great A-level results. In addition to the A-levels, I have been able to do the EPQ which has been an incredible tool in developing skills which will be vital for university. The excellent support system and facilities have allowed me to focus well throughout my time here and achieve highly, but also feel comfortable and calm. Furthermore, there has been lots of extras such as talks from universities and careers week as well as getting involved in things such as the prom committee which has been really fun. The conscientious and friendly people create a wonderful atmosphere which feels like a community and is a perfect transition from lower school.

Nathan Sexton

(Year 11 Cleeve School)

AS: AABB

Plans: a Degree Apprenticeship in Cyber Security or Computer Networks

Joining Balcarras was, while at first a daunting prospect, the best decision I could have made for education beyond GCSEs. While I had not decided on a future career path, visiting Balcarras Open Evening displayed to me that the excellent staff and facilities would ensure the best possible grades in whatever I wanted to do. The atmosphere throughout the school was welcoming, supportive and uplifting. I became part of Sixth Form very quickly despite knowing very few people, and the support from the Sixth Form leadership and tutor teams ensured that the concerns I had were immediately addressed.

I was never clear on which path I wanted to take. The careers team and advice I have received from the staff have allowed me to identify the future destinations and careers that were possible and how to get to them. Studying 4 subjects at AS-level allowed me to be certain in the courses I wanted to be specialising in at A-level, and permitted me to study one of my personal interests: politics, a course not offered by my previous school. Balcarras has allowed me to develop my personal attributes, such as my communication through the paired maths scheme, as well as my sporting abilities and leadership in the school's badminton club, developing both as a player and a coach with some of the younger pupils. The encouragement to engage in other extracurricular activities have strengthened some of my weakest skills as a person, while my weakest skills academically are dealt with by the excellent teaching staff.

Many of my strengths, knowledge and abilities I have gained because of my decision to join Balcarras. I would thoroughly encourage any student to join post GCSEs for any subject or future plans; Balcarras Sixth Form will help you get to where you want to be.



Aaron White

(Year 11 Cirencester Kinghill School)

AS: BBBB

Plans: to study medicine at the university of Birmingham and to go on to become a psychiatrist

I chose to study at Balcarras for my A-levels after having visited the school at an opening evening and being impressed by the facilities and the enthusiasm of the teachers. Initially when coming to the sixth form I was nervous however the transition was smooth and soon enough I had settled into the sixth form. Being able to study 4 subjects at AS-level was helpful as I was previously undecided about which 3 subjects I wanted to take but having the opportunity to study them all for a year and then making the decision was beneficial. During my time at Balcarras I took part in Gold DofE which helped me meet many new people and was a great experience. I was also part of the BOOST programme which took me on several visits to different universities which has helped me make more informed choices on what I would like to do after Balcarras.

I chose Balcarras as I felt the structure of the school environment was what I needed to succeed with my A-levels as the study periods allow me to get a lot of work done at school and I knew if I went to a college without study I would probably not have the motivation to complete my work with plenty of time for extra revision. Having studied at Balcarras I feel prepared to head off to university with the school having equipped me with the information necessary to make an informed choice about my future.





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

welcome to Balcarras Sixth Form

A warm welcome to this guide about the courses available in the sixth form from September 2020.

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

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

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

Dominic Burke Headteacher

welcome



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

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

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

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Leatherbarrow'.

Darren Leatherbarrow Head of Sixth Form

Teachers are
experts in their
subjects. OFSTED

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a supportive environment

Sixth form team

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

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



Mrs Derrick



Mr Constance

Tutors

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

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



Administrative support

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



Mrs Shute

Lead Study Supervisor and Mentor

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



Mrs Dean

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.

a supportive environment

Careers and university advice

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

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

Reports and parents' evenings

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

The sixth form committee

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

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



A-levels offered at Balcarras

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Art | Mathematics |
| Biology | Music |
| Business studies | Photography |
| Chemistry | Physical education |
| Computer science | Physics |
| Drama and theatre | Politics |
| Economics | Product design |
| English literature | Psychology |
| Environmental science | Religion, philosophy and ethics |
| French | Russian |
| Further mathematics | Spanish |
| Geography | Textiles |
| History | |

We also provide vocational qualifications:

- Applied science
- Food science & nutrition
- Health and social care

the courses on offer

What is an A-level?

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

In Year 13 students will normally progress to A-level courses in three of their Year 12 subjects. In many cases, students may complete four A-level course.

Assessment

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

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

Choosing your courses

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

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

Progression to A-level

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

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

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



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

a rich experience

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

Futures

This course offers a number of elements:

- Preparation for higher education: choosing the right course, UCAS applications, money management, getting accommodation

- Alternatives to higher education
- Starting a career, taking a gap year
- Study skills and tips for achieving success at A-level, including note taking, essay writing and time management

Guest speakers

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



Students' confidence in knowing exactly where they are in their learning encourages students to ask questions of teachers rather than wait until questioned.

OFSTED

Sixth form games

Every Wednesday afternoon all Year 12 students take part in a sporting activity. This is a compulsory part of the curriculum and the aim is for every student to do some form of physical exercise which they enjoy. Each student selects from a wide range of activities, which varies from term to term. A number of competitive options are available including netball, hockey, football and rugby. Fitness training or inter-school fixtures also take place during this time. More recreational options (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, Bar Mock Trial, World Challenge, Model United Nations General Assembly, debating, school music competitions, drama productions, inter-school sports matches and regular intra-tutor competitions.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)

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

Young Enterprise

The success of the Young Enterprise scheme at Balcarras has been exceptional. Students have formed their own companies, producing and selling a range of goods and services in recent years. Each business is judged on its trading activities, the quality of production and a financial report at the end of the year. As a team we have finished in the top three within Gloucestershire for the past eight years and we have represented the county at the South West finals on no less than three occasions. There are over 2,000 schools that participate in the UK each year and our greatest successes include Balcarras winning the national award for producing a range of tea products, and more recently reaching the national final with an environmentally-themed children's book and accompanying resources. The Business department works hard and liaises with local businesses to ensure that students are motivated and supported in every aspect of running their businesses.

The paired reading scheme

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

Private study

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



outstanding facilities

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

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

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

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

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

uniform

The idea

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

The design

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

The uniform

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

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

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

Buying uniform

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



applied science

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

Examination board: **AQA**

Certificate units in Year 12

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

Extended Certificate units in Year 13

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

Studying level 3 Certificate/Extended Certificate in applied science

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

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Art (Fine art)

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level art

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

Entry requirements

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

biology

Syllabus title: Biology

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level biology

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

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

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

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

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

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

A field 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 two grade 6's in GCSE combined science and grade 6 or above in maths.

business studies

Syllabus title: Business studies

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level business

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

chemistry

Syllabus title: Chemistry A

Examination board: OCR

Studying A-level chemistry

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

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

Module 1 – Development of practical skills in chemistry

Module 2 – Foundations in chemistry

Module 3 – Periodic table and energy

Module 4 – Core organic chemistry

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

Module 5 – Physical chemistry and transition elements

Module 6 - Organic chemistry and analysis

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

Entry requirements

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

AS-level

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

A-level

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

computer science

Syllabus title: Computer Science

Examination board: OCR

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level computer science

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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



drama & theatre



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 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.

Please note that AS-level Drama is not offered as a separate qualification. Should you decide to discontinue Drama at the end of Year 12 to pursue your other three option choices, you will not be eligible for any official accreditation. However, Balcarras will recognise the knowledge and transferable skills developed in support of post-18 references to UCAS or other post-18 applications.

Syllabus title: Drama and 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.

Syllabus title: Economics

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level economics

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

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

english literature

Syllabus title: English Literature

Examination board: WJEC

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level English Literature

AS English Literature involves the study of the following texts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

environmental science

Syllabus title: A-level Environmental Science

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Paper 1	3hrs written paper	100%
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A-level

Paper 1	3 hrs written paper	50%
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Paper 2	3 hrs written paper	50%
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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 | 5. Biological resources |
| 2. Energy resources | 6. Sustainability |
| 3. Pollution | 7. Research methods |
| 4. The Living environment | |

Learners studying the A/S level will study modules **1, 4 and 7 only**. Learners studying the A-level 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 | • Environmental Manager |
| • Marine Biologist | • Recycling Officer |
| • Sustainability Consultant | • 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.



Issy Kilbride

(Year 11- Denmark Road High School)

AS: AAAB

Plans - to study Textile Design at University after a one year art foundation course

Joining Balcarras in Year 12 was a brilliant decision and the transition into a new school was made easy by the welcoming nature of the school. Everyone at Balcarras is friendly and approachable and every effort was made to make me and other external students feel comfortable and welcome- now I think even some teachers struggle to distinguish between externals and internals! There is a strong work ethic, facilitated by the study rooms and teachers go above and beyond to help and support students. I am currently studying textiles, English Literature and history and my plans of gaining a degree in Textile Design have been nurtured and supported throughout my time in the sixth form. A particular highlight was a trip to Graduate Fashion Week which showcased exemplar graduate work and introduced many university and employee opportunities if I choose to work in this field. I love how the school is always trying to further the learning of students through getting involved in and providing as many opportunities as possible and I thoroughly enjoyed an independent trip to Auschwitz- Birkenhau with the Holocaust Educational Trust.



Matilda Fryer-Hornsby

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: ABBB

Plans: to study dance at a conservatoire or study English literature at university

Continuing my studies at Balcarras was the only option for me, as I had attended many schools before joining Balcarras in Year 7, and I can honestly say Balcarras has been by far my favourite learning environment. The teachers are so supportive and are willing to advise with any difficulties with the syllabus, exams or homework. The school offers equal opportunity for everyone, allowing students to reach their full potential, no matter what their initial circumstances.

There is an expansive variety of extracurricular clubs and events for all students including sixth formers; a highlight for me was being a part of school productions. I love the strong sense of community within the drama students and teachers, I was encouraged to expand my passion for dance, singing and acting as there are plenty of opportunities to participate in performances, from the Christmas variety show, school plays, house music, house dance and midsummer music. The A-levels I am studying are art, English literature and drama, I am a very creative person and Balcarras has allowed me the freedom to explore subjects that are so often ignored by other schools. The drama and art studio facilities are extensive and art students have the chance to work with a range of mixed media.

My favourite subject is English literature, I love analysing texts, and the inspiring teaching staff have really influenced me in delving into analysing texts, forming my own opinion of the meaning of different literary texts. The school has encouraged me to explore several career pathways, which has given me wider opportunity for my post A-level options and helped me put my best foot forward into furthering my future career.

Amy Lancaster

(Year 11 Stroud High School)

AS: AAAA

Plans – to study Economics at the University of Leeds and hopes to work for the Bank of Spain

I made the decision to join Balcarras in Year 12, and have been really glad of my decision ever since. The school's ability to combine a hardworking ethic along with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere is what really drew me in. Since the first few weeks the staff have been nothing but supportive, both academically, and with any other worries that we may have, such as settling in, which turned out to be much easier than expected. In the short space of just over a year, I've been provided with so many opportunities here at Balcarras, such as taking place in the Bar Mock Trial competition, my Gold D of E award, a trip to New York, and representing my tutor on the student council, to name a few. The teaching of my A-level subjects; Spanish, economics and history, has filled me with enthusiasm for the subjects and made me really excited to continue studying them into higher education at university. Balcarras has been a supportive and encouraging environment to be a student in over these two years, and has made me feel much more prepared for what the future holds.



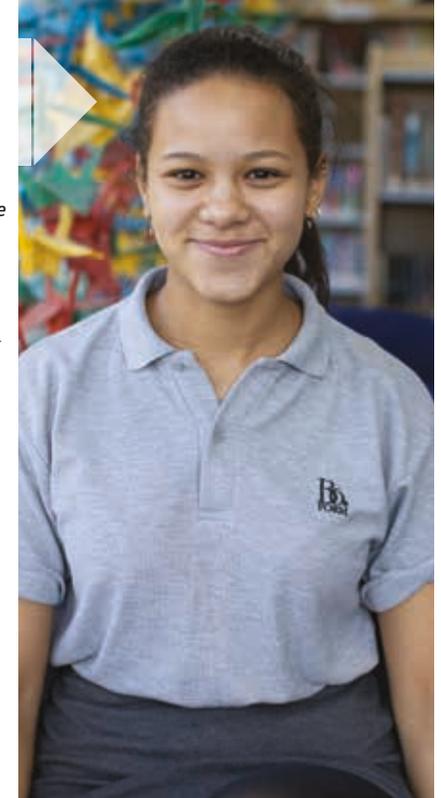
Jodi Anyster

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study veterinary medicine at university

Continuing on from Year 11 at Balcarras to the Sixth Form had always been definite for me. The positive experience I had at lower school made it an easy choice, and as a result I did not look at any other schools to go to for sixth form. The facilities at Balcarras are always high quality, and I knew that this was only going to improve going into the Sixth Form, for example with the independent study rooms. However, in my opinion what makes the school exceptional is the people. Every student here is motivated to achieve their full potential which gives the school a real sense of community. In addition, the teachers are always more than happy to help and are able to make lessons engaging because of their passion for their own subject. Every teacher knows each student's individual needs and in the sixth form, they are able to help you get to whatever your requirements are for your plans after school. For me, the school were very helpful in arranging a mock interview for me with a vet in preparation for my university interviews. This will ensure that I have the highest probability of success in my interviews, and aid me in achieving my goal of studying veterinary medicine. I am truly looking forward to the rest of my time at Balcarras.





Andrea Moses

(Year 11 Cleeve School)

AS: ABBC

Plans: Degree apprenticeship in Marketing and Management

Deciding to move schools for sixth form was not my initial decision for my post 16 destination but I have no regrets about moving to Balcarras.

The transition was so smooth and the school environment was uplifting and supportive allowing me to achieve the grades I desired as quickly as possible. Being able to study four AS-levels allowed me to experience a variety of subjects that would give me a chance to learn more transferrable skills between subjects. Studying philosophy and ethics for a year enhanced my English skills and critical evaluative thinking which came to benefit my other subjects. The teachers are passionate about their subjects which in turn increased the student motivation, leading me to reach my full academic potential.

The work ethic is strong and the opportunity for independent study is vast, encouraging independence and responsibility which is an invaluable skill for higher education. Despite this there is still a good network of support should we need it.



Oswald Dallimore

(Year 11 Pittville)

AS: AAAA

Plans: to study maths at Oxford or Cardiff University

Balcarras open evening was the first one I attended and, after it, I was biased against all other sixth forms. While my mum was swayed by the free refreshments, the factor that persuaded me was no other teachers had quite as much passion for their subject as the ones at Balcarras.

I started Year 12 with 5 A-levels, and despite the norm being 4 A-levels, I found Balcarras very supportive in terms of giving me all the help I needed. This meant I was able to trial a variety of A-levels before dropping down to 4 after a few weeks - still a broader range than what some sixth forms offered. Despite 3 of my 4 subjects being very popular in the sixth form, my biggest class still only had around 14 students. This meant that the teachers could personalise the lessons more and better judge where we were at, giving us more time at the end of the year to revise topics we struggled with. There are many things in place to help enhance our university application. For example, BOOST focuses on character building and encourages us to be proud of our passions.

Balcarras has many opportunities outside of A-levels too. Last year, I was took part in the annual debate competition. My tutor's motion was "In sport, winning is everything" and we were first... to lose. I also signed up to do Gold DoFE, though I sprained my ankle 2 days before our expedition. While I haven't had much luck with the extra-curricular activities, other people certainly have. I have still had an amazing time and I've never once regretted my decision to go to Balcarras.

Felix McCartney

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AAAC

Plans: to study engineering at Oxford University

Having enjoyed lower school at Balcarras so much, I always knew that I wanted to attend Balcarras 6th form too. The teachers are very supportive and there is a great social atmosphere in the 6th form community. I know that external students are warmly welcomed by the existing students and find it very easy to settle in. There are fantastic facilities on hand and many extracurricular activities such as the BOOST programme to help the students to explore their subject areas and plan for the future.

Thanks to the teachers' enthusiasm in maths and physics, I have decided to study engineering at university. Although engineering isn't a school subject, the teachers are very helpful in finding ways that the content applies to engineering, and are happy to go through extra content. I also study Russian language, which is a great way to broaden my range of skills. The department is very friendly and I find learning about the diverse culture of Russia as well as the language very interesting. I look forward to enjoying the rest of my time here.



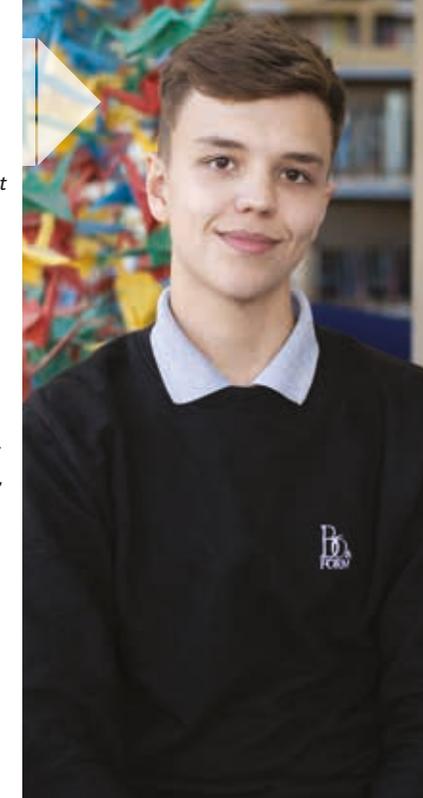
Daniel Kalms

(Year 11 Balcarras)

AS: AABB

Plans: to study Engineering at university

I thoroughly enjoyed my time during Years 7-11 in Balcarras, I knew that the Balcarras Sixth Form was the destination for me. The exceptional facilities available, such as the large independent study rooms and the 6th form common area, coupled with the outstanding teachers made it a no-brainer to continue my post-16 education here. The teachers at Balcarras are extremely passionate for their subject and are always happy to help with extra reading in preparation to university, as well as helping students who may not quite understand a topic they are covering. Not only are there great facilities and teachers, but the extremely friendly atmosphere makes it very welcoming for external students, as well as creating a great community, united to achieve their very best. Since I decided to study a non-curricular subject post-school, engineering, the teachers were extremely supportive in helping me prepare for entrance tests for universities, as well as organising mock interviews, which will certainly increase the chance of me going to my dream university. I am looking forward to the support my teachers will provide in order to achieve my very best at A-Level.



food science & nutrition

Syllabus title: Food Science and Nutrition
Examination board: WJEC

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.

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

Syllabus title: French AS/A Level

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading & Writing	45% of AS
Paper 2	Writing	25% of AS
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of AS

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

Cultural development is exceptionally good. OFSTED

Studying A-level French

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

further mathematics

Syllabus title: Further mathematics

Examination board: Edexcel

A-level

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

Studying A-level further mathematics

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: **Geography**

Examination board: **AQA**

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level geography

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

health & social care

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

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

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

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

AS-level

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

Studying A-level history

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

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

Finally unit 3 involves an independent investigation that consists of a 3,500-4,500 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 in English.

mathematics

Syllabus title: Mathematics

Examination board: Edexcel

$$x^2 + 12x = -4$$
$$x^2 + 12x + 4 = 0$$

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.

Syllabus title: Music
Examination board: WJEC Eduqas

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level music

The music AS/A-level course is an exciting and challenging balance of theory and practice, allowing individual students to develop all aspects of musicianship through appraising, performing and composing. The appraising is taught through three areas of study. The first area of study is The Western Classical Tradition and includes one set work (Symphony No.104 in D major, 'London' by Haydn).The second area of study will be decided by staff at the beginning of the course and will be from a rock and pop, musical theatre or jazz genre. The third area of study, at A-level only, will be based on twentieth century music and will include two set works. Appraising is assessed 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. AS/A-level students are expected to participate fully in the extracurricular programme offered by the music department.

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

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

Entry requirements

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

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

photography

Syllabus title: Photography

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level photography

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Physical education

Examination board: OCR

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level physical education

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

Entry requirements

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



physics

Syllabus title: Physics
Examination board: Edexcel

AS-level

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

Syllabus title: Government and politics
Examination board: Edexcel

Studying A-level government and politics

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

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

AS-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

A-level

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

Component 2: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas

Component 3: Comparative Politics

Entry requirements

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

Studying A-level product design

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

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

AS-level

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

A-level

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

psychology

Syllabus title: Psychology

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

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

A-level

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

Studying A-level psychology

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

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

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

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

Entry requirements

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

religion, philosophy and ethics

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

Studying A-Level religion, philosophy and ethics

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

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

board a wide range of ideas and opinions.

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

Entry requirements

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



Syllabus title: Russian

Examination board: Edexcel

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, as well as conventional text books. 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 a visit to Russia and take part 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.

Please note that AS-level Russian is not offered as a separate qualification. Should you decide to discontinue Russian at the end of Year 12 to pursue your other three option choices, you will not be eligible for any official accreditation. However, Balcarras will recognise the knowledge and transferable skills developed in support of post-18 references to UCAS or other post-18 applications.

Entry requirements

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



spanish

Syllabus title: Spanish

Examination board: AQA

AS-level

Paper 1	Listening, Reading & Writing	45% of AS
Paper 2	Writing	25% of AS
Paper 3	Speaking	30% of AS

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

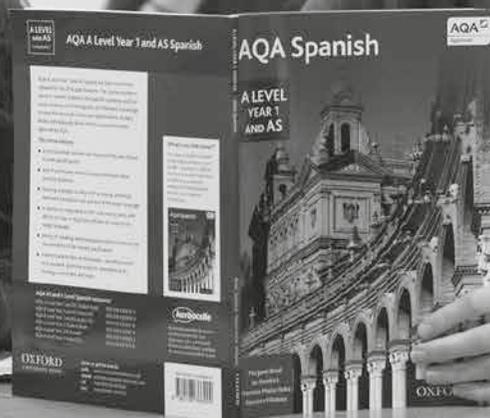
A-level Spanish builds upon the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking which you have developed during your GCSE course. You will not only extend your knowledge and understanding of Spain and Spanish life and culture but also of other Spanish speaking countries of the world as well. In addition,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

We use a range of up-to-date sources such as the internet, radio and television as well as conventional textbooks. Students will also be encouraged to make use of such resources independently. You will learn how to use Spanish in everyday conversation as well as in formal discussion and debate. A Spanish Assistant is employed so that students can have one-to-one speaking sessions for half an hour per week. These sessions are obligatory and form an important part of the course.

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

Entry requirements

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



Syllabus title: Art and Design (Textile design)

Examination board: AQA

Studying A-level textiles

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

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

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

Entry requirements

A GCSE level 6 or higher, in art, textiles or appropriate technology subject. It would be an advantage if you are experienced using a sewing machine.

AS-level

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

A-level

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

extended project qualification

Syllabus title: Extended Project

Examination board: AQA

Completing the extended project qualification

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

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

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

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

The EPQ is an extremely valuable course, preparing students for the challenge and rigour of university study or working life. In addition, an increasing number of universities are including the E.P.Q. in their offers to students. 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 course will be made in April. Secondly, we will try to make sure that your chosen combination of courses is possible i.e. that they are not timetables at the same time. This will be more difficult to ensure if you change your mind later on.

Application form

An application form is downloadable from our website www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk on the sixth form/admissions page.

Please complete the form and email to sixthformapplications@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk. You will receive an acknowledgement by return.

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

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

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

Deadline

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

Course consultation meeting

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

Offers of places

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

Late applicants

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

Balcarras Sixth Form

for more information contact:

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