

## Update from the Head

I hope you all had a lovely half term. I don't normally go away in October but this year we decided to go to Mallorca. We had a lovely time in the autumn sunshine...I can recommend it!

### Geography Trip



The Geography department had a hugely successful visit to Iceland over half term although it lasted a little longer than they had bargained for. Their homeward flight was cancelled which forced the group to stay an extra night in Reykjavik. The following day the group took a flight to Edinburgh and then made it home via the train cross country. They eventually arrived in Cheltenham some 30 hours late! I would like to thank the staff for their calm management of this potentially stressful situation—the pupils too were apparently brilliant. If you are interested in what they got up to there is an article here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1334>

### Student Teachers Visit Balcarras for Intensive Training and Practice

On Tuesday and Wednesday we had 10 student teachers attend Balcarras to undergo their Intensive Training and Practice session on supporting pupils with special educational needs. The student teachers are part of the

Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership which Balcarras plays a key role in. We are committed to teacher training and I am pleased that colleagues here were able to offer their expertise in this crucial area.

### **Sugamo Visit**



On Thursday we had a visit from 30 Japanese pupils from Sugamo High School in Tokyo. Sugamo visit Balcarras every year and it is always a really enjoyable event. Our Year 10 pupils acted as hosts for the day and were superb ambassadors both for Balcarras and England. See news article here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1337>

### **School Nursing Extended Service**

Balcarras has been approached by the School Nursing Service. They are keen to offer the Extended Nursing Service to the school. We would like to hear what parents think about this. The link below will give you more information and there will be a presentation from the School Nursing Service on Tuesday 25th November at 5.30. We will send out a survey to parents shortly after that event.

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1335>

### **Cheltenham Education Partnership Events**

Balcarras pupils have been involved in two CEP events this week. On Wednesday several of our pupils took part in a history masterclass run by our own Mr Stoker here at Balcarras. They were joined by pupils from other Cheltenham schools. The event focussed on 20th Century history and in particular the positive developments brought about during the century. Today 9 of our pupils are at a music masterclass event with the pianist Martin Roscoe. I've asked Mrs Watts to put something on the school website about this.

### **Music Videos**

The music department have now released all 8 of the music videos that were produced at the end of last school year. They have now been viewed over 125,000 times online!

<https://www.youtube.com/@baccarrasmusic495>

If you have enjoyed watching these then don't worry because more are on their way. The department is currently recording new ones including of the famous Girls Chamber Choir.

### **Attendance Certificate**

We received a nice certificate this week saying that our attendance was in the top 10% of all schools nationally last year. See article here:

<https://www.baccarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1336>

### **Bike Helmets**

I go on duty outside the front gate most afternoons. I have to say I have been very impressed that the vast majority of pupils are wearing their bike helmets as they cycle out of the gate. I have just had to stop one or two in the last couple of weeks who were dangling the helmet over the handlebars instead of wearing it. Please do reinforce the importance of wearing a bike helmet to your children. We will continue to monitor it carefully at school.

Right time for the weekend. Leeds are at the City Ground. I'm not very optimistic for our chances. The hope and excitement of the early season is giving way to nervousness and anxiety as Leeds slip towards the relegation zone! I hope you all have a nice weekend.

**Dominic Burke**