

Update from the Head



I hope you all had a lovely St George's Day yesterday. I celebrated by having Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding in the canteen—it was jolly tasty. Here is a nice photo of the St George's Cross flying at Balcarras against the backdrop of a cloudless sky. It has been lovely weather all week—long may it continue.

Debate Semi Finals

The Debate Season is now moving into its final stages. We had two great semi-finals this week with 12A (Agnes Evans and Will Pearne) and 13E (Alex Williams and Jacob Austin) making it though to the final which will be held on Tuesday next week. The motion for debate is: *This house believes that it is time that the UK acknowledged that the British Empire did more harm than good.* We are all really looking forward to it.

Foley Pupil Pursuit

On Thursday I did my final Pupil Pursuit of the year—following the timetables of two pupils in Year 8. I had a very enjoyable day observing teaching—it is a privilege of my job that I get to observe so many teachers doing what they do best.

Year 7 Parents Evening

The Year 7 Parents Evening on Thursday went very well. I enjoyed talking to parents and pupils about how they have settled in to Balcarras.

Year 11 Prom

Tonight we will be at the Double Tree to celebrate with Year 11 during their Prom. It promises to be a lovely evening. My thanks to Mr Baxter and the Year 11 Prom Committee for organising it.

Schools Forum Working Party on SEND Reforms

I am a member of the Gloucestershire Schools Forum Working Party on Special Educational Needs reform. On Wednesday I went to a meeting in Gloucester to discuss what we know about the planned reforms and the likely impact on Gloucestershire. The reforms are complicated. If you are interested Schoolsweek did a good summary here:

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-white-paper-the-key-send-reform-policies/>

I'm instinctively in favour of mainstream inclusion. My worry about the reforms is that I simply don't yet understand the financial figures behind them. By my reckoning the system risks continuing to be financially unsustainable.

There was a report out from the Sutton Trust this week that said that cuts continue to be imposed across the sector. If you are interested follow this link:

https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/new-poll-reveals-schools-facing-further-painful-spending-cuts/?utm_source=Dynamics%20365%20Customer%20Insights%20-%20Journeys&utm_medium=email&utm_term=N%20FA&utm_campaign=ASCL%20Briefing%3A%2024%20April%202026&utm_content=ASCL%20Briefing%3A%2024%20April%202026#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=a64e7939-a967-464f-a846-aaaf54720000

Dates for your diary...

There are some music events coming up that you might wish to attend

Balcjazz are performing at the **Cheltenham Jazz Festival** at 1pm on Saturday 2nd May. Entry is free.

Balcarras are also performing at the **Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts** at 11.30 on Weds 6th May at the Cheltenham Town Hall. The Balcarras Chamber Choir and Cantabile Choir are performing.

Public admission is £5. It's at the Town Hall.

<https://cfpa.org.uk/entries/on-the-day/>

Finally, do make sure you put **Midsummer Music** in your diary—this is our very own music festival. It is happening on the evening of Friday 19th June. More details to follow.

Right, that's it...time for the weekend. I'm heading to London to watch Leeds in the semi-final of the FA Cup—our first appearance at this level since 1987. I can't accurately describe in words just how much I want Leeds to win. I hope you all have a nice weekend—unless you're a Chelsea fan!

Dominic Burke

COME ON LEEDS!!



Dominic Burke

