



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Balcarras to Sponsor Cheltenham's New School

We are delighted that Balcarras has been confirmed as the Local Authority's sponsor to develop and run Cheltenham's new secondary school.

Balcarras Headteacher Dominic Burke was delighted to hear the news commenting: "We are about to embark on an exciting challenge. It is a huge compliment to the staff and governors of the school that we have been entrusted to take on this great responsibility and we are hugely excited by the challenge of creating a new school which is just as vibrant and successful as Balcarras."

Chair of Trustees, Rosi Shepherd said: "I believe that we have the capacity to create the new school whilst also ensuring that standards remain high at Balcarras. In drawing up the bid to sponsor the new school we focussed on creating a school which was inclusive, engaging and which placed enjoyment at the heart of everything."

Balcarras will be working with a number of other schools locally to bring the new school on line. Cheltenham Ladies' College were a key partner in the bid and the school has pledged to support Balcarras in a number of areas. The Ladies' College Principal, Eve Jardine Young, commented, "We are proud to be one of the partner schools and have the highest respect for the leadership and achievements of Balcarras, its teachers, pupils and wider community. We believe that our partnership will be imaginative and dynamic and that together we can create something of real value for Cheltenham."

Pittville School are also a key partner and their Headteacher Richard Gilpin is looking forward to working with Balcarras: "The two schools have a long history of working together and this initiative is the latest chapter in the close relationship that we have developed over the years. I am sure the experience of our partnership work will be of great value in helping to establish the school".

Balcarras received letters of support from ten schools locally including Charlton Kings' Infants and Junior Schools, Glenfall Primary, Holy Apostles Primary, Leckhampton Primary, Warden Hill School, Greatfield Park Primary and St James' Primary. Dominic Burke commented, "We are very grateful for the support offered by local schools. We believe that transition between primary and secondary school is vital so it is great that we have developed strong links with the schools that are likely to send students to the new school."

Balcarras will now begin a series of meetings with officials from Gloucestershire County Council to begin the work of developing the school.

Balcarras is keen to engage with local businesses and employers. "We have a great relationship with a number of big employers in Gloucestershire including GCHQ, and many of the big companies that operate in the town. There are enormous benefits to be had from a close collaboration with local companies and local entrepreneurs, such as Julian Dunkerton, who has taken a really keen interest in state education generally and Balcarras in particular," said Headteacher, Dominic Burke.

For any further information and a chance to interview or arrange a photo opportunity please contact Mrs Nicki Harrington, Headteacher's PA, on 01242 515881 or njh@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk