



BALCARRAS
From strength to strength

NEWSLETTER

Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

It has been a very busy start to the school year here at Balcarras and the summer holiday now seems like a distant memory. I hope you all had a lovely summer and that your children are settling in well to the new school year.

There has been a really positive atmosphere in the school and it has been lovely to observe so much extracurricular activity going on. I spend a lot of my time just walking around and observing the school in action and I have to say that the pupils attitude to learning has never been better.

BUDDY THE SCHOOL DOG

DOMINIC BURKE, HEADTEACHER

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Miss McCarthy for organising the school photos recently. Buddy the School Dog took the opportunity to have his first official portraits and here they are.



EXAMINATION RESULTS

DOMINIC BURKE, HEADTEACHER

We were absolutely delighted with the examination results in the summer. Both results days were full of celebration and happiness. At A-level our pupils achieved 64% A* to B and the vast majority went onto their first choice destination.

At GCSE, the pupils achieved similarly great results. 88% of pupils gained a 4+ in English and Maths and 78% gained a 5+. This will put Balcarras amongst the very top comprehensive schools in the country. In term of progress our provisional Progress 8 score was revealed by the DfE last Thursday as +0.70. We don't yet know how this compares to other schools but it is likely to place us in, or close to, the top 5% of schools nationally.

TRIBUTE TO SUE CLAY

DOMINIC BURKE, HEADTEACHER

A couple of weeks ago we received the very sad news that Sue Clay had passed away. Sue was the Data manager at Balcarras for many years before leaving the school in 2016. In my time as Deputy Head, I worked very closely with Sue particularly on the school timetable. She was always incredibly patient and had the very nicest way of pointing out the catastrophic errors that I had made! She was a highly intelligent woman and had an enormous capacity for work. Sue was a lovely person and we all remember her very fondly here. On behalf of the school, I would like to pass on my condolences to Sue's children, all of whom are former pupils at Balcarras.

ARKWRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS

DOMINIC BURKE, HEADTEACHER

Harriet Foulkes and Henry Hockenhull (both Y12) have both been successful in securing Arkwright Scholarships! <https://www.arkwright.org.uk/>

They will both receive £500 to spend on STEM related resources, be mentored by an Engineering company and have the opportunity to complete work experience in the industry.

The Arkwright Scholarship has thousands of applicants a year and only the very best are awarded a scholarship. Henry and Harriet had to complete an application, an aptitude test and an online interview to secure the scholarship.

MUSIC NEWS

DAN ARMSTRONG & JANE WATTS, MUSIC

Welcome

We are delighted to have been joined in the Department by Mr Matthew Howell. He's made a great start and is involved in lots of extra-curricular clubs as well as teaching across the Music curriculum. He's even joined Staff Football! We're very pleased to have him on board.

We've also welcomed Caleb Horne, who studied Music at A Level with us and is now our School Performing Arts Technician, working with both Drama and Music. His sport of choice is golf – luckily for us, our Ryder Cup team didn't need his services when he was busy on our behalf!

House Music



This was a HUGE success on Tuesday 26th September. The Sixth Form leaders put together amazingly creative programmes and the competition could not have been closer. There were literally only a handful of points in it between all the teams. Selvey emerged as the deserving victors though and their Head of House, Miss Niblett is still celebrating! Congratulations to absolutely everyone who took part on the day and who participated in the House

Music Highlights concert on Thursday 28th. Particularly heartfelt thanks to all the Sixth Form students who were involved in planning, arranging, accompanying, performing, stage-managing and working with the Tech team. A big thankyou to Mr George Douglas, who taught with us last year and the year before and who returned for the day as Guest Adjudicator. It was so lovely to see him again and we're very grateful to him for his time and expertise.

Production

We have been very busy working with Mr Bennett and the Drama department over the summer and early part of this term, hatching plans! Our production of 'The 39 Steps' is now in rehearsal, and, although it's not officially a Musical as such, there IS quite a lot of music in it and it will feature dancers, singers and our largest ever orchestra! The dates for your diary: 12th to 15th December (Tuesday to Friday) inclusive. It promises to be a hot ticket!

Lunchtime Concert at Pittville Pump Room

Our GCSE and A Level musicians will be showcased in a special Lunchtime Concert at Pittville Pump Room at 1pm on November 7th. Do come along and support them if you're free.

Carol Concert

All of our various choirs and instrumental ensembles are now in rehearsal for this year's Carol Concert, which will be held at Holy Apostles Church, Charlton Kings on Wednesday December 6th. Another one not to miss!

SCHOOL POLICIES

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

As this is the first newsletter of the year, it seems a good time to remind parents of the school policies. These can be found on the school website:

Our School
Policies

The school policies are designed to give parents an understanding of how the school operates and the expectations the school has for all the pupils. In particular the policies on:

Behaviour	Drugs
Bullying	Child Protection/Safeguarding
Attendance	Single Equalities

might be of interest for parents to read. Some parents might find the other policies useful to read and understand. We hope that all our expectations are by-and-large common sense: work hard, act nicely to other people and behave well and you will find your time at Balcarras enjoyable and successful.

PE DEPT NEWS

MARK HARVEY, HEAD OF PE

County Champions!



Huge congratulations to the U16 hockey team for winning the County Hockey Tournament.

The girls made a great start to the tournament, winning 3 out of 4 matches in the group stage. This meant they secured their place in the semi-final where they faced CLC. With the game ending in a draw, it went to dreaded penalty flicks! Thanks to some amazing saves from Meg as well as some confident flicks from our penalty takers, we managed to beat CLC 5-4.

We then played KLB, the reigning champions, in the final. Every single player did Balcarras proud as they did not stop running in the final! Their hard work eventually paid off as they managed to score a fantastic team goal, becoming County Champions!

The girls will now progress to the West Hockey Regional Finals which will be held at Clifton College in November.

Well done!

GK - Meg West, Evie Henderson (c), Jess Smith, Evie Chicken, Jess Chicken, Kitty Ellis, Shamarah Magume, Hannah La Valette-Cooper, Gabby Habben, Freya Hansen, Blue Heath-Smith, Josie Steer, Ella Webster, Milly Edwards, Amelie Parsons, Nel O'Leary, Poppy Foulkes



U18 Netball

The U18 team won the Challenge cup at CLC. They beat, Chosen Hill, Cotswold, Marling, Stroud High, Denmark road and Farmers in the final!

Lucy King
Charlotte Tonge
Flo Matcham - Baker
Hannah Mohaed Ali
Emily Harvey
Izzy Johnson
Izzy Gardner
Alys Dixon
Ruby Newman

Year 11 Rugby

Congratulations to both Gus Andrews and Sam Bates who have been chosen to represent Cheltenham District in the upcoming County Trials. Good luck to both boys.



Year 11 Football

Congratulations to Frankie O'Leary, Yannick Rielly, Sam Sullivan, Jacob Croft and Dan Henderson who made it through the Cheltenham Trials to represent the District in the County Trials.

Inter-House Cross Country Results

Over 400 students competed in the annual House Cross Country event on Friday 29th September. Please find the results below:

Year 7 House Cross Country Winners: Graveney

Boys:

1st: P Paul (S)

2nd: G Iddon (G)

3rd: H Sheer (F)

Girls:

1st: O Avery (G)

2nd: E Avery (G)

3rd: H Roscoe (F)

Year 8&9 House Cross Country: Winners Graveney

Boys:

1st: P Paul (S)

2nd: G Iddon (G)

3rd: H Sheer (F)

Girls:

1st: O Avery (G)

2nd: E Avery (G)

3rd: H Roscoe (F)

Year 10+11 House Cross Country Winners Ottewell

Boys:

1st: B Yates (S)
2nd: F Coombe (O)
3rd: S Vacaloplous (S)

Girls:

1st: B Heath-Smith (G)
2nd: A Paul (S)
3rd: T Shirlaw (S)

Overall House Cross Country Result:

1st: Selvey
2nd: Ottewell
3rd: Graveney
4th: Foley



Please book mark our new Sports Fixtures link. There's lot of information about the upcoming fixtures and results. Click [here](#).

There is a new Icon on the top toolbar which is a shortcut to this page, it looks like this



LOCKDOWN TRAINING

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

On Monday 23rd October all the pupils are going to practise the lockdown procedure. This will be the scenario:

There is a fire at a local petrol station and the smoke is blowing towards the school.

At 3:15pm the school bell will sound 5 times. This is the signal to practise lockdown. The pupils will sit quietly on their seats in their usual places. The teachers will close the windows and the doors and pull down the blinds. After about 10-15 minutes the all-clear will be signalled to the teachers, and the pupils can carry on with the end of their lessons.

While we all hope it will never be needed, it is sensible that the pupils practise the drill, and know what to expect.

SIXTH FORM NEWS

DARREN LEATHERBARROW, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Parliament visit:

On 4th October, the Politics sets of Year 13 were treated to a trip to the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court. Despite an early start at 6:30am, we were all raring to go and, when we got to London, we were given a great tour of the Palace of Westminster. It was fantastic to visit the core of our democracy, as we got to go inside both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, seeing the dispatch boxes, the Speaker's Chair and the Royal Throne firsthand! The majesty and atmosphere of this 800-year-old building cannot be expressed by the TV cameras, as centuries of government that have happened in those chambers is awe-inspiring. We also visited Westminster Hall, where leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and Volodymyr Zelenskyy have spoken. After a period of free

time to eat our lunch and admire the numerous statues in Parliament Square, we capped off our day with a brilliant visit to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the realm, where we witnessed the law in action. It was a truly phenomenal experience, and we would like to thank Mr Harding and Mr Sexton for organising it, as well as all the staff who made it possible. Who knows, it could have inspired a couple of future Prime Ministers! Daniel Morgan, 13J

**Balktoberfest**

On Friday 22nd September, while the lower school took part in their annual sponsored walk, the Sixth Form team hosted their annual BBQ. Mr Constance took to the BBQ once again with his team of helpers to serve a selection of sausages under the theme of "Balktoberfest" to over 400 Sixth Form students. Music was provided by some of our very talented musicians, along with Mr Armstrong, performing Bavarian style oompah music. The sun shone and a wonderful afternoon was had

by all!

Ice Breaker

During the first week of the academic year, it's a Sixth Form tradition to host an Ice Breaker for Y12 students. Students get together in their tutor groups (dressed in their assigned colours) and perform as a team up against their peers, competing in a broad range of activities including making a human version of the Sixth Form B6 logo, speaking charades, basket balloon, and the famous magic carpet. The students did amazingly well during the event showing good humour and abundant community spirit throughout the afternoon. Unbelievably, the event was tied yet again, with 12B and 12C J having to settle things with a nerve-wracking contest of Rock, Paper, Scissors, best-of-three, with Mr Boughton stepping up in place of Mr Hazael, to face Miss Heather. Ultimately, after 8 rounds of unbearable tension, it was Mr Boughton who demonstrated nerves of steel to secure the kudos and glory for 12B, congratulations to them!





AIC Naivasha Polytechnic, Naivasha, Kenya

Where Did Your Donated IT Equipment Go?



Chiwarira Primary School, Nyanga, Zimbabwe

African destinations of donated IT equipment

We thought you would be pleased to know that IT equipment from Balcarras School

is now being put to great use and is transforming education in African schools.

Your kind donations are now supporting students in the following schools:

AIC Naivasha Polytechnic, Naivasha, Kenya; Baricho Boys High School, Kirinyaga, Kenya; Kapsabet Boys High School, BOMET, Kenya; Lil Poppins School, Blantyre, Malawi; The Polytechnic, Blantyre, Malawi; Malawi Institute Of Tourism Training School, Blantyre, Malawi; Namiwawa Primary School, Blantyre, Malawi; Nankumba Secondary School, Blantyre, Malawi; Stella Maris Secondary School, Blantyre, Malawi; Thyolo Secondary School, Thyolo, Malawi

The students and members of their communities will benefit from life-enhancing knowledge and skills, access to further education and improved opportunities for employment.

Thank you for helping us to inspire brighter futures to African schoolchildren.

CALLING IT OUT

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

On Friday 1st December, all of Year 9 will watch a performance in the Main Hall called "Calling it Out". It will be performed by "Loudmouth Education and Training". Below is a quote from them about the performance:

"Calling it Out" reinforces to students the vital message of non-tolerance of harmful sexual behaviour. The performance and discussion-based workshop explore where these behaviours are coming from and alternative positive behaviours. The programme raises the groups' awareness of the huge impacts these everyday incidences of sexual harassment and assault can have on girls and young women and how we all have a role in safely challenging and reporting these behaviours. If this is happening to you, it is definitely not your fault!

For parents who would like to find out more about the performance, here is the website address:

<https://loudmouth.co.uk/programmes/programme/calling-it-out>

Balcarras believes that it is important that pupils are educated about these important issues. We hope that the pupils will learn a lot from the performance. Tutors will follow up the performance with conversations in tutor time.

YEAR 11 PROM

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

The Year 11 Prom is an annual celebration at Balcarras and is always an enjoyable event for both pupils and staff. It is intended as a celebration of the hard work the Year 11 pupils have put into their studies during the year, and as a way of saying thank-you and good luck to the Year 11 students just before they depart for study leave and to begin their GCSE examinations.

The event is **invite only**. While we hope that **all** our Year 11 pupils will be invited to the Prom, pupils whose behaviour has been **below expectation** will **not** be invited to attend the celebrations. Invites will be issued to all pupils who work hard in lessons, have good attendance and punctuality at school, complete homework to a good standard and follow the school rules. Pupils who need regular intervention for their behaviour, attendance, punctuality or effort will not receive an invite to the Year 11 Prom.

EMAILS INTO SCHOOL

FINANCE OFFICE

When emailing the school please could we ask parents or guardians to include their child's name and tutor group in all correspondence. Thank you.

10TH OCTOBER – WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

PASTORAL TEAM

ITV's Ant and Dec have set the students a different type of homework to mark World Mental Health Day. If you'd like to get involved take a look at the school website for more information. Click [here](#) to find out more.

LABELLING UNIFORM AND BELONGINGS

A reminder that all uniform, including shoes, boots, trainers and coats should be clearly labelled. Please do also label water bottles. We will do our utmost to reunite labelled items however anything unlabelled will be placed in lost property and if unclaimed donated to the PTFA/clothes bank.

SPONSORED WALK

MARK CONSTANCE

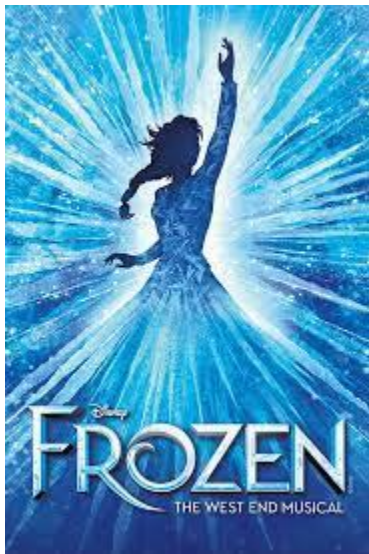
We are really pleased to say that the sponsored walk raised well over £4,000. We've given students the opportunity to vote on where the money goes, and this year they have decided that we will be donating to Cyclists Fighting Cancer, a national charity who, in their own words "help children and young people living with cancer across the UK regain their physical fitness, improve mental wellness and reduce social isolation by giving them new lightweight bikes, specially adapted trikes, cycling related equipment and support."

DROPPING CHILDREN OFF AT SCHOOL

At Balcarras, we encourage all of our pupils to walk or cycle to school if they can. If you do need to drop a pupil off, can we ask you to be respectful to our neighbours and please avoid parking which causes inconvenience such as blocking driveways etc.

ACTIVITIES WEEK

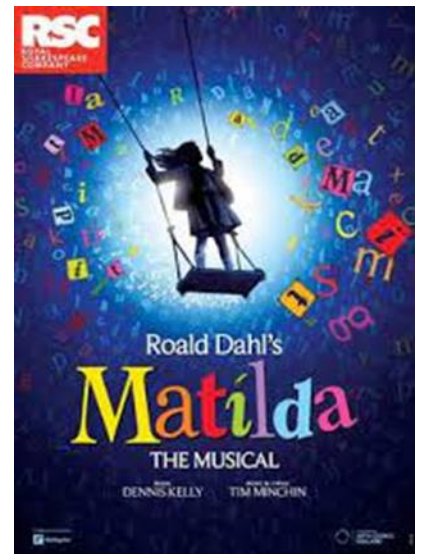
LYNN MASSEY, ACTIVITIES WEEK COORDINATOR



It is only October I know, but it is that time of year that preparations are made for next year's Activities Week happening in July.

There will be lots of information coming out about trips being launched over the coming weeks regarding this. However, for now, I thought it best to inform you that as usual we will be doing two London theatre trips on Wednesday 12th July and Thursday 13th July. This year the shows on offer are Frozen and Matilda. There will be a separate letter going out in more detail regarding the trips shortly. Please bear in mind that other things will be happening if you do decide to go onto the theatre trips, so please bear that in mind. No further information regarding activities week will

be coming out to you until February. We have to pay for the Theatre trips well in advance. The costs and all other details are in the information letter being sent out.



PUPIL PREMIUM & FREE SCHOOL MEALS

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

If your child is eligible for 'free school meals' and you register for this, Balcarras School will receive extra funding called 'pupil premium'. We use this extra money to improve the educational provision and resources at the school.

What is pupil premium funding?

Pupil premium funding from the government is given to schools to help pupils reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation. It's provided for pupils who:

- Are registered for free school meals
- Have been registered for free school meals at any point in the past 6 years
- Are, or have been, in care
- Have parents in the armed forces

At Balcarras we get an extra money for every eligible pupil who is registered for free school meals. This extra money could make a real difference to the quality of education we offer. Balcarras uses the money for a whole system of support for children, including:

- Extra teaching in Year 10 and Year 11 for English, Mathematics and Science
- Literacy support across the school
- A study option for pupils at Key Stage 4
- Homework Clubs at Lunchtime
- Extra Support for low-income families with uniform and equipment

Is my child eligible for free school meals?

Your child might be eligible if you access:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Universal Credit, provided you have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)

Your child might also be eligible if you're in a household with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), subject to a maximum income threshold. This is for children of:

- Zambrano and Chen carers (non-EEA nationals caring for a British citizen residing in the UK)
- British National (Overseas) passport holders
- Spousal visa, work visa, or student visa holders
- Those with no immigration status
- Families with a right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights
- Families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction
- Certain failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Does my child have to eat the free school meals?

No. Pupils who are registered for free school meals don't have to eat them. If you're eligible but you want your child to have packed lunches you should still register because the school will receive the funding which can support your child in other ways.

How do I register?

To apply for Free School Meals, you will need to complete the application form on the Gloucestershire County Council website. The web address is:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-transport-and-free-school-meals/apply-for-free-school-meals/>

(a Google search will probably get you there quicker than typing it all in!)

More information

For more information about pupil premium go to our website, which contains details of how the pupil premium has been spent in the past academic year and how it will be spent this year. You can find the pupil premium strategy at the following location:

www.Balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Learning at Balcarras

Developing the Individual

Pupil Premium

NEWSLETTER



The newsletter will now be distributed by email and available to view on our VLE (Firefly) as well as on the school website.

It is incredibly easy and will save the school a lot of paper and the planet a lot of trees!

If you would still prefer a hard copy, please contact Karen Adkins
ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Alongside our @Balcarras Twitter you may also now follow Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Dominic Bule', with a horizontal line underneath.

Headteacher





Assistant Reprographics Technician

Required to start as soon as possible

7 hours per week, term time only, ideally on a Friday but there is some flexibility and some hours could be worked on other days for the right candidate.

Salary: Point 8-10 actual salary: £3,565.80 - FTE £22,777

We are looking for an Assistant Reprographics Assistant to support our Reprographics Technician. You will take responsibility for a range of Reprographics Services under the guidance of the Reprographics Technician. You will provide a full reprographics service to students and staff and help to promote a positive image of the school through the production of professional documents for both internal and external use.

Please see the Applicant Pack for further information including a Job Description on the Balcarras Trust website www.thebaltarrastrust.co.uk

Application

To apply, please send completed application forms to jobs@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Closing Date for applications: Thursday 19th October 2023, 9am

(This position may close earlier than stated above should a suitable applicant apply.

We encourage interested candidates to apply as soon as possible)

Interviews will be on a rolling basis.

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above email address.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.

All vacancies are advertised on the Balcarras Trust website:

<https://www.thebaltarrastrust.co.uk>



Exams Invigilators

Required on an "on going" basis

£10.50 per hour.

Balcarras School are looking to recruit more invigilators to join our excellent team. We particularly need people who are available in May & June as this is the busiest time during the external exams.

Internal exam periods are between 5 and 10 days in November, January, February, and April. It is preferable if you are available from 8.30am for morning slots and/or able to cover afternoon exams which typically finish around 3.30pm/4pm but could be later.

No experience is necessary as full training will be given.

Application

To apply, please download an application form and send completed application forms to jobs@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.