



BALCARRAS
From strength to strength

NEWSLETTER

Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

It is a nice feeling to reach the May break. At 19 days this half term is as short as it is possible to be—it certainly seems to have gone by in a flash. We are now firmly in exam mode at Balcarras and I am pleased to report that so far everything is going smoothly. I am full of admiration for our pupils—they are collectively working ever so hard.

As I write the introduction to this newsletter announcements are being made about school funding for next year. On first glance these announcements look to me like real term reductions in our funding. We will spend half term working out exactly what it all means.

Dominic Burke

EASYFUNDRAISING

Balcarras School



Just letting you know that Balcarras School are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment. Scan the QR code to start fundraising!

Thank you so much!

ACTIVITIES WEEK

LYN MASSEY

As you know, it is that time of year again when your child has the fantastic opportunity to go onto our activities week in July.

All students by now should have had a choices form (unless on a residential/camp). The closing date for completion of this is the 22nd May as it takes time to input them all and to ensure the bookings can go ahead.

If you have any queries, please email me on ljm@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

I hope your child is really looking forward to this enrichment week which is a fantastic opportunity for them to take part in.

CHELTENHAM HALF MARATHON

A large group of staff are going to be running the Cheltenham Half Marathon this September. We are raising funds for Sue Ryder Leckhampton Hospice. We are runners (or not) of all different levels, ages, and paces, but we are united in our quest to raise as much as we possibly can for this fantastic local charity.

If you're keen to support, please follow the link below. Many of us have chosen to run in memory of a close former colleague of ours.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/jon-pearce-9?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=015

BALCARRAS CROQUET CLUB

LAURA THOMSON

This term Balcarras has formed its first ever Croquet Club! The students train weekly at Cheltenham Croquet Club, the home of Croquet England. They are trained by specialist coaches and (once he gets back from the World Championships in New Zealand) the Under 18 British National Champion Sam Cuthbert. The students are thoroughly enjoying the experience and the weather has been kind whilst they have been on the lawns. They are also completing additional training on Sundays, guided by an experienced and qualified croquet coach, Naomi Whitehead. The students have a goal (or should I say hoop!) in mind and are looking forward to entering the National Schools Croquet Championships in June.



HISTORY DEPARTMENT

MIKE STOKER, HEAD OF HISTORY

This year's theme is "Light Through Dark", and we're inviting students to submit poems, quotes, images, photographs, or sketches that capture examples of hope in history.

Think VE Day commemorations, acts of kindness, liberation from oppressive regimes, heroic acts of defiance, or brave individuals who stood up in dark times.

Please email your entries to mks@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk or bring them to the History Department. We're preparing a new History corridor display, and we'd love to showcase your contributions!

YEAR 12 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
LAURA THOMSON, SCIENCE TEACHER

Year 12 Environmental Science students carried out a survey on the River Chelt at Dowdeswell. They took biotic and abiotic measurements and related their findings to the impact of forestry on the biodiversity of the river. Students enjoyed carrying out fieldwork - especially when they caught a crayfish (or two!). They completed analysis on their data back in the classroom using Simpsons Diversity Index and they found that there was a relationship between forestry in the surrounding areas and the decline in biodiversity in the river.



STUDENTS FROM BALCARRAS SCHOOL CROWNED SW BEST COMPANY AT YE REGIONAL FINAL JACK GODDARD, HEAD OF ENTERPRISE



Students from Balcarras School, Gloucestershire have been crowned Best Overall Company at the South West Young Enterprise Regional Final. The final, held at Poole Harbour Commissioners, Dorset on 7th May 2025, celebrated students who have set up and run a company over the academic year as part of the Young Enterprise Company Programme.



Seven teams from the South West competed across eight categories – Creativity, Sustainability, Best Presentation, Customer Service, Innovation, Financial Management, Marketing and Teamwork – with a prize for each. The winning team, Pearl from Balcarras School, will go on to represent the South West at the UK Company of the Year final in Manchester on 4th June.

The winning team, Pearl created and sold an eco-friendly manual toothbrush crafted from sustainably sourced bamboo, designed to revolutionise your oral care routine while minimising environmental impact. Pearl Managing Director Jem Paris-Johnstone said to win the South West YE Final was “absolutely

amazing!” “Everyone has worked really hard and we have had lots of ups and downs. This experience has really given us direction. I have gained hugely in leadership skills and the rest of my team have also gained other new skills and benefitted enormously. We are now really looking forward to going to the national final.”

If you'd like to support **Team Pearl** by purchasing their products, please check out their products through the links below:

<https://www.ye-tradingstation.org.uk/product/pearl-toothbrush>

Your support will be greatly appreciated as they continue their entrepreneurial journey!

H&SC TASTER TRIP

MIA DODDS, TEACHER OF HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



On Tuesday 29th April, some Year 12 Health and Social Care students visited The University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus for an Explorative Health and Social Care Taster Day. They had an insight into social work, nursing, paramedic science, physiotherapy, radiography and then had a hands-on look and experience of operating department practitioners. Great day had by all!

SCIENCE NEWS

KRISTI PRAKI, SCIENCE TEACHER

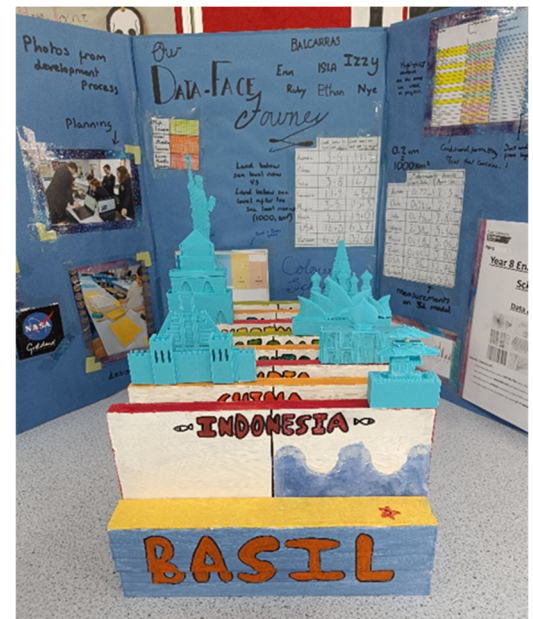
Dataface competition



This year, Balcarras has been working with DataFace, a Cheltenham Science Festival project to boost the data literacy and essential data science skills of UK secondary school pupils. It aims to give them the skills and confidence to dive into an open dataset, find an issue that catches their interest, and tell a story with creative data visualisations.

A small team of year 8 and 9 students have been working with the science and DT departments to create a 3-dimensional model which represents the data describing global sea-level rise. Their incredible model showcases the effect of sea-level rise on countries with

different development statuses. It is a wooden, hand-painted structure with a 3D-printed landmark representing each of the countries in their dataset. They will compete in the Gloucestershire final of the Dataface competition at the Cheltenham Science Festival on the 2nd June where they will need to present their project to a panel of judges. Look out for their model during Cheltenham Science Festival, as it will be part of a display in the Discovery Zone!



Royal institution STEM masterclass series

Congratulations to our year 12 STEM ambassadors who have received certificates and pin badges from the Royal institution. This prestigious award marks their completion of the Royal institution STEM masterclass series. A total of 27 year 12 students took part in this programme, where they designed and presented STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) workshops to year 5 students from local primary schools. These workshops were greatly received by the year 5 students who have been attending afterschool sessions in the Balcarras science department over the past few months. The year 5 students developed their STEM knowledge by taking part in hands-on activities, including a maths scavenger hunt, building and launching rockets, creating bracelets using computer code, making magnetic slime and creating colourful fire.



CAREERS

JILL LEWIS, CAREERS LEAD



As part of PHSE on the 14th of May, Year 9 students heard from an array of speakers about their career journeys since leaving Balcarras, the students had great questions for the speakers and enjoyed hearing about different industries.

- Mia Collins - BB1 Apprentice Candidate 2025
- Max Hayes - Sustainability PA
- Peter McCrea - Head of Production AV, Video Lead - Technical Matrix d&b solutions UK Ltd.
- Leo Daubeney - Paramedic
- Alexis Bowden - Illustrator
- Hannah MacKenzie-Neville - Zoo Biology, animal rescue and rehabilitation

If you would like to support careers events such as speaker sessions, careers fairs, practice interviews or mentoring, please contact the careers department - careers@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

YEAR 9/10 BRITISH PHYSICS OLYMPIAD ONLINE (BPHO) JUNIOR PHYSICS CHALLENGE

KRISTI PRAKI, SCIENCE

Eleven of our students recently sat the Year 9/10 British Physics Olympiad Online (BPhO) Junior Physics Challenge and achieved an excellent set of results, with every student gaining a Bronze or better!

This is a national physics competition designed to engage and challenge students of all abilities by offering them a



(Y9) and Edward Wheeler (Y9).

range of problems to solve. Although most of the questions are based around the current GCSE curriculum, students are able to gain more marks if they have a general knowledge in physics as well as taking a keen interest in practical work in lessons.

Nationally, 13,040 students participated from 273 schools. At Balcarras, we were delighted to see that our students scored above the national average. Well done to all who took part, and a special congratulations to the four students who achieved a gold award — Tom Carroll (Y10); Matthew Johnston (Y9); Stanley Moore

A DELICIOUS JOURNEY, FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION TRIP BAY OF NAPLES, FOOD TECH – MRS FORD

Our recent trip to the Bay of Naples was nothing short of exceptional for our Year 10 and Year 12 Food Preparation and Nutrition students. This immersive and unforgettable experience brought together culture, cuisine, and education in the most delicious way possible. From the moment we arrived in the stunning region of southern Italy, students were engaged in hands-on learning experiences that truly brought the subject to life. Our first day began with a fascinating visit to the ancient ruins of Pompeii. Walking through the remarkably preserved streets and buildings provided a powerful context to life in Roman times, enriching our understanding of food history and social culture. Later that day, students enjoyed a gelato-making workshop, where they didn't just observe but actively participated in crafting and tasting authentic lemon gelato. The



culinary fun continued with a pizza-making session, where everyone had the chance to make and knead dough, learning about the importance of the 00 pasta flour. The evening concluded with an energetic Tarantella dancing show, giving us a joyful insight into traditional local entertainment and culture.

On the second day, we explored the origins of some of Italy's most beloved ingredients. Our first stop was an olive oil factory, where students learned about the production process and sampled high

quality oils - an eye opener into the importance of ingredients in Mediterranean cuisine. Next was a visit to a local mozzarella farm, where students observed traditional cheese-making methods had a chance to shape the warm cheese and tasted fresh, creamy mozzarella straight from the source. The afternoon featured another hands-on gnocchi and struffoli-making workshop, where students worked alongside local chefs to create these iconic dishes from scratch. We ended the day with a relaxing visit to Meta Beach, soaking in the sun and reflecting on the day's activities.

On our final day, we visited a beautiful garden renowned for its exceptional lemons known as the jewel of Sorrento. Students explored how these fragrant fruits are grown and used to produce marmalade and Limoncello, the tastings they provided offering us all a sweet and zesty conclusion to our trip.

The entire journey was a perfect blend of education and enjoyment, giving students an authentic taste of Italian life and an inspiring look at food preparation from farm to fork.

We couldn't be prouder of how engaged and enthusiastic our students were throughout. This experience has not only enriched their knowledge but also sparked a deeper passion for food, nutrition, and culture and certainly for me a strong desire to head back to Italy as soon as possible. Bring on next year!



CONTACTING A MEMBER OF STAFF GARY TOWERS, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

If you would like to contact a specific member of staff by email, please send your message to the admin@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk email address stating which member of staff it is for, the name of your child and their tutor group.

Your message will then be forwarded to the relevant member staff and will have been logged arriving into school.

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

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @balcarras and Facebook, Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dominic Burke".

Headteacher






GENTLEMAN'S MOVE

Furniture Relocation With A Gentleman's Touch

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- Packing Services
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- Furniture Pick Up & Delivery


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 info@gentlemansmove.com





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CTFCofficial



DAVE NEEDHAM
U19 LEAD COACH

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E dave.needham@ctfc.com

I'm Dave Needham, Lead Coach of the Cheltenham Town FC Post 16 Football & Education Programme (U19s Development).

We're pleased to invite Year 11 pupils at your school to attend our upcoming open trial for the 2025/26 academic year intake:

Date: Wednesday 28th May 2025

Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Location: All Saints Academy, Cheltenham, GL51 0WH

Our programme offers students the opportunity to continue their academic studies while training and playing football at a high level, representing Cheltenham Town FC.

Key benefits of the programme include:

- Players remain fully eligible to continue playing for their grassroots clubs
- Academy-level coaching, feedback and performance analysis from Cheltenham Town FC Academy staff
- Weekly training and matches in the CEFA Alliance League, against clubs like Bristol City, Bournemouth, and Plymouth Argyle
- A proven pathway into the Cheltenham Town FC Academy and football scholarships abroad, including in the USA
- Students gain academic qualifications alongside their football development

We would be grateful if you could share this opportunity with your Year 11 students who are passionate about football and interested in pursuing a dual pathway in education and sport.

Pupils can register to attend the trial using the link below: Please share around Parent portals, groups, website etc

<https://forms.gle/xC2UoDuUsvqH1b7z7>

If you have any questions or would like further information about the programme, please contact me directly at Dave.Needham@ctfc.com

Cheltenham Education Partnership Administrator

For a September 2025 start, **Cheltenham Education Partnership (CEP)** seeks to appoint an Administrator. Reporting to the Chair/Vice-Chair or Trustees this role plays a crucial part in CEP.

The role involves overseeing the administration of the charity and helping to promote and organise educational events primarily in Cheltenham schools. The role also involves raising the profile of the charity on social media as well as maintaining and updating the CEP website. From time to time the CEP administrator will be asked to assist external facilitators to deliver partnership events and to occasionally represent the charity on behalf of the Trustees.

Applicants should be confident in their communications at all levels, including colleagues, parents, pupils and stakeholders.

The successful candidate will be confident, self-motivated, able to work unsupervised in a busy environment, and have a good level of relevant experience.

A degree qualification and experience of secondary education would be desirable, but not essential.

A full list of duties can be found in the **Job description document**.

Further information about the work of Cheltenham Education partnership can be found in the CEP Fact Sheet.

The position will be offered initially on a one-year fixed contract

This is a part-time, part-year (39 weeks) position working 20 hours per week, Monday to Friday. Some flexibility with hours will be required for occasional evening events.

It is envisaged that though the administrator will work from home, he/she will visit CEP stakeholders on a regular basis.

Salary:

- Salary of £20,000 *per annum* based on 20 hrs per week (39 weeks). This is based on a full-time equivalent salary of £41,623 *per annum*.
- 20 days of annual leave plus all statutory bank holidays

Benefits:

Pension scheme through the Nest Scheme after a 3-month initial probation period.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 18 June 2025 (12 noon).

Interviews are planned to take place in the week commencing: Monday 23 June

Cheltenham Education Partnership is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its recruitment and selection of job applicants and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send CV and a Covering Letter to Enquiries4CEP@gmail.com

If you would like an initial conversation about this vacancy, please email Enquiries4CEP@gmail.com with your telephone number and availability.

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and applications from suitably qualified individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships. We encourage all candidates to ensure that the charity is aware of your particular requirements should you be invited to interview.

Please contact the school for a job description.