

September 2024

Dear Colleague,

Teacher of Mathematics

Thank you for your interest in this important post. We are looking to appoint a new colleague to join the maths department from January 2025.

Balcarras is a good place to teach, with friendly, committed colleagues, keen pupils, supportive parents and a consistent focus upon professional development. Facilities are first rate and the Mathematics department is well equipped. You will be assured of a warm welcome and excellent support both in the department and across the school.

At GCSE the department achieves fantastic results always exceeding 10% at Grade 9 and over 90% at Grade 4. At A-level we achieved ALPS 1 in 2019 which meant that we were the highest achieving school in the country.

We are both a teaching school and a maths hub, so professional development is one of our major strengths. The post is open to both experienced and newly-qualified teachers and you will be assured of an excellent induction programme if appointed.

Having perused the details and our website and applicant pack, I hope you will be keen to apply. Please submit an application form by Wednesday 23rd October, 9am. We will then interview shortly afterwards.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

The maths department is made up of collaborative team of 12 maths specialists that are passionate about teaching their subject. Each full-time member of the team is assigned his or her own room which includes a data projector and interactive whiteboard or LED board. We believe in a maths curriculum that is creative and engaging with the national curriculum at its core. All children are to have access to this curriculum and to make progress in lessons, irrespective of their starting point. Children need to develop the necessary skills to make them "deep thinkers" acquiring maths skills that can be recalled quickly and transferred and applied in different contexts. They need to be able to make rich connections across the areas of maths and use their knowledge in other subjects.

Students are set on entry to Year 7 based on their KS2 SAT scores. There are two parallel bands with three or four sets being created in each half year. In Year 9, students are set across the year into eight sets and at KS4 an extra group is created.

At KS3 we use a vastly adapted kangaroo maths scheme of work alongside CGP practice textbooks, supported by a wide range of electronic resources. The department has its own dedicated mathematics ICT room. There are six timetabled maths lessons per two-week cycle. We use a mastery approach in lessons incorporating the three main strands of the national curriculum PoS; fluency, problem solving and reasoning.

In Years 10 and 11 students are prepared for the Edexcel GCSE mathematics examination following an adapted Pearson GCSE SoW and a CGP textbook. Currently, seven of the ten sets are entered for the Higher tier examination with the remainder sitting the Foundation level. Sets 1 and 2 study some FM topics in the final two terms and have the option of sitting the FM examination in the same examination season as their GCSE. As the depth and spread of material has increased, the time allocation has gone up from 6 to 7 hours of class contact per fortnight.

From September 2018 all students at KS5 started to follow the same A Level mathematics content which includes both mechanics and statistics elements. The ability to teach a wide range of A Levels topics would be advantageous for any applicant. Again, we currently use Edexcel as the examining board and predominantly follow the Pearson textbooks. There are four groups studying maths in Year 13 and five in Year 12 with a group of further mathematicians in each year giving us 130 pupils studying A-level maths. Maths has been the most popular sixth form subject in 7 out of the last 8 years at Balcarras.

We encourage all teachers to teach across all year groups, all abilities and all key stages.

The department has an excellent record of success in external examinations. Results are consistently well above the national average and amongst the highest in the county. At GCSE we have exceeded 90% 4+ (A*-C) for the 9 of the last 10 years. Last year our 4+ was 93% and 5+ 84% with 10% of the year group achieving a Grade 9.

At A-level we had a 100% pass rate again this year with 74% achieving A*-B grades in maths. In further maths the corresponding figures were 100% A*-B.

Pupils are invited to enter the UK Maths Challenges at all levels and enjoy success. We always enter a team in the junior and senior UK Team Maths Challenge.

Back in 2013 the department led the school's bid to become a Maths Hub. GLOW Maths Hub is now well established under the leadership of Steve Lomax and Ed Neale. The department actively supports Steve and Ed in the leadership of the hub and there will be plenty of opportunities for getting involved with the hub's CPD activities.

I wish you luck in your application. Please contact me if you have any questions, either by phone or at smc@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Mr Simon Critchley
Head of Mathematics
October 2024