



The  
**Balcarras  
Trust**

# Balcarras School



**Applicant Pack**



The Balcarras Trust came into existence on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. We are a Multi Academy Trust based in Gloucestershire. Prior to this the company (Balcarras School) was a Single Academy Trust.

**The Mission Statement of The Balcarras Trust:**

The Balcarras Trust is committed to delivering outstanding inclusive, comprehensive education in each of its schools. Every child within the Trust will be expected, encouraged and supported to reach their full potential and, when they leave school, to be fully equipped to go on to be successful in the next phase of their lives.

The Trust will establish and maintain high standards of teaching, pastoral care and behaviour in its schools. No child will be “left behind.” There will be excellent opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Each member of staff in the Trust’s schools will be an excellent role model and will play their part in ensuring that each school in the Trust will have its own special ethos. Students will feel proud of their school.



Balcarras is a co-educational 11-18 comprehensive school situated in Charlton Kings on the Eastern side of Cheltenham. Consistently rated outstanding by Ofsted, it has also been recognised by The Sunday Times as the highest performing comprehensive school in the Southwest. Balcarras’s performance at A level and GCSE is amongst the highest for any school in the country.





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**Currently there are three schools in the Trust:**

**Balcarras:** an 11-18 coeducational academy with 1402 pupils on roll. Consistently rated outstanding by Ofsted, the school secures superb outcomes at both GCSE and A level. Recently the school was awarded the Sunday Times Southwest State School of the Decade Award. The school is led by Dominic Burke (Headteacher) who combines this role with CEO of the Trust. Balcarras is the lead school in the GLOW Maths Hub and the Balcarras Teaching School Partnership. Balcarras is located in Charlton Kings and is currently where the Trust's registered office is located.

**The High School Leckhampton:** a brand new 11-16 coeducational comprehensive academy with an eventual capacity of 900. The school opened in September 2021 initially on the Balcarras site. It transferred to its own purpose built accommodation in September 2022. It now occupies a beautiful campus at Farm Lane in Leckhampton. This facility cost £35 million and is state of the art. The school is led by Helen Wood and has for the first two years of its existence been oversubscribed.

**Winchcombe School:** a high-performing school with High Expectations for their students balanced against a supportive environment to help every individual towards success. This has been highlighted with their recent successes in examination results in 2023. As a smaller than average school, led by Jonathan Templeton - of only 500 pupils, they are well placed to unlock their passions and interests. Set in an idyllic location with excellent facilities they offer an environment for learning that is both unique and stimulating. A recent multi-million pound investment has added new and refurbished facilities in Sport, Science, Technology and Drama.

**In addition the Trust has a wider role as a system leader:**

**Outreach work:** The Balcarras Trust is a leading provider of professional development for educators. The Trust runs the GLOW Maths Hub which is responsible for leading maths education in this region. GLOW has an annual turnover of close to £1 million. The Trust has the contract to run the Teaching School Hub for Cheltenham, Stroud and The Cotswolds.

The Trust runs its own School Direct teacher training programme working alongside the Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Programme (GITEP) which is run by the Gloucestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers Limited (GASH). In 2024 Balcarras will become the lead school for GITEP.

We mention these initiatives because we believe it demonstrates our commitment to professional development and the importance of collaboration.





**Balcarras**  
From strength to strength

## Balcarras Aims and Values

We provide our pupils with an education of the highest quality so that they leave us with the qualifications, skills and personal qualities they need to lead a successful life.

To achieve this, we will ensure:

- Our commitment to the highest academic standards
- A caring and stimulating environment
- A wide range of extra curricular activities
- A partnership with parents, business and the local community





## What is it like working at Balcarras?

It is a very exciting and rewarding time to be working at Balcarras. Our latest GCSE grades were extraordinary and put us in the Top 30 comprehensive schools in the country based on the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ in English and Maths. At A level the picture was similar. We were listed by the Sunday Times as the second highest performing comprehensive school in the Southwest in Parent Power published in November 2023. It is this commitment to the highest academic standards, whilst at the same time being a caring and stimulating environment, that makes Balcarras feel different from anywhere else.

As part of the Balcarras Trust, our teaching staff have access to outstanding professional development networks including NPOs and ECTs if appropriate.

Balcarras is a great place to work, from staff football and wreath making sessions to Chinese cookery – Balcarras creates opportunities for staff cohesion. We recently ran a whole Trust staff inset on staff wellbeing that covered topics such as physical well being, mental well being, financial wellbeing and reducing workload. Both staff and pupils benefit from Buddy the school dog who is the one of best appointments ever made!



## What is the surrounding area like?

Members of staff moving into the area to join Balcarras have a wide variety of locations from which to choose. There are the large urban areas of Cheltenham and Gloucester together with the many modern housing developments clustered around them, the older market towns such as Cirencester and the smaller villages and hamlets of the Cotswolds. Within a short distance of the school it is possible to find both the facilities of a thriving urban area and the tranquility of unspoiled countryside.

Balcarras occupies an attractive site at the very edge of Charlton Kings. The woods and fields of the Cotswold escarpment rise up to the east and south east, while in other directions there is housing surrounding the old village centre.



## Teaching Assistant - Qualified/unqualified - General Job Description

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Teaching Assistant - Qualified/unqualified
<b>HOURS:</b>	5 hours per day days per week, term time only worked over 5 days 9 am - 3.35 pm 25 hours per week—Monday to Friday + 5 INSETS <i>There maybe an opportunity to take on additional paid duties at break and/or lunch time.</i>
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO:</b>	SENDCo / Assistant SENDCo
<b>GRADE:</b>	Unqualified Grade 3-4 £13,435.08 actual salary (FTE £22,737) Qualified Grade 6-8 £14,118.15 actual salary (FTE £23,893)

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

Balcarras School is committed to creating a diverse workforce. We will consider all qualified applicants for employment without regard to sex, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, age, disability, marriage or civil partnership.

### MAIN PURPOSE:

To work under the guidance/instruction of teaching staff to provide learning and care support for individual pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to help work towards the outcomes on their education and health care plan (EHCP). A Teaching Assistant will:

- ⇒ Work with class teachers to raise the learning and attainment of all pupils, working with individual pupil or in small groups.
- ⇒ Promote pupils' independence, self-esteem and social inclusion.
- ⇒ Give support to pupils, individually or in groups, so they can access the curriculum, take part in learning, and experience a sense of achievement.
- ⇒ Work with teachers to plan and deliver activities inside and outside of the classroom.
- ⇒ Support pupils with routines, transitions and behaviour management.



## Teaching Assistant - General Job Description continued

### MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### Supporting pupils

- ⇒ Build a positive relationship with the pupil, treating each pupil with consistency and respect, promoting high self-esteem, independence and social inclusion.
- ⇒ Adapt communication style to respond to pupils according to their individual needs, including adaptations needed to support pupils in recording their work.
- ⇒ Support pupils with their social, emotional and mental health needs, escalating concerns where appropriate.
- ⇒ Promote high standards of behaviour, responding to incidents in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- ⇒ Assist with the development and delivery of individual education and support plans.
- ⇒ Escort pupils on educational visits.
- ⇒ Build and maintain close and secure relationships with pupils, attending to and ensuring the case, health and welfare of children at all times.
- ⇒ Supervise pupils for limited and specified periods including break and lunch times, arrival at school or before departure and during lesson transition.
- ⇒ Ensure the inclusion of all children, including those with EAL and support individual children who find it difficult to form relationships.

#### Teaching and learning

- ⇒ Demonstrate an informed and efficient approach to teaching and learning by adopting relevant strategies to support the work of the teacher and increase achievement of all pupils including, where appropriate, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- ⇒ Contribute to the planning of lessons using adapted teaching strategies.
- ⇒ Support the teaching of a broad and balanced curriculum aimed at helping the pupil to achieve their full potential in all areas of learning by contributing to the planning of lessons using adapted teaching strategies.
- ⇒ Read and understand lesson plans shared prior to lessons, if available.
- ⇒ Take into account the pupils' Special Educational Needs and ensure they access to the lesson and its content through appropriate clarification, explanations, equipment, materials and use of data and other metacognitive strategies.
- ⇒ Promote, support and facilitate inclusion by encouraging participation of all pupils in learning and extracurricular activities.
- ⇒ Use effective behaviour management strategies consistently in line with the school's policy and procedures by modelling good behaviour.
- ⇒ Monitor, record and report on pupil progress and attainment.
- ⇒ Support class teachers with maintaining good order and discipline among pupils, managing behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.



## Teaching Assistant - General Job Description continued

### Teaching and learning continued

- ⇒ Organise and manage teaching space and resources to help maintain a stimulating and safe learning environment.
- ⇒ Observe pupil performance and pass observations on to the class teacher.
- ⇒ Supervise a class if the teacher is temporarily unavailable.
- ⇒ Supporting individual pupils with their exam access arrangements.
- ⇒ Use ICT skills to advance pupils' learning and develop pupils' competence and independence in its use.
- ⇒ Attend formal and informal meetings with teachers and other school staff to contribute to planning lessons / activities in order to meet pupil needs.
- ⇒ Contribute to the overall ethos, aims and work of the school.
- ⇒ Undertake any other relevant duties given by the class teacher, SENDCo or Assistant SENDCo.

### Working with staff, parents/carers and relevant professionals

- ⇒ Communicate effectively with other staff members and pupils, and with parents and carers under the direction of the class teacher, SENDCo or Assistant SENDCo.
- ⇒ Communicate knowledge and understanding of pupils to other school staff and education, health and social care professionals, so that informed decision making can take place on intervention and provision.
- ⇒ Contribute to meetings with parents and carers by providing feedback on pupil progress, attainment and barriers to learning, as directed by teachers, SENDCo or Assistant SENDCo.
- ⇒ With the class teacher, keep other professionals accurately informed of performance and progress, or concerns they may have about the pupils they work with.
- ⇒ Collaborate and work with colleagues and other relevant professionals within and beyond the school.
- ⇒ Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues.

### Health and safety

- ⇒ Promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils, and help to safeguard pupils' wellbeing by following the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the Balcarras Trust's child protection and safeguarding policies.
- ⇒ Comply with individual responsibilities, in accordance with the role, for health and safety within the workplace, including manual handling.
- ⇒ Look after children who are upset or have had accidents.





## Teaching Assistant—General Job Description continued

### Professional development

- ⇒ Help keep own knowledge and understanding relevant and up-to-date by reflecting on own practice, liaising with school leaders, and identifying relevant professional development to improve personal practice.
- ⇒ Take opportunities to build the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience needed for the role, with support from the school.
- ⇒ Take part in the school's appraisal procedures.

### Safeguarding

- ⇒ Work in line with statutory safeguarding guidance (e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education, Prevent) and the safeguarding and child protection policies of Balcarras Trust.
- ⇒ Share the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people
- ⇒ Promote the safeguarding of all pupils in the school.
- ⇒ Take action to meet pupils' personal needs to avoid undue physical or mental stress

Teaching Assistants are required to follow all school policies and the staff code of conduct.

*Please note, this is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the role. It is not a comprehensive list of all tasks that a Teaching Assistant will carry out. The postholder may be required to do other duties appropriate to the level of the role, as directed by the headteacher or SENDCo.*

## Teaching Assistant - Person Specification

CRITERIA	QUALITIES
<b>Qualifications and Training</b>	<p><u>Essential</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 GCSEs or equivalent level, including at least a Grade 4 (previously Grade C) in English and mathematics.</li> </ul> <p><u>Desirable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First-aid training, or willingness to complete it.</li> <li>Manual handling training, or willingness to complete it.</li> <li>Evidence of continuous professional development.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience</b>	<p><u>Desirable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience working in a school environment or other educational setting.</li> <li>Experience of working with children with Special Educational Needs and / or disabilities.</li> <li>Experience planning and delivering learning activities (under supervision).</li> <li>Experience of using strategies to manage challenging behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>	<p><u>Essential</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent level of English, both spoken and written.</li> <li>Excellent verbal and written communication skills.</li> <li>Active listening skills.</li> <li>Good organisational skills.</li> <li>Ability to build effective working relationships with pupils and adults by overcoming any communication barriers.</li> <li>Proven ability to manage a demanding workload, work under pressure and deal with conflicting demands.</li> <li>Knowledge of guidance and requirements around safeguarding children.</li> <li>Knowledge of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).</li> <li>Ability to work in a small team, maintaining confidentiality and excellent working practice.</li> </ul> <p><u>Desirable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills and expertise in understanding the needs of all pupils.</li> <li>Knowledge of how to help adapt and deliver support to meet individual needs.</li> <li>Subject and curriculum knowledge relevant to the role, and ability to apply this effectively in supporting teachers and pupils.</li> <li>Good ICT skills, particularly using ICT to support learning.</li> <li>Understanding of roles and responsibilities within the classroom and whole school context.</li> <li>Understanding of effective teaching methods that create a culture of high expectations in the classroom environment.</li> <li>Knowledge of how to successfully lead learning activities for a group or class of children.</li> <li>Knowledge of how statutory and non-statutory frameworks for the school curriculum relate to the age and ability ranges of the learners they support.</li> <li>Knowledge of how to support learners in accessing the curriculum in accordance with the SEND code of practice</li> </ul>



## Teaching Assistant - Qualified - Person Specification continued

<b>Personal qualities</b>	<u>Essential</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enjoyment of working with children.</li><li>• Ability to work effectively in a team including the proven ability to work creatively and strategically with flexibility and openness to continuous change.</li><li>• Sensitivity and understanding, to help build good relationships with pupils with honesty and integrity.</li><li>• A commitment to getting the best outcomes for all pupils, and promoting the ethos and values of the school.</li><li>• Commitment to safeguarding pupil's wellbeing, welfare and equality.</li><li>• Resilient (including the ability to remain calm under pressure), positive, forward looking and enthusiastic about making a difference.</li><li>• Capacity to inspire, motivate and challenge children and young people.</li></ul>
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*Note: This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the postholder.*



## Selection Process

- ⇒ After the deadline for the position has passed there will be a shortlisting meeting with the Headteacher, Head of Department/Line Manager to review the applications.
- ⇒ Qualifications, experience and suitability for the post will be considered during the shortlisting process.
- ⇒ Unsuccessful applications will be notified by email. Unsuccessful candidates can request feedback by email.
- ⇒ Successful applicants will be invited for interview by telephone or email.
- ⇒ References will be requested at this stage.

**Please stipulate clearly on you application form should you wish for your references not to be checked prior to job offer.**

- ⇒ A formal letter confirming the interview arrangements and plan for the day will then be emailed to candidates including details of documentation that will be required to be presented on the day.
- ⇒ One of the requirements of the day will be to complete a “Declaration of Criminal Record and other information” check.
- ⇒ If you have a DBS certificate from your current work place, you will be required to show this.
- ⇒ Candidates will be required to undergo a formal interview (including safer recruitment questions) and where appropriate a task. All information concerning the day will be provided in the formal letter.
- ⇒ A decision will be made on the day where possible.
- ⇒ Both successful and unsuccessful candidates will be notified by telephone where possible.

For all enquiries about this position please email [jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

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