



Welcome to our first newsletter for prospective parents and members of the local community. It is my intention to publish these regularly over the next two terms to keep you informed about the progress of our new school. Please share our newsletters with your children, friends and interested members of the local community so that we can begin to foster strong partnerships and they can share in our excitement, ready for a flying start in September.

I will use the newsletter to keep you abreast of the school's development, including updates about the buildings at Balcarras and our school at Farm Lane, as well as relevant news about staff recruitment, curriculum planning and transition arrangements. After national offer day on 1<sup>st</sup> March, we will be contacting our families with a welcome pack, but the newsletter will remain an important source of information about how to support your child with the transition to The High School Leckhampton.

If you do have a particular enquiry in between editions, please email or telephone the school. I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have, however trivial they seem.

## Our new website

You will be aware that our school has a website, using the temporary domain name [www.newschoolcheltenham.co.uk](http://www.newschoolcheltenham.co.uk). We will shortly be moving over to our new website which will look and feel a little different. You will still be able to access the new site from our existing domain, as we will only be moving over to the permanent domain name in the summer term. We will gradually populate the new website with key policies and information that all schools are required to publish, so it is worth regularly logging in to see how it is developing.

## Our temporary home at Balcarras



Planning permission for our temporary home at Balcarras was passed by Cheltenham Borough Council at the end of December. The Balcarras Trust have since met with TG Escapes, the contractors, and building work is due to commence on Monday 25th January. We will publish photos in the news section of our website shortly. The Trust is also currently working with the Gloucestershire County Council to confirm the two bus routes that will bring our pupils to the site at Balcarras in September. Details of these routes and information about how parents can apply will be published at the beginning of March, around the time of national offer day. Please look at our website around that time for further information.





## Building a learning school – Teacher recruitment and curriculum planning

One of the most exciting parts of creating a new school is bringing together the teachers and support staff who will bring the school to life. I am currently fully engaged in the intricacies of curriculum planning and staffing for our school. In the next 2 weeks I will have recruited a key senior position in the school, Pastoral Lead Teacher. This person will play a crucial role in shaping the House system and developing the pastoral care of our pupils. I am working with The Trust to secure the very best person for this role and we have taken the approach of recruiting from Baccarras School, as we are seeking an experienced colleague who will share Baccarras' ethos, values and commitment with us, to develop the whole child. Once we have made this appointment, we will be advertising nationally for subject teacher positions and continue staffing our school with first-class teachers who share our vision. It is a very exciting time indeed!

## Remote learning

At the time of writing, it is almost certain that you are engaged in remote learning with your child. I know from personal experience how challenging this can be, balancing the demands of working from home with the technical demands of 'live' lessons. It is important that children in Year 6 continue to apply themselves to their studies as best they can. Time spent learning at home, however challenging, will allow them to develop a great many skills that will help them when they arrive at The High School Leckhampton, not least resilience and independence. Please reassure your children that we will be working closely with their Primary Schools, to understand their experience and progress over the next two terms and we will ensure that our transition plans are supportive, clear and tailored to their needs. I have already arranged several introductory meetings with local Primary school Headteachers and I am looking forward to building strong, relationships with them over the coming months.

**And finally....** I am a strong believer in the value of a great story, so if your child is looking for a great book to read either by themselves or with you, I would strongly encourage you to look at the school reading list website [www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk](http://www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk) for some brilliant suggestions for Year 6 pupils. It is worth looking at the Year 7 reading list if they are already strong readers. A quick straw poll of current Year 7 pupils at Baccarras identified these amongst their favourites when they were in Year 6:



I would be delighted to read any book reviews or see any inspired illustrations if your children particularly enjoy one on this list.

With very warm wishes

**Helen Wood**  
Headteacher

