

The British College of Benalmádena

Urbanización Torremuelle. Paseo del Genil s/n
29630 Benalmádena Costa, Málaga.

School's regional authorisation number: 29001029

Date of Inspection: 26/05/2023

Inspection Team:

(Lead Inspector) Gill Kaye
(Team Inspector) Joan Gemmell

Reason for the Inspection: to reauthorise the whole school as British, from Pre- Nursery (1 year old) to Year 13 (18 years old).

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from **Pre-Nursery** (age 1) to **Year 13** (age 18) for a period of **4 years** for **1400 pupils**.

The next inspection is due in May 2027.

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N.B. A NABSS inspection does not infer membership of the Association. Authorised schools may apply for NABSS membership.

History and Context of the School:

The British College of Benalmádena was established in September 2000 and is family owned. It is housed in a purpose – built building in the urbanisation of Torremuelle on the coast of Benalmádena. Over the years the school has grown considerably and now in its 23rd year, has 805 pupils on roll. They are aged between one and 18 years. Over 40 nationalities are represented by pupils in the school, but the largest groups are Spanish and British.

Accommodation and Resources:

The premises have four floors with disabled access throughout. The school provides a high quality learning environment. All classrooms are well resourced and well organised.

There are seven play areas for both sports and recreation, as well as an indoor gymnasium and two outdoor multi-purpose sports areas with tiered seating for spectators.

The Pre-Nursery and Foundation Stage areas are extremely attractive and extremely well resourced with easy access to outdoor learning spaces. There is an enclosed garden where the children can observe and tend to vegetables and plants.

Stimulating displays in classrooms and corridors are used to support and consolidate learning, create a positive learning environment, and allow students to show their progress.

Specialist rooms include four science laboratories, one exclusively for primary children, an art room, a well resourced music room with practice rooms, two information and communications technology (ICT) rooms with a total of 55 computers, and various well resourced libraries. Accommodation also includes a large hall which is used for school performances and assemblies, and two study rooms solely for the use of Key Stage 5 students, one of them with an additional 15 computers. Sixth form students take full advantage of these rooms during their supervised study periods.

Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for all ages.

Overall, the accommodation is extremely attractive and has a positive impact on pupils' learning, creating learning opportunities in an exceptionally stimulating environment.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

The school campus is managed very well so that it provides a clean, safe and secure environment for all pupils. The school has a high level of security with CCTV monitors throughout classrooms and public areas.

Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. Safeguarding policies and procedures are thorough and are a high priority for all staff in the school.

The school has a fully equipped infirmary and a full time, qualified doctor who works effectively to respond to students' and teachers' needs. Staff who provide intimate care to children in Pre-nursery and Nursery classes have a high awareness of child protection issues. They recognise the importance of maintaining the dignity of the child while also encouraging the children to care for themselves.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and enable the pupils to grow rapidly in maturity and confidence. The high level of support provided for the students is one of the reasons why achievement is outstanding.

Healthy eating and the benefits of physical exercise are emphasised.

Fire drills are carried out regularly and suitably recorded. Hoses and extinguishers are appropriately placed in corridors throughout the school.

Risk assessment policies are documented for all areas of the school and its activities.

The school carries out the required checks on staff and any other adults working at the school to ensure their suitability to work with children.

The Curriculum:

The curriculum is broad and balanced, well-planned, firmly based on the English National Curriculum, and designed to meet the varying needs of all pupils. It promotes the key attributes of teamwork, participation and tolerance, alongside high levels of attainment and progress.

Curriculum policies are supported by appropriate planning and schemes of work. The language of instruction is English. Spoken English throughout the school is excellent. This was clearly seen in a Reception class where a child pretending to be a travel agent was selling a holiday to another child who was pretending to be a customer, describing the destination in articulate language.

A system of rewards effectively celebrates pupils' successes, efforts and achievements.

Extra-curricular provision is excellent. A wide range of after-school activities is offered, including orchestra, ballet, judo, drama and choir.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) forms an integral part of the curriculum at all levels. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible, to help others and to be respectful and supportive of each other.

A sixth form career advisor team provides assistance with university applications and career guidance. The emphasis is on helping students to be successful beyond school. Students access universities both in Spain and in the United Kingdom.

Three academic reports are issued throughout the year for each child and include personal statements where children add what they have enjoyed and their personal targets for improvement.

Staffing:

Staff are well qualified and effectively deployed throughout the school. Teaching assistants are also well deployed and effectively used to support learning throughout the school.

In the secondary school, where the growth of staff parallels the growth in the numbers of secondary students, senior members of staff are responsible for the induction of any new teachers. This allows the school to monitor very closely the performance of new staff, to support them, and to make them aware of the school's high expectations.

Staff retention is very good. There is a good mix of longstanding teachers and new arrivals. Professional development opportunities are good. For example, NABSS conference workshops and regional training courses, and INSET such as 'teaching to the top'. This results in a classroom ethos with enquiry at its heart and where purposeful talk dominates learning and promotes thinking skills. The school also hosts training workshops for Cambridge International Examinations.

Staff-pupil ratios are very good.

Teaching and Learning:

The quality of teaching ranges from very good to outstanding. Overall, it is very good. The depth of the secondary teachers' subject knowledge, their skilful use of questioning and their high expectations are a significant strength of the school. The best lessons are characterised by enthusiasm, dynamic teaching, engaging pupils in learning and making sure that all the pupils make progress, including those with special educational needs.

Challenging work is set that is closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, higher ability children were asked to work as a group to calculate and programme how many moves would be needed for the Beebot to reach a certain destination. As a result, the children were learning the mathematical skills of estimating distance and the ICT skills of reprogramming the robot.

All pupils have opportunities to learn including those identified as more able or with particular talents.

Support is provided by highly personalised, targeted interventions and where necessary, may involve adjustment in learning objectives coordinated by the special educational needs coordinator.

Detailed planning and the use of a wide variety of teaching styles such as guided group work, learning partners and immediate feedback about success, and suitable resources result in all pupils making very good progress. Overall teaching methods and activities match pupils' different learning styles and ensure effective learning for all.

All work is marked appropriately according to the task and is consistent throughout the school. Constructive feedback is given and guidance for future development helps students to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do next. Student self-evaluation is encouraged wherever possible. One child commented that they learn to identify their own successes and to look for ways to improve.

The teachers create attractive learning environments that support learning in class and promote good standards of children's work. In Pre-Nursery, teachers provide opportunities for children to learn through active play and exploration. As a result, children improve their knowledge of the world around them.

The students enjoy working together in the classroom and solving problems as a team. A primary history class was involved in evaluating primary and secondary sources and examining the purpose and motive behind various written articles. Pupils were able to distinguish between prime historical documents and second-hand accounts.

Children are happy, conscientious and purposeful, enjoying a wide variety of stimulating and creative tasks.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the standard of teaching is outstanding. Topic-based activities are very well-planned and there are excellent opportunities for child-initiated play and teacher led learning both inside and outside the classroom. Children are asked relevant questions to ensure understanding and encouraged by appropriate praise. Lessons are stimulating and engaging, and children work well together in pairs and in groups. In a Reception class, one child described a drawing of her dog who had only three legs using very mature vocabulary such as 'surgery' and 'amputate'.

Year 2 children are working well above the expected levels in both in reading and writing. They work and speak confidently and are able to write coherent narratives.

Teachers use a range of activities and styles of learning to keep students engaged and motivated. In the best lessons, skilled questioning and good quality feedback ensure that students know how well they are doing and how to improve. This was evident in an outstanding Key Stage 3 English lesson where pupils researched questions on how Shakespeare created tension in Macbeth and the activity helped to develop their understanding very effectively.

Key Stage 4 and 5 teachers plan lessons that are focussed on pupils achieving well in the external examinations. The teachers' strong subject knowledge gives authority to their teaching styles which engage pupils and encourage thinking. Continual references are made to external examination style questions and answer technique.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are a significant strength and a testament to the school's successful achievement of its aim to enable pupils to achieve excellence. Last year, Key Stage 4 and 5 students were the recipients of nine Cambridge Outstanding Learner awards. Overall, the school has received 92 Cambridge Outstanding Learner Awards for Top in Spain and Top in the World results.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.

Assessment:

A well embedded framework for assessment is in place to assess pupils' performance and to track progress. Assessment information is used systematically in planning teaching.

Great importance is given to homework to consolidate and extend learning skills. Homework is assessed and constructive feedback given.

All work is marked in line with the whole school marking policy. The school follows an assessment for learning approach with constant feedback to students, giving them indicators to improve their own performance and informing teachers' subsequent planning. Summative assessment provides the periodic opportunity to evaluate what has been taught and learnt.

In the EYFS, the seven areas of development are tracked for each individual child. Early learning goals are met by all pupils by the end of this stage and in some cases exceeded. Learning journals are kept for all children with appropriate comments, photographs and evidence of assessed work.

Progress checks at age two are carried out for every child in Nursery. Apart from contributing to the usual cycle of observing, assessing, and planning, the other main purpose of this progress check at age two is to identify, record and enable early intervention should any delays or difficulties emerge. A short summary of the child's stage of development in the prime areas is written and a professional judgement is made on whether or not that development falls within the expected range for their age. This forms the basis of the discussion with parents at the progress check at age two meeting. This meeting is also an opportunity for teachers to plan the next steps for the child, and to consider ways in which they can be further supported in their development.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

Very positive relationships exist between all members of the school and a family atmosphere is apparent.

Pupils are welcomed by staff; by name as they come into school in the morning. Pupils spoken to said they very much enjoyed school.

PSHE is given a high profile and pupils are given opportunities to develop confidence. Assemblies are held regularly, and celebrations and concerts enable children to develop self-confidence particularly in musical and sporting activities.

The head girl and head boy, their deputies and prefects are all actively involved in the organisation of special school events such as the Christmas concert, and summer fair. A 'guardian angels system' provides help and support for new pupils, accompanying them through daily procedures and making sure they feel at home.

Great emphasis is placed on the value of cultural diversity and in helping those in need. The school was named ambassador in Spain for Save the Children in recognition of its work, for example for children in Ukraine. The school raised money and purchased medical equipment for Ukrainian hospitals.

Leadership and Management:

Effective leadership and management across the school result in a continual drive for improving the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are responsible for the academic management of the school and lead with an enthusiastic passion for learning. They inspire both staff and pupils.

A dedicated, competent management team shares the aspirations of the leaders, fulfilling their responsibilities and ensuring standards are met.

There is a secure process for managing the performance of teachers which includes observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and regular 'pop ins'. This readily identifies strengths and weaknesses and establishes areas for development. Appraisal is linked to the school development plan. Staff feel it is a supportive process. As a result, the school achieves a good balance between holding staff to account and providing a supportive environment for teachers to work in.

The leaders aim to create a sense of community with bonds of friendship and mutual support. They seek and succeed in offering an education with academic rigour supporting the values of the British National curriculum.

Conclusion:

The British College of Benalmádena offers a high-quality British education which meets the needs of all its pupils. The curriculum is rich and inspiring. Behaviour is exemplary and as a result, pupils make good progress and become confident and articulate learners

Response to the previous inspection report:

The marking of pupils' work and feedback in Key stages 3 and 4 are now systematic and matches the high quality seen in the primary classes. There is appropriate and constructive feedback and guidance for future development.

The school has maintained the high standards of behaviour, attainment and leadership, which are fundamental to the school's success throughout all key stages.

Recommendations:

Continue to maintain the many existing strengths of the school, particularly the high expectations, skilled teaching and the supportive family atmosphere.