

Benalmádena International College

Calle Catamáran, Nueva Torrequebrada, 29630, Benalmádena Costa

School's regional authorisation number: 29001078

Date of Inspection:

Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th March 2019

Inspection Team:

Richard Cook	(Lead Inspector)
Heather Muntaner	(Team Inspector)
Janice Short	(Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

- to authorise the school's Pre-Nursery department
- to re-authorise Nursery to Year 13 as British

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from Pre-Nursery (1-2 years) to Year 13 (17-18 years) for a period of 2 years for 420 pupils. The next inspection is due in March 2021.

*Schools are **authorised** by regional authorities after **inspection** by NABSS (or another recognised inspection service) and **certification** by the British Council.*

Schools should not refer to themselves as being authorised by the British Council, NABSS nor any other inspection service. Schools must not use the logos of any of these organisations in their publicity. NABSS member schools may use the NABSS logo.

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:

Benalmádena International College was established in 1997 and moved to its current purpose-built premises in a residential area of Benalmádena, Málaga, in 2001. The school is privately owned by its founder via the company The Benalmádena International College S.L. Currently there are almost 300 pupils on roll, a quarter of whom are British, a quarter Spanish, and the rest made up of a very diverse range of nearly thirty different nationalities.

The school was last inspected in 2012 and authorised for pupils from Nursery to Year 13. The purpose of this inspection is to re-authorise the whole school as British, but this time also including the new Pre-Nursery department.

Accommodation and Resources:

The school provides accommodation and resources appropriate for the delivery of the British curriculum.

The school grounds currently consist of three buildings, separated by outdoor sports pitches and playgrounds. The main building has four floors and houses all of the secondary classes, as well as some classrooms for upper primary pupils. In addition to this, there are spacious reception and office areas. Some good use is made of display in these main entrance areas to celebrate pupils' achievements.

The second building was formerly an accommodation block for boarders, but currently houses the classrooms for Pre-Nursery to Year 4 pupils. These classes are in this temporary accommodation whilst a new three floor primary building is constructed. Work is due to commence on this imminently.

The final building has a large cafeteria on the lower floor, which includes a spacious terraced area, and an indoor games room on the upper floor, containing table tennis and pool tables.

The classrooms are adequate in size and suitably furnished. The school provides good specialist facilities, including three science laboratories, three computer rooms, an art workshop and a number of large spaces which can be used for drama, dance and for hosting assemblies. The school library also acts as a study area for older students. In addition to the well-equipped computer rooms, a number of tablet computers are available. There is also a computer and large television screen in each classroom and these are used regularly to good effect.

There are excellent and spacious outdoor sports facilities which are used well during physical education lessons. It is envisaged that in the future pupils will also have access to a swimming pool and indoor sports facilities in a new sports and leisure centre which is currently under construction behind the existing school buildings.

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) pupils have direct access to an outdoor area, which contains a variety of suitable equipment. Staff encourage children to play and to be adventurous when doing so. Whilst well utilised during break times, more activities should be carefully planned for the outdoors during the day.

There are sufficient toilets for the current number of pupils, including disabled facilities. One changing table and one changing mat are available in the Pre-Nursery classes and there is an area for the storage and preparation of food for these pupils.

There is a lift in the main building.

There is a wide range of printed resources, although some, whilst remaining in good condition, are not related to the current curriculum and therefore are of reduced usefulness. This is especially true of reading resources in the EYFS and key stage one, which do not allow children to use synthetic phonics when learning to read.

Whilst there are sufficient practical resources to teach the curriculum, the number and range in the EYFS and primary classes will need to be increased across all subject areas if pupil numbers grow so as not to inhibit opportunities for hands on learning.

Health and Safety:

The school premises are safe and access to them is carefully controlled and monitored.

There are clear policies related to health and safety and these matters are also overseen by an external company.

Evacuation procedures are clearly displayed and fire drills, overseen by the local fire brigade, held regularly.

Two members of staff are designated first aiders. A clear log is kept of accidents and of when medication is administered. A nearby local hospital is used for the treatment of more serious incidents. The school must now ensure that at least one member of staff working in the Pre-Nursery classes holds a paediatric first aid certificate.

Whilst the current temporary facilities are adequate, the school plans to vastly improve changing, food preparation and medical storage facilities for the youngest pupils in the new primary building.

The school has written safeguarding and child protection guidance and this is shared with all staff. However, it currently lacks sufficient detail of procedures and protocols. The school must appoint a designated person with responsibility for this area and ensure that they receive training in current Spanish legislation, along with best practice from the UK. This should include an intimate care policy for those working with the very youngest children.

The school has performed the required checks on all members of staff to ensure they are not on the sexual offences register in Spain. However, for several staff, this was not done until well after they had joined the school. Managers are aware that from now on it is vital that detailed background checks are carried out on all adults who work in the building before they begin employment.

Chemicals are kept securely in a locked room adjacent to one of the science laboratories. The school currently does not have a fume cupboard to ensure the safe dispersal of chemicals.

There is a very clear behaviour management policy which is consistently followed. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they move around the school sensibly and safely. They are well supervised.

The current staff to pupil ratios in the EYFS are adequate, although will need to be increased if pupil numbers grow, to ensure they continue to meet requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Curriculum:

The curriculum is clearly based on the English national curriculum and early years foundation stage curriculum. There is a suitable balance between English and Spanish subjects.

A large effort has been made to improve and standardise schemes of work for each subject and planning is monitored by senior management. On the whole, an adequate amount of time is scheduled for each subject, although, at present, whilst there are some opportunities for musical activities, the school does not fully cover the requirements of the music curriculum, nor does it teach personal, social and health education (PSHE) beyond key stage three.

Activities in the EYFS are based around the early learning goals, although currently insufficient emphasis is placed on physical development. Activities in other areas tend to be teacher led for much of the time, with pupils allowed fewer opportunities to initiate learning for themselves than would typically be seen.

The school offers a satisfactory range of course options at IGCSE and A-level, as well as a small number of vocational BTEC qualifications.

Whilst some effort is made to use planning to identify measures to support specific children's needs, the school does not currently have a special educational needs co-ordinator and does not produce or implement individual education plans for students with additional needs. As a consequence, there is inconsistency in the quality and effectiveness of support offered.

Several opportunities are provided for off-site learning, including local excursions, overnight camping and overseas trips. The school also plays a prominent role in organising and participating in sporting events with other schools. Older students studying vocational courses are given opportunities to collaborate with local businesses.

The school provides some extra-curricular activities, including football, basketball and judo.

Staffing:

The vast majority of teaching staff is appropriately qualified and teachers are generally deployed in their areas of specialism. Senior managers demonstrate a strong commitment to employing the best staff they can.

Staff retention is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and express a strong commitment to the school.

Monthly staff meetings provide some opportunities for staff development.

Teaching and Learning:

The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in a number of instances is good or better.

The best lessons follow the school's own guidance for teaching. The teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, ensure pupils understand clearly what is to be learnt, and provide sufficient opportunity for them to develop their skills and work in depth. The lessons are engaging and allow pupils to work collaboratively.

In general, lessons are well paced and behaviour management is good. Pupils demonstrate a keen desire to learn.

However, where teaching is only satisfactory, it is because it contains some of the following elements. In some classes learning objectives are not clear and pupils are not sufficiently aware of how to complete tasks successfully. In others, the lessons lack variety and are tightly controlled by the teacher, meaning that pupils are passive. As a consequence they are not always sufficiently challenged or given enough opportunity to develop skills or think deeply. In some lessons all pupils are asked to complete the same tasks and therefore work is not correctly matched to individual pupils' abilities.

English is very clearly the principal language of instruction and pupils of all ages communicate in English willingly. All staff, including auxiliary staff, speak to pupils in English at all times.

The pupils take pride in their work and it is neatly presented. Pieces of extended writing are also displayed in some classrooms and corridors, although primary pupils have relatively few opportunities to write in depth.

Assessment:

Pupils' work is regularly assessed and a record kept of their attainment and effort over time. Tracking has become more systematic and senior managers are beginning to use this assessment data, along with their behaviour tracking systems, to identify where intervention may be required.

The teachers understand how the tracking system works, but currently, until key stage four, rely overmuch on their own judgement of whether pupils have met the expected standard or not because no external assessment data is collected before IGCSE.

Pupils in the EYFS are regularly tracked against the early learning goals, although the current system for record keeping does not make evident the next steps for each child's development.

All pupils' work is marked and the written guidance for how the school expects this to be done has improved since the previous inspection. However, the guidance is not consistently followed and therefore pupils are not always clear about what exactly it is that they have done well or what they could do next to improve further.

Pass rates in external examinations are generally in line with international expectations and results in some subjects, usually where the best teaching was observed, are very good. There is also some excellent individual performance from some students.

There is good communication between school and home. The school updates parents regularly on its website and has recently introduced a mobile application. Written reports are sent to parents twice per year and are now much more detailed, following the introduction of a computerised system for composing them. Parents also have several opportunities through the year to meet personally with teachers.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural

The school provides a clear statement of its ethos and sets high expectations for pupils' conduct. These expectations are met well. There is a pleasant atmosphere throughout the school and a clear sense of mutual respect between children of different ages and backgrounds, and between pupils and staff. The school has also demonstrated its commitment to this area by appointing a pastoral manager to oversee all aspects related to pupils' social development.

Leadership and Management:

The founder of the school remains the director and he continues to have oversight of the whole project. He is passionate about the school and plays a very visible role in driving and promoting the school's ethos. He helps to ensure that the school functions well on a day-to-day level.

The director is supported for four days per week by the principal and, since last September, by a vice-principal, both of whom have relatively full teaching timetables. Additional positions of responsibility have recently been created, such as key stage co-ordinators and heads of department. However, these middle managers have had little guidance and training to prepare them for these roles and have limited time to carry out their responsibilities. As a consequence they are not yet able to influence others or drive school improvement to the extent that they would like.

The director and principal have undertaken a full review of the school and devised a development plan based on their findings. At present, whilst they can informally bring forward ideas and suggestions, teachers have no formal opportunity to contribute directly to the development process, although it is intended that they will do from now on.

Senior managers do observe teachers for appraisal purposes, although currently this does not always happen as often as they would wish.

Response to the previous inspection report:

- The school now has a clear marking policy and all work is marked. However, the quality remains inconsistent and so it is still the case that marking does not always effectively inform students of what they have done well and what they could do next to improve further.
- Reading resources in key stage one remain dated and of limited usefulness.

Recommendations:

The school should:

- ensure a full safeguarding and child protection policy is systematically implemented, a lead person is designated to have responsibility for this area, and that full background checks are carried out on all staff before they begin working alongside children;
- review its management structure, giving clear roles and responsibilities to middle leaders and ensuring they have sufficient time and greater responsibility for helping to improve teaching and learning. Provide the relevant professional development opportunities to allow this to happen effectively;
- appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator to oversee the effective co-ordination of support for pupils with additional needs and to help ensure that teachers provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils;
- increase the amount and range of reading books and practical resources, including those needed to cover all the requirements of the national curriculum in music.