



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

British Schools Overseas

Inspection Report

The Benalmadena International College

November 2021

Contents

School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
Part 1 – Quality of education provided	6
Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	7
Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	8
Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	8
Part 6 – Provision of information	9
Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	9
Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	9
3. Inspection Evidence	10

School's Details

School	The Benalmadena International College			
Address	The Benalmadena International College C. Catamarán s/n Nueva Torrequebrada 29630 Benalmádena Costa Málaga Spain			
Telephone number	+34 952 56 16 66			
Email address	info@bic-benal.com			
Principal	Mr Keith Ellis			
Proprietor	Mr Keith Ellis			
Age range	1 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	156			
	Early years	7	Juniors	64
	Seniors	76	Sixth Form	9
Inspection dates	18 to 19 November 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Benalmadena International College (BIC) is a co-educational day school. The college was set up in 1997 by Mr Keith Ellis, who is joint proprietor with Mrs Belinda Ellis. The proprietors are responsible for the governance of the college. The college has completed a new nursery and primary building, which is separate from the senior school and cafeteria. The college also organises homestay facilities for a small number of international students, primarily from Norway. The college is regulated under Royal Decree 806/93. The college was previously inspected by NIS (NABSS Inspection Service) in March 2019. This is the college's first inspection under ISI.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The college aims to provide a dynamic and modern British education for a multi-national community. It strives to build on pupils' individual strengths to prepare them for the challenges and excitement of life as young adults, in an environment which is ordered, secure and caring. The college endeavours to create a positive, happy atmosphere in which pupils are able to take pride in their achievements in an environment of mutual respect, courtesy and consideration for others. The college motto is, 'building inner confidence'.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional families with over 25 different nationalities who have chosen to live and work in Spain. Data provided by the college show that the overall ability profile of the pupils is average in comparison to other similar schools in Spain. The college has identified four pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), three of whom receive additional support from the college. One hundred and seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom five receive support for their development of English from the college and additional agencies. The needs of the more able are recognised through work set by teachers to meet their individual requirements.

2. Inspection of Standards for British Schools Overseas

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting independent schools in England and overseas.

Inspections for British schools overseas follow closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England. ISI reports to the English Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO). It also takes account, where relevant, of compliance with any local requirements. Schools may opt for an inspection of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include: an exhaustive health and safety audit; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures; an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment or company law; in-depth consideration of the extent to which the school meets the requirements of local law and custom.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the Standards for British Schools Overseas. The standards represent minimum requirements, and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. In order to gain BSO accreditation, a school is required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report. If a school does not meet all of the standards, it may elect to be re-inspected once it has taken the required actions in order to gain BSO accreditation.

Headline judgements against the Standards for British Schools Overseas indicate that the standards have been 'met' or 'not met' for accreditation.

Accreditation as a British school overseas lasts for three years. The school's previous inspection was in March 2019.

Key findings

- 2.1 The college meets all the Standards for British Schools Overseas and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Part 1 – Quality of education provided

2.2 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

- 2.3 The college has appropriate policies and schemes of work in place. These consider the age range of the pupils and any individual needs, such as those with SEND, EAL and the more able. Due to relatively small class sizes, each teacher follows the specific units of study in each subject and adapts it accordingly to meet the needs of the pupils. In the early years, the planned activities meet the children's levels of development and are dynamic in content and approach. Older pupils work towards IGCSEs and A levels, where the subject availability is limited due to the relatively low numbers of teaching staff and pupils. The college has begun to introduce remote learning for some A levels to combat this, working closely with a company in the UK.
- 2.4 The breadth of the curriculum is suitable. It covers all core and non-core subject areas effectively. However, opportunities for musical development and practical sciences are more limited. Pupils develop a good understanding of English and additional support is provided when required, either by class teachers or through specialist input. All pupils learn Spanish. The college has an appropriate scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which also incorporates age related sections on relationships and sex education. In discussions, pupils feel that this helps them to be well prepared for the next stages of their lives. A recently appointed head of sixth form has ensured that there are appropriate arrangements in place for careers guidance. This includes links with universities and the workplace. Opportunities for this, yet to be fully realised, have been curbed due to Covid-19 restrictions. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a majority of parents and small minority of pupils felt that there was not a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. The range, though not extensive, suitably reflects the size of the college. Access to any activities are currently restricted due to Covid-19.
- 2.5 Teaching at the college enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and to make good progress. Pupils of all ages enjoy their learning and strive to give of their best. They are capable of being competent and independent learners, especially when the teaching allows them to think for themselves and to challenge their own learning. This judgement reflects the opinions of pupils in their questionnaire responses, where a few felt that lessons, including any online, were not interesting and challenging. The teachers know their pupils well and are thus able to plan to meet their individual needs. Teaching demonstrates secure subject knowledge and appropriate use is made of resources, which are limited in certain subjects. Pupil behaviour is managed effectively by staff across the college. The college has a strong sense of being a British institution and this was confirmed in discussions with both staff and pupils. As such, the teaching does not undermine fundamental British values. There is a focus on mutual respect in all aspects of college life and everyone, irrespective of their background or beliefs, is treated as a valued individual member of an international college community.
- 2.6 There is a suitable framework in place to assess pupils' performance, with older pupils working towards their IGCSEs and A-level examinations. End of unit testing enables staff to plot pupil progress as they move through the college. Informal verbal assessment also ensures that planning meets the needs of all.

Part 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

- 2.8 The college actively promotes fundamental British values through both the college curriculum and the PSHE scheme of work. Pupils speak of how the college feels British due to the celebration of different events, such as Remembrance Day and key royal celebrations. There is mutual respect for, and tolerance of, all members of the college community and individuality is openly celebrated. As a result, the college meets the requirements of The Equality Act (2010) with particular regard to the protected characteristics, notably age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Pupils come from over twenty-five different nationalities and the internationalism that this brings permeates every aspect of college life. There is a sense of tolerance and harmony as pupils work and play together, irrespective of their cultural, religious or ethnic origins. Pupils understand the democratic process and have knowledge of respect for the public institutions of England, such as the legal system and parliamentary arrangements. Pupils develop a strong moral awareness from an early age and understand how their behaviours impact on the fabric of the college society. During discussions, pupils were self-confident and talked openly of the importance of supporting others. Older pupils actively support the youngest children in the college. In discussions, pupils stated that they would like more opportunity to take on positions of responsibility within the college to strengthen their contributions.

Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16] are met.

- 2.10 The college has a suitable safeguarding policy that is implemented effectively. It reflects both the requirements of statutory and non-statutory advice from the United Kingdom, as well as requirements of both the Spanish national government and the Junta of Andalucia. All staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibility, are suitably trained. In discussions, staff feel that their roles as safeguarders have been strengthened through recent training sessions led by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The college's safeguarding team also attends updates for the local junta. The college, led by the proprietor, undertakes an annual review of its safeguarding arrangements. The college has recently strengthened its recruitment procedures and it ensures that all staff, including those who host international pupils, and proprietors have all the required checks. Such checks are carefully recorded. In discussions, pupils state they feel safe in the college and that they would always go to seek support from the college's pastoral leads should the need arise. There is a suitable code of conduct and a whistleblowing policy in place and staff understand their responsibilities in these areas.
- 2.11 Throughout the college good behaviour is promoted through the effective implementation of the behaviour policy. Rewards and sanctions are clearly set out and records show that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. This was also reflected in questionnaire responses, where all staff and almost all parents felt that the college actively promotes good behaviour. Sanctions include community service, such as tidying and cleaning in the college cafeteria. The college's behavioural records enable those with pastoral leadership roles to identify any patterns or trends and respond accordingly. The college rejects the use of corporal punishment.
- 2.12 The college has effective strategies in place to prevent bullying. Cases are rare and are generally handled effectively and swiftly. In their questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils felt that the college does not handle bullying incidents effectively. In discussions, pupils said they feel well supported by pastoral leads throughout the college. However, they felt that some staff did not always take concerns seriously enough. The college recognises that there are potential inconsistencies in this area, but is taking effective steps to address them. The college maintains a log of any bullying incidents and college leaders analyse any entries to determine how they can strengthen the arrangements for the benefit of all pupils.
- 2.13 The college has a suitable health and safety policy which is implemented effectively. The proprietor has overall responsibility for all health and safety matters and ensures that local laws in this area are

met. Any health and safety concern that is identified, is dealt with promptly to ensure the safety of all on the college site. The college maintains a log of all health and safety checks undertaken.

- 2.14 The college ensures that it meets all fire regulations as set out by the Spanish government. Staff receive appropriate training on fire prevention and fire safety. The administrative team maintain logs of checks on all fire apparatus. All evacuation routes are clearly labelled and are free from obstructions. The college undertakes regular fire drills, and in discussions, pupils stated that they knew what to do in the event of the fire alarm being sounded.
- 2.15 First aid procedures at the college are appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils. There is always a trained nurse present on site. Staff have received basic first aid at work training which is shortly due for renewal. The college has actioned further training. There are sufficient first aid bags and boxes located around the college ensuring that any first aid can be administered in a timely manner. All medicines are kept locked away in the main college office. The college has an appropriate first aid policy that is implemented effectively.
- 2.16 The college ensures that there are appropriate levels of supervision in place at all times. Children in the early years are always in sight of the staff. In discussions, pupils stated that there was always an adult nearby that they could contact if they needed help.
- 2.17 Appropriate registers of attendance and admissions are properly maintained. Any unexplained daily absences are followed up in a timely manner. Copies of all electronic registers are backed up and kept for a minimum of three years.
- 2.18 The college has a suitable risk assessment policy in place. There are risk assessments undertaken for any area identified as higher risk and these indicate how any potential risk is mitigated. Staff understand how to fill out any risk assessment forms. The college's administration has effective oversight of all risk assessment arrangements, including those required by Spanish law.

Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.19 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**
- 2.20 The college has recently strengthened its recruitment procedures with the development of a safer recruitment policy and the establishment of a single central register of appointments (SCR). Neither had been requirements for previous inspections through NIS. The college ensures that all pre-appointment checks are carried out, reflecting both Spanish requirements and best practice from the United Kingdom. All checks are carried out before the commencement of employment. All staff, including proprietors, have full Spanish police checks including those for criminal and sexual offences. For staff arriving from the UK, a disclosure and barring service check (DBS) or an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) is required. For all staff, suitable checks are also carried out for aspects such as right to work, medical suitability, qualifications and employment history. Appropriate checks are also carried out for those who host pupils from abroad as part of the college's homestay arrangements. All checks are now entered on the college's SCR. Staff files contain relevant appointment information.

Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.21 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**
- 2.22 The college provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for pupils of all ages, which are easily accessible in all buildings. Separate staff toilets are available. The college has appropriate showering facilities for those pupils over the age of eleven. These have previously been used by the summer school, but are now available for senior pupils following any physical education or games activities.

- 2.23 There is suitable accommodation available for the short-term care of sick pupils and for medical examination. It has appropriate washing facilities within the room and is reasonably close to a toilet. The medical accommodation can be effectively supervised by the office staff.
- 2.24 College premises and facilities are maintained to a standard that supports the safety and security of staff and pupils. The acoustics and lighting in classrooms are suitable for the activities that take place therein. There is suitable outdoor lighting to ensure the safety of all when entering or leaving the premises during the hours of darkness.
- 2.25 Toilets have an adequate supply of cold water, whilst wash basins have both hot and cold water. The temperature of the hot water does not pose any risk of scalding. Pupils bring in their own drinking water which they can access during the school day. There is sufficient space for pupils to play and learn outdoors, including areas protected from the hot sun. The early years children have their own secure outside areas. There are suitable dedicated areas for physical education and games.

Part 6 – Provision of information

2.26 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

- 2.27 In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of parents felt that key information relating to aspects such as college policies and procedures, was not readily available. The college has responded to this and recently reviewed its arrangements for providing key policies to parents and for parents of prospective pupils. The college's website now contains all required information including: policies and particulars of arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; provision for SEND and EAL; the college's academic performance; complaints procedure; curriculum policy; arrangements for promoting good behaviour, preventing bullying, health and safety and first aid. The website also contains details for the college and the proprietor. The college's safeguarding policy is also made available on the website. Parents are provided with an annual written report of their child's progress and attainment.

Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.28 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

- 2.29 The college's complaints procedure is made available to parents through the website. The complaints procedure has four stages which allows initial consideration on an informal basis by either the class or subject teacher in the first instance. If a parent is not satisfied, they can then make an informal complaint to the heads of section. If there is not a satisfactory resolution the complainant may then move to a formal stage and make their complaint, in writing, to the college's proprietor. Should there still be no resolution then the college's final stage would be evoked. This makes provision for a hearing before a panel which includes independent members not involved with the management or running of the college. Parents attending the panel hearing may be accompanied if they wish. The policy makes provision for the panel to make findings and recommendations and for a confidential record to be kept of findings. At any point, the complainant may also fill out the Spanish complaint form which is kept at the college office.

Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.30 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

- 2.31 A small minority of parents, in their questionnaire responses, felt that the college is not led and managed well. The college has recently re-structured its senior leadership team. This has strengthened the skills and knowledge required, so that college leaders can fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that the BSO standards are met. The college's leadership and management know the pupils in their care, and they actively promote their well-being.

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick and injured pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mr Graham Gorton

Reporting inspector

Mrs Dawn Akyurek

Team inspector (Head, BSO school, Spain)