



International School of Madrid

Primary: C/ Rosa Jardón, 3 28016 Madrid
Telephone: 91 359 21 21 **Fax:** 91 359 07 22
E-mail: ISMPRIMARY@terra.es

Secondary: C/ Serrano Galvache, 13 28033 Madrid
Telephone: 91 302 30 80, 91 3024473 **Fax:** 91 302 66 53
E-mail: ismadrid@terra.es

Internet: www.internationalschoolofmadrid.com

Head teacher: Mrs. Mazón

Information to parents (Secondary)

After offering a quality primary education for 25 years, the **INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MADRID** (formerly the International Primary School) opened a new chapter in its history, with the creation of the **secondary section** in September 1996.

In September 2000 Years 8 to 13 moved to the new building, in Serrano Galvache 13, being joined by Year 7 in September 2001.

With its emphasis on meeting the needs of the whole person and on the quality and effectiveness of the learning process, the secondary section aims to prepare its students to be as well equipped as possible to face the challenges of a changing world.

The Curriculum at I.S.M. has been specially designed to meet the needs of both Spanish and non-Spanish students in Madrid. Whilst it is based on the **English National Curriculum**, and the academic examinations which are recognised for entry into universities in Britain, the curriculum permits Spanish students to follow these studies whilst at the same time satisfying the curriculum requirements of the Spanish government for the education of Spanish students in non-Spanish schools.

The information below seeks to explain the main characteristics of the teaching system in I.S.M. which follows the **English National Curriculum**. This is done through a description of the examination courses taken at the school, which is an official examination centre for Cambridge International Examinations, part of Cambridge Assessment (formerly U.C.L.E.S. - The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) and EDEXCEL.

I. Studies that are offered by the International School of Madrid

General

Students in the International School of Madrid study a teaching programme which is specifically designed to suit their needs. Whilst all students study a range of subjects which are based on the British **National Curriculum** programme, and which prepare them for entry into British universities, Spanish students also study the **Spanish subjects** required by the Spanish Ministry thus validating their studies and ensuring an excellent preparation for entry into Spanish universities, having in addition the very high level of English obtained in I.S.M.

In Years 7 to 11 students could be set in some subjects according to their level, for instance in French and Mathematics in Key Stage Three (Years 7-9). As both sets are timetabled at the same time pupils can be moved between groups in order to match their progress better.

Studies and examinations in the International School of Madrid.

There are five types of external examinations taken in I.S.M.

- A) The **IGCSE** examinations, taken in Year 11 and some in Year 10 (English as a Second Language, Spanish as a Foreign Language).
- B) The **GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS)** examinations, which are taken in Years 12 and 13. ISM is an official examination centre for Cambridge International Examinations and Edexcel.
- C) The **K.E.T., P.E.T., F.C.E., C.A.E. (Advanced) and C.P.E. (Proficiency)** examinations of Cambridge ESOL.
- D) **End of Key Stage Tests (SATs)**, taken in Year 9. Some **Progress Tests** are taken in Year 7 for pupils not reaching the required level in Year 6.
- E) In addition students in Years 8 and 9 take the French **Alliance Française** examinations (Prep., CAF, etc).

The information below gives you more details about these examinations.

A) IGCSE EXAMINATIONS.

To understand what IGCSE is we need to explain first what GCSE means.

i) What are G.C.S.E.s?

G.C.S.E. means 'General Certificate of Secondary Education'. These are examinations which all pupils in the United Kingdom (except Scotland) have to take at the end of their compulsory period of education, usually at 16 year of age. They consist of a programme of studies in a number of compulsory and optional subjects taken over two years, in Years 10 and 11. Within the Spanish educational system this corresponds to 3º and 4º of ESO.

ii) What are IGCSEs?

The IGCSE is the international version of the GCSE. The IGCSEs taken through Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) are recognised world wide as an appropriate qualification to be taken by pupils of this age. The main difference between the GCSEs and the IGCSEs is that in some areas they have been restructured to give a more international flavour to the courses.

iii) The significance of the IGCSE qualification

The marking system is as follows: Grades A,B,C,D,E,F,G are given, a grade **C** being regarded as a pass mark. Most institutions of higher education in the UK demand 5 IGCSE passes with a minimum of a C grade.

The grades correspond to the Spanish numbering system in the following way:-

<u>IGCSE</u>		<u>Spanish System</u>
A+	.....	10
A	.....	9
B	.....	7,25
C	.....	5,5
D	.....	3

iv) An examination for pupils of all abilities

The IGCSE is designed to examine pupils of all abilities. Within some subjects, including Maths, Science and Economics, there are two optional levels: **Core** and **Extended**. Extended is designed for those pupils who are capable of achieving an A or a B grade.

Although all the pupils of the International School of Madrid will study both levels, there will be some pupils to whom it could be recommended **not** to take the Extended level in certain subjects as they are more likely guaranteed a pass at C grade by taking the Core level. This decision would be taken in Year 11 (the second year of IGCSE studies).

v) Evaluation of Coursework

One of the most important characteristics of the GCSE exams is that in some subjects, English and Computer Studies at ISM, some of the work that the students complete during the course counts towards the final exam mark. The evaluation of coursework varies from 20 - 40% of the final grade.

vi) Subjects in Years 10 and 11

Students follow a two-year course in *compulsory* and *optional* subjects, being examined at the end of Year 11. In many cases they will have already taken and passed two IGCSEs (English as a Second Language and Spanish as a Foreign Language) before they commence Year 11 studies.

There are **five** compulsory IGCSE subjects for all the pupils, and a number of optional subjects. In addition to IGCSE courses, all Spanish students study **Spanish subjects** required by the Spanish Ministry. In Years 10 and 11, which is equivalent to 3º and 4º E.S.O., the subjects are '**Lengua y Literatura Española y Sociedad (Historia)**'.

vi a) *Compulsory Subjects*

English Language, Mathematics, Co-ordinated Science (a Double Award IGCSE in Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and **IGCSE Spanish Literature** are compulsory subjects for all the students with very rare exceptions.

- This gives a total of **5** IGCSE certificates.

Lengua y Literatura Española and **Sociedad (Historia)** are also compulsory for the Spanish pupils.

vi b) Optional subjects

The **International School of Madrid** offers a number of suitable IGCSEs which can give the pupils in each case the chance to study subjects useful to them and to achieve the top grade, thus ensuring the validation with the Spanish system.

Students normally choose 3 subjects from the following:

- **History or Computer Studies; Geography or French; Art and Design or Economics.**

If teaching staff consider it appropriate, pupils can also be prepared for one or more of the following subjects, taken in the November or June examination sessions :

- **English Literature, First Language Spanish, First Language English and First Language French.** Other Foreign Languages (Chinese, Portuguese, Italian, Arabic) can also be examined, although tuition for these is arranged privately.

vi c) *Other classes* (not IGCSE exams)

Physical education; Games, or Drama; Religion, or Citizenship (or **Psychology** in Y13).

B) ADVANCED AND AS LEVEL EXAMINATIONS AND SPANISH STUDIES IN THE SIXTH FORM (YEARS 12 AND 13)

i) General

Students are prepared for the **Advanced** Level examinations (known as **A** Levels), and the **Advanced Subsidiary** exams (**AS**) of the University of Cambridge and Edexcel examination board. A and AS Levels are studied in the last two years of school - Years 12 and 13, equivalent to the Spanish 1st and 2nd Bachillerato.

The **A** and **AS** levels consist of a vigorous programme of study and are recognised world wide as an excellent means of entry to a university. The **AS** is studied in Year 12 and is the first part of the full A level. The second part called A level is studied in Year 13. Most students would end up with four A levels, one being Spanish A level .Most British universities require the equivalent of three a levels for entry.

ii) Subjects that are on offer in Years 12 and 13

Each student is advised as to the most suitable options open to them. Normally it is recommended that each student takes **at least four AS levels in Year 12**, in addition to Lengua Española and A level Spanish, and continue with three A levels in Year 13. The Spanish Advanced Level is taken in Year 12 because it is very easy to achieve the highest grade (A*). At ISM all students obtain more than the minimum number of passes needed for validation of studies with the Spanish Ministry.

The following A/AS Level subjects are offered:

* <u>Languages:</u> -	English, French, Spanish
* <u>Mathematics/Sciences/Technology :-</u>	Physics, Chemistry, Biology
*	Mathematics, Computing
* <u>Humanities/Arts:-</u>	History, Geography, Business Studies, Art and Design.

- Spanish students in Years 12 and 13 (1º y 2º de Bachillerato)

The emphasis in Years 12 and 13 is on the Advanced Levels. If students wish to consider entering Spanish universities they can do so through direct access with A levels, or, in a few exceptional cases (the weakest pupils), through a reduced number of Advanced levels to satisfy the minimum requirements, plus the UNED Selectividad ('Convalidables') examinations. This examination is still available for at least one more year, despite information which indicated that it would disappear. No matter if they choose direct access or Selectividad, all students who are thinking of the possibility of applying to Spanish universities study the 'Lengua Española' course of '1º y 2º Bachillerato' plus other Science/Maths or Humanities options in Spanish.

- Other subjects

Students in Years 12 and 13 have one or two period per week of **Physical Education**, and take part in **Sports**, including sporting events against other schools. **Drama** is an option to Games. The school has a long history of productions (*Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores*, de Federico García Lorca (1999); *Las de Caín*, de los hermanos Álvarez Quintero (2001); *Asuntos de Familia* de Alfonso Paso (2002); *La casa de Bernarda Alba* de Federico García Lorca (2005); *West Side Story* (2006); and *Chicago* (2007).

iii) The A and AS level qualification

The official marks that will validate the qualifications of the A and AS level are A,B,C,D and E. **Please note that a pass grade at A/AS level is an 'E'**, not a 'C' as in IGCSE. School reports reflect this difference. The following shows the equivalent marks in the Spanish system:

<u>A or AS Level</u>	<u>Spanish System</u>
A+	10
A	9
B	8
C	7
D	6
E	5,5

C) CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS (K.E.T., P.E.T., F.C.E., C.A.E. AND C.P.E.).

These are the English as a Second Language examinations of the University of Cambridge Examinations Board. They correspond to 'Waystage User', 'Threshold User' and 'Independent User.' Whilst K.E.T. (Key English Test) is a basic qualification in English, and a step towards P.E.T., the latter (Preliminary English Test) gives proof of English language competence at a basic level sufficient to 'survive' in everyday situations.

F.C.E. (First Certificate in English), the most widely taken of all the Cambridge EFL exams, gives proof of competence in English at an intermediate level. It is widely recognised in commerce, industry and educational institutions in Britain and other English-speaking countries.

In **I.S.M.** K.E.T. is taken in **Year 6**, P.E.T. in **Year 7** and FCE in **Year 9**. Cambridge Advanced English (C.A.E.) and Proficiency (C.P.E.) are normally taken in **Years 12 and 13**.

II. University entrance

- British universities:

IGCSE, Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary qualifications are recognised world wide for entrance into university. Entrance to British universities is through U.C.A.S., (www.ucas.com) and the school prepares students well in advance with careers guidance, undertaken by staff. This is concerned with further education and careers, and we have up to date information (including booklets, university prospectuses, leaflets and videos). Three members of staff are responsible for this area, which includes Spanish universities. Teachers take great care to advise students about entrance to British universities, which include Oxford and Cambridge, US or Spanish universities, so that when the time comes to make applications, students are clear about the choices and the entrance process. PSAT and SAT examinations (for US Colleges and Universities) can also be arranged. Students have at their disposal a **Careers** and Further Education section in the Study Room, and have one period per week devoted to careers talks organized by Begoña del Valle, personal investigation and advice from staff. Mr. Joseph Coughlan, the Key Stage 5 Coordinator, is responsible for guidance for entrance to non-Spanish universities, assisted by Mrs. K. Deeprise, Year 12D tutor.

- Spanish universities:

The “Real Decreto” that determines the number of A-Levels required for entrance to Spanish Universities is now published and available in school. (BOE 112, 7 de mayo 2007, N° 9509, páginas 20125-6). The school has prepared more information in order to help pupils and parents to know which subjects are recommended for the different career paths. Ms. Begoña del Valle and Rafael Mialdea are responsible for entrance to Spanish universities.

Students who wish to continue their higher education studies in the USA can take the U.S. College Board examinations (SATs). Pupils register online with College Board - www.collegeboard.com and the tests are taken at different times of the year at the American School of Madrid, a registered centre for the College Board.

Students at ISM can thus choose from the whole international range of university education.

Note on resources:

Web site for UK universities: www.ucas.com

Web site for Cambridge IGCSE and AS/A level syllabuses and past papers: www.cie.org.uk. See the section on Qualifications.

Web site for the Edexcel examination board (University of London): www.edexcel.org.uk. At present used for Advanced Level French, English and English Literature and Spanish.