



## INFORMATION TO PARENTS ABOUT SECONDARY EDUCATION AT BSL & BEYOND

The Secondary department aims to prepare pupils to be as well equipped as possible to face the challenges of a changing world. Emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of the whole person and on the quality and effectiveness of the learning process.

The Curriculum at BSL has been specially designed to meet the needs of both Spanish and non-Spanish pupils at the school. Whilst it is based on the English National Curriculum, and the academic examinations which are recognised for entry into further education and ultimately university in Britain, the curriculum also permits students to cover the necessary requirements stipulated by 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 at BSL through a description of the examination courses taken at the school. BSL is an officially recognised examination centre for Cambridge International Examinations.

### **Studies that are offered by the British School of Lanzarote**

Students at BSL study a teaching programme which is specifically designed to suit their needs. All students study a range of subjects which are based on the English National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and 4 (Years 7 to 11), as well as the Spanish subjects required for validation by the Spanish Ministry, thus ensuring an excellent preparation for entry into British or Spanish further education.

### **Details on studies and examinations at BSL Key Stage 3 & 4**

There are three types of external examinations taken at BSL:

- The End of Key Stage Tests (SATs) are taken in Year 9. They are marked internally and moderated.
- (Internally marked Progress Tests are taken in Year 7 and Year 8).
- F.C.E. (First Certificate in English), examination is taken in Year 9. The F.C.E. gives proof of competence in English at an intermediate level and is widely recognised in commerce, industry and educational institutions in Britain and other English-speaking countries.
- IGCSE examinations, taken in Year 11.

## **IGCSE EXAMINATIONS**

The information below focuses on the Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) curriculum, in which IGCSEs are studied over a two year period and examined at the end of Year 11. To understand what IGCSE is we need to explain first what GCSE means.

### **1) 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 years of age. The G.C.S.E.s consist of a programme of studies in a number of compulsory and optional subjects studied over two years, in Years 10 and 11. Within the Spanish educational system this corresponds to 3º and 4º ESO.

### **2) What are IGCSEs?**

The IGCSE is the international version of the GCSE. The IGCSEs taken through Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) are recognised worldwide 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.

### **3) The significance of the IGCSE qualification**

The marking system is as follows: Grades A, B, C, D, E, F, G may be awarded. Grade C is regarded as an average pass mark. Most institutions of higher education in the UK demand 5 IGCSE passes with a minimum of a C grade.

### **4) An examination for pupils of all abilities**

The IGCSE is designed to examine pupils of all abilities. Within some subjects, including Maths and Science, 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 at BSL have the opportunity of studying 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).

### **5) Evaluation of Coursework**

One of the most important characteristics of the IGCSE examinations is that in some subjects 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. Examples are Art and Design, English Literature and First Language English.

## **6) 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. There are a minimum of nine compulsory IGCSE subjects for all the pupils.

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 3<sup>o</sup> and 4<sup>o</sup> E.S.O., the subjects are Lengua Castellana and Ciencias Sociales. Pupils who do not have Spanish as a first language study Spanish as a Foreign Language during these two years.

Compulsory Subjects for most students are:

English as a First Language; English Literature; Mathematics; Co-ordinated Science (a Double Award IGCSE in Biology, Chemistry and Physics); Spanish; Business Studies; History and Geography.

The Optional Subjects are Art & Design, Italian and ICT.

### **AFTER IGCSE**

At the end of Year 11 pupils can opt to study for Baccalaureate in the Spanish system or for AS and A levels in the British system. These qualifications are necessary to go on to higher education or university. Pupils can also sit examinations at the '*Escuela de Idiomas*' without having taken relevant courses there.

### **VALIDATION**

The education provided at BSL is fully recognised and certified if a pupil moves to a Spanish school at any time.

- Currently formal validation, Homologation, is not necessary for pupils up to and including Year 10 (3<sup>o</sup> E.S.O.). If pupils have completed a certain year successfully at BSL they will be automatically accepted into the following year at a Spanish school.
- Homologation is part of Spanish law for Spanish nationality students and for students of other nationalities that pass 4 E.S.O. and wish to study further in the Spanish system. It is a certificate issued by the Spanish authorities recognizing that a benchmark level of secondary education has been achieved. This is certificate is necessary for further education within the Spanish education system.
- At the end of Year 11 (4<sup>o</sup> E.S.O.) pupils will receive the 'Homologación' certificate providing they have achieved four IGCSE passes (Grades A, B or C) and have pass grades in the internal Lengua Castellano and Ciencias Sociales examinations in based on the Spanish Curriculum.

## UNIVERSITY

After completing Year 12 and 13 in the British system or 1 and 2 Baccalaureate in the Spanish system successfully, pupils have the opportunity to apply to study at Spanish, British or American Universities.

British Universities generally accept applicants with three A Level passes; however it may be possible to gain entry with less. Universities usually ask for certain grades for the pupil's A Level passes, depending on the course and subject.

Students can apply to Spanish universities directly with their A levels. The 'Direct Access' facility is available to non-Spanish schools in Spain for students wishing to enter Spanish Universities. The AS and A2 examination results are converted on a scale system to points based on the UCAS tariff, [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com), (used to calculate A level results for entry to a British University), and the Spanish Ministry of Education has fixed the equivalences of this tariff for the combination of grades for different university subjects (See the UNED web site). The grade that pupils achieve through Direct Access is equivalent to the 'Fase General' of the new examination for entrance to Spanish public universities.

| <i>British System</i>   | <i>Spanish System</i>   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 3 A-Levels (one in Spanish) = Eligible for direct access to Spanish Universities (According to the Spanish Law: '<i>Orden EDU/1161/2010, de 4 de mayo; de aplicación al artículo 38.5 de la Ley Orgánica 2/2006 del 3 de mayo; Ley orgánica 8/2013-Real decreto 412/2014 6 junio</i>').</li> <li>✓ Disappearance of the examination: PAU does not affect eligibility for direct access.</li> <li>✓ Specific Stage optional (University Access LOMCE).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Passes must be obtained in all 1<sup>o</sup> &amp; 2<sup>o</sup> Spanish Baccalaureate subjects studied in order to be eligible for university access.</li> <li>✓ PAU examination was obligatory in 2016. (General phase + Specific phase).</li> <li>✓ Proof of passing Spanish Baccalaureate is obligatory from 2017. (LOMCE)</li> <li>✓ Spanish University Entrance Examinations from 2017.</li> </ul> |
| <i>University Access in Spain, Europe &amp; USA.</i>  | <i>University Access in Spain</i>   |