

## The British College of Gavá

Carrer Josep Lluís Sert 32, 08850, Gavá, Barcelona

**School's regional authorisation number:** 08074884

### **Date of Inspection:**

9<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### **Inspection Team:**

Richard Cook (Lead Inspector)

Michael Wickham (Team Inspector)

### **Reason for the Inspection:**

to evaluate the provision in key stage five for re-authorisation as British

### **Overall Recommendation:**

The school is recommended for authorisation from Year 12 (17 years) to Year 13 (18 years) for a period of **2 years** for **80 pupils**. The next inspection is due in March 2023.

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## History and Context of the School:

The British College of Gavá was founded in 2015 and is located to the south of the city of Barcelona. It is privately owned and forms part of the Excellence in Education group. The school admits pupils from Nursery to Year 13. There are currently 303 on roll, half of whom are Spanish, with the rest made up of a diverse range of nationalities, including British and Russian. Currently there are 14 students in Year 12, but none in Year 13.

The school's authorisation to teach pupils from Nursery to Year 11 does not expire until May 2022, whereas the authorisation to teach Years 12 and 13 (key stage five) expires in March 2021. The purpose of this inspection, therefore, is to consider the re-authorisation of the educational provision for pupils in key stage five as British.

## Accommodation and Resources:

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

Since the last inspection, the school's premises have been greatly enhanced, as a result of a large extension that connects directly with the original building. The vast majority of key stage five lessons take place in the new classrooms, all of which are spacious, well-lit and suitably furnished. There is thermostat controlled heating and air conditioning in each of the new rooms. Some effective use is made of display in the classrooms to support learning and plans are underway to make greater use of the corridors to celebrate pupils' achievements.

There are three large science laboratories, one each for chemistry, physics and biology. The chemistry laboratory, in particular, is very well-equipped and has all of the required safety equipment, including a fume cupboard for the safe disposal of chemicals. A spacious and well-equipped music room has four smaller practice rooms adjacent to it. There is also a drama studio and two rooms dedicated to art and technology. In addition to the computer suite, computers are available for private study in a room next to a well-stocked central library and portable devices are regularly used in classrooms. Key stage five students have access to a common room.

Classrooms are equipped with large interactive screens and teachers make excellent use of these as a teaching tool.

The school grounds are spacious and the building is surrounded by a variety of sports courts as well as other outdoor and garden areas, all of which are well-utilised.

In addition, a very large indoor sports hall is used for the teaching of physical education, as is a multi-gym containing a wide range of equipment. There are male and female changing rooms.

An auditorium which can seat up to 140 is used for assemblies and presentations. There are several other offices and meeting rooms, in addition to the staff room, meaning that staff facilities are very good.

There are adequate toilet facilities, including some with disabled access, and a lift to all floors.

Meals are cooked on site in the school's kitchen and served in a large dining room.

There has been considerable investment in resources since the last inspection and key stage five students are equipped with the necessary textbooks and practical equipment needed for the courses they are studying.

### **Health, Safety and Welfare:**

The school provides a safe environment for pupils and staff. Its policies in relation to health and safety are comprehensive and adhered to well.

Access to the premises is secure and is carefully controlled and monitored.

Fire exits are clearly marked and evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the school. Fire drills are held regularly.

There are several fully trained first aiders in the school and many other members of staff have received basic first aid training.

The school has a thorough safeguarding and child protection policy and the required criminal record checks have been carried out for all members of staff working in the school. The head teacher has undertaken training in safe recruitment and the students are well aware of who the school's designated safeguarding leaders are.

Pupils' behaviour is very good and this contributes to the safe atmosphere in the school.

### **The Curriculum:**

The curriculum in key stage five is appropriately based on the international AS and A-level syllabi established by the examination boards. The school intends to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) qualification from September onwards and is advanced in its preparations for this.

The school offers a good range of subjects for study in key stage five and smoothly coordinates the subjects currently offered at A-level with those to be offered at IB.

Key stage three students are provided with exemplary guidance to assist them in selecting the options for IGCSE that will prove most useful when later selecting subjects to study in key stage five.

Planning is suitably thorough and takes account of students' abilities and interests.

Personal, social and health education forms an integral part of the curriculum and is, in key stage five, delivered well by the form tutor, who also acts as one of the mentors to the students and provides pastoral support and careers guidance. Online support with the university application process, via a subscription service, is also available.

The school is already an established examination centre and the technical director has experience of the homologation process that ensures that students' qualifications are recognised in the Spanish system.

The school offers a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities including, tennis, rowing, robotics, additional languages and instrumental tuition. The local environment, as well as excursions and residential trips is also used to enhance the curriculum.

## **Staffing:**

The teaching staff is appropriately qualified and teachers are effectively deployed in their areas of specialism.

The number of teachers in the secondary department has increased significantly since the last inspection, allowing a broader range of subjects to be offered to the oldest students.

Staff retention, which was consistently an issue in the past, is improving, with little turnover in the past year and all secondary teachers committed to remaining into the next academic year. Staff now speak highly of the school and feel confident to express their ideas and opinions regarding school improvement, believing that their voices will be heard.

A very thorough staff appraisal system has been established and professional development is one of the head teacher's key priorities. He is also committed to providing opportunities for career development and, as such, has created a number of new positions of responsibility within the school.

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment:**

The quality of teaching in key stage five is good.

Students enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and are keen to learn and to be challenged. There is a wide range of backgrounds and abilities amongst the students in key stage five and teachers adapt their lessons accordingly in order to meet individual pupils' needs. Lessons progress at a good pace and the inclusion of practical activities and group work ensures that pupils are engaged and motivated. What pupils are to learn is made clear to them, as are the steps that will enable them to carry out tasks, including examinations, successfully. Teachers display good subject knowledge and are, overall, adapting well to the techniques required for teaching small classes.

English is very much the principal language of instruction, although a small number of students sometimes lack the fluency to express themselves to the depth usually required for A-level.

The school's assessment procedures have been improved to allow better tracking of progress over time and now include standardised data as well as teacher assessment.

As a relatively new examination centre, only limited IGCSE results data exist, although what there is shows large year on year improvement in all subjects.

There is good communication between home and school and parents receive detailed written reports about their child's progress.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:**

The school prides itself on being a community school and families are encouraged to play an active role in school life. There is a happy atmosphere and students from a diverse range of backgrounds have been taught to work well together and be supportive of each other. Pupils are increasingly proud to belong to their school and key stage five students appreciate that they are role models to the younger children. The school's commitment to the environment and sustainability is clearly evident.

## **Leadership and Management:**

The school is very well led and managed.

Whilst the owner has overall financial control, it is the head teacher who is responsible for making all of the educational decisions and for overseeing the day-to-day running of the school. The current head teacher joined the school one year ago and has brought stability following a period of rapid staff turnover, including senior managers. He demonstrates a clear vision for the school and his drive and determination have brought a renewed sense of purpose. His development plan has accurately identified the current priorities for improving the school and his influence is evident through the consistency of teaching approach seen across the classes. Effective use of the staff appraisal process, as well as training and professional development opportunities, are helping to ensure that his high standards are met.

The head teacher is supported effectively by the senior management team, the structure of which has benefited from change since the last inspection. The recent appointees demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm and have been carefully selected for their suitability to their particular roles.

## **Response to the previous inspection report:**

- The extension to the building has been completed and, therefore, secondary pupils now have access to excellent facilities, including well-equipped specialist rooms, such as the three science laboratories, music room, and sports hall.
- Suitable staff have been recruited to extend the range of secondary subjects offered, including in key stage five.
- Increased staff appraisal and continuous professional development have led to greater consistency and quality in the standard of teaching, which is now never less than satisfactory.

## **Conclusion:**

The British College of Gavá is an identifiably British school, which employs suitably qualified and experienced staff to deliver the national curriculum and to prepare students for internationally recognised qualifications. It is an improving school which has responded well to the recommendations made in previous inspection visits. The recently appointed head teacher has high aspirations for the school and is committed to its continuous development and improvement.

## **Recommendations:**

To improve further the school should build on the sound foundation already established for key stage five and:

- continue to enhance and develop the provision, ensuring that staff and pupils are fully prepared for the transition from A-level to IB, that all of the resources required for the new syllabi are available, that further suitably qualified staff are recruited when needed, and by evaluating the effectiveness of the university and careers advice that is offered.