

Information for Prospective Teachers 2019

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in a teaching position at Canterbury School in Gran Canaria. Canterbury School offers a British style education of a very high standard up to University entrance level and we also operate within the Spanish system and prepare pupils for entry to Spanish Universities.

The information that follows is intended to provide applicants with a greater understanding of the school, its environment and its pupils. We hope that it will answer your questions about salary and conditions of service, as well as any questions you may have about living and working in the Canary Islands. However, you will have an opportunity in the interview to ask any further questions you may have.

Canterbury School is highly regarded in the Canary Islands and since the opening of our new Secondary Department in September 1992 we have been able to provide an excellent education to pupils from pre-nursery to university entrance. Our pupils are keen, well motivated and supported by interested parents. Our staff is made up of enthusiastic, highly qualified professionals who enjoy living and working in the Canary Islands. We are seeking to recruit teachers who can actively contribute to the continued growth of the school.

The School

The school originally began as a small nursery school in 1972, with just seventeen pupils, but has steadily grown to become the largest English speaking school in Gran Canaria. There are now over one thousand two hundred pupils whose ages range from pre- nursery 2 year olds to pre-university eighteen year olds.

The pupils begin their education with us at the age of two or three, in our new Infant building, Milton House, in the Garden City area of Las Palmas. We moved to this site in September 2018 and it provides an ideal atmosphere for young children with its ample play areas and modern, light learning areas. In the infants the focus is on immersion in the English language.

During the year of their sixth birthday, the pupils move to the Primary School which is housed in a large building at San Lorenzo. The Primary department moved to this spacious, purpose built school in September 1999. The pupils begin Spanish here, where we have a team of three native Spanish teachers.

The Infants and Primary are run very much along the lines of a British Primary school. Each class has its own teacher who works in a year group team of three from Reception upwards.

The Secondary School is based next door to the Primary in their own modern building. This contains laboratories, computer and music rooms, an art workshop and a library.

The school is lucky enough to have its own theatre which serves the Infant, Primary and Secondary departments. There is also a fully equipped gymnasium underneath the theatre.

We have recently built a sixth form block and a sports hall with first class basketball facilities. There are also plans to construct an athletics track.

We also have a small school in the South of the island, near Maspalomas, which caters for pupils from the ages of 3 to 11. It has a friendly welcoming atmosphere with small classes.

Our only source of income is from school fees. These are paid by parents who make a deliberate choice to send their pupils to this school. The two reasons most usually given for that choice are the improvement and use of the English language and the high standards of behaviour that we expect from our pupils. Also important is the fact that we achieve high grades in I.G.C.S.E. and A level examinations, with resulting excellent success in university entrance

both in Spain and in Britain, giving the school an excellent reputation in the local area. Indeed we have many ex-students putting their own children into the school now.

Canterbury is a non-selective school, with an enrolment policy that does not discriminate against pupils on any grounds-race, religion, colour, sex or ability. We believe that all pupils can benefit from our programme of studies.

Many of our teachers have recently come out from the U.K. but about 60% of the teachers at the Secondary School, and about 90% of teachers at the Infant and Primary Schools are permanent residents. We have a very good mixture of both young and experienced staff, some of whom have many years of service with Canterbury School.

The Management of the School

The structure in the Infant School is developed through individual class teachers and teaching assistants to the Head of Infant. All teachers oversee a curriculum area. There are two coordinators with specific areas of responsibility.

The structure in the Primary School is developed through individual class teachers, to Deputy Head and to the Head of Primary. All class teachers also have an area of the curriculum for which they are responsible and for which they act as advisors to the rest of the school. There are two coordinators with specific areas of responsibility.

The structure in the Secondary School is slightly different. Here it is developed through individual class tutors, to the Head of phases, Deputy Head and to the Head of the Secondary School.

The Heads of each school meet regularly with the school owners to ensure the smooth running of the school and consistency across departments as well as continually developing the school in line with our vision and aims.

Our intention is that all teachers at Canterbury School will gain professionally from being with us and their careers will be enhanced by the experience. To make sure that this happens, Canterbury School is a member of NABSS (National Association of British Schools in Spain) which organises in-service training days as well as sporting and cultural activities amongst its members. We also organise professional development opportunities for our staff, inviting guest speakers, such as Pie Corbett, out to lead training, regular first aid training and Educare courses.

The Curriculum

Canterbury School is committed to delivering both the English National Curriculum through all the Key Stages culminating in Cambridge I.G.C.S.E s and A Levels and a high level of education in the Spanish system, enabling our pupils to validate their studies for the entrance to Spanish universities. Native Spanish teachers are recruited to teach the Spanish timetable in the Primary and Secondary Departments.

Pupils in both Infant and Primary Departments follow the the Early Years Foundation Stage and the English National Curriculum.

At the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are assessed using the KS2 SATs.

There is an active programme of cultural visits that allows pupils of all ages to experience the external environment. This consists of day long visits to local museums and landmarks of interest in the Infant and Primary departments and longer camping trips and visits abroad for the Secondary pupils.

The Pupils

At Canterbury School our pupils come first. They are well motivated, keen and polite and discipline problems are rare.

About 85% of our pupils are Spanish speaking Canarians but our student population also includes British, Korean, Indian, Chinese, Russian, French, Dutch, Icelandic and Canadian pupils amongst others.

Prospective teachers should be aware that the Spanish system of allocating year groups to pupils is different to the British system. Pupils are placed in a particular year group with pupils whose birthdays fall between 1st January and 31st December, rather than from September to August.

The implications of this are twofold. Firstly, classes will consist of pupils who can be up to three months younger than in equivalent year groups in Britain. Secondly, especially with the very youngest pupils, they may speak no English at all, at least when they begin in the school. Obviously, as they progress through the school, their English will improve until by the time they reach Secondary School many are, to all intents and purposes bilingual. Even at upper Primary and Secondary level though, there are pupils who speak little or no English, largely because they have joined us late in their school career either from Spanish schools or from other countries. In reality this does not present a major problem as we provide extra help and the number involved is relatively small. Although the language in which we teach is English, teachers need to be prepared to teach pupils for whom English is a second or even third language and to adjust their teaching style accordingly.

Living and Teaching in Las Palmas

Las Palmas is a large, cosmopolitan and bustling city overflowing with Spanish ambience, history and culture. It is lively and well served with shops, bars, restaurants and other amenities. It is situated alongside the beautiful Las Canteras beach, which is an excellent beach for swimming and surfing. The harbour, Puerto de la Luz, is one of the most important in Europe, with ships and cruise liners from around the world.

Las Palmas has an abundance of taxis and buses both of which are cheap. Although prices of new cars are lower than in the UK, second hand cars tend to maintain their value and can be higher priced than in the UK.

Some teachers decide to live out of the city centre, in the surrounding countryside. In such cases a car is essential because although there is a reliable bus service, timetables can be restricting. Accommodation in the countryside is cheaper and the views are beautiful!

The warm, sunny climate is a very attractive feature of life in the Canary Islands. In the winter the temperature may fall to the point where a sweater or jacket is needed (And occasionally in the higher regions of the island it does get rather chilly), but the temperatures are usually very pleasant. The temperature falls quite dramatically with altitude and it is possible to find snow on some of the higher peaks in winter. The Primary and Secondary Schools, which are situated a little way outside the city, do suffer from lower temperatures in winter. The South department enjoys warm weather for most of the year. The occasional dust storm from the Sahara, may however pose problems for those who suffer from respiratory complaints.

It is difficult to make a direct comparison with the cost of living between Gran Canaria and the UK. Some things are cheaper, while other items are more expensive. In general, eating out is cheaper than the UK.

Electricity is more expensive, although there aren't the heating bills one has in the UK and it is necessary to buy bottled water for drinking.

On arrival it is necessary to open a Spanish bank account to enable your salary to be paid at the end of the month, and to have a Spanish mobile number, as it is obligatory to put a Spanish mobile number on some official paperwork.

Accommodation is not provided by the school, but the school does have some flats that are rented out to staff. When teachers first arrive the school will find temporary accommodation, usually near Las Canteras beach for teachers in the north. Although teachers must pay for their own accommodation, Canterbury School will pay for the temporary accommodation for a few days whilst new teachers look for a more settled home. Help is given to do this. Very often teachers share with each other to keep costs down. Rents are varied but the following guide will provide an idea (Although teachers should be aware that landlords usually charge two months rent in advance using one as a deposit to be returned at the end of the contract).

Approximate rent charges are:

Studio Apartment with balcony facing the sea- 700 Euros upwards

Studio apartment facing side street- 550 Euros upwards

One bedroomed flat in side street in beach area- 600 Euros upwards

Two bedroomed flat in other part of Las Palmas- 600 Euros upwards

As previously mentioned, apartments and houses outside Las Palmas are cheaper, but teachers are warned that they can be quite cold in winter and they will need their own transport. Teachers living in Las Palmas may travel to the Primary and Secondary Schools in San Lorenzo, free of charge on the school buses. There are several pickup points in the city. However on occasion there might be the need to make your own way from school (after parent meetings etc). Teachers in the Infant School in Las Palmas and the South school must find their own way to school but this does not usually present a problem.

From the moment that your **contract starts** you are covered by the Spanish National Health service. Until this time you are covered by the EHIC Card (European Health Insurance Card) if you are an EU resident, which you need to apply for in the UK prior to coming to the island. It seems most likely that this will continue if Brexit goes ahead. Dental treatment is available privately and tends to be on a par with private dental treatment in the UK. The school will obtain a social security card and an identity number for teachers. This is a legal requirement and entitles you to the Health and Social Security system. Family members may be included but boyfriends/girlfriends will not and will therefore have to make alternative arrangements. Friends or partners who do not speak Spanish and have no job arranged will find it difficult to obtain work not related to teaching.

Conditions of Service.

Staff are initially recruited for a two year period and teachers are paid according to the Spanish schools pay system. With regards to the contract, staff first go onto temporary Spanish contracts each lasting for 10 months (1st September - 30th June) but are paid salary for 12 months of the year. The summer pay for July and August is usually paid in a lump sum in mid-July, however if you decide to leave after the first year you only get one month summer pay, in accordance with Spanish law. This does mean that you do not receive Social Security contributions during the 2 summer months for the first two years you work here; however you can sign on at the Social Security office which covers the contributions. (This really would only be of interest if you hope to stay in Spain long term and receive your pension here). The second summer you could also receive dole money for those two months on top of your salary, if you signed on. This is just the way it is done here in Spain until you get a permanent contract. If you decide to stay on after two years and the school is in agreement, you would go straight onto a permanent contract at the end of your third year (1st July) meaning there are no further breaks in your summer social security contributions.

Teachers are taxed according to individual circumstances, which means that teachers with children and other dependants will be given the legal tax concessions. The gross salary for an Infant or Primary trained teacher with QTS is 2256 Euros per month gross (Annual increments are usually made in January) After taxes have been paid a Primary teacher has a net income of approximately 1768 Euros. (The net is approximate as each person is taxed according to their circumstances.) During the months of September, October, November and December of the first year's employment the monthly net will be higher for those people who have not been working in Spain for the previous eight months. (This is due to the fact that the amount earned is calculated as a yearly income and the tax % is lowered to compensate.) Payment of salary is made by direct debit into your bank account.

Teachers who come from overseas are given a once only payment of 200 Euros gross towards their outward flight/relocation. Excess baggage can be expensive! Canterbury School does not make any payment towards excess baggage.

Canterbury School Infant Department

The large Infant Department, where the pupils spend the first years of their schooling at Canterbury, is located in a quiet, residential area in the heart of Las Palmas. In September 2018 we were very fortunate move into a new building, which has been totally renovated for the purpose of housing our Infant Department. The new site consists of two buildings; a completely renovated older building and a purpose built new building behind. All the teaching areas are modern, light and airy and designed to facilitate 21st century Early Years provision. Although in the city, we have adequate playground space including a sports playground/ basketball court and soft-floored play park areas complete with climbing frames and slides. The new site also includes a pleasant garden area with a special zone where pupils can undertake gardening and planting activities. Our pupils eat a well balanced lunch prepared in the state of the art kitchen on site, including special food preparation areas to cater for celiac pupils and those with allergies. Every learning area contains an interactive TV screen and there is Wi-Fi throughout the building so that even our youngest pupils at Canterbury have access to the latest technology.

In the Early Years, we consider it essential that the pupils speak and understand the English language before they are taught to read and write. All our teachers are native English speakers, many also speak fluent Spanish, and our TA's are bilingual. We offer an immersion approach to English in our Infant department. We place a very strong emphasis on teaching English to enable our pupils to communicate in English from a very early age and we have a high adult:child ratio especially in Nursery and Reception (6:75) in order to facilitate small group work and lots of opportunity for developing oracy. Right from the start we follow the Pie Corbett 'Talk for Writing' approach to learning English, which continues throughout the Primary school.

At two years of age pupils may enter our "Teddies" pre-Nursery Class with a bilingual Early Years Educator in charge and one or two bilingual teaching assistants, depending on the number of pupils. The Teddies is on the ground floor of the older building, having a large classroom, bathroom and changing area complete with shower, leading into a sleep room / soft play area. They have direct access from their classroom to their outdoor play area.

From Nursery (3 year olds) onwards we have a maximum of 75 pupils in a year group. In the new school the Nursery is housed in a 200 square metre floor with large, bright learning areas, shared play areas, bathrooms and their own outdoor area. This has been designed to offer the best provision for nursery pupils in line with current UK guidelines. In Nursery, we have 6 Early Years Educators working with the pupils, who are divided into small groups, each having their own Key Worker (teacher). They all use the different areas of the semi-open plan Nursery floor, rather than being based in their own class base all the time. The teachers work together as a team to plan play based learning experiences that our little ones will enjoy and thrive on.

At four years of age, in Reception the pupils are split into 3 classes of 25 pupils, the general pattern for each year group in the rest of the Infant and Primary schools. There are 6 adults working with Reception; each class having both a fully UK qualified class teacher and also a teaching assistant with them. They also have their own floor of the building, with classrooms, bathrooms and a shared play area. In Reception the pupils begin to learn phonics (a combination of Jolly Phonics and Letters and Sounds) and to start to read (Oxford Reading Tree) and write as well as begin with our Infant and Primary maths scheme, Abacus Maths; all in a practical and fun way.

In Year 1, the five year olds, there are 3 class teachers plus a support teacher who works across all three Year 1 classes. Year 1 are based in the older part of the building, where as well as their 3 large class rooms, each with its own bathroom, there is a library and a Computer / Support classroom for their use.

We are also fortunate to have a PE monitor and all the classes have two PE lessons weekly, which is when the class teachers have their PPA time. Each year group also meets together once a week to plan what they will be teaching the following week. Teachers all have daily duties either outside or in the dining room.

We follow the English National Curriculum throughout the school, adapted where necessary to suit our Spanish-speaking pupils. Our Nursery and Reception pupils follow the objectives and Areas of Learning of the Early Years

Foundation Stage and our Year 1 pupils follow the Year 1 Programme of Study of the English National Curriculum in all subject areas. All the Infant classes work through cross-curricular topics each half term to make learning both relevant and enjoyable for the pupils. We encourage practical, creative activities and attractively display pupils' work to make a lively and stimulating learning environment for them. Both Infant and Primary departments work closely together and liaise frequently.

Our school ethos is one of nurturing all our pupils to ensure they are happy coming to school, as a happy child is a child whom we can help to grow and develop into an inquisitive and active learner. One of the many ways in which we try to do this is through constant positive reinforcement: we praise them throughout the day for good behaviour, good work, trying their best, being kind to others, etc. Throughout the year all our pupils participate in various class assemblies where pupils receive special awards and certificates and which their parents are invited to watch. We also invite parents to join us for events such as our Christmas Nativity play in the school theatre in San Lorenzo, our Summer Show and the Year 1 Graduation Ceremony. All pupils have the opportunity to go with their class or year group on a termly school visit to a local place of interest. We always encourage parent participation in these events and we are also happy to encourage family members to come along to help us in the classroom with art work or even to read a story! As well as this we celebrate Hallowe'en, Christmas, Carnival and Canary Day with special activities and parties in school.

We offer a range of after school clubs, such as basketball, judo, ballet and art, in which pupils from 3 years old can participate. As well, we have our Early Bird Club from 7:15 am to facilitate an early drop off for working parents.

When our pupils leave us to continue their progression in their educational adventure in the Primary department we hope that they are happy, confident individuals who have acquired a curiosity and a thirst to develop their potential as a learner.

The Primary Department

This consists of 15 classes divided into 5 year groups (Yrs 2-6) where teachers continue to work in year group teams of three. Here the maximum number per class continues to be 25.

Pupils at Canterbury School follow the English National Curriculum which has been adapted where necessary to our geographical location. We continue to use "Talk for Writing" to have a coherent approach to teaching writing throughout the school. We keep up to date with developments in the UK and any changes are done very much as a team with everyone's input essential. The programme of studies offers the pupils a variety of opportunities to develop their competence in English and other curriculum areas. In addition we have three Spanish teachers on the staff and each class receives a Spanish lesson a day. This department co-ordinates closely with the Infant Department and the teachers carefully build on the excellent foundation created there. Once again the atmosphere and ethos of the school reflect the professionalism of the staff who works in it to provide a rich and stimulating learning environment.

Although we are a large school we pride ourselves on having a family atmosphere. We are fortunate that the majority of the staff have been here for several years and have built up relationships with the families of the pupils in their care. We encourage the older pupils to take care of the younger pupils through the Prefect scheme and the Playground Friends scheme. Our House system also encourages integration and a feeling of the "whole school".

As a staff we are a united team and are constantly striving to improve our school. We are prepared to trial new initiatives and always have a period of reflection to see if they work for us. Staff are very much involved in the decision making process. We are proud of the fact that the vast majority of our staff decide to stay with us.

Our facilities are excellent. Each classroom has an interactive C-Touch board plus a computer and a printer. We also have a Computing suite with twenty six computers and each class is time tabled for a session a week in there. We also use tablets to enhance the children's learning where necessary.

As mentioned earlier, we are lucky enough to have a fully equipped theatre which is based in the Primary department. This is used regularly for our weekly assemblies to celebrate the children's learning and for shows and other concerts.

We also have a gymnasium situated in the Primary department which is solely used by us and provides a perfect environment to develop gymnastics, dance and drama.

We passionately believe that every child should learn to love reading. To help encourage a life long love of reading we've got two libraries in the school. One is for Y2 and Y3. The other is for Y4 to Y6. Each class has a timetabled weekly session but the library can be used whenever it's free and provides a light, calm space where the children can lose themselves in a book.

Our current focus for development is our school garden. We are developing a space outside the classrooms to give each year group their own space for planting and cultivating fruit and vegetables.

The South Department

Although Canterbury School, Maspalomas is located in a rural area we are close to all local amenities. We cater for pupils from 3 years old to 11, most of them being Spanish although a small percentage of our pupils are of different nationalities.

The class sizes are relatively small, averaging at 15 pupils per class with a maximum of: Nursery 15, Reception 20 and Year 1 through to Y6 25 pupils. In the South, we have a one form entry. The pupils have their own tutor based classrooms. As we are a small school, we have the freedom to move pupils who require further assistance during the school day to other classrooms. The pupils also have an interactive C-Touch board and computer and printer in each classroom. In addition we benefit from a library, swimming pool and very extensive playgrounds purposely designed and equipped for each age phase. We have our own kitchen and dining room where fresh food is prepared daily and enjoyed by the pupils and teachers alike. The atmosphere here is very friendly and affable towards parents, pupils and staff. Being situated in the south our weather is generally warm and sunny and teachers find it enjoyable working in our stimulating environment.

We keep in regular contact with the Primary and Infant departments to try and ensure continuity between the three schools.

Canterbury School takes safeguarding pupils very seriously and all staff will be subject to rigorous checks and the interview process will include safeguarding and staff conduct checks