

EDUCATION

& LEARNING

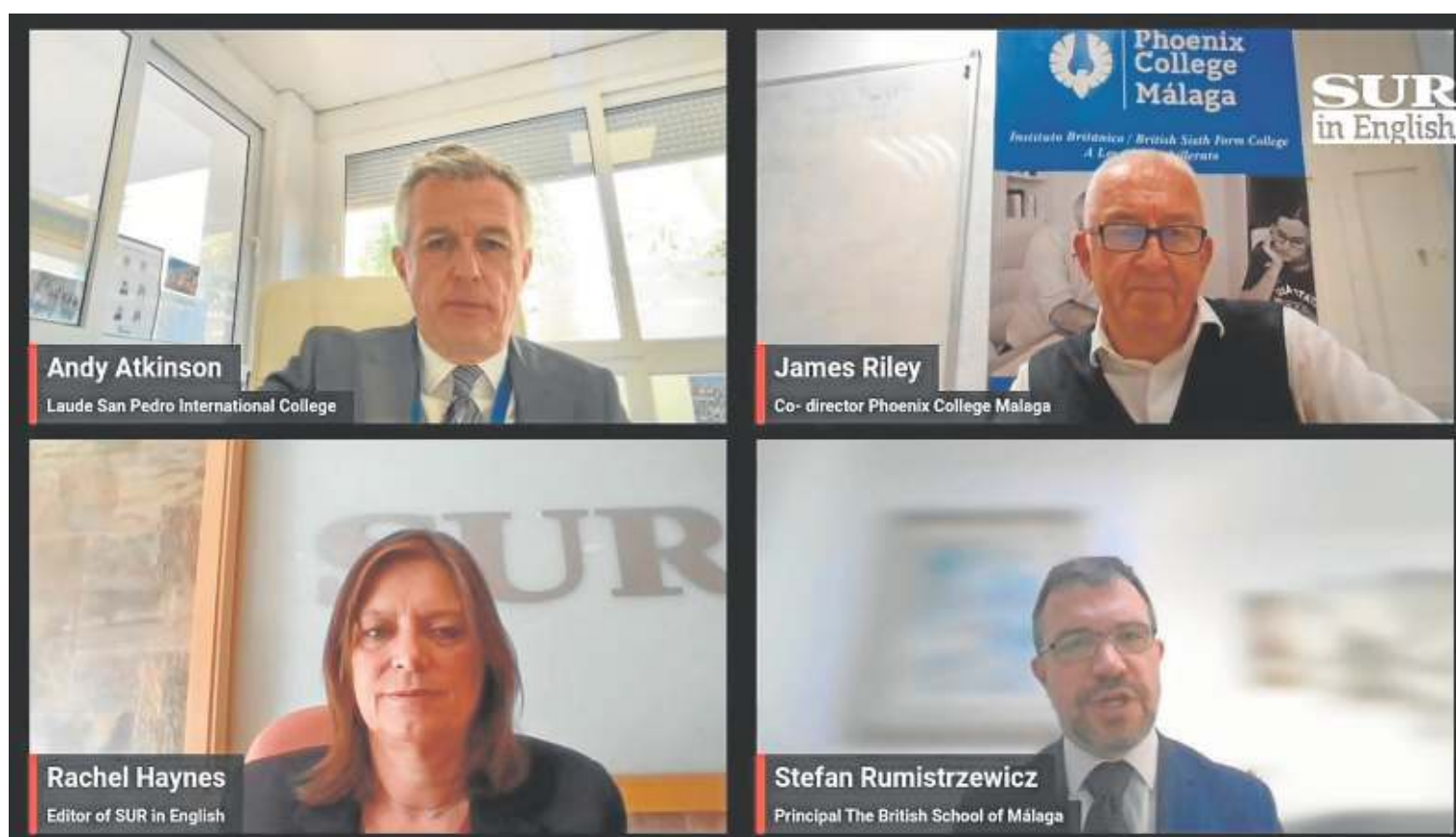
Webinar. SUR in English talks to international schools on the Costa del Sol about laying the foundations for future success **P2-3**

Schoolwork showcase 2024. Art, poetry and short stories display the talent and imagination fostered in the classroom **P6-18**



Making learning fun

A safe and happy environment created by enthusiastic teachers paves the way for years of discovery, say schools



SUR in English editor Rachel Haynes was joined by Andrew Atkinson, principal at Laude San Pedro International College; James Riley, co-director of Phoenix College Málaga; and Stefan Rumistrzewicz, principal at The British School of Málaga.

Laying the foundations for future success

Education on the Costa del Sol. SUR in English talks to three schools and colleges about the challenges of teaching in an international community and how to look after pupils' emotional well-being as well as academic achievement

RACHEL HAYNES

Children are the future - there's no doubt about that - but multiple factors throughout young lives determine just what type of future that will be. While parents, family and society as a whole all have their influence, schools and education form another essential part of a young person's development.

SUR in English looks further at how international schools and colleges in the south of Spain work to guide young people on the path towards a successful future. In a webinar held earlier this week we spoke to head teachers and directors of three teaching centres based in Malaga and Marbella: Andrew Atkinson, principal at Laude San Pedro International College; Stefan Rumistrzewicz, principal of The British School of Málaga; and James Riley, co-director of Phoenix College Málaga.

The British School of Málaga

The British School of Málaga, located in the Cerrado de Calderón area of the city, covers all levels, from three-year-olds up to 18-year-olds, teaching the British national

curriculum. The school also includes all the compulsory Spanish subjects, giving pupils the option of having a dual qualification, enabling them to attend universities in Spain, UK or around the world, explains Stefan Rumistrzewicz. The demographic of the school has changed with the local population, going from a high proportion of Spanish students to almost a 50-50 ratio of Spanish and international, said the principal.

Phoenix College Málaga

Phoenix College Málaga was founded in 2017. Located in Malaga city centre, the school specialises solely in sixth form education, teaching British A levels to the 16 to 19 age group as well as PCE subjects required to access Spanish universities. What makes the college unique, explains James Riley, "is that it is owned and run by teachers". Growing since 2017, the college now has 45 students doing a wide range of subjects.

Laude San Pedro

Laude San Pedro International College in Marbella is, like the British

School of Málaga, a member of the International Schools Partnership (ISP), and teaches all ages from three to 18. The school teaches the British national curriculum although pupils have the option of following the Spanish system from the age of 12, according to individual aspirations.

Settling new students in

The international community on the Costa del Sol means that schools have a wide range of nationalities among their pupils and new faces in classrooms throughout the year. Settling in to a new school, especially when that means a new country and even a new language, is a challenge all three schools are expert at dealing with.

Stefan Rumistrzewicz explained that The British School of Málaga has an induction programme at the beginning of the year and new students are invited to meet the teachers and get to know the school. "We accept students throughout the year in all year groups so we also have a buddy system to make sure they're not alone," said the principal, adding

The teachers explain how their schools offer support to new students, especially in terms of language acquisition

All three experts stressed that the quality of teaching and the training and enthusiasm of teachers are vital

that there is also an extensive pastoral care system in place throughout the entire school so there is always someone to go to.

Language can also be a problem for some new pupils who have not studied in English before and all three schools have programmes in place to help with language acquisition.

Help is given with English for non-native speakers and with Spanish for students coming in from other parts of the world, explained James Riley of Phoenix College Málaga. "Being a small school, we're more like a family, he said. "We have tutors assigned to every student and students are able to see teachers all the time, on a day to day basis." Students are invited to taster days to see whether a sixth form college, which gives young people more independence than a traditional school, is for them.

High achievers - special needs

The three experts discussed how their schools made sure they were able to give the right level of attention to pupils with a range of abilities, from very high achievers to those with special needs.

Andrew Atkinson, principal at Laude San Pedro International College, said that better attainment tests meant that teachers were able to assess the potential of students in classes where there is a wide range of academic abilities. "We have a lot of English as an additional language [EAL] learners at the school and so the important thing is training teachers well, to make sure that they take all learners with them regardless of their different levels of English," he said. He added that the school has a strong special educational needs department that can provide one-to-one interventions when needed.

Meanwhile at the top end, when children are taking official exams the school acts strategically and "looks at tailored interventions to boost their grades so they can get to where they want to be when they graduate" added the principal of Laude San Pedro.

Similarly, The British School of Málaga offers support to both high achievers and those needing extra help. "Part of the beauty of the British national curriculum is the whole idea of personalised learning," said the principal. "For high achievers we offer all sorts of opportunities," he said, explaining that these range from giving them different, more complex work in the classroom to offering clubs to extend their knowledge. "We also have a support department for those with additional learning needs, for example someone with dyslexia might have one-to-one lessons or in small groups with a specialist to help them along. So in a sense the support for high and low achievers is very similar," added Rumistrzewicz.

In the case of Phoenix College Málaga, co-director James Riley pointed out one of the foundations

of teacher training is that “education is for everyone”. He said: “Sometimes we find that students may not have done so well at GCSE and then suddenly through the different approach and teaching styles here, they have blossomed and found that information has clicked. With the small class sizes, teachers are able to give that extra support to the students.”

Independent learning

Both The British School of Málaga and Laude San Pedro International College have classes of very young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The principals explain that free flow teaching styles are used, providing independence to move between indoors and outdoors and make other choices. Education then becomes gradually more formalised. “We continue free flow in years 1 and 2 and further up the school there is still an element of free flow in the sense that students are encouraged to look things up, to try something new,” said Stefan Rumistrzewicz.

“The early years are the most important in any child’s education as without those foundations you’re not going to get anywhere, but whether they can continue with those skills depends on us and the education we provide,” added the British School of Málaga Principal.

Meanwhile James Riley explained how the independent, flexible learning approach continues at the sixth form college. Research studies and field work help prepare the students for university, he said, adding that the science teachers at Phoenix College “believe passionately that the students should learn through experiments”.

Dealing with bullying

When talking about student well-being, the issue of bullying inevitably comes up, especially in its 21st-century form, linked to mobile phones and social media.

“A constant challenge for any head teacher and senior leaders in a school is how we manage the digital environment when it comes to bullying,” said Andrew Atkinson of Laude San Pedro. “ISP schools have anti-bullying protocols based on Spanish law and we also have our internal policies about nipping things in the bud,” said the principal. “Students are aware they can come forward to our safeguarding staff if they’re feeling threatened. The digital environment is where it is hidden; we encourage parents to monitor use of digital devices,” said Atkinson.

“The digital environment is always a danger and the important



Stefan Rumistrzewicz
Principal
The British School of Málaga

“We try to make sure that students leave with our four core values - creativity, aspiration, resilience and empathy - as they go into the world”

“The early years are the most important in any child’s education, but whether they can continue with those skills depends on us and the education we provide”

thing is educating students and educating parents. Parents are blissfully unaware sometimes about what their children are up to, especially in those early teens,” agreed Stefan Rumistrzewicz.

“When we find [bullying], even if it doesn’t take place inside school, when it’s between our students we confront it,” said Atkinson. “As schools, we’re trained to respond to these things effectively. Parents are appreciative when we resolve issues quickly.”

“I’m not sure mobile-free schools are the answer; I think it’s about educating children about when to use it and to make them realise that what they write online is the same as saying it out loud; they think it’s not as serious,” the Laude principal said.

James Riley of Phoenix College Málaga agreed that educating parents, students and teachers about the use of mobile devices and technology is essential. When there are issues, he said, “we try to respond quickly and effectively, talking to



James Riley
Co-director
Phoenix College Málaga

“Being a small school, we’re more like a family; what makes Phoenix College unique is that it is owned and run by teachers”

“Sometimes we find that students who may not have done so well at GCSE, suddenly, through the different approach and teaching styles here, have blossomed”

students and parents”. “Because we’re a small school it does come to us quite quickly and it’s evident to us, so we make sure our doors are always open so students can talk about any problems going on.”

Riley also pointed out the importance of students understanding the emotional harm they can cause to others through what they write on social media. Phoenix College’s PSC (Personal, Social and Cultural) programme helps with this, he added.

Parents’ participation

The extent to which parents take



Andrew Atkinson
Principal
Laude San Pedro International College

“The important thing is training teachers well, to make sure that they take all learners with them regardless of their different levels”

“Apart from the academic side, successful schools are those that get the relationships right”

part in school life varies according to the age group.

In the case of very young children, the principal of Laude San Pedro said parents are encouraged to get involved in their child’s learning and one way is to drop into the classroom with the child in the morning, sit with them for a few minutes and chat to the teacher. “It works really well,” he said, adding that it is harder to get parents involved at secondary level.

In terms of parents doing things together as a community, the Laude principal highlighted the parents association. “They just add positive things to the school,” he said, listing activities, such as bake sales and social events.

Similarly, Stefan Rumistrzewicz said that at The British School of Málaga parental involvement is part of the school’s motto ‘Growing our future together’ and parents organise charity and social events. “Parents come from all over the world so it’s good for them

to meet each other,” he said.

At Phoenix College Málaga, doors are always open, explained James Riley, saying that parents are always able to get in touch and speak to teachers.

Class sizes

The three experts agreed on the importance of students getting the attention they need, which is provided by the smaller classes, especially at more specialist A level. However the quality of the teaching is just as, if not more, important.

“The important thing is training of teachers - how they manage the differentiation and support all the students, irrespective of class size, so it doesn’t affect academic achievement,” said the principal at The British School of Málaga, where no class has more than 25 students and A level classes have a maximum of 12 or 13.

“We have one adult for every nine children and one teacher for every 12 children across the school,” said the principal of Laude San Pedro, pointing out, though, that academic achievement depends more on how they are taught.

“The teachers need to enthuse the students and get them interested in the subjects,” said James Riley of Phoenix College Málaga. “We’re privileged as we have very small class sizes, but it’s the teaching and education that is fundamental.”

Values and relationships

To conclude the discussion, Stefan Rumistrzewicz stressed the core values that run through the British School of Málaga: “We try to make sure that students leave with creativity, aspiration, resilience and empathy as they go into the world.”

James Riley encouraged parents and students to consider the sixth form college option for A levels offered by Phoenix College Málaga. “The difference is that we are run and owned by teachers who have lived in Malaga for a number of years and invested in the region, who enjoy education and want to get the best out of our students.”

Andrew Atkinson of Laude San Pedro concluded that “successful schools are those that, apart from the academic side, get the relationships right”, between students, teachers and parents.

“Managing relationships is not an easy task in an international environment with changing families, but it’s a fun challenge,” he said.

Schoolwork showcase

Fostering creativity and innovation

Imagination. Poems had to include the words 'pen' and 'talk', while the theme of the short stories was 'in a strange land', sparking some refreshingly original compositions, a selection of which can be found in these pages

MYRTO KALTSIDOU

Committed to cultivating their pupils' creative talents and raising the future generations of artists, poets and writers, this year saw 16 international schools and colleges across the south of Spain participate in SUR in English's annual schoolwork showcase.

Schools sent in their entries, which were divided into three categories: artwork, poems and short

stories, with each category further grouped by age: primary and secondary. Submissions were then passed on to be reviewed by the showcase panel of judges.

The panel was overseen by former SUR in English editor, Liz Parry, and featured journalist and art critic Georgina Oliver, who judged the artwork category; novelist Joan Fallon, who commented on the short stories; and singer-songwriter

Peter Edgerton, who evaluated the poems.

For this last category, the children had to include the words 'pen' and 'talk' in their compositions, which produced some very fresh and original poems.

Likewise, the theme for the short stories was 'in a strange land,' where the judges remarked on pupils' imaginative descriptions of weird and wonderful places.

In a general comment, Georgina Oliver said, "Discovering the art works, stories and poems submitted by participants who remind us of the child or teenager within us is always extremely moving."

Liz Parry remarked that she was "particularly impressed by students' ingenuity, as they incorporated the given words or themes into their work. Artwork was my favourite category this year, as the cute animal faces made me smile."

Peter Edgerton said, "In times when we need the power of imagination more than ever, it's profoundly encouraging to read the work of so many young people quite clearly in possession of that very gift."

Joan Fallon mentioned the "high standard of this year's entries, which stood out as examples of clear, concise and imaginative writing".

The judges congratulated all pupils who submitted entries, for their inventive and insightful work, as well as the teachers, for inspiring their creative flair in the classroom and encouraging their contributions to this year's showcase.

i Visit www.surinenglish.com to see more submissions to the schoolwork showcase

THE JUDGES

Liz Parry
Former editor,
SUR in English

"The cute animal faces in the artwork made me smile"



Georgina Oliver
Art critic

"The works submitted remind us of the child or teenager within us"



Joan Fallon
Novelist

"This year's entries were clear, concise and imaginative"

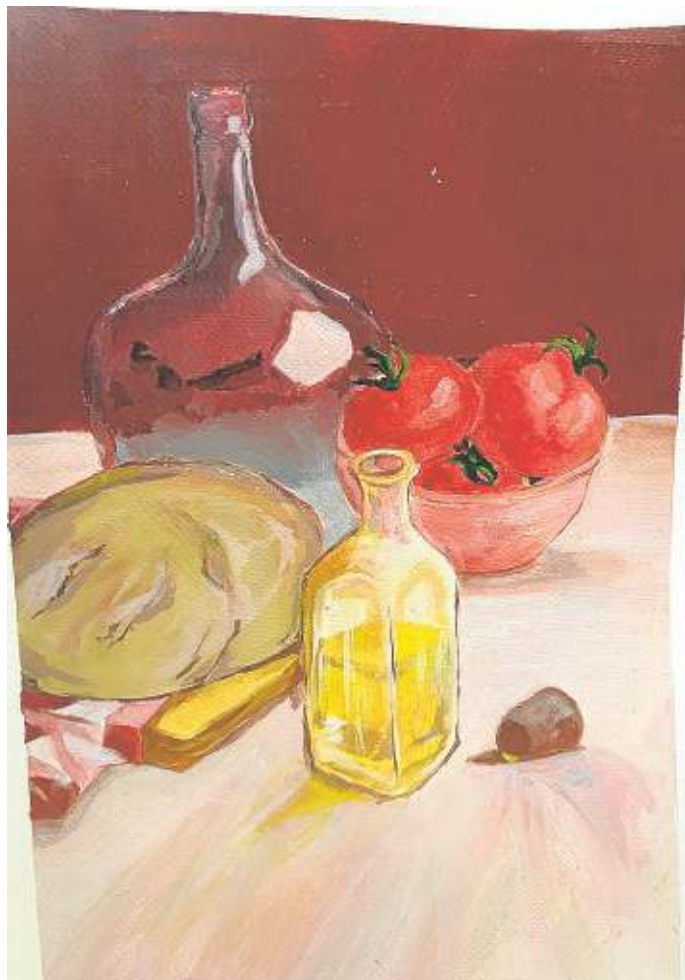


Peter Edgerton
Singer-songwriter

"Reading work by people who possess the gift of imagination is profoundly encouraging"



BEST PRIMARY ARTWORK



Yuzi Z., age 12
Sunny View School

"This 'Mediterranean diet' still-life by an amazingly gifted 12-year-old stands out. It reminded me of the expression 'to enjoy one's food'. The painter clearly likes their subject matter. The tomatoes are mouth-wateringly touchy-feely. The light shines exactly at the right angle, keeping our eyes moving from flask of olive oil to food and back. Anything but 'still'..." said art critic Georgina Oliver.



Olivia L. S., age 10
Sunny View School

Journalist and art critic Georgina Oliver commented, "There were several floral compositions among this year's entries. This one fills the page, bordering on abstraction. Are those flowers we are looking at? If so, they are as 'fleshy' as the tomatoes in the still-life [left]. Each brushstroke contributes to the overall sense of movement."

BEST PRIMARY POEM

School soup (an educational recipe)

Take...

A snap of a ruler
the slam of a door
the buzz of brains
the sharpenings on a floor

The click of a pen
the scrape of chairs
(with screeching legs)
a teacher's stare

The smell of coffee
the clap of hands
the talk of children
the noise of the school band

The ring of a bell
the sigh of relief
the fun of learning
the B in belief

Then whisk it all up
and wait for some magic
drop in some school spirit
put in an educational gadget

Now make sure you're ready
serve it with knowledge
and all
that is
left to do
is wait for the first day of school

Ella-Rose, age 9
Swans Primary School

Singer-songwriter Peter Edgerton commented: "Great opening which draws you in immediately, plus enchanting rhythmic rhymes - who could ask for more?"



grows
confidence
Where



Your **Internacional** Schools in
Málaga and Marbella



LAUDE SAN PEDRO
INTERNATIONAL
COLLEGE



THE BRITISH
SCHOOL OF
MÁLAGA

BEST SECONDARY ARTWORK



Isabella Victoria Artz González, aged 15
Swans International School

Journalist and art critic Georgina Oliver said: "This remarkable portrait, possibly an imaginary self-portrait, struck me as being the strongest of the figurative candidates, because it's extremely 'complete': beyond representational... It 'Smells Like Teen Spirit'. Each patch of realism (background, curtains, shirt...) contains the 'makings' of an abstract painting. The same applies to the blank, apparently expressionless, but highly expressionistic gaze, which beckons us into this young artist's 'mind's eye' - as if it were another dimension of the painting."

BEST SECONDARY POEM

Spilt Milk

Grief lurks in cobwebbed shadows,
Surreptitious, shifty and shrewd,
A Deathstalker Scorpion, venomous,
For a moment - brief interlude,
Then pincers grasping, clasp-
ing, a victim fragile, frail,
A paralysing, searing sting, se-
creted from its tail.

Guilt hovers raucously over-
head,
Its squalls pierce the evening
chill,
A voracious vulture stalking its
prey,
Then silently - in for the kill.
On a bed of remorse, stripped
to the bone,
A ravaged soul - no way to
atone.

Fear is a young trembling fawn,
Abandoned without its doe,
Loneliness, a single robin,
pecking in the snow,
Despair is a freight train
screeching,
Pounding *what-ifs* on tracks in
the rain,
And **Loss**, her blue lips and
swollen tongue,
All life drained from her veins.

Love is a gift with candles,
A birthday invitation surprise,
A homemade, frosted, carrot
cake,
With fine-blended walnuts in-
side,
A pleasant talk, a flame, a wish,
a taste, a plate of crumbs,
Then frantic, rasping, *Get the
pen*, and moments frozen,
numb.

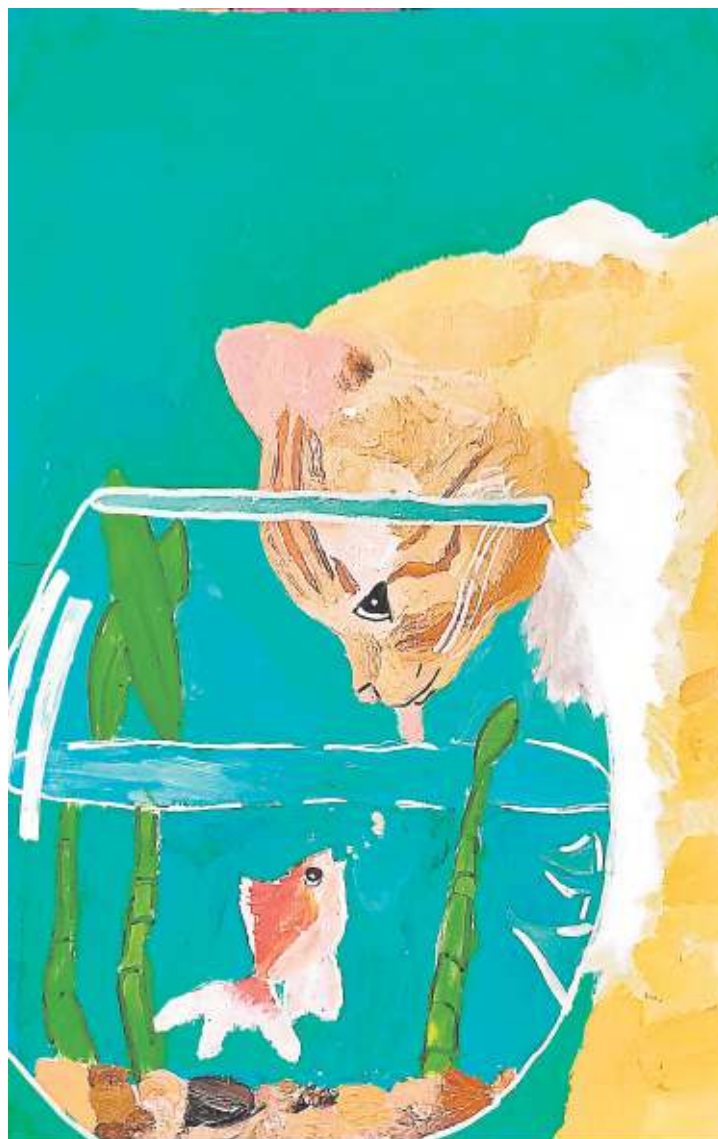
Regret is milk spilt on the floor,
And puddles of tortured
thoughts,
What if she hadn't switched it
that day,
Her own handbag for the one I
had bought,
What if I'd known her condition
or we could start again,
And *what if* she hadn't been
rushing and forgotten the
Epipen.

Forgiveness is flowers besides
my friend's grave,
It's the many years that have
passed,
A pure-white dove with an olive
branch,
Placed tenderly on the grass,
As Guilt and all his cousins,
have now long since departed,
And I've learnt to see the light
again, despite being broken-
hearted.

Irma, aged 14
English International College

"Marvellous concept and structure, taking us on an exploration from grief to forgiveness via fear and love among others. Stunning range of vocabulary and striking turn of phrase," said Peter Edgerton.

RUNNER-UP PRIMARY ARTWORK



Adriana, aged 11
Novaschool Benalmádena

"This amusing cat and goldfish picture tells a story or rather invites us to 'make up' what happens next," said art critic Georgina Oliver.

BEST PRIMARY STORY

Stairs to the Sky

Just this week my grandma died but that isn't totally true... the first day after she left us I dreamt of her and I was with her. She showed me an emptiness and a strange hole. She extended her soft hand to me and both of us together jumped into a swirling hole.

We entered the strange land! It was tremendous, I couldn't believe my eyes. There was a winding staircase with different rainbow colours, soft lights and fascinating music, all leading to doors. Each stair represented a year of my grandma's life. Together we opened a gleaming white door, it was unimaginable - my grandma and all of her family were inside celebrating her wedding to my grandfather.

We made a deal - some nights I would visit the strange land with her, sometimes she would come to our world to feel all of the extraordinary experiences of the real world.

Yesterday in my dream my grandma asked me if I could keep a secret. She told me that she can foresee the future. She wanted to take the stairs to my future with me. Grandma led me gently by the hand... we reached a burnished gold stair and opened the door. The year was 2032, I was on the podium holding a gold medal for gymnastics at the Olympics!

I realised that with my grandma's encouragement and my effort that dream was possible... in the strange land.

I love you grandma.

Martina, aged 9
Sunny View School

"This is very imaginative," said novelist Joan Fallon.

Former editor Liz Parry found this story "very relatable": "The last line 'I love you grandma' made me cry. Good opening and closing lines. Simple, heartfelt and charming. Well done Martina," she expressed.

PHOENIX COLLEGE MÁLAGA



Phoenix isn't for everyone

MÁLAGA

SIE. At first, this might appear to be a strange thing to say. However, as we recruit students for our 7th year, it is becoming clear that not only are our unique identity and philosophy crystalising, but that the word is spreading,

throughout the province and beyond, about who we are.

So what makes us unique amongst British International Colleges on the Costa?

Being a Sixth Form college means that we are just for students of year 12 and 13, normally 16 to

18 years old. This means we specialise only in A-levels and university applications. PCE or CAE qualifications needed for applications to Spanish universities or others are available as an extra.

The College is owned and administered by the three Co-Directors,

who all teach in the school, without any external influences, meaning all decisions taken are for the good of students and staff. Teaching in all subjects is of the highest quality, with a maximum group size of twelve (average 6-8) meaning each student gets abundant teacher attention. Offering a generous 5 hours per A-level still means that students have spaces or 'study periods' on their timetables. They are encouraged to stay in college and study, so that they can approach their teachers outside class for extra help if they need it, but can go home to work if they prefer - or just go out for a while to get a coffee or a snack. Being right in the centre of the city of Málaga has its advantages.

Our aim is to encourage and support each of our students to explore their individual potential, and achieve the very best that they can. Alongside this, we act as a bridge between the sheltered environment of school, and the far

more exposed of university. The studying environment that we provide at Phoenix College does not necessarily suit all students. Some still need a big, busy school, with lots of younger students, uniforms, rules and guidelines. However – at the end of Year 11, many are ready for something different, and indeed thrive and achieve higher A-level grades as a result of changing school. Most young people are ready for, and have the maturity to successfully exploit, more freedom in their studies – and the responsibility that comes with it. All this snowballs into personal growth, successful study – and enjoyment of learning.

More Information

To find out more about Phoenix College Málaga: +34952220275 / info@phoenixcollegemalaga.com / www.phoenixcollegemalaga.com.



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Phoenix isn't for everyone

How do I know if it's for me?

TOP 5

1. you're 16-18.
2. you'll pass 5 GCSEs or equivalent.
3. you have an excellent level of English.
4. you like the idea of responsibility, independence and diversity.
5. you're interested in studying a university degree in any part of the world.



Oliver, 16

"I like the study periods between classes, and that the college is in the centre of Málaga."

Coco, 18

"It's a small school, and students thrive in such an environment."

Kieron, 16

"In Phoenix, I have the freedom to study what I want and how I want. It's a lively place, without any sensation of being trapped."



BEST SECONDARY
STORY

Deprivation

What is sound? Is it a colour for the ear to feel? Or a complex wavelength that each living being translates into its own mental language? That is a question I cannot answer, as in our land, no one can hear.

Our ancestors understood sounds and would feel emotions from them, studied them and analyzed them but, what is there to find? How can a simple, mathematically perfect wavelength turn into a plethora of emotions in one's own mind? We simply cannot comprehend sound, as since the moment we were born, our world is this so-called 'silent'. The silence that could supposedly 'drive creatures insane' though our life has been mute for centuries and nothing seems anomalous. Communication through hand signals is efficient and equal for everyone. This same language is used in the entirety of the land, fast and easy to understand. An audible voice is unequal to the language of the land!

In the mornings, I rush to the omniscient building that is the library. I take out all the books regarding sound, direct wisdom from the past. If it weren't for writing, how would communication ever advance? The answer is clear: it wouldn't. "Make sure to bring them back!" shouts the sign at the exit. Writing expresses emotions which sounds cannot convey. I'd wish to comprehend sound, but I simply cannot as in our land, no one can hear.

I am writing this diary to be read by future generations, to gift them a vision of our life. We have never understood what sound is. When you feel a colour in your mind—a vibrant, deep, beautiful colour—isn't it natural? If the sense was taken away, it would make us feel empty. Now imagine the complete absence of sound; that is how we live.

Marcos, aged 14
English International College

"A truly imaginative interpretation of the theme 'in a strange land'. The pupil was a worthy winner with this well-written and thought-provoking story," commented novelist Joan Fallon.

RUNNER-UP SECONDARY ARTWORK



Mia M., aged 15
British International School of Marbella

Journalist and art critic Georgina Oliver said, "The polar opposite of the portrait [Best Secondary Artwork], light years away from the existential adolescent angst many of the secondary entries share with the onlooker. The painting is an object in its own right. Are those rocks? Grey leaves in a strange 'parched' land? No specific feeling is expressed but the composition is positively magnetic."

SPECIAL MENTION PRIMARY ARTWORK



Alisa, aged 8
The International School Estepona

"This one is positively solar, because the brush strokes are expansive... He's irresistible," said art critic Georgina Oliver.

RUNNER-UP PRIMARY POEM

If a pen could talk

If this old pen could talk,
here's what he'd say,
Why must I walk so far each day?
Why must I march from left to right
to the edge of a cliff which gives me a fright,
I spend my day skating on an ice-rink
Wriggling and jiggling so much I can't think.

And Page is unfriendly, staring blankly at me,
"You always mess the place," he complains angrily,
After my visits, he looks blotchy and smudged,
His face black and blue, and he holds a grudge,
I try to explain that, not like back in old days,
I've learnt from mistakes I now can erase.

I've come a long way from an old feathered quill
I'm fountain, ballpoint and felt tip - a thrill
But one thing I dislike is being chewed on the head,
It's one time I wish I was Pen-cil with lead,

Stefania, aged 10
English International College

"Charmingly imaginative. Excellent word pairings - 'wriggling and jiggling', 'blotchy and smudged', the second of which should have been 1970s comic book characters," said singer-songwriter Peter Edgerton.

RUNNER-UP SECONDARY POEM

Whispers of the Pen

In the hush of the night, the pen takes flight,
Its ink a river of thoughts, dark and bright.
Words unspoken, in silence they dwell,
Awaiting the touch of the pen's gentle spell.

In the dance of shadows, secrets unfold,
Each stroke of the pen, a story retold.
For when tongues falter, and voices fail,
The ink on the paper becomes a trail.

Through the papers embrace, emotions walk,
In the whispered cadence of the pen's talk.
It weaves through the pages, a silent symphony,
A tale of longing, of hope, and epiphany.

Oh, how the pen converses with the soul,
In letters of love, in tales untold.
With every stroke, a universe unfurls,
As the ink spills forth, and the heart twirls.

So let the pen speak, let its ink flow free,
In the language of dreams, let it be.
For in the silence of paper, in the quiet den,
Lies the power of the pen, the art to begin.

Pelin, aged 15
Atlas American School of Málaga

"'In the hush of the night' is a lovely opening line. Includes the rhyme 'symphony'/'epiphany' - it's a risk which could have fallen flat but works beautifully," expressed singer-songwriter Peter Edgerton.



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RUNNER-UP SECONDARY STORY

We Need Something More

Another day passes, just like the last. My room is too small, and so is everyone else's. The food is too bland, the audience too loud, the spotlights too bright. And everything is too monotonous. We need something more.

It's late in the day, and orange light is streaming in from the holes in the tarpaulin that surrounds my room. Mine, and everyone's, they're the same. Same size, same dull color, and same impenetrable metal bars surrounding us, that only open when it's showtime.

The sharp, painful sound of a whistle wakes us up, for another day at work. There are seven of us: Juan Martin, Arthur, Rosa, Nat, Joan, Harriet and me, and everyday our master forces us to perform in front of a crowd under his watchful eye, and his whip. We dance, balance, and jump

through hoops ablaze, until exhaustion. Waiting, for the moment that comes once a day, a moment we all wait restlessly for. For an instant, when everyone leaves, and we're left on stage, a door will open, from behind the stands, and we'll all catch a glimpse of the world beyond the tarp.

At first we get blinded by the sunlight, but once our eyes adjust we can see the dirt beyond the door, the cars the spectators will pack into, and beyond that, green. Not the fake, bright and overly cheerful green that coats the frills Joan is forced to wear, but a deep green that feels like eternity and finality in one. And we know that that is where we're meant to be, deep in the forest. If only we could go there, I know we would be safe, home. Right now, however, we are stuck in a strange land that is also the only place we know.

-Aquinas, Circus Bear.

Gabriela, aged 15
Atlas American School of Málaga

The judges commented on how imaginative this story was. Liz Parry especially liked its (among other stories') approach to the theme 'in a strange land', as it dealt with 'arriving in a foreign (but not imagined) land'.

SPECIAL MENTION PRIMARY ART



Sara, aged 6
Benalmádena International College

"A 'sunny, happy-go-lucky' collage with just a few leaf veins pencilled in. It fills the page. The bright coloured pieces of paper fall into place, as if by magic," expressed art critic Georgina Oliver.

SPECIAL MENTION SECONDARY ART



Phoebe W., aged 15
Aloha College

"The detail and expression of [this drawing] makes me think that at some point the artist has visited the Jorge Rando Museum in Malaga, where the theme of most of the artist's work is war and suffering, and one can almost see that in this child's face," said novelist Joan Fallon.

RUNNER-UP PRIMARY STORY

In a Strange Land

Once upon a time, there was a land called 'Drawing Land'. Every time people drew something, it became real. One day, a family with two children moved in. The girl and the boy wanted to draw a monster, but, without knowing it will become real. So they drew the monster and went to sleep. The next day, they woke up and they were watching the news. When suddenly, they saw the monster they had drawn, destroying the

land. So they got a rubber and erased the monster they drew out and the monster disappeared.

Greta, aged 8
The International School Estepona

"I chose this because I thought it was very imaginative," commented novelist Joan Fallon.

SPECIAL MENTION SECONDARY POEM

The Classroom

The clock keeps ticking over loud conversations.
My thighs stuck to the seat, I cry out in frustration.
The ink keeps pouring, splotches on my paper.
The feeling then sets in but the aches still linger.
Breathing heavily I close my textbook
Lie back on my seat, biting on my pen which is now a chew toy to me.
Then I hear whispers and eyes that are on me.
Am the talk of the classroom? I didn't do anything wrong right? I was only a distraction merely...
The teacher broke the eerie atmosphere in a second, maybe less
'Put your work on my desk and see yourself out.'
People pouring out, but I'm still drowning in doubt.

A. Webb, aged 14
Novaschool Sunland International

"Darkly atmospheric. Reminds me of Joy Division for some reason. Shows great depth of feeling and perception," remarked Peter Edgerton.

SPECIAL MENTION PRIMARY STORY

In a Strange Land

Once upon a time in a sleepy town nestled between the hills there lived a boy named Sam. He was an adventurous soul, with a heart as brave as a lion and a mind as curious as a cat.

One day while exploring the woods near his home Sam stumbled upon a hidden path. Curiosity tugged him at his sleeve, urging him to follow it. As he ventured deeper into the path it led to a dense forest - it felt like stepping into a whole new world. The trees overhead whispered secrets, their branches swaying like friendly waves. And when he reached an opening, his eyes widened in amazement...

Before him spread a land of wonders. The sky was like a giant painting with clouds swirling like cotton candy. In the distance mountains stood tall and proud. But it was the creatures that caught Sam's attention. Birds flew overhead, their feathers shimmering like precious gems. There were foxes with tails like flames, deer with horns that glowed in the sunlight and bears with fur as soft as clouds.

In this enchanted land, every rock and every stream seemed to hold a story waiting to be told. The rivers flowed with a melody as soothing as a gentle lullaby, butterflies fluttered from flower to flower, their wings painted with beautiful, colourful patterns.

Fish darted through the water like shooting stars in the night sky.

As Sam continued to explore, he felt like an adventurer in a storybook but soon the sun started to dip below the horizon. He knew it was time to head back home before it became dark. With a smile on his face and memories swirling in his mind he made his way home, already dreaming about the strange land.

Samir G., aged 9
Sunny View School

SPECIAL MENTION SECONDARY STORY

In the heart of an ancient forest, where the trees whispered secrets of by-gone eras and the air hummed with a mysterious energy, I found myself in a strange land unlike any I had ever known.

The moment I stepped into this enchanted realm, the ground beneath my feet felt alive, pulsating with an otherworldly rhythm. The foliage shimmered with hues unseen in my world, casting an ethereal glow that danced across the forest floor.

As I ventured deeper, the trees seemed to lean in, their branches forming intricate patterns against the sky. Each step I took was met with a chorus of whispers, as if the very land itself was trying to communicate with me.

Strange creatures lurked in the shadows, their forms twisted and fantastical. Some had wings that glimmered like opals, while others slithered through the underbrush with scales that shimmered like emeralds. Yet despite their alien appearances, there was a sense of harmony among them, as if they were all part of the same intricate tapestry woven by nature's hand.

I felt a connection to this strange land, a bond that transcended language and understanding. It was as if I had been welcomed into a world where magic still thrived, where the impossible was possible, and where every corner held the promise of adventure.

As dawn broke and the first rays of sunlight pierced the canopy above, I knew that my time in this strange land was drawing to a close. But as I turned to leave, I carried with me memories that would last a lifetime, and a longing to return to the place where dreams were made real.

Adrian, aged 16
Atlas American School of Málaga

► **Anastasia, aged 10**
Aloha College

"Lovely descriptions. Perfectly weighted use of adjectives (not an easy skill to master)," said singer-songwriter Peter Edgerton.

SELECTED SECONDARY ART



◀ **Andrea Florine M. aged 18**
British School Málaga

Georgina wanted to put these two paintings together, as they explore the theme of modern technology; in both, "the telephone is very present" and they portray different forms of transport: train and plane.

▼ **Lais Santos Basualdo, aged 15**
Swans International School



"I picked this one [below] out as my personal favourite... What I was most impressed by was the rendering of the table itself. I thought it was very skilful and the expression on the two women's faces was extremely well done," said former editor Liz Parry.

SPECIAL MENTION PRIMARY POEM

A Magical Land

In a land where the water slowly flows,
Where whispers dance and colours swirl.
A realm of magic, both near and far,
Created by the moon and the evening star.

Upon a hill, a wizard's den
Ink-stained pages, a poet's pen.
Words that flutter, like butterflies,
A collection of tales, reaching the sky.

Butterflies dance in the golden sun,
Their wings painted with colours.
Enchanted voices, a lively walk,
In this land where even shadows talk.

Mountains embrace the skies
with majestic grace,
A heaven where time finds a
peaceful space.
In this magical realm, where fan-
tasies blend,
A pen's gentle touch, a story-
teller's trend.

Castles rise with towers high,
Touching the canvas of the sky.
A wizard's spell, a fairy's trance,
A land where talk is a poetic
dance.

THE SWEDISH SCHOOL



The Swedish School of Marbella. SUR

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The Swedish School of Marbella offers a vibrant and engaging environment committed to Swedish-speaking children who wish to continue studying the Swedish curriculum whilst living on the Costa del Sol

MARBELLA

SUR. Now in its 21st year, the Swedish School of Marbella aims to ensure that Swedish-speakers don't miss out on any aspects of the education they would receive in the Scandinavian country. The school is certified by the Swedish National Agency for Edu-

cation, and all the teachers are qualified in Sweden.

With capacity for 275 pupils, the Swedish School of Marbella provides a safe and productive teaching space with small classes that ensure excellent one-on-one guidance where necessary.

The school offers the Swedish

curriculum from pre-school (3-5 years) all the way through to elementary year F6 (6-12 years). Pupils aged between 13 - 18 receive a different type of education through 2 virtual schools in Stockholm called 'Sofia Distans' and 'Hermod's' who provide on-line education for Swedes residing abroad. With full-time teacher support and guidance, pupils can take advantage of the excellent online studies provided by the Swedish curriculum in a social and involved school environment, while also receiving all the other perks of the school including healthy, home-cooked lunches, PE and school trips.

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SELECTED SECONDARY STORIES

In a Strange Land

My eyes felt heavy, and with much effort I managed to open them. White blinding light shined on me, making it difficult for me to see.

As I woke up in this new, strange place, my eyesight focused on my surroundings. I was in a white room, impeccable and in a perfect condition.

There was a window straight ahead of me, the source of the surreal bright light, covered in a thin curtain which blocked my view of whatever was outside.

A horrible pounding in my head, making me dizzy, forced me to turn my head to the side, where I was surprised with my own reflection in a mirror. Behind me, I could see in my reflection, there were strange machines I had never seen before. One of them, I noticed, had some papers with writings over it by its side.

I tried to turn over to see the papers and find out where I was, but as I did, something entered the glowing room hurriedly. I distinguished the blurry shape of a person coming closer to me, and I tried in vain to move and protect myself.

Elma, aged 14
The British School of Málaga

In a Strange Land

The first day that I arrived at the airport in America, it felt really strange. Everything was different but I was very excited. After getting out of the plane we went to go get our luggage.

When we picked up our belongings, we headed towards the exit. I remember having to go through a wave of people before coming out. There were all kinds of people all speaking different languages. I then noticed I had lost sight of my parents. I stared around in horror. I could not ask anyone if they had seen my parents because I did not speak or understand their language. I was lost.

I became more worried by the second. At first, I didn't

self. The person sat beside me. My eyes had now gotten used to the light, and I suddenly saw that I was lying beside an angel. That must be it, I thought. With teary eyes, the angel started sobbing softly.

"I died," I said, as I took in the idea that I was now in heaven, bright and peaceful, quiet, with caring angels without wings beside me.

Suddenly more human-like angels entered the room, dressed in blue-green robes. I couldn't see their faces. For a brief moment, they stared at me in disbelief, and then immediately organised themselves and started working on the strange machines and checking on me.

I was now aware of my situation. How did it happen? What would my loved ones feel right now? My headache was killing me.

"I died," I repeated.

The angel beside me looked straight into my eyes with a familiar gaze. It was comforting. The angel hugged me, and as the nurses did their job and the hospital continued with its routine, the angel whispered something in my ear.

"Thank god you're alive."

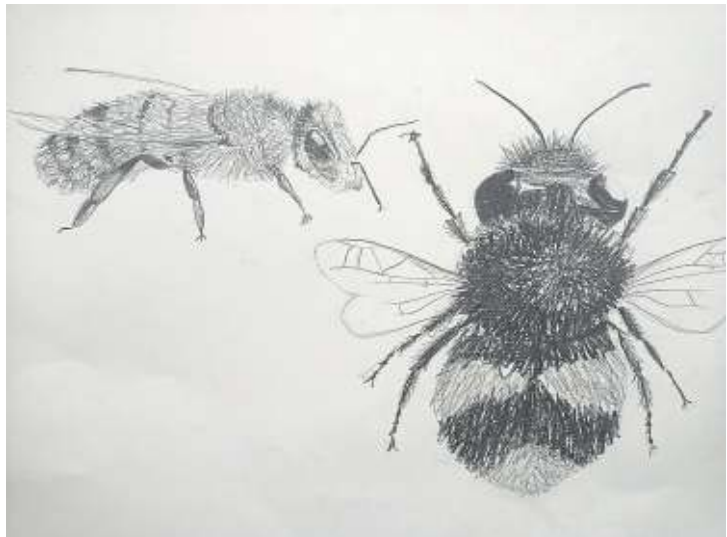
Bárbara, aged 11
Sage College Jerez

SELECTED SECONDARY ART

▶ Esther, aged 16
Phoenix College Málaga
Cathedral Dreams.

▼ Tereza, aged 13
Laude San Pedro International College
Busy Bees.

Art critic Georgina Oliver highlighted these two pencil drawings, remarking on the great deal of work that has gone into them.



SELECTED PRIMARY ART

◀ Emilie, aged 11
English International College

"Simple, rhythmic and captures the attention; it's just fun. What's wrong with being fun?" said art critic Georgina Oliver.



◀ Rafael B.P., aged 11
Swans Primary School

Miss Jordan Smoking on the Chair: "The fruit of a cultural outing? This 'Neo-Constructivist' composition has a sense of humour. The onlooker is drawn in by the playful anachronisms: cigarette, baseball cap, sneakers..." said art critic Georgina Oliver.



▲ Andrei, aged 10
British International School of Marbella



Now in our 20th year and fully accredited by the Swedish National Agency for Education, The Swedish School of Marbella is one of the longest established and best known schools for Swedish expats living in Spain. We offer the Swedish National Curriculum taught in Swedish, starting with preschool from 3 years of age to elementary school grades 1-6, right through to online schooling with full time teacher support for older students. Our teachers are all qualified in Sweden and aim to offer students a safe and engaging study environment focusing on the development of each student's individual needs.

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SELECTED SECONDARY ART



▲ Olivia, aged 18
English International College



◀ Alex, aged 15
Benalmádena International College

"Soul-searching eyes were a recurrent theme among secondary entries this year - staring at us, beckoning us into each young artist's inner world, while suggesting more far-reaching concerns, including...What lies ahead? How do they see me? Not as a clown or powerless puppet, I hope..." remarked art critic Georgina Oliver.

SELECTED SECONDARY STORY

In a Strange Land

Once upon a time in a peaceful village hidden by the green hills there lived a girl called Alice. With her fiery red curls cascading down on her shoulders and her adorable retriever Bonnie trotting beside her, Alice set off on her daily walk following the familiar paths that surrounded her village. On this particular day, as the sun's bright and golden rays pranced through the treetops filtering through the emerald green leaves above, Alice's curiosity got the better of her. She wandered off the beaten path, dreaming of the secrets that lay hidden deep within the unexplored forest that stood silently.

With each step she took, the air around her grew denser and the sound of chirping birds faded with the gentle rustling of leaves beneath her feet. As Alice walked deeper into the forest, the canopy above thickened creating an enchanting shade over the forest floor. She marvelled at the dancing flowers that made this mystical woodland bright with colours. Soon Alice stumbled on a murmuring stream. Its crystal clear water calling her in. She plunged her feet into the cool stream feeling a sense of excitement wash over her. The forest seemed to come alive the trees twirling around her glistening under the sunbeams

that filtered through the trees. Graceful deer with antlers adorned in colourful flowers, walked around without a care in the world. Squirrels with emerald green fur scuttled around her, their laughter tinkling through the air. Alice wondered at the majesty of it all, letting her fingers brush the velvety golden roses. The scent of lavender hung thick in the air. She watched in awe as fairies weaved delicate tapestries from stardust and moonbeams crafting stories only the moon itself could witness, and then she knew, she knew she would stay there forever.

S. O., aged 12
Novaschool Sunland International

SELECTED SECONDARY POEM

Poem

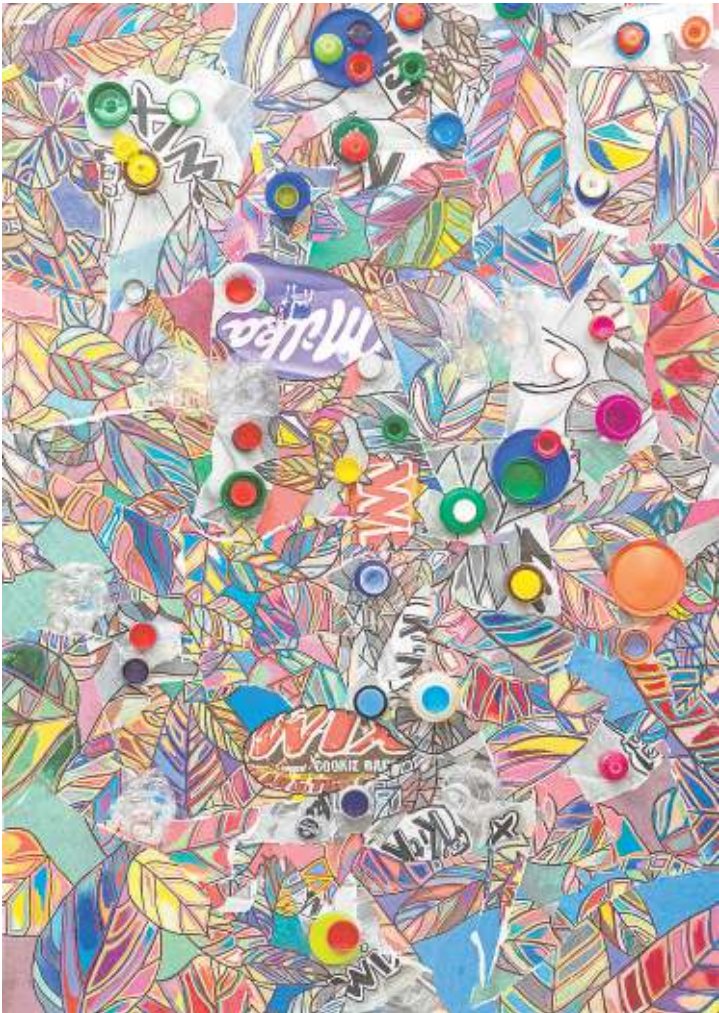
In a world of pencil and paper,
Where thoughts flow and ideas taper,
Lines drawn with graphite grace,
Capturing moments, time and space.

Inscribing tales of joy and sorrow,
On pages where dreams borrow,
Words to weave their silent song,
As the ink dances, swift and strong.

With every stroke, a story unfolds,
In the quiet whispers, secrets hold,
A canvas for the mind to explore,
With pencil and paper, forevermore

Margo, aged 12
Laude San Pedro International College
Former editor Liz Parry said she enjoyed this poem's rhymes.

SELECTED SECONDARY ART



▲ Thomas, aged 17
English International College

"This is ecological... a rare one that was not figurative... not self-centred," said Georgina Oliver.

"Looks like a Murakami to me," commented former editor Liz Parry.

► Asha Sara Finance, aged 17
Sotogrande International School

Art critic Georgina Oliver remarked, "This hyper-sensitive self-portrait based on a Georges de La Tour-esque 'selfie' is altogether different from its brasher, introspective counterparts. The more you look at it, the more you 'warm' to it."





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SELECTED PRIMARY ART



▲ Maleek B., aged 10
Sunny View School
"This is a future cartoonist," commented art critic Georgina Oliver.



Olivia, aged 7
British International School of Marbella



Natalia, aged 10
Novaschool Sunland International

SELECTED SECONDARY ART



◀ Erica M., aged 18
Sunny View School
Novelist Joan Fallon commented, "It is certainly possible that this (along with the Special Mention Secondary Artwork) has been inspired by Jorge Rando's work because you can see these young people sheltering from devastation in the background, and possibly war."

SELECTED PRIMARY POEMS

The talking pen

I was tired yet excited for the challenge ahead
Thinking about my words, I was imagining in my head

Then I took my pencil in my hand, I started to think
And without a pause, not even a blink
My pencil stuck to the paper and scribbled "My Dear Owner"

My hand started to twitch, to turn, to glitch
The power of the pencil struck into my hand
And as I looked down, I saw a curious thing

Flawless writing about the life of a pencil
How he wrote and wrote his entire life, an eternity
"I've been to the sharpener, the bin, the floor"
"I've seen all you can see"
I couldn't believe you were talking to me

"I am exhausted, leave me alone, on the floor, on the desk,
wherever you please"
He jumped out of my hand and scribbled away under the desk
And then the pencil never wrote again.

Elizaveta, aged 9
Aloha College
"Great movement!" said former editor Liz Parry.

If I were a pen and I could talk...

If I were a pen and I could talk, I would say...
Put
My lid
On right now
Please put it on
My ink is going to
Dry, make a solution
Please I beg
You right
NOW!

Daniel O., aged 7
Sage College Jerez

Pen friend

My pen is my friend who speaks for me,
He travels each page, swirling gently.
I whisper my thoughts, he turns them to words,
To say how I feel and be heard.

I like how we talk and then he tells the world
What I think and feel, this seven-year old girl.
If he makes a mistake, I don't even shout.
We just start again since he can rub out!

We draw and we sketch and stories we write.
And then take a rest and say, "Goodnight."
To record my life, my pen helps me
And leaves me with great memories!

Nika, aged 7
Novaschool Sunland International

SOTOGRADE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



Rachel Dent: “Early-childhood education is more than preparation for later stages”

Marianne Valentine, Education Director of Inspired Education Group, and Rachel Dent, Head of Sotograde International School, share their opinion on the importance of early-childhood education in a child's development

SOTOGRADE

There is significant worldwide research demonstrating the direct correlation between a child's participation in high-quality ear-

ly-childhood education and their later academic success. Families must choose carefully, though, as the emphasis here is on quality.

Early-childhood education is more than preparation for later stages. It has a critical role in ensuring that children develop a strong and healthy sense of self, a key factor in determining academic success, and also how we thrive as human beings throughout life. The first five years of life are the most crucial window for optimal brain development, and being in a relational and en-

riched-learning environment with other children has a significant impact on this.

What role does play have in children's learning and development in early years?

We have a duty as adults to understand the importance of play. Children are not 'just' playing; they are seeking and exploring multifaceted ways to deeply understand the world they find themselves in. Rather than debating whether they should play, we should be asking what the adult's role is. We know that play that leads to deeper learning is playful research, this should be supported by adults who are highly qualified to do so. We should consider playful curiosity as a quality that should belong not just to the child but also to the adult beside them, and by that I mean having the creative curiosity of the inventor, scientist, researcher or entrepreneur. The curiosity to really understand the child, their theories and ideas, and their potential. As children develop, all of this should be coupled with guided learning and taught in a coherent and consistent way by the teacher.

How do you address the different needs and learning styles of children in your classes?

Rather than simply planning to

differentiate between the different levels of understanding in the classroom, an Inspired Early-Childhood teacher should strive to get as close an understanding as possible of who each child is and how they learn. This is not so simple when we consider that we are also talking about infants and toddlers, as well as pre-school children, many of whom will be in the emerging phase of language development. Here, we focus on understanding children's learning processes through observation and documentation. This process guides the carefully planned steps we then create for the children. We also understand that children in early childhood stimulate each other's learning processes.

What is your approach to working with parents and caregivers during the early years of a child's education?

Children have a fundamental right to be supported by all the adults in their world, so it is crucial for their well-being that the school is in constant collaboration and partnership with the family. This is a two-way process, not simply a matter of passing information to the family, but of listening carefully to families and ensuring their active participation in the school's early-learning culture.



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Sotogrande, first in international schools cross country championships



Sotogrande runners with the cross country cup. SUR

SUR IN ENGLISH. Sotogrande International School secured first place in the International Schools Cross Country Championships hosted recently by St Anthony's College (Mijas). This was the larg-

est championship yet with ten schools taking part and more than 400 athletes. The event covered age groups from Under-11 to Under-19, with courses ranging from two to five kilometres. This was

only the second time that Sotogrande International School has lifted the trophy with an impressive number of podium places. Congratulations have been extended to all runners.



Individual gymnasts who formed Team Gibraltar in Ronda. SUR

Gibraltar gymnasts reap success in Ronda competition

SUR IN ENGLISH. Young gymnasts from Gibraltar took part in the Al-Andalus circuit event in Ronda recently, coming away with the first gold of the season for the GRGA (Gibraltar Rhythmic Gym-

nastics Association). The first place was secured by Nyah Galiain in the hoop category and fellow Gibraltarians Thea Cawthorn and Mie Alvarez took second and third places.

The Benjamin group competed in freehand and were placed fifth overall while the GRGA's newly formed Benjamin group Infantil ball also came fifth. Other groups and individuals came away with impressive results in rope, ribbon and clubs categories.

Swans School football teams lift trophies at international tournaments

SUR IN ENGLISH. Football teams from Swans International School have lifted trophies at different prestigious international tournaments recently.

Teams travelled to Barcelona in October last year for the World School Games Football Cup. The Under-13 boys' team came third in their competition, an achievement that is "a clear indicator of the team's potential and the effective training programme at Swans International School" said the school's head of Physical Education, Peter Carr.

The school also travelled to the Mediterranean Cup in Verona, Italy, last October. There, the Under-16 girls' team emerged as the Europa Cup winners, showcasing their domi-

nance on the field with a series of impressive performances. In the same tournament, the Under-18 girls' team clinched the Champions Cup, adding another title to the school's list of accolades.

Also in Verona, the Under-16 boys' team fought valiantly to become the Champions Cup runners-up, while the Under-18 boys' team secured third place in the Elite Cup.

"These outstanding achievements are a testament to the dedication and hard work of the students, coaches, and support staff at Swans International School. The school's focus on fostering athletic talent, alongside academic excellence, is clearly paying dividends," said Carr.



Swans players took part in the World Schools Football Cup. SUR



Swans International School football players with trophies at the Mediterranean Cup in October. SUR



The school is preparing to participate in the Mediterranean Cup once again in Verona, Italy, this year, with high hopes for the Under-11 and Under-14 teams.

Given their recent track record, the Swans International School football teams are expected to be strong contenders, said the head of Physical Edu-

cation, who added that there is a "palpable sense of excitement and anticipation for what these young athletes will achieve next" among the school community.

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Children learn outdoors at Novaschool agro-sustainable farm



SUR IN ENGLISH. Learning outdoors as well as in the classroom is a way of life at Novaschool Sunland International in Cártama. The Novaschool group boasts its own agro-sustainable farm, which covers 22,000 square metres

distributed in natural and educational spaces such as open-air classrooms, a laboratory, an orchard and areas for animals, crops and picnic areas. Animals include horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens and dogs.

British school leaves record of 2023 for future generations



SUR IN ENGLISH. One of the highlights of the last year at the British School of Málaga was the burial of a school time capsule. The container was buried on the site of the construction of the new primary school building, with the idea that, "in decades to come, or perhaps in the next millennium, future humans will unearth this strange metallic object and marvel at the 'amazing' ancient people pictured inside", said the school.

Among the objects saved in the capsule were: photographs, an audio clip of the Primary choir recorded at the event; school information; an activity booklet; a T-shirt signed by the school football team when they were crowned Spanish Champions in 2022; and a copy of the 2023 SUR in English Education and Learning supplement which featured the school.

As well as copies of

speeches and letters the content of the capsule also included a bag of seeds, chosen by the attendees. "The seeds represent growth, care and patience which go hand in hand with our motto 'Growing our Future Together'. We hope that they are still ok when the capsule is opened and that the seeds can be sown," said the school.

Oxbridge

Also in the last year the British School of Málaga has become an approved centre for admission exams to the most prestigious universities in the UK, such as Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and UCL. This is not available to every exam centre and the approval process is rigorous and thorough, explained the school. Last year 13 candidates travelled to the school from around Spain to sit the assessment tests.

Students head to Indonesia on science expedition



SUR IN ENGLISH. Students from Sotogrande International School experienced the trip of a lifetime and helped contribute to scientific research on their second scientific expedition to Indonesia recently. A group of 16 students and two teachers travelled to a remote tropical rainforest camp in Indonesia. They spent a week with scientists carrying out surveys for various ani-

mals including birds, bats, megafauna, reptiles and butterflies. They also collected carbon data to determine the role of the forest in mitigating climate change. They then travelled to a remote island and spent a second week diving and carrying out coral reef surveys. It was a great success with new species discovered and research papers written using the data collected.

TOP PERFORMERS

Sotogrande's SotoRox6 show: 'Bigger, bolder and better'



Some of the performers at the two-day event in which more than 160 students took part. SIS

SUR IN ENGLISH. Sotogrande International School recently celebrated SotoRox, a two-day musical event to showcase the talents of pupils of all ages.

More than 160 students took part in this year's event, performing a range of classics - from Led Zeppelin to The Foo Fighters, from Pink Floyd to Fleetwood Mac, explains seventeen-year-old student Lily Irene Trevisani, who sent in a report to SUR in English:

"The sold out crowd of over 1,100 were simply blown away.

The high quality level of production (stage, lights, sound screen projections and livecam) made the 27-song setlist the perfect platform to exhibit the vast array of talent at SIS. SotoSmash followed on Friday evening and transformed the concert hall into a dance hall as students came together to listen to and support student DJs, loopers, rappers, poets and a special 90s dance classic set (featuring vocalists). SotoRox/SotoSmash helped raise funds for our partner community in Asni, Mo-

rocco, where our in-house, student-led NGO The Kindred Project are planning our next expedition this year. The first year diploma students are heading to Asni in March as part of their CAS where the IBO encourages students to be lifelong learners and others outside of the classroom. SotoRox would not have been possible without the hard work of the wonderful staff of Sotogrande International school."

Director and musical producer of the event, Mr Wickersham,

said: "SotoRox has become somewhat of an institution. With its own branding, merchandising, student-led marketing team, social media pages (@sotorox-sis) and legacy, it has grown into an iconic event which SIS looks forward to every four years. From rather humble beginnings in 2007, SotoRox has truly become "bigger, bolder and better" over the years and many alumni share fond memories and identify this occasion as one of their SIS highlights. However, what the audience sees in the

three hours of the show is a mere glimpse into the project in its entirety. This is a result of a process and planning. A dedication of time learning individual parts, giving up lunchtimes, after school hours and weekends to rehearse. SotoRox truly embraces the real meaning of collaboration."

Lily Irene Trevisani writes: "Students were not only able to enjoy SotoRox as performers or spectators, they were also able to gain important volunteer experience."

Students from 66 countries graduate from Les Roches

MARÍA ALBARRAL. Marbella's congress centre was the venue for the recent graduation ceremony for students from Les Roches Hospitality School. Certificates were awarded to 193 students from 66 different countries, who have completed one of the courses offered by the school, from a BBA degree in Global Hospitality Management, to post-graduate diplomas and master's degrees.

The graduation ceremony was presided over by Les Roches CEO Carlos Díez de la Lastra, director of the Marbella campus Mano Soler and academic director Jon Loiti. Also present was Monique Dekker, senior vice-president of

human resources at EAME Hyatt Hotels. "This industry makes you feel part of it from the first day and, however, you can spend your entire life perfecting your profession and exploring new and fascinating ways to grow," said Dekker, who invited students to commit to constant learning and development.

Relatives, authorities, representatives of organisations and companies joined the graduation ceremony from all over the world. This highlights the multicultural nature of Marbella and its ability to attract international talent.

"The industry needs professionals who can change things. We train directors in the ability



The recent graduation ceremony at the congress centre in Marbella. JUAN CARLOS DOMÍNGUEZ

to provide a service to demanding guests, to deal with critical situations, all with innovation in their DNA. Les Roches has been able to bring together integral education, theoretical and practical, with the reality and demands of the market. The em-

ployability of our students is practically total. At Les Roches we are proud to contribute to the training of what, I'm convinced, is already the next generation of tourism leaders," said Díez.

Also during the ceremony, Les Roches handed out its Hospital-

ity Young Talent Award to Hyatt Hotels; the Mentor Award to Paolo Martignago, F&B Manager and Les Roches alumni; the Social Responsibility Award to Asociación ProDunas; and the Way of Life Award to Rafael Burgos Mérida, a BBA student.

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University Program (2+2)

ACS also offers a university solution for students in the Costa del Sol. Our university program focuses on our 2+2 model: 2 years in Spain + 2 years in the US; also known as the 2+2 Transfer Program.

The University Transfer Program enables students to begin in Marbella the first 2 years of university, covering much of the basic coursework required by all North American universities. Students who join this program can then transfer to the United States or any other American university in Europe to complete their degree.

GED (General Education Development) and Fast Track

The GED is another form of high school completion and is a great option for students who have been in different educational systems such as athletes, or mature students, who need to finish their secondary education. The GED diploma is accepted in most universities in the United States. Students enrolled in this program can complete the course and exams in one semester and can then apply to the university program in what we call the Fast Track one semester of GED and 4 semesters of university, after which students can earn their Associate Degree Diploma.

Mission and Vision

At ACS, our primary focus is to provide educational solutions and opportunities. Through a successful high school and university academic program, we aim to provide students with the best educational and cultural background to continue their higher education in America and other international institutions elsewhere. We believe that all students have the opportunity of becoming academically successful while developing self-confidence and finding their true talent.

More Information

For more information, please visit our website:
www.americancollegespain.com
or contact us:
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LEADER. The American College in Spain is the first American institution in the Costa del Sol

The American College in Spain; 11 years helping students succeed in the Costa del Sol and half a century educating them around the world

MARBELLA

SUR. The American College in Spain is the first American institution to have been established in the Costa del Sol. Focusing on American education, ACS strives to provide educational opportunities to students in Marbella and its surrounding areas.

Our small classroom sizes and personalized curriculum puts particular emphasis on developing international and cross-cultural capabilities through excellence in academics.

About our programs

- High School
- University (2+2 transfer program)
- GED (High School Equivalency) + Fast Track

High School

Our fully accredited US High School program allows students can complete their high school diploma in Spain. Classes are taught by a team of qualified teachers specialized in different

subjects and personal academic advice is offered to all students. An individualized graduation curriculum is carefully planned for each student and the necessary courses are assigned for high



school completion. Students can also join The American College in Spain's program at any time during the academic year.

ACS is an international center of University of Missouri High School (Mizzou Academy) which is fully accredited by Cognia and the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement in the United States.

This program provides outstanding solutions to meet the different needs of everyone and



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