

# STATEMENT ON BRITISH COUNCIL SCHOOLS OVERSEAS

The British Council runs a highly-successful and prestigious school in Madrid, providing a bilingual and bicultural education for Spanish children. We now propose to develop a small network of similar schools. The statement below sets out the mission for our new schools, and the benefits this creates for the UK. For more information about the British Council School of Madrid, please visit our [website](#).

## **British Council Schools Mission**

Our schools will facilitate cultural relations engagement with key target audiences through a high-quality bilingual and bi-cultural curriculum to a school community of host country children from 3 to 18 years of age. The curriculum is values-based, including tolerance and respect for other cultures and points of view. In each school, we will teach up to 1,500 students at any one time, engaging with social groups of current and future leaders and influencers to the benefit of both countries. We will encourage and facilitate access to higher education in the UK for those who wish to pursue that route.

Our schools will also support outreach into national education through policy exchange with Ministries of Education and also through practical projects in teacher training and curriculum design, drawing on the British Council's professional resource and locally-based expertise. We aim to support plans to enhance the quality of school education in general and English teaching in particular, of benefit to children and families across the whole country.

We recognise that we are different from the traditional 'international school' approach, whose principal target audiences are largely international students rather than host-country nationals, who often remain at the school for relatively short periods of time before moving on to another international school elsewhere. We also aspire to significant levels of outreach collaboration with national education systems.

## **Benefit to UK**

The British Council School of Madrid is widely considered to be one of the most effective instruments of cultural relations engagement the UK has in that country. The principles of its success are ones we intend to emulate in new schools in other countries.

The nature of engagement through school education is profound and long-reaching. It creates significant influence for the UK among its target audience of a different order to one-off or shorter transactional contact. This applies not only to the children at the school at any one time, but to their future selves as well as to their parents and families. An understanding and appreciation of the UK – its language, culture, and values – is a core part of the education delivered. In Madrid, this influence is magnified exponentially by our school's ability to target social groups of current and former (and no doubt future) government Ministers and their children, as well as senior leaders and decision-makers across the full spectrum of Spain's educated and professional elite.

The excellence of our school in Madrid and its widely-perceived reputation as one of the very best schools in the whole country has the further advantage of enhancing the profile and reputation of UK education as a whole. We encourage and facilitate Spanish students – from our own School and across the country - to attend UK higher education at undergraduate and post-graduate level. Spain is established as one of the largest overseas markets, and our School's reputation helps us to support continuing promotion of the UK in this area.

The values that the School espouses include tolerance and respect for other cultures and other points of view. Our Madrid school had a significant track record of success during the closed pre-democracy years, when the British Council supported those who wished to develop an open and pluralistic society. Our new schools will be positioned to make similar contributions to openness in the contemporary world.

Our schools also have a broader mission than the education offered directly to our own pupils. They will act as a platform for outreach support to national education systems. Madrid's major success in this has been working with the Ministry of Education and regional authorities who have established a significant number of bilingual schools following a similar approach to ours. The improvement of English language teaching in national education systems is of advantage to the UK as well as the host country in terms of building economic capacity and orientation to the UK as a trading partner.

## **Next Schools**

We are actively developing plans to open a small network of British Council schools, initially in East Asia, Central Europe and Latin America.

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