



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
Bachillerato Internacional

International College Spain

# 40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE, INNOVATION AND SUCCESS

**1980**

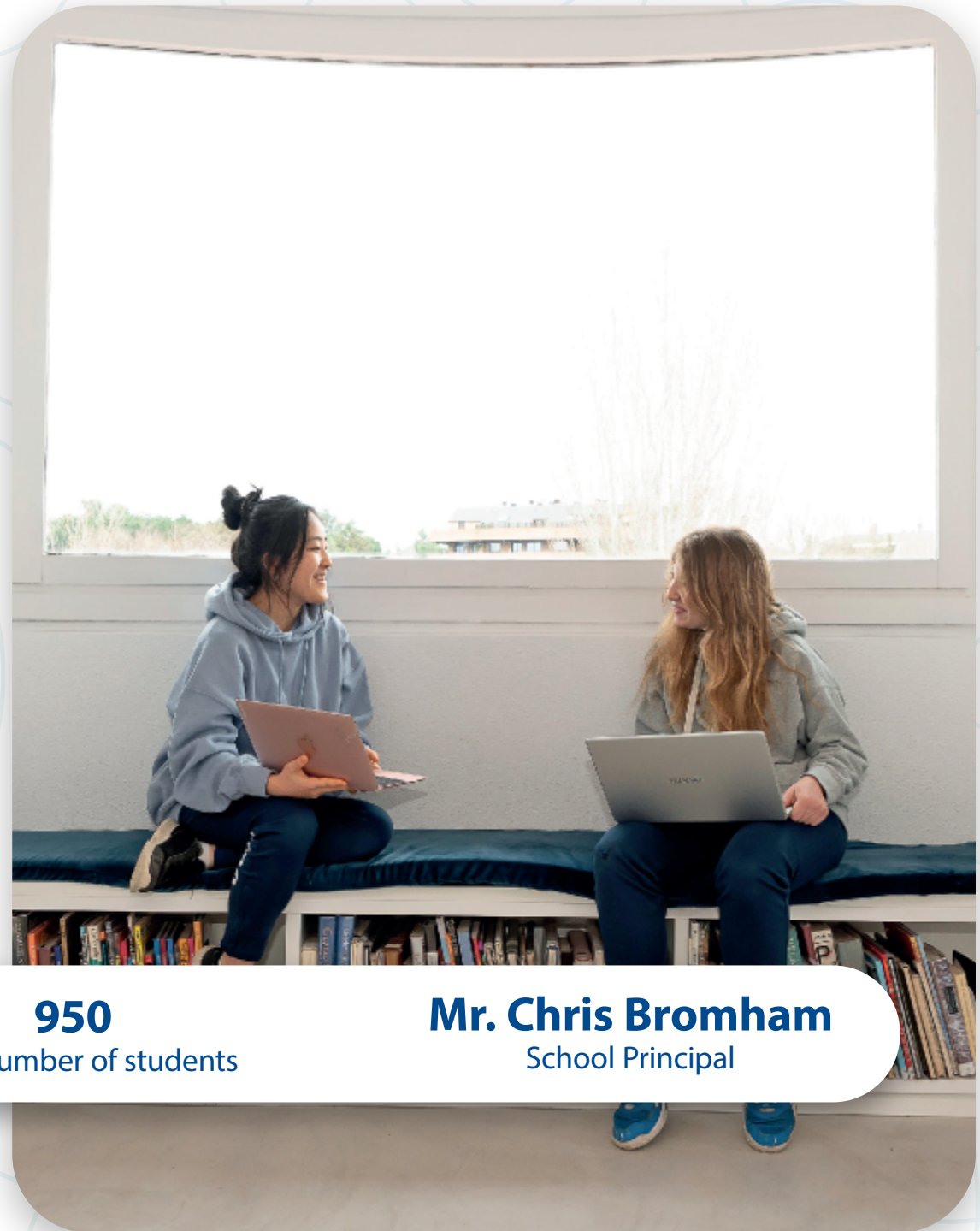
Diploma Programme offered since

**950**

Total number of students

**Mr. Chris Bromham**

School Principal



## A lasting legacy

The academic year of 2020/2021 is a special ruby celebration year for the Madrid-based International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, International College Spain; marking 40 years of providing educational excellence through the IB Diploma Programme (DP).

It didn't take long for International College Spain to manifest a lasting legacy as an outstanding IB World School. Over the last four decades, the school has moved from strength to strength; expanding its infrastructure and community to a current cohort of over 950 students. The first expansion to its IB offering outside of the DP was implemented in 1996, when the school replaced iGCSEs with the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP).



Commenting on this milestone and the following transition, Head of Secondary School, Barry Hughes mentions: "At the time, one of the challenges we faced stemmed from our move from teaching iGCSEs to the MYP. However, it wasn't a disruptive experience and all staff, students and parents naturally became used to the new style of learning. We were fortunate that our parent community were hands-on and did their research on the MYP, so the transition was seamless. We've had a 100% DP pass rate in the last two years, so I think that shows just how strong these programmes and our standards of teaching are, and why we have taught them for so long."

Just three years later, in 1999, International College Spain grew its offering further, becoming authorized to teach the Primary Years Programme (PYP); a move that made International College Spain the 13th school in the world to offer all three IB programmes at the time. Today, it is the only IB World School in Madrid delivering the IB continuum of programmes in English to students across 72 nationalities, and has been a proud Nord Anglia Education Group School for the last six years. Christopher Bromham, Principal at International College Spain says: "We truly offer a home away from home for hundreds of our students, and our internationally inclusive culture means that we have many expat students waiting to attend our school."





## Establishing lasting links

With 31 years of IB teaching experience at International College Spain, Barry shares what it means to offer all three IB programmes to students: "For me, being a true IB World School means having an IB education all the way through a student's educational journey, and it is very important to me that we are able to provide this. Having witnessed the school's growth for this length of time, I can see first-hand how the programmes have benefitted not only our past and present cohorts, but our teachers too; six of whom I previously taught here myself! A main goal of one of our current Biology teachers was to come back and teach here, which I feel not only speaks volumes about the school but the lasting impact of the IB itself."

When looking at the legacy of an IB education, it is clear that International College Spain fosters a strong community bond among its students. Taking a closer look at this, Chris explains: "It's wonderful when previous students come back to visit us and still view themselves as part of our community; this inclusive nature forms a huge part of the IB core in all IB World Schools, and I think this is one of the many reasons why all over the globe, and especially here in Spain, the IB has become a top, worthwhile and recognizable programme of education."

Chris notes that one of the key benefits of an IB education is the international-mindedness that

it instils in students, and that this has been particularly important in the last year: "We are lucky that this is a fundamental principal instilled within many of our students already, stemming from their rich backgrounds of different countries and cultures. This hugely benefits our next generation of learners in being respectful of different cultures, which is something that can be lacking in today's world."

In addition to international-mindedness, developing other future-ready skills within the school's students remains a large priority, benefitting them not only in the classroom but throughout their lives. Barry shares examples of these skills, such as critical thinking: "As a school that has taught the DP for 40 years, we can clearly identify the advantages the programme brings in specific areas of learning. Through teaching Theory of Knowledge (TOK) classes, I am able to see how students develop their critical thinking skills, which is a crucial asset for them to have in order to enhance their learning. As an IB continuum school; it's easy for us to spot the positive correlations between the programmes, and we know that a skill such as critical thinking, continually develops from the PYP all the way through to the DP."

Establishing these links between the subjects and subject areas forms a key part to the success of the programmes not only at International College Spain, but to every IB World School. Chris confirms that this helps to provide a wider understanding of each subject a

student undertakes; teaching more than how to pass examinations, but providing context and an in-depth knowledge of how their learning relates to, and can be put into practice in, the real world. Chris says: "The programmes are continually advancing with the current times and adapting to an ever-changing world, so it means that having an IB education is more relevant today than it's ever been and, as a parent, that is exactly what you want for your child."



## A passport to university

International College Spain understands the important role that the DP core plays within the educational journey of its students. Barry explains: "The DP core is absolutely critical to the success of our students when making their next steps to university. A good example of this is the extended essay; it's difficult to do, but it puts our students at an academic advantage when making the transition to university. When looking at creativity, activity, service (CAS), many of our students appreciate the work they put into it, and discover the genuine reason behind why they do it; they don't just focus on box ticking and counting hours. CAS brings a level of wider understanding to the word "community" and I don't think it is matched by other educational programmes for school aged students. I find that these elements truly make the DP the incredible programme it is, and provide our students with a passport to university when they decide to make that step."

Adding to this, Chris says: "I hear so much about how IB students are far from more prepared for university and one of their main selling points within their application process was the fact that they had been to an IB World School. University admissions departments hold an IB education in high regard and can see the important life skills that are developed through the DP and, in particular its core."

For both Barry and Chris, encouraging other schools to make the move to becoming an IB World School is an easy recommendation for them to make. "I would absolutely recommend the IB to non-IB schools. All of the programmes help to shape the students in so many constructive ways. It's been incredible to see just how many of our students over the last few decades have grown to become independent, inquiring learners who go on to make positive change to the world. I know that as we head into an ever-changing future, both our own, and fellow IB cohorts across the globe, will continue to seize and create every opportunity that helps make our world a better place to live in," says Barry.





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Find out more about the benefits of the IB:  
[www.ibo.org/benefits](http://www.ibo.org/benefits)