



ST MARY OF THE ANGELS SPANISH EXCHANGE 2018-19

THE only primary school in the northwest of England with an established Spanish exchange programme!



EXCHANGE VISIT OF CHILDREN FROM MARISTAS SCHOOL, PAMPLONA, SPAIN

Dear parents,

I am sure you will have heard that, when your child is in Year 6, we have a Spanish exchange programme. It is going remarkably well this year - again! **No other school does it** – it's a brilliant privilege for our children!

Next school year, we will be looking after 14 children from our partner school, **during the week 1st – 7th October 2018.** **We need some kind families from this class to host the Spanish children. You'd need a bed in your house for 1 child. We'll keep girls with girls... and vice versa.**

We will return to Spain later, not finalised yet – but we expect that would be in June 2018. So that would be just weeks before your child goes to high school. We stay in a hotel together in Spain. But at the moment, we are thinking about the October 2017 visit of the Spanish children to England!

COULD YOU HELP? HOW WOULD YOUR CHILD BENEFIT? PLEASE READ THESE FAQs!

MY CHILD IS OFTEN IN AFTER SCHOOL/BREAKFAST CLUB – SO I CAN'T HAVE A STUDENT

If you need our childcare, you can of course put the Spanish student in the club too - *free of charge* - on each occasion, before school starts and/or until you have finished work.

I WORK LATE... SO I CAN'T LOOK AFTER A STUDENT IN THE EVENINGS

The staff here will be putting on free activities in the evenings. For example, one or two evenings, a club in the hall, with art, crafts, ipads, snooker, Wii and Nintendos.

One night we will be going to the bowling alley; and another, out for a meal together ...and so on. You don't have to amuse them for many evenings – and when they get home, it will be nearly bedtime!

If you're in late, I'll keep them and drop them off for you...we're very flexible for that week. We have a WhatsApp group so we can talk at all times and share photos - a lot!

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN AND WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

The children are from a lovely Catholic school in Spain, very similar to ours. The children are well behaved and well brought up. They'll be about the same age as your child (Y6 in October).

All the children have really enjoyed each other's company over the past 4 years; it's gone REALLY WELL! But of course, while they're in your house, you'll have an emergency mobile number for me and the staff; you can ring us day and night if there are any problems, we'll be on call 24 hours.

WHY DO THE SPANISH CHILDREN WANT TO STAY IN OUR HOMES?

The Spanish parents have a different ethos to us. They're not as protective. They send their kids on summer camps, to English schools...everything is about their child learning English. That's why their children are almost fluent in English already – they put us to shame!

They are desperate for their children to stay with English families so that they can be 'immersed' in the English language and the English lifestyle. They definitely do not want them staying in a hotel. And for the past five years this has gone exceptionally well, no tears, no trouble. The English kids have loved having them in their homes, and we try to match similar children. If they like dancing, we put them together. If they like playing football, we put them together... and so on...

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE DAY?

Your child's class and the Spanish pupils will be doing some work together each morning, such as an exciting shared Art project, or an ICT project on the i-Pads; and we will also be going on trips during the afternoons/evenings, such as to Liverpool, Chester Zoo and so on. *We won't be charging for any trips in England.* **You will be given a full timetable and there will be plenty of letters and Parents Meetings, well before they come, so everyone will know exactly what is happening; and if you have any problems, we can sort ALL OF THEM, we promise.**

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM US WHEN WE LOOK AFTER THIS CHILD?

We ask that you give the child a breakfast. They will have their lunch in school, provided by us. You need to give them their evening meal (unless we go out on a certain night for a meal, all paid by school); and you need to provide a bed for them to sleep. (We have spare folding beds in school - if you want to borrow a bed, you're welcome.) We ask you to look after them in the same manner that you would expect other people to look after your child, if they were away from home. **It's worked really well each year. They're like friends for life now, still phoning each other up and talking on Skype, Xbox etc!**

HOW DO THEY GET HERE?

The Spanish school usually fly from Bilbao, in the north of Spain, to Manchester, on Easyjet; and so do we. Several of my staff and I are trained minibus drivers, so we always collect them from the airport, bring them to school, where you can meet up in the car park; and we will take them back to the airport from here too, on the way home. This will be in October 2018.

CAN THEY SPEAK ENGLISH?!

The Spanish children have been learning English since they were about 3; and so they are ***amazingly good at English, virtually fluent.*** Your child's class learn Spanish, at a basic level; but if there are any problems, of course, they'll speak in English!

DOES MY CHILD GO ON A RETURN TRIP TO SPAIN, IF WE HOST A SPANISH CHILD?

That's the way it works, yes. Once the children met last year, they became such close friends; and they couldn't wait to see each other again in June 16, when we did a return trip there. The children in current Year 6, Miss Pugh, Mrs Williams and I are going again in June 2017. **We all stay in a hotel together, not in the Spanish families' houses, although we do visit them at times.** Why? Because our parents were a bit more anxious about things; our children never do this kind of thing as a rule; but the Spanish kids are used to it. Our parents told me they would only let them go if we stayed overnight in a hotel. That's fine by us, and it's worked well anyway, we're used to it now. This also made it a bit easier for us too, because of the police check arrangements, which only English schools have to legally follow.

A grant we received from the EU should keep the cost ***very low*** in 2018, for the return leg. **But this is a long way off** – there'll be lots of planning meetings before then, to keep you informed. Of course, we'll have done the whole cycle FIVE times by then – I am a regular visitor to Pamplona, and we plan each trip with the staff there together. ***It's fantastic there!*** We have taken children with special needs – such as diabetes – it's no problem. We are full first aiders; and the Spanish school has a sick bay – and full time nurse on site. We also know the local doctor and can visit at short notice if necessary.

WHAT IS THE LONG TERM AIM?

In the future, your child will have employment opportunities all over the world if they speak other languages. And in London, huge Spanish companies like Santander and BBVA are investing, and looking for Spanish-English speaking graduates. Don't believe what they say about Brexit; there are top jobs for English-Spanish students, in Spain, USA, South America – and in Spanish corporations in the UK.

There's a shortage. We want to develop a love for languages in every child, to give them such opportunities. *That's why your child is now learning Spanish in St Mary's.*

Feedback from ALL pupils is 100% positive. They say it's the best thing they've ever done in school. *It's the best experience I've known in 30 years in schools.*

RETURN SLIP.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, JUST COME TO THE MEETING SOON, WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE, NO MONEY OR COMMITMENT YET.

Please can you reply by next Tuesday, 22ND March, THAT'S Parents' Evening- or speak to Mr Hughes there.

There will only be a maximum of 14 spaces - so be quick!

Name of your child

I am provisionally interested for my child to take part in the Spanish exchange programme, during their Year 6 class next year. NO MONEY REQUIRED, no commitment yet! But I understand that I can attend a further meeting about this very soon, where all my questions will be answered!

Signed.....(name of parent)