

SANTA MARIA LA BLANCA SCHOOL: VISION AND PURPOSE

Santa María la Blanca was built with the idea that children should have an affordable quality education in a safe, nurturing environment. Santa María la Blanca represents a project in which both Church and School under the same name, work closely to reach their goals. Santa María la Blanca is a charter school; which allows parents a choice in free public education for their child.

Our vision can be defined according to the next principles:

- Catholicity
- Educative Innovation
- Bilingualism
- Special attention to leisure time

- Santa Maria la Blanca is a Catholic School: Our school has an educative Project founded by Catholics, with the main purpose to serve our community with high quality education, as well as cultural, recreational and sports activities. The School and the Parish Church are linked and work closely for the same Project. The common goal is working hand by hand in order to offer our community our Christian values.
- Basic Interactive Education (EBI Spanish acronym) is the new pedagogical methodology that we are developing both theoretically and experimentally starting in Elementary Education.
 - a) Personalized education, encouraging the student autonomy and the use of different resources of information to work on the different daily projects.
 - b) The educative spaces are places within the school that have been named to bring to our student's mind all different possibilities: el bosque animado (the lively forest), el agora (public assemblies place), la huerta (the garden), el lugar de los sentidos (the senses place), el espacio de los santos (the saints place), el espacio de los hombres ilustres (the enlighten people place), el parlamento (the parliament), el aula del mar (the sea class)
 - c) The structural organization of the school is made up of four different groups called Las Tribus (The four tribes), which represent the different educative levels.
- New technologies: Based in the successful experiences in both America and Europe with the use of new technologies, we have been able to have some well known companies involved in our technological project such as Microsoft, Telefónica, and Ibermática. The named companies have showed their interest on sending teachers to other schools in Madrid as well in other Provinces of Spain, so they can reproduce our technological method. We think is important to have a regular use of new technologies (active boards, laptops, internet...) in the classroom in all levels of education. The use of these technological resources in our daily schedule it is combined with other traditional resources such as text books, encyclopaedias, written documents, notebooks... We use the advantages of each of them, keeping in mind our student's success.
- Academic and Vocational Counselling: It is important that all students feel motivated. Depending on the Students' personality some of them may start to define their professional interests before adolescence. The school provides periodically some sessions in which students are exposed to different professionals that come to our school, and explain what do their job consists of. Students have the opportunity to find answers to their questions.
- Our students learn to speak in public: Recurrent activities take place in the classrooms to teach the students how to speak in public from the very first stages of the education. During school assemblies students have the opportunity to put into practice their public speech skills.

- Development of Team Work Strategies: We consider fundamental to ensure that our students know how to work cooperatively in teams, being respected as well as being respectful to everyone's ideas. With the use of the different technological resources, our pupils work cooperatively through internet, not only with their classmates, but with students from other schools in different countries and/or continents, thanks to the agreements established with different centres.
- We promote the Recreational Reading: Knowing how reading is strongly connected to learning, our school promotes reading at home through different programs adequate to the different reading stages of the students.
- Santa María la Blanca is a bilingual school: Our students have two daily classes taught in English. With a total of 10 weekly sessions (which represents 1/3 of our schedule) we intend to improve our students' comprehension and expression in English with the development of the four skills involved (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Other than the English class, we teach Artistic Education and half of the Schedule of Science in English. We focus on activities that promote English proficiency. Some activities will start this coming summer. They are exchange programs with Ireland, United States, United Kingdom Australia and China. We also have other activities developed during the school year with our twin schools (pen-pal, Skype conversations...)

Santa Maria la Blanca is the perfect place for leisure time:

We have designed the distribution of the different spaces with the objective of being used beyond the regular school schedule. Our school has been created as an educative place where leisure activities and spare time take place. Every day, when the regular classes are finished, during weekends and vacations we offer educative, cultural and sports activities. The activities have been formulated and created following a new and attractive format. They are described as Academies.

- Language Academy: Activities in English and Chinese.
- Scenic Arts Academy. We offer theatre, storytelling, scenography, and puppets shows.
- Music and Dance Academy: We offer music classes, guitar, piano, ballet, and gymnastics.
- Fine Arts Academy. Paint classes as well as crafts classes.
- Sports Academy. We offer swimming, paddle tennis, tennis, soccer and basketball.