

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

JUDY DEAN, THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF BARCELONA



Judy Dean, Head Teacher of Early Years and Primary at The British School of Barcelona (BSB), is a former Educational Visits Coordinator and now oversees five EVCs across multiple school sites.

Find out how her role has evolved over time; the kinds of experiences on offer to students at BSB, and how the school manages priorities and pressures around learning beyond the classroom.

**SHARED EXPERIENCE,
CHALLENGE, RESPECT**

Judy and BSB students learn watersports on the Costa Brava in 2022.

In your experience, what makes a great educational visit?

One that is relevant, linked to learning, well organised, busy and fun! I believe that children and young people benefit hugely from learning outside, particularly from being challenged and encouraged to take risks.

What were the highlights of your educational visits year last year?

The highlight for me was the feeling of getting back to normal. We were able to think beyond our own borders again and plan overseas visits, such as ski trips to Italy and football tours in the United States. International visits offer unique opportunities for language immersion, personal growth and self-discovery. By experiencing different cultures, our young people can gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

What are your priorities when planning the educational visits programme for BSB?

It's important to take a long-term view and ensure that every visit contributes to the young person's whole school experience.

At BSB, we promote nine learning habits which run through everything we do: **curiosity, organisation, socialising, imagination, attention, determination, reflection, thinking and leadership.**

Educational visits enable our children and young people to develop and apply these skills – we plan our visits with this in mind.

What are the biggest pressures on your educational visits at the moment?

With a large cohort and the increasing cost of visits, we need to be strategic. Many schools face similar challenges. We have begun a process of planning visits years in advance to ensure that all students have the best possible opportunity to access educational visits and residential.

In a crowded curriculum, educational visits need to be meaningful. Memorable educational visits will stay with children far longer than the maths lesson they had last week, so it is our responsibility to make sure they are purposeful learning experiences.

Does being an international school make a difference to the way you approach educational visits?

Being an international school in Barcelona doesn't affect how we approach day visits or residential in Spain. However, with a multi-national student population, we do face some specific challenges. For example, we need to plan ahead for international residential as some students may require visas to enter or exit countries.

What advice would you give to EVCs and school leaders today?

I can't stress enough the importance of planning and collaboration: plan, manage and evaluate your visits as a team. This enables you to draw on different strengths and ensure everyone is fully engaged with the visit.

To get the best out of your visit team, give people responsibility and hold them accountable, but ensure they are supported.

If you're leading a residential, don't be afraid to use the support available to you; for example, call the SLT contact who is not on the residential to talk through any concerns or questions.

Finally, make use of your Educational Visits Advisers. We have a great relationship with our advisers – they help us with everything from answering a simple question to reviewing our policies and procedures.

This issue, we're thinking about inclusion - how do you ensure all students have access to educational visits?

We have clear processes to make sure that students with specific needs can access day visits and residential. That includes explicitly considering their needs in the planning process and when conducting risk assessments. We may also include students and their families in this process too.

We use 'social stories' to help prepare some of our students for residential visits. These are short stories that describe the experience they are hoping to join. Teachers and support staff invite the student to engage with the social story, helping them to understand what they can expect on the residential visit, and reducing anxiety about the unknown.

Finally, what has been your all-time favourite visit?

It has to be our year six residential at a water sports centre on the Costa Brava. We brought children from three BSB sites together, with a focus on shared experiences, challenge, and respect.

The British School of Barcelona has four campuses located in Barcelona, Sitges and Castelldefels. Its student population is made up of 74 different nationalities.

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Y6 cross-campus residential on the Costa Brava 2022.