

CBS Roscommon Spanish Exchange



The CBS Roscommon recently completed a hugely successful exchange programme with 'Colegio Jesús Sacramentado' in Gáldar, a town in the North West of Gran Canaria, with approximately 25,000 inhabitants.

The exchange required a lot of advance organisation, preparation and liaison between the two schools, but the general consensus from parents, students and teachers is that it far exceeded their expectations, and was well worth the effort.

Key to the success of the exchange was the support it received from parents. CBS Spanish teachers, Yesica Jimenez-Godoy and Aideen Egan held a meeting to outline the benefits of an exchange programme: the acquisition of language skills, the opportunity to enhance their oral Spanish, as well as enabling personal development. They discovered how it would allow them to gain lifelong friends, a 'new family' and an authentic cultural experience impossible to replicate. Parents also found out more about Gáldar, and watched short video clips from the town and the school. Overall, it gave students and their parents a much clearer idea of the experience that lay ahead of them, and how they could maximise it.

Ten Spanish exchange students and two teachers arrived on the 25th of February to enjoy an action-packed few days in Roscommon. As well as becoming immersed in family and school life, they were also given the opportunity to find out more about the community. Some of the extra-curricular activities organised for them included a treasure hunt around the town, a visit to a famous local bakery to see some traditional Irish baking, a tour of Clonmacnoise, and a night bowling with their exchange students and families, and some water sports on Lough Ree. The visit culminated with an 'Irish Night' in the school in which members and friends of the school community showcased their talents to our Spanish visitors, and gave them a real taste of Irish culture through song, dance, music and poetry.

Fortunately, there was no need for teary goodbyes the following morning, as two days later, eighteen students from the CBS and their teachers Ms Jiménez and Ms Egan, flew out to Gran Canaria to commence the next phase of the exchange.

After an early departure from the CBS on March 6th, the students flew from Dublin to Gando airport in Gran Canaria. They were transferred straight to the school where they were greeted by their host families, and met up once again with their exchange students.





Pictured: Breaking Bread! Students from the CBS Roscommon and Spanish exchange students visit Molloy's bakery, Roscommon to see traditional Irish bread being made.



Pictured: Spanish students practising their 'One Two Threes' at the Irish Night held in the CBS!

During their stay, students had the opportunity to engage fully in school life at Colegio Jesús Sacramentado. They participated in classes, quizzes, lectures, attended a school play and even got to play in a football blitz!

There were day trips organised for the students, giving them the opportunity to discover more about the landscape, history and culture of Gran Canaria. They visited Vegueta, the old part of the city of Las Palmas, and the South of Gran Canaria including the Dunes of Maspalomas, Playa del Inglés and Anfi del Mar. They also took part in a walking tour of Gáldar, went to see its town hall and theatre and visited an important archeological site – La Cueva Pintada (The Painted Cave).

One of the most enjoyable elements of the trip was getting to taste authentic Spanish food, and students were particularly keen on the traditional breakfast of Chocolate con churros which they had in a café one morning.

Evenings and the weekend were spent with the families, and many students went to the beach after school with their Spanish families. There was no shortage of entertainment at the weekend either with the Carnaval de Gáldar. Students could enjoy the colourful parades, concerts and events which were taking place throughout the town.

For the last night of the exchange, the school organised a night of Canarian music, dance and culture for the Irish students and the whole school community. It was fitting end to a fabulous week for the students. Although they were sad to say 'adíos', the students promised to keep in regular contact with each other, and perhaps visit again at some stage.

