

# Colegio San Andres

**ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE / PARAGUAY**



## About the College

St Andrew's College is a Christian school in the heart of Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. St Andrew's was founded in 1963 by Thea Wedgewood, an English missionary who wanted to provide a bilingual Christian education in English and Spanish, with the aim that every pupil should come to know Jesus as Saviour, Friend and Lord. Thea also wanted every pupil to obtain a Christian worldview and lifestyle, and so contribute to the welfare of their family, their nation and the wider world. These remain the stated aims of the school and our reason for being. Hence, all aspects of education in St Andrew's have a solid Evangelical Christian foundation and the school is part of the work of the Anglican Diocese of Paraguay.

At the present time St Andrew's has 370 pupils ranging in age from 3 to 18 years old. The school employs a full Paraguayan staff plus a dozen native English speaking teachers. St Andrew's is the only school in Asunción to



provide the full Paraguayan curriculum and internationally recognised British qualifications, e.g. International GCSEs and AS Levels.

Over the years the pupils have come

to realise the value of these exams as they find they open doors to university here in Paraguay and in other parts of the world. Most of our pupils go on to university and many of them are able to go abroad to study.

## Core Aims & Purposes

The aims of the school are still very dear to us and still the main focus of our attention. We try to employ only Christian staff and these come from the different Christian churches

around us. We have daily Bible studies, assemblies, camps and special activities and whenever the children perform we try to have a message for the parents too. We aim to work with

the whole family. When a child is about to come into the school we interview the family and make it very clear that we will be teaching their children the Gospel message. We realise that God has given us a special opportunity and so we want to be faithful in communicating His good news to our pupils and their parents.





## Theory to Practice

Many of our pupils come from comfortable backgrounds and do not really get a first hand view of their country and the poverty in it. As an Anglican school we are privileged to have contacts, through the work of the churches, with poor and marginalised people. Each year we try to take groups of older pupils to the Chaco, an area of scrubland where there might

be drought or flooding and where the indigenous people live. Our pupils stay in the basic conditions of the Anglican centre there and then go out to dig water tanks, latrines and paint the schools. They visit and share with local people and get to see life in these communities first hand. Other pupils from St Andrew's are taken to different areas of Paraguay. In the last few years

they have served in regional hospitals, dug latrines and even constructed a simple wooden house. The younger children visit orphanages, homes for blind, deaf and old people, AIDS patients, etc. In some ways we hope these things will open their eyes to the profound needs of their country and help them to see that they can make a difference.

## The School Year

The School Year begins around the middle of February for the students, although the teachers start a few weeks before that. There are 2 terms. The first term is from mid February until the beginning of July with a

week long holiday for Easter. In July there is a 2 week winter holiday. The 2nd term begins after the winter July holidays, and the pupils finish towards the end of November by which time the weather is very hot. The teachers

are generally in school until about mid December, clearing up and getting ready for the next school year. There are always special end of year activities. This final term is divided up with a week long break in September.



## The School Day

The school day is long as the students study both the Paraguayan Curriculum and at least 2.5 hours of English. Right from the beginning the English teachers aim to speak to the children almost completely in English.

- The Guarderia or Playschool age children (aged about 3) come to school in the afternoon from 1.00 to 3.30p.m. A lot of this time will be in English.
- Jardin (4 year olds) come to school from 7.30am to 12 noon. Again a lot of this time will be spent hearing and learning English through play, songs, stories and games.
- Pre-school (5 year olds) are in school from 7.30am to 3.30pm. A good deal of this time is spent in English and they also study the Paraguayan curriculum.

- Primary School children attend school from 7.30am to 3.30pm. They have about 2.5 hours of English, and about 4.5 hours of the Paraguayan Curriculum. During English time they study all the different subjects – Maths, English, Geography, History, Science etc. all through the medium of English.
- Secondary School begins at 7.30am and finishes at 4.00pm. By this stage their English is advanced and they work towards taking important exams in English.

Apart from the very youngest children, the majority of the pupils spend all day at school. There is a canteen where both students and teachers can buy hot food and snacks. The school has a swimming pool that students have an opportunity to use at some stage each week. Teachers can also use the

pool. Over recent years the school purchased a big piece of land in an area about half an hour's drive from the school. Each week all classes travel there to be involved in sports activities. Sport's Day and Family Days are also held there. There is also a library with a range of English and Spanish books and DVDs that pupils and teachers can use and a computer suite with internet. Almost all of the classrooms now have interactive white boards. The School Day for teachers can be longer than that of the students. Prayer and bible study is a very important part of the life of the school and on most days there are prayer meetings before school. Monday mornings begin at 6.45a.m. with a prayer meeting and bible reflection and different teachers take it in turns to lead this.

***One of the greatest risks of today's Christianity is gradually changing from a 'religion of the cross' to a 'religion of well-being'.***





## Annexe School

In addition to the main school, St Andrew's incorporates an Annexe school for children who live in the Chacarita shanty town. The Annexe was founded in 1972 by Glenys Williams. The idea was that St Andrew's should tithe its income to help others and so a site was sought near the Chacarita shanty town area. This is an area on the edge of the river that floods regularly but where many people build their homes in order to be near the centre and find work. A piece of land was found on the higher ground and the school was started. This is also a Christian

school with similar aims to St Andrew's College, although the pupils don't have English lessons. Some of the same staff teach in both schools and standards are high. Today the Annexe school has 250 pupils, mostly from the shanty area. Many of these are now children of ex-pupils too. Classes range from a nursery class for four year olds up to the highest primary class for 15 year olds. Although some staff now receive government salaries, St Andrew's is still responsible for finding most of the wages for the staff and for the upkeep of the buildings.

***“The Annexe school serves the children of the Chacarita shanty town”***

## Pray

We would love you to pray for our work here in Paraguay, that we might make the most of the open door that God has given us at this time; that many young people might come to know Him and then might go on to make a difference for God in their country. Pray that we might always have the staff we need. If there are any English speaking teachers out there looking for a new challenge, please contact SAMS and simply enquire about possibilities. The work is not always easy and life can be frustrating at times but God is faithful and is working amongst us. Looking back I think what stands out most is God's faithfulness over the years and for that we give Him all the glory.

**Gwen Carlisle (Head Teacher)**