

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

American School of Madrid

Madrid, Spain

Start Date: July 2026 or July 2027



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

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ASM at a Glance



Established
1961



Total enrollment
1,050



Total faculty
160



Student-teacher ratio
6:1



Nationalities represented
in the student body
60+



Annual operating budget
\$20 Million



Campus size
11 acres

Mission Statement

To empower lifelong learners to take on challenges and thrive, care for others in its diverse international community, and think globally and creatively toward a better future.

Vision

ASM aspires to offer its American, Spanish, and international students the finest American, U.S. college preparatory education available in the European Union in order to prepare them, through a holistic education and the development of shared values, with the skills, attitudes, and behaviors to achieve their highest potential on a global stage and positively contribute to the world.

Overview

Founded in 1961 and located just outside downtown Madrid, the American School of Madrid (ASM) is a leading, not-for-profit, K-12 co-educational day school offering a U.S. college preparatory education underpinned by the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program.

Serving more than 1,050 students from over 60 nationalities, ASM offers a truly multicultural learning environment. The *Magic Mix* of one-third American, one-third Spanish, and one-third international students is core to ASM's unique proposition and drives our admissions policy. ASM takes great pride in its diverse international student body and the global perspectives it brings to its classrooms and community.

The school strives for excellence in all aspects of student learning and growth—from academics to leadership, the arts, and athletics. Its purpose-built campus and leading facilities support this vision, offering spaces that foster exploration, creativity, and high performance.

Respect, inclusion, and kindness are foundational to ASM's shared experience. The school aims to create an environment for students to thrive, where they feel safe, loved, and part of a caring community. At the same time, students need to manage and overcome academic, social, emotional, and technological challenges. The world is changing at a fast pace in multiple ways—becoming more competitive and global, and more challenged by technology and geopolitics. ASM aspires to play a part as educators in these areas, ensuring that when students leave ASM they are ready to face the challenges of modern life with the skills and tools needed to learn, adapt, perform, and lead in this new world.

At ASM, the community believes that education is a continuous, lifelong journey—one that must be purposeful, relevant, and deeply connected to the world beyond the classroom. ASM students are encouraged to engage actively, embrace challenges, and push beyond perceived limits, guided by skillful, caring teachers who inspire and nurture each learner to grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally.



The school recognizes that ASM operates in a very different world from the one in which it was established over 60 years ago and even from when we last conducted a search for a Head of School. In a new environment characterized by fast technological change and stronger global and local competition, the school's ambition for the future of ASM will be rooted in its DNA, mission, and vision while ASM strives for greater levels of achievement.

Living in Madrid

Madrid is one of the [best places to live in Spain](#). The Spanish capital combines endless work opportunities, high-quality life, and never-ending nightlife with a buzzing social scene, rich culture, and significant diversity. It's **home to the biggest expat community** in Spain, bringing people from different backgrounds together and forming a vibrant environment.

Madrid has a perfect mix of history and modernity. Its history dates back to prehistoric times. While its **historic sites like Plaza Mayor, the Royal Palace, and The Egyptian Temple of Debod** are well-preserved, Madrid grew into a world-class city with its modern architecture, world-class museums, championship soccer team, and internationally-acclaimed cuisine.

Drenched in culture, Madrid is known as the city of joy and life. Renowned for Flamenco, countless museums, art galleries, and historic buildings, Madrid offers so much for its residents and visitors.

Opportunities and Challenges

ASM is already one of the leading American college preparatory schools in Europe. As it looks forward, the school expects the next Head of School to build on ASM's DNA, mission, and vision, strive for even higher levels of achievement, and lead ASM into a new phase of growth and excellence by addressing the following strategic priorities.

Pursue excellence in academic standards while preserving ASM's core values

The next Head of School must commit to excellence across all areas of student life—especially academics, but also athletics and the arts. This commitment must permeate every aspect of the school experience and begin well before students enter the classroom, with Admissions serving as the first step in identifying and supporting those ready to grow and thrive at ASM.



The new Head of School will set high expectations for students while recognizing that excellence should not mean uniformity; rather, it should mean every student is challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential. This means fostering a culture of rigorous academic standards, differentiated learning, and personal growth where every student is challenged, supported, and inspired to achieve their best within a culture that celebrates achievement and growth across all levels of the school and all aspects of student life - academics, sports, the arts, and beyond.

This approach must be rooted in ASM's DNA as an internationally diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community where differences are embraced and celebrated and where all individuals feel a deep sense of belonging that extends beyond their time at ASM ("Once a Lancer, Always a Lancer").

In addition, ASM's pursuit of excellence must always be balanced with a commitment to student well-being. ASM believes that well-being and effort go hand in hand. Students thrive when they feel safe, supported, and cared for. By pairing high expectations with strong support, ASM fosters a culture where effort leads to growth, confidence, and achievement. The next Head of School will be expected to cultivate a culture where effort is celebrated, persistence is valued, and personal growth is seen as an essential part of success.

The new Head of School must:

- Implement systems and practices that drive consistently high student performance across the school, and especially in the IB Diploma Program.
- Build an outcomes-driven academic culture focused on excellent teaching quality, curricular challenge and depth, and data-driven interventions.
- Ensure that instructional practices are research-based, inclusive, and effective for a wide range of learners.
- Promote a culture that values effort, supports well-being, and empowers all students to grow through challenge.

Improve university placement

The next Head of School will be expected to lead with an outcome-centered approach, ensuring that ASM students with comparable levels of achievement gain access to the same caliber of U.S. and global institutions as their peers at other leading schools. College placement outcomes must reflect the aspirations, talent, and potential of our students while celebrating a wide range of student pathways.



To achieve this, the new Head of School must strengthen the broader academic and institutional framework that underpins student success. This includes building rigorous and responsive academic programs, fostering early and personalized preparation to help and encourage students to make informed choices, and ensuring the operational systems are in place to support every student's growth and achievement, including the integration of co-curricular activities that contribute to well-rounded student profiles.

Such efforts must be supported by a highly effective college counseling team that is well-resourced, data-driven, knowledgeable about global admissions trends, and proactive in its guidance. Under the Head of School's leadership, college counseling should be embedded within a school-wide strategy that cultivates strong relationships with leading universities and positions ASM among the most respected American and international schools for student outcomes.

Support and elevate a culture of professional and operational excellence

Excellence begins with the people who deliver it. Therefore, it is critical to foster a culture of teaching excellence across the board in every subject and every classroom, setting and upholding clear professional standards while actively listening to and engaging with the faculty. This includes providing the professional learning, mentorship, and support needed for teachers and staff to grow and thrive.

The goal is to create a work environment where ASM can have an extraordinary team to guide its students, to bring out the best from each one of them, and where ASM can identify, recruit, and retain the best talent through data-informed decisions. Doing so requires fostering a culture of accountability and outcomes that is fair, firm, and measurable, where excellence is expected, feedback is constructive, and all professionals feel respected, heard, and empowered. To support this, the Head of School will be expected to implement a comprehensive and consistent evaluation system across all departments and divisions, aligned with measurable goals, shared expectations, and opportunities for continuous professional growth.

The next Head of School will work closely with faculty, staff, and the senior leadership team to strengthen alignment and collaboration among ASM's three divisions. This includes fostering a more cohesive educational journey for students, encouraging professional collaboration across grade levels, and ensuring consistency in values and expectations throughout the entire school.



In addition to this, the new Head of School must have the operational acumen to lead from the top with clear alignment between vision, strategy, and execution to be an effective and efficient leader and operator of a large organization. ASM seeks a Head of School who is not only a visionary, but who can translate that vision into clear, actionable priorities, ensuring consistent implementation and full organizational alignment from leadership to faculty.

The new Head of School will work with staff to optimize the use of resources, financial health, enrollment growth, and strategic and operational alignment at ASM while keeping in mind the increased competitive environment ASM operates in.

Navigate technological innovation with purpose and discernment

The new Head of School will lead ASM in responding thoughtfully to the evolving educational landscape and rapid technological change.

They will have to evaluate and lead the integration of emerging technologies to enhance student learning, operational efficiency, and decision-making.

They will be responsible for preparing students for a rapidly changing world by embedding responsible technology use and future-ready skills in the curriculum.

At the same time, the Head of School must cultivate a forward-thinking academic environment that supports faculty in adapting their instructional practices, promotes the ethical use of technology, and develops students' critical thinking while preserving the core strengths of a balanced, traditional education.

In doing this, the new Head of School will work with the staff to define digital literacy goals for the students and staff, ensuring the right balance between the use of technology and AI versus traditional educational methods appropriate for each age group and the operations and processes at the school.

Strengthen market positioning and enrollment

Given the increasingly competitive landscape, both within Madrid and globally, ASM must clearly define, communicate, and deliver on the values that set it apart. ASM should be positioned as a top, world-class American school—the first-choice school both for families relocating to Madrid and locally-based families seeking an exceptional, future-ready education—one where demand consistently exceeds supply across all divisions.

The Head of School will oversee the refinement of the Admissions strategy to attract academically motivated, mission-aligned students across the region and globally. Just as importantly, ASM must continue to retain families by ensuring a consistently high-quality experience that reflects the school's values, mission and promise.



Energize fundraising and institutional growth

Over the past decade, ASM has made significant progress in developing its fundraising efforts to support key initiatives such as scholarships, faculty development, and facility improvement projects.

The new Head of School will be expected to bring new energy and vision to build on this foundation by engaging and inspiring donors, alumni, and stakeholders to invest in ASM's long-term success.

As a result of all the above, the new Head of School will lead ASM into a new stage of development and growth, improving academic outcomes while respecting the school's culture and DNA, and elevating our brand visibility and value proposition in the competitive Spanish and global school market, and strengthen ASM's place as a leading American college preparatory school in Europe.

Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The successful candidate will be an experienced educational leader with a global mindset, strategic vision, and an entrepreneurial approach, someone who can operate as a true CEO, guiding the school with both educational insight and organizational acumen.

ASM seeks a passionate educator, a person of integrity, empathy, and emotional intelligence who genuinely connects with students, faculty, and the community at large. This leader will inspire trust through authenticity, active listening, and a deep commitment to the mission and people of ASM.

Successful candidates will possess the following characteristics and capacities:

- Proven success in a senior leadership role within an American/international school setting, ideally with experience leading through institutional growth and change, and a record of strong academic performance under their stewardship.
- Demonstrated capacity to lead meaningful school improvement resulting in measurable academic and institutional gains.
- Ability to cultivate a high-achieving, inclusive academic culture through data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement.



- Deep understanding of American education and practices and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, with a clear commitment to academic excellence through:
 - » An integrated coordination among the divisions to facilitate an effective and efficient learning process that generates the best possible academic results for each student.
 - » A result-driven approach (including university acceptance results).
- Relational, inclusive leadership style rooted in empathy, coupled with the courage to make difficult decisions in the best interests of students and the school community; resolute, resilient, and consistently solution-oriented.
- Capacity to integrate technology into the curriculum and operations of the school. Able to navigate the current rapidly changing technological environment to work with the school team and stakeholders to strike the right balance between rigorous academic foundation and effective use of technology, including AI tools, to enable students to achieve the right level of digital literacy.
- A data-informed and outcome-driven mindset, using evidence-based practices to assess impact, drive improvement, and support continuous growth.
- Track record of building and leading high-performing teams, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and professional growth.
- Ability to attract, develop, and retain top talent, aligned with the values and high expectations of a world-class international school.
- Exceptional communication skills, able to engage with transparency, empathy, and conviction.
- Fluency in institutional strategy, operations, and governance, with a mission-driven approach.
- Financially and operationally effective and efficient, with the strategic insight not only to raise resources but also to allocate them effectively, ensuring that spending decisions support student learning, faculty excellence, and sustainable institutional growth to enable ASM to remain competitive in a dynamic international education market.
- Ability to work in partnership with the Board of Trustees to drive execution while engaging the Board as stewards of ASM's mission, values, and future growth.
- Ability to engage, inspire and lead a culturally diverse community around a shared vision.
- Successful leadership in fundraising, donor engagement, and building a culture of philanthropy.

The ideal candidate will be a visionary and strategic leader guided by purpose, grounded in empathy, and informed by data who is an effective and efficient operator and able to lead the American School of Madrid into a new phase of growth and excellence.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about American School of Madrid.

[School Website](#)

[Mission and Values](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)

[International Baccalaureate](#)

[School Profile](#)

[About Madrid, Spain](#)



To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A statement of educational and leadership philosophy;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

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