

St Andrew the Apostle Greek Orthodox School

North London Business Park, London, N11 1NP

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The thoughtful, insightful and effective leadership of the headteacher leads to a common, shared vision for excellence, which is underpinned by the religious character and values of the school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide a strong and positive model of high expectations for colleagues and students to adopt. They plan strategically with governors to ensure the highest standards, as the school develops.
- Governors and their sponsor Trust Board provide highly effective support and challenge to school leaders to achieve this vision. They fulfil their statutory duties fully in safeguarding students in their care. They have detailed understanding of the achievement of students and the quality of teaching.
- Students manage their behaviour, guided by their teachers, in an exemplary fashion in all lessons and during social time.
- The school takes all practicable steps to ensure the safety of students and helps them to understand and deal with risks. Students are adamant that they feel perfectly safe in the care of the school.
- Teaching is outstanding. It enthuses and engages students. It is skilfully delivered and focuses on the learning needs of individual students.
- Middle leaders use expert knowledge and skills that lead to exciting, challenging teaching. There is a consistently high level of expectation and challenge for all.
- Students, from all starting points and backgrounds, make sustained, rapid progress across the curriculum. Current achievement exceeds national expectations by a wide margin.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors talked with students in meetings and informally during social time in school and in the outdoor areas to gather their views on learning and how well the school looks after them.
- Discussions were also held with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Executive of the sponsoring Trust. Inspectors talked with the headteacher and other senior leaders to gather information about how well the school is led.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and planning, and evidence of its work to check the quality of teaching and the progress that students make.
- Inspectors visited 27 lessons to examine the quality of teaching and learning and how well students behave in lessons. Senior leaders joined inspectors on some visits to lessons, and observations in three lessons were carried out jointly.
- Inspectors examined a wide sample of books across subjects to find out how well students are achieving.
- Inspectors considered 107 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and other parental submissions.
- Most staff responded to the staff questionnaire and inspectors took their views into account.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Graham Tyrer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Andrew the Apostle is the country's first Greek Orthodox secondary school and is part of the Russell Education Trust. The school's local governing body is appointed by the Trust and by his Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain. This free school opened in September 2013.
- The school admits students from age 11 to 19, reserving up to 50% of places for students of the Greek Orthodox faith. It is much smaller than average currently, and is registered to admit up to 1050 students.
- At present, only students in Years 7 and 8 attend the school. It is therefore too early to state whether the school meets the minimum national expected levels for attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The proportions of disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs are well below the national averages. A small proportion of students enter the school who speak English as an additional language.
- The largest single group of students is those of Greek or Cypriot heritage. Other students come from a number of different ethnic backgrounds.
- No students attend any alternative provision. Students have not yet sat any public examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should implement their plans successfully to maintain the established ethos and strengths in the school by developing:
 - the school site and accommodation
 - the staffing structure to meet changing needs.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's determined vision to provide the best education possible for all students in a safe and caring environment is shared by all members of staff, the school's governors and the school's sponsor. He is ably supported by senior leaders, who ensure that the vision for excellence is enacted in all aspects of school life.
- This vision for excellence is translated into a culture for learning and respect for others, where students value deeply their academic and personal achievements.
- The quality of teaching is exceptional. Leaders ensure that teachers have the highest expectations of students' learning. They check rigorously and accurately that precisely planned lessons excite, engage and sustain rapid progress for all students and groups of students.
- Middle leaders are adept at ensuring effective coverage of the curriculum, and well-thought-out opportunities for creative learning deepen and broaden students' understanding. Collaboration between middle leaders is highly effective. It secures rapid improvement in students' literacy and communication skills in all groups. They use a network of professional expertise to check and moderate how well students are progressing. Consequently, they put in place short, sharply focused and highly effective interventions. These provide an added boost to students' learning, should their progress fall below the school's high expectations.
- The curriculum provides rich and varied opportunities to develop academic skills, knowledge and understanding. The high achievement in physical education (PE) and drama, for example, develops students' self-confidence and social skills and these complement the curriculum in the core subjects. The challenge seen in each area of the curriculum allows students to explore their learning, ask inquisitive and insightful questions and ponder moral issues.
- The school's focus on 'character education', underpinned by the religious nature of the school, promotes fundamental British values fully. A well-constructed programme for personal, health and social education (PHSE) actively promotes incremental knowledge and understanding of a range of issues. This is successful in helping students develop understanding of other cultures and values. It supports them in appreciating the diversity in society. It helps them learn and understand about different beliefs, values and lifestyles. It deepens their awareness of discrimination. Students themselves said, without prompting, that their school is about 'respect and equality'.
- The equality of opportunity provided by the school in organising learning reflects its vision. Excellent use of data and knowledge of students' learning needs are successful in garnering outstanding progress for disadvantaged students and those with specific learning needs. The additional funding received to support this work is used very effectively and the outcomes are checked not just by governors but by leaders at all levels. Students eligible for this funding achieve as well and sometimes better than others in the school. Gaps are closing rapidly. Year 7 catch-up funding, targeted at students who enter the school with lower than expected levels of attainment, is used equally effectively.
- The outstanding achievement of students coupled with the development of their understanding of the world around them make for excellent preparation for life in modern Britain. The early stages of careers advice to students is effective in helping them get ready for study in Year 9, when they will begin focused preparation and learning for examination courses.
- Students have a keen sense of how to keep themselves safe. This is because leaders plan regular opportunities to learn about risks, for example the use of social networking sites. Teachers make frequent reference to safety, for example in science, PE and design and technology lessons. Students have developed confidence in talking to staff if they have concerns. This includes letting staff know if they have a deep concern about issues faced by other students. Underpinned by formal risk assessments, safer recruitment practices and a detailed safeguarding and child protection policy, leaders are punctilious in their record keeping. Leaders are effective in involving other teams and agencies to promote students' well-being and keep them safe. All the required checks and records to ensure that only appropriate adults work with students are kept accurately and are up to date. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements fully.
- The school enthusiastically benefits from and contributes to school improvement activities developed by the Russell Education Trust. The wide range of development opportunities extend from training for the local governing body to leadership and subject development. The Trust provides a support framework of subject experts and a link adviser. They provide advice to middle leaders, for example, and engage them in moderating the checks made by the school on students' progress. This provides senior leaders with confidence that judgments on progress are accurate. It enables them to target work to extend learning and intervene when progress falls below the school's high expectations. The Trust also provides an

external challenge to moderate the precision and quality of performance management targets alongside the local governing body. External agencies, for example social services, engage with the school to provide a wider network of support for students and families as required.

- The depth and breadth of support for the school is also evident in providing the headteacher, currently acting as the temporary special educational needs coordinator, with high-level expert advice and challenge. These frequent visits are well documented.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local governing body and sponsoring Trust communicate the same determination as school leaders to ensure that students are happy, well cared for and achieve excellent outcomes. They possess a range of professional skills, including extensive experience of senior leadership in education and finance. This helps them to execute their duties to challenge school leaders and hold them to account.
 - They ensure that all required policies are up to date, including safeguarding and safer recruitment policies. They check that children feel safe by talking with them when they visit the school and by listening to parents' and carers' views.
 - Governors are provided with detailed information about how well students are progressing and how well they are taught. They supplement this information by finding out for themselves through visits to classrooms, talking with students and looking through their work. This enables them to form their own view and sharpen challenge to school leaders. Governors have a precise and insightful understanding of data.
 - Governors have been successful in appointing highly effective teachers, who have very strong subject knowledge. Nevertheless, they are assiduous in reviewing recommendations for pay progression awards and scrutinise the performance management targets for each member of staff alongside advisers from the Trust. They have an unrelenting focus on sustaining and improving high quality teaching and have clear plans to pursue this aim as new teachers take up post. Their detailed knowledge of the school helps them manage the headteacher's performance effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Inspectors saw not one instance of low-level disruption or minor misbehaviour. Students behave with maturity and sensitivity towards the needs of others and a genuine respect for adults in the school.
- In social time, while they are well supervised, students moderate their own behaviour. They show consideration towards each other and plainly enjoy socialising happily in a variety of groups. Students playing ball games enjoy social time without any disagreement with those sitting chatting on nearby benches. There is no evidence of students congregating in large groups that might intimidate others. They mix and talk in a friendly manner with staff in the dining hall and outside areas. Their behaviour fully reflects what they told inspectors that the school is about 'respect and equality'. They welcomed inspectors to join in their conversations.
- Students are intensely proud to be members of this school, irrespective of whether they belong to the Greek Orthodox community or not. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and accompany this with a strong understanding of bullying and discrimination. They not only say they feel safe but actively contribute to this through their behaviour to others and their sensible use of the school facilities.
- Students say that behaviour is excellent and that bullying is extremely rare. They could only think of one instance and confirmed that school leaders dealt with it very effectively. They are secure in their knowledge of what to do if they have a problem and are confident that the right help will be given swiftly.
- Their insightful understanding of risk not only helps them keep safe but a strong example of positive, mature behaviour was shown when students informed school leaders about their concerns for another student.
- The excellent behaviour seen by inspectors throughout the inspection is also reflected in higher than average attendance levels. Where absence has increased, the school has detailed knowledge of students' individual circumstances. Staff keep a careful watch on these cases to ensure they attend as frequently as possible.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. All members of staff know about safeguarding arrangements and receive regular update training. Teachers show that they take their responsibilities for students' safety seriously through their frequent references and cautions to students

about safety in lessons. This helps students understand the 'rules' and recognise risks. Without exception, students told inspectors that they feel safe and not just because the site is secure. They also understand the risks and dangers associated with different parts of their learning in lessons. With the exception of a very small minority, all other parents confirm the view that students are kept safe and are well looked after by the school.

- Wider learning about being safe, primarily through the PHSE and assembly programme, helps keep students safe outside of school too. For example, students go beyond a generic knowledge of the risks of accessing the internet and are able to give specific examples of social networking sites that present particular risks.
- The excellent behaviour of students and site maintenance, including the cleanliness of student toilets, contribute to students' health and safety. Leaders ensure that all required checks, for example fire equipment and portable electrical testing, are carried out and logged. Signage and emergency exit routes are well displayed.
- School leaders and other staff members show a keen awareness of the range of risks faced by students. They take appropriate action to minimise this by thinking through and recording them on risk assessment forms. They take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of students. This includes provision for administration of medicines and a well-equipped medical room, should any student fall ill during the school day.
- For students, the expectations of behaviour and the 'rules' to keep them safe have become a way of life rather than an imposition.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Students revel in their enjoyment of learning and burst with pride at their achievement. They show an exciting balance of ambition to achieve very high standards and a genuine and energetic enjoyment in their learning. This is because teachers use excellent subject knowledge to provide exciting and engaging learning activities. They pitch challenge precisely to students' needs. As a result, students from different starting points with a range of learning needs make at least sustained, rapid and often much better than expected progress.
- Students who are disadvantaged or who speak English as an additional language make the same progress as others. Teachers are adept at using the information about students' prior learning and current needs to plan learning with high levels of precision. Whatever their needs are, teachers across the curriculum have the same high expectations for their progress. They use a variety of techniques to accelerate progress and sustain it over time.
- Similarly, disabled students and those with special educational needs make very good and better progress because teachers take care to provide well-tailored support and intervention for them during their lessons.
- Teachers use a range of styles in their work. Typically, they engender enthusiasm and curiosity among their students whatever style they adopt. This enables students to extend their responses, think hard and deepen their understanding. For example, in a history lesson, students were weighing up the validity and impartiality of a source text about crusades, because the author's account may have been influenced by his own beliefs.
- Teachers plan thoroughly and use their knowledge of their students to ensure that the most able are consistently challenged to sustain excellent progress. They do so by the wide range of topics covered and also by posing searching questions that make students think deeply and broaden their understanding. In several cases, for example in English, science and mathematics, Year 8 students are tackling GCSE style questions, using well-established learning skills to great effect.
- Teachers have a keen focus on developing students' literacy and communication skills across the curriculum. In a range of lessons, from drama to mathematics and science, inspectors saw a range of techniques used to support language development. For example, in a science lesson, students were thrilled to write a fictional text to illustrate their understanding of gravity and weightlessness. Such creative teaching strategies engender students' limitless enthusiasm for learning. Teachers encourage students to read widely and frequently. Students talk with enthusiasm about books they are reading and frequently read aloud in lessons. This cements their understanding of text and task. Students also grow in confidence in reading fluently and with intonation that reveals a high level of understanding.
- Good examples of numeracy skills were seen in the use made of graphical knowledge, for example in geography and science.
- Teachers, with senior leaders, have elaborated an effective approach to marking and feedback. They use this consistently across all subjects and it generates a learning dialogue between teachers and their

students. Evidence from students' books shows that students benefit from advice and this underpins their learning and progress. Teachers are adept at checking and gauging understanding during lessons. They ask focused questions that move learning forward, or correct and complete understanding when errors are made. This helps students of different abilities to enjoy success and make progress. These small interventions are supplemented by homework which provides opportunities to extend learning as well as consolidate it.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The vast majority of students from all starting points and from different groups make at least expected progress against the school's high expectations. Students' work shows that higher than average proportions of students are on track to make expected and more than expected progress in English and mathematics. These are mirrored in the progress made in science and foundation subjects. Progress at this high level is sustained over time.
- There is very little difference in the progress made by boys and girls. Students of Greek and Cypriot heritage make rapid progress. The progress made by most disadvantaged students is at least as rapid and in some cases better than that made by others in the school. They are on track to exceed national averages by a wide margin when they complete GCSE examinations. Almost all are on track to make expected progress in mathematics and English and a higher than average proportion is on track to make better than expected progress. The work produced by these students, across subjects, shows that their achievement is outstanding because the rapid rate of progress is sustained over time. Currently, there are no published data for the school to make full comparison of attainment against national averages.
- Students with special educational needs make the same progress as other groups of students, because teachers shape their learning with precision and effect. For example, one student with reading difficulties has made at least expected progress and is achieving above national expected levels.
- Staff have received specialised training to address the needs of students with specific disabilities. Using this training and their wider skills, they have secured at least sustained good progress.
- Additional support through interventions is very effective in enabling students to catch up if they enter the school with lower levels of attainment than are expected nationally. Similarly students who speak English as an additional language are supported well by teachers. Staff think carefully about how to support their language development and thus secure access to learning in all subjects. As a consequence, checks on progress show that they too make rapid progress.
- The confidence and developing learning skills which the curriculum engenders help students to achieve. For example, in modern foreign languages lessons, students rapidly improved their communication skills by engaging in frequent opportunities to speak in the foreign language. Skilled planning in a drama lesson enabled students of different abilities to make excellent progress. They rapidly developed an understanding of how the tone and pitch of voice contributes to communication.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139410
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	450090

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	None
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Yiannis Pareas
Headteacher	Mr Robert Ahearn
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 3195 5444
Fax number	None
Email address	r.ahearn@standrewtheapostle.org.uk

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