

## **Inspection report**

# **The Greek Secondary School of London**

**Independent school**

**DfES ref no: 309/6081**

**Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002**

**Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 March 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### **Information about the school**

The Greek Secondary School of London is a day school, situated in Wood Green, in North London, in the Borough of Haringey. It is opposite the Greek Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary. The school was established in 1983 by the Greek Embassy *'for children of Greek origin to stay in touch with their roots'*. The school is officially recognised as an independent school by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The Greek government provides free education at the school for Greek and Greek-Cypriot pupils. Entry is non-selective.

The school is in two sections: lower secondary (γυμνάσιο - *gymnasio*), for pupils aged 12 to 15, and upper secondary (λύκειο - *lykeio*), for pupils aged 15 to 18. The total number of pupils is 67, of whom 37 are boys and 30 girls.

The school provides a full-time Greek education according to the Greek National Curriculum. This is covered in a daily session from 09.20 to 15.00. The time from 15.00 to 18.00 is devoted to learning support, extra-curricular activities and courses for English General Certificate of Education advanced level (A-level) accreditation. These courses include modern Greek, English literature and mathematics. In addition, pupils take examinations in English for non-native speakers.

Every school year, the pupils are required to complete a satisfactory level of attendance and to pass end-of-year examinations. In the final year, successful pupils are awarded the Greek certificate of secondary education (απολυτήριο λυκείου - *apolytirio lykeiou*). Most of the pupils who leave from Year 13 proceed to Greek or English universities.

### **Summary of main findings**

The school provides a curriculum which emphasises Greek language and cultural traditions, which is much appreciated by the pupils and their parents. The pupils apply themselves well to their work and make good progress. They are well taught in the majority of lessons and achieve success in their studies, so that most proceed to universities in England or Greece. Their personal development is notably strong and they are mature and reflective. The school's educational provision plays a valuable part in preparing them for their future study and life in the wider world. However, there are limitations in the range of extra-curricular opportunities and elements of assessment and reporting are not well developed. Although welfare provision has recently been improved, the shortcomings of the school building present potential hazards to the well-being of the pupils.

**What the school does well:**

- its pupils are mature and reflective;
- it ensures that pupils have positive attitudes to their work;
- it provides good teaching in the great majority of lessons;
- it provides a good academic curriculum; and
- its pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects.

**What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:**

- provide more specialist accommodation for practical work and increase the availability of electronic resources and library books, as finance is forthcoming;
- through classroom teaching and other means, ensure that pupils gain a good appreciation of English institutions and public services;
- resolve the shortcomings in matters of welfare, health and safety as detailed in section 3 of this report;
- ensure that checks on the suitability of staff are completed before their appointment is confirmed, as detailed in section 4; and
- remedy the defects in the condition of the school premises and accommodation, as noted in section 5.

# COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

## 1. The quality of education provided by the school

### The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good overall, with many strengths of an academic nature. The school operates the Greek National Curriculum, which places strong emphasis on modern and classical Greek, English, mathematics and three separate sciences throughout. The range of subjects in the lower secondary part of the school (γυμνάσιο - *gymnasio*) includes also history, geography, religious education (RE), French, physical education, careers, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. The practical subjects of art and design and technology (DT) have light emphasis within 'technology' (τεχνολογία - *technologia*), and science is largely theoretical (the school has no science laboratory). In the upper secondary part of the school (λύκειο - *lykeio*), all the pupils continue to study a wide-ranging set of subjects, which include law and sociology from the second year. In addition, they undertake some specialisation by selecting a particular educational direction, either arts (θωρητική κατεύθυνση - *theoretiki katevthyysi*) or science (θετική κατεύθυνση - *thetiki katevthyysi*). In the one, the emphasis is on classical and modern Greek and history plus philosophy and Latin, and in the other the emphasis is on mathematics and science.

The afternoon programme is a valuable addition to the main programmes of study. Learning support lessons are provided for groups of pupils in English, modern Greek and classical Greek. Teaching is also provided for groups taking examinations in English as a second language, and A-level mathematics and English.

Extra-curricular provision is limited and largely consists of Greek dancing, basketball, volleyball, football and drama. In particular, opportunities are not provided for other creative and aesthetic activities. However, a large number of pupils make an effective contribution to the school community as year group representatives for the school council (5 in each year group and 15 attend meetings).

### The quality of teaching and assessment

The overall quality of the teaching is good and it is effective in promoting the pupils' learning. It marks an improvement since the last inspection in 2003. The teachers are successful in encouraging the pupils to work hard. The inspection vindicates the positive view of teaching as expressed by a high proportion of the parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

The teachers are well qualified and have a strong grasp of subjects they teach. In most lessons they secure the pupils' attention and interest. In very few lessons observed was there any sign of inattention. The pupils respond very well to the good teaching they experience. They concentrate well and are keen to learn. Often they give individual and well-considered answers to questions and on occasion some of them generate interesting questions of their own.

The pupils' achievements are good in a wide range of subjects and their learning skills are well developed. They write well in Greek and English and are confident and articulate in spoken language. They are capable in the application of mathematics and have good understanding in science. Their competence in ICT is satisfactory. The school's results have been good in English as a foreign language, in the A-level subjects taken and in the marks obtained for the leaving certificate (απολυτήριο λυκείου - *apolytirio lykeiou*).

The style of teaching observed was usually formal and based closely on the Greek National Curriculum course books. Although much of the teaching introduced a measure of variety and showed sensitivity to the pupils' standards and learning needs, a small but significant proportion lacked variety and did not involve the whole class in active participation. In the most effective teaching, pupils carried out both oral and written work and had the opportunity to co-operate, if only briefly, with other pupils.

In the pre-inspection questionnaire, several parents felt that staff do not treat all pupils fairly and with respect. However, during the inspection, it was evident that most of the teachers observed have a good affinity with their pupils, giving praise and showing understanding.

The teachers make good use of the resources at their disposal. The course books are attractive and provide a strong academic basis for the teaching. However, the lack of dedicated facilities for science, DT, art and music has an adverse effect on the kind of work which can be undertaken and reduces the opportunities for practical work. Computers are not available in most of the teaching areas and the library provision is meagre. The classrooms and the school generally are drab and there is little to stimulate pupils' learning through educational display material.

Teachers' assessment of pupils is satisfactory, with both strengths and weaknesses. Useful tests are set and marked and at the end of each term all subjects are graded with a mark out of 20. However, much of the pupils' regular work is unmarked or only reviewed orally. Some is merely initialled by the teacher. A few examples of thorough and helpful marking were noted among the pieces of work submitted to inspectors. These had written corrections, written comments to praise good aspects of the work and written advice on how to improve.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school complies with all but one of the requirements.*

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply in full with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *provide more specialist accommodation for practical work – for example, in science, DT and art – and increase the availability of electronic resources and library books, as finance is forthcoming (paragraph 1(3)(f)).*

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The pupils' personal development is good. They are confident, articulate and mature in their attitudes to school and have a high degree of self-esteem. They treat teachers with respect and the great majority of pupils have positive relationships with the adults in the school.

The pupils understand the differences between right and wrong and have a strong sense of fair play and justice, which they are keen to draw on when problems arise. The pupils behave well in lessons and try their best to work hard.

The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual awareness through lessons in RE. There is little enhancement to this to broaden the pupils' knowledge and understanding. They visit the local church twice a year but there are no instances of religious leaders visiting the school to talk to pupils. Daily assemblies have a religious element which consists only of a short prayer.

The pupils have a strong social awareness and relate well one to another, enjoying companionship with pupils from a similar cultural background. They are well able to accept responsibility and five in each year group have a special duty of representing the views of their fellow pupils. Others are involved in occasional charity collections, leading the worship in assembly or helping to complete the attendance and curricular records for the registers. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, about a quarter of the parents felt that the school does not give enough opportunities for responsibility, and this is the case for a number of pupils, particularly in light of the limited extra-curricular programme.

Greek culture is promoted well through the curriculum and the commitment of the adults working in the school. Celebrations of festivals do well in drawing the community together. However, pupils do not have a great knowledge or appreciation of the institutions and services in England, although a school visit to the Houses of Parliament was helpful in this respect. There has been a range of visits to places such as the Science Museum and an exchange trip to Italy. Limited emphasis is placed on consideration of the multi-cultural diversity of living in London.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school complies with all but one of the requirements.*

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *through classroom teaching and other means, ensure that pupils gain a good appreciation of English institutions and public services (paragraph 2(d)).*

## **3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate in several respects. Pupils project a sense of general well-being and many appreciate the contact they

have with the 'home teacher' responsible for their year group. The required policies have been introduced, but many are recent and are not fully embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. Up-to-date training in child protection has not been held, although arrangements are in hand for all staff to be trained by the local social services department. Procedures for the sharing of policies with parents have recently been introduced.

Pupils are adequately supervised on arrival and throughout the school day. The school maintains a register of attendance for all lessons. These registers are often completed by pupils, but they are checked and signed by adults. The school's procedures to provide First Aid are satisfactory.

Some pupils are critical of the provision made for their welfare, health and safety. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, these pupils indicated that they do not feel safe in school and consider that teachers do not deal effectively with any bullying. However, in discussions with pupils, bullying was not regarded as a problem and no instances of bullying came to notice during the inspection. Quite the opposite, pupils were observed being courteous and helpful to each other and socialising well together. A significant minority of pupils indicated that there is no responsible adult, within the school, to whom they feel they would readily go for advice about a personal problem.

The school does not give sufficient regard to certain health and safety requirements. Upstairs windows are not locked or blocked to prevent the possibility of a pupil falling out, and the required annual safety checks have not been undertaken on all electrical equipment. The school complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- ensure that the designated persons and the whole staff undertake child protection training (paragraph 3(2)(b)); and*
- have due regard to the DfES guidance: 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers', in particular ensuring that all upstairs windows are secured in such a way that there is no possibility that pupils could fall out and ensuring that annual safety checks are undertaken, by a reputable contractor, for all electrical equipment (paragraph 3(4)).*

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The teachers are well qualified and have a thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach. Most are seconded from the Ministry of Education in Athens. They have been checked by the Greek police and the Ministry of Justice. The school has been

attempting to secure Criminal Records Bureau checks on members of staff recruited in England, but has encountered difficulties in obtaining the necessary official checks. The school has its own system for carrying out its own checks on staff before appointment, but this has only recently been established.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that, prior to the confirmation of their appointment, staff are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b)); and*
- *carry out checks on the identity, medical fitness, previous employment history and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references of all staff prior to the confirmation of their appointment (paragraph 4(c)).*

## **5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The premises and accommodation are inadequate. For example, there are no dedicated areas for teaching practical aspects of subjects. The school has been seeking new premises for some time, but this is proving to be a long and drawn-out process. Much of the building is in a poor state of repair and in need of decoration. Some areas are not maintained in a sufficiently clean condition and many classrooms are untidy. Graffiti are evident on doors and tables. Some carpets in classrooms and on stairs are torn. These carpets have potentially hazardous holes which could cause trips and falls. Pupils are openly critical about the condition of the building. The health and safety hazards recorded in section 3 were brought to the school's attention by inspectors. Arrangements to evacuate pupils from the building in the event of an emergency are satisfactory.

The school meets the requirement to cater for the needs of pupils who are ill. However, the present provision does not give them sufficient privacy or a place where they can lie down in comfort. Where food is served there are satisfactory facilities for its hygienic preparation. The area for pupils to play outdoors and to be taught physical education is small and this restricts the numbers of pupils who can participate in games at any time. The surface of this play area is uneven and broken in many places, presenting a hazard to users.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that all areas of the school do not compromise health or safety (paragraph 5(j));*

- *ensure that all classrooms are maintained in an acceptably clean and tidy condition (paragraph 5(n));*
- *ensure that all parts of the accommodation are maintained in an acceptable decorative condition (paragraph 5(q));*
- *replace and make safe all carpets that are torn or that have holes; (paragraph 5(s)); and*
- *make sure that the surface of the outdoor play area is smooth and free from potentially dangerous holes and undulations (paragraph 5(t)).*

## **6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**

Information for parents is satisfactory. The school provides parents with a newly extended prospectus, which gives information about the school, its aims, and the curriculum to be followed. There are also details about the school's sanctions and rewards for behaviour. Frequent contact is made between parents and the school but very little had been formalised in writing until the headteacher took up her post in September 2005. The school now has comprehensive policies and procedures.

The school provides parents with a computerised summary of grades following regular three-monthly academic tests. These are given out and discussed at regular parents' meetings. Although the school meets minimum requirements, and the reports include a record of any absences, they do not contain written comments on what pupils need to do to improve their performance further.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school has recently introduced a satisfactory procedure for handling complaints and logging the progress of actions taken. The arrangements are comprehensive and cohesive and mark a distinct improvement since the time of the pre-inspection questionnaire, when a significant minority of the parents were unsure of the procedure for making complaints. The emphasis is on dealing with complaints through informal resolution in the first instance, but clear, formal stages are given for dealing with more serious matters in writing where necessary.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	The Greek Secondary School of London
DfES Number:	309/6081
Type of school:	Foreign national
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	12 - 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 37      Girls: 30      Total: 67
Address of school:	Avenue Lodge Bounds Green Road London N22 7EU
Telephone number:	0207 2210093
Fax number:	0207 2434212
Email address:	<a href="http://www.greek-secondary.haringey.sch.uk">www.greek-secondary.haringey.sch.uk</a>
Headteacher:	Mrs Andriani Sozou
Proprietor:	The Greek Embassy
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Richard Shannon
Date of inspection:	27 - 30 March 2006

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