

Greek Secondary School of London

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	309/6081
Unique Reference Number	101959
Inspection number	330424
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	David Young

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

The Greek Secondary School is situated in Wood Green in the London Borough of Haringey. The school was established in 1983 by the Greek Embassy for Greek children living in London 'to encourage and deepen their understanding of the Greek language, culture, history and customs so that they keep in touch with their roots'. The Greek government provides free education at the school for Greek and Greek-Cypriot students. There are 76 students on roll, aged 12 to 18, of whom 41 are boys and 35 girls; including 18 post-16 students.

The school provides a full-time Greek education according to the Greek National Curriculum. The curriculum is taught in daily sessions covering a range of subjects from 09.15 to 15.05. From 15.15 to 17.25 daily, additional courses and activities are provided. These include learning support, extra-curricular activities and English General Certificate of Education (GCE) A-level courses. The majority of teachers are appointed on secondment from Greece by the Greek Ministry of Education.

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2006.

Evaluation of the school

The Greek Secondary School provides a good quality of education with the majority of students moving on to universities in the United Kingdom (UK) or Greece. Students respond in a mature and committed manner to largely good teaching which enables them to make good progress. Arrangements to ensure the welfare of students are effective and issues of concern raised at the time of the previous inspection, have now been resolved. The school meets all the regulatory requirements for the registration of independent schools.

Quality of education

The good quality of education provided by the school is achieved through a good curriculum which includes all the subjects of the Greek National Curriculum. The school is effective in achieving its aim to foster, within students born in Greece and the UK, a strong sense of identity with each other and the community of the school. All students cover a common curriculum to the age of 16 and the broad range of subjects covers all the required areas of experience. There is an appropriate emphasis on the Greek language and history, together with English and

mathematics. Three separate sciences are included for all students. The science is theoretical as the school has no science laboratories; students respond well to this mode of learning and participate with interest and enthusiasm, although this does restrict their good level of progress. The curriculum for post-16 students retains a breadth of study with an opportunity to specialise in arts or sciences. This enables students to study a range of subjects successfully to university entrance level. In addition, the afternoon curriculum provides the opportunity for students to study GCE A-level courses, including English and mathematics.

A strong feature of the afternoon provision is a programme of support lessons in Modern Greek, English literature and mathematics. Students may also study for examinations in English for non-native speakers. The afternoon curriculum ensures that individual needs are addressed through this variety of courses at different levels. In particular, the bi-lingual capacities of students are enhanced and supported. Practical experiences are enjoyed by students, for example, during lessons in art, music and physical education (PE). However, many students expressed the view that they would like wider opportunities for practical learning, particularly in science. Inspectors agree with this view, although the constraints of the current premises are acknowledged. All students have access to the one computer room but this provides only limited opportunity for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. About 20% of students take part regularly in sporting activities during the afternoon; this is in addition to the PE lessons within the common curriculum.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teachers are well qualified in the subjects they teach and have a good understanding of how to communicate effectively in ways that enable students to learn. Much of the teaching is formal and theoretical, based on course text books for the various subjects. This provides a secure structure which students understand. Students respond well to their teachers, in particular, enjoying opportunities for extended discussion. In lessons where teaching is good, there is high quality intellectual challenge and students are encouraged to contribute orally, to justify their answers and to develop sufficient depth in their thinking. Teachers typically use thought provoking questions which require reflection, analysis and well constructed answers. Paired and group activities are used by some teachers to ensure active learning by all students. In satisfactory lessons, whilst learning is evident, lessons are not conducted at a sufficient pace or the intended outcomes are not sufficiently clear to students. Where written work is marked with comments to explain what students need to do to improve, this is appreciated by students and aids their achievement. Work is not consistently marked to this standard in all subjects.

Every school year, the students are required to pass end-of-year examinations. These examinations form the core of the school's assessment system. The required marks and how these may be achieved are well understood by students. However, the results of assessments are not generally used well to ensure that work in future lessons is organised in a manner which meets the individual needs of all the students

in a class. Regular assessments of units of work are undertaken to a similar structure and provide a suitable incentive for students to achieve. Information from these assessments is communicated regularly to parents. Parents must visit the school to receive their children's assessment results; parents meet with teachers to discuss achievement and progress in the various subjects. Students make good progress, almost all attaining the required standard at the end of each year. In the final year, successful students are awarded the Greek Certificate of Secondary Education (apolytirio lykeiou). In 2008, all students in their final year met this standard; 70% went on to university.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Provision for the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of the students is good. The students' moral development is good with a strong emphasis on justice, fair play and mutual respect for the individual. Students understand the difference between right and wrong and show this in their good behaviour. Attendance at school is good and ensures that students meet the necessary level for successful completion of the required standard each year. Their social development is also good. Relationships between the students and with adults are very good. The students are given, and take, responsibility early on and mature very well leading to mutual respect between teachers and themselves. This is particularly evident in the mature attitudes to learning, at all ages, as demonstrated in classrooms. Twenty five per cent of parents who replied to the questionnaire believe that the staff do not always treat children fairly and with respect. Representatives from the student council believe that students are treated with respect and their ideas and concerns are listened to. Evidence from lesson observations and elsewhere around the school indicates good mutual respect and open relationships. The headteacher agrees that this is an aspect of school life which merits further investigation.

The students' spiritual development is also good. This is generally encouraged and enhanced through religious education lessons and through the Greek culture and links with the Greek Orthodox Church. Students display a reflective attitude to issues discussed in lessons and are able to weigh up ideas to reach their own conclusions. The students' cultural development is good within the context of their Greek community. They participate fully in a wide range of Greek cultural events throughout the year and have a strong appreciation of their own culture; this fulfils one of the main aims of the school. They participate in a range of cultural visits, and the number of extra-curricular activities has been improved since the last inspection. Educational visits, for example, to the Houses of Parliament, The Royal Academy and London museums help to broaden students' cultural understanding but they have limited contact with and appreciation of the wider cultural diversity of the UK. Important elements of citizenship are taught through the curriculum in English and sociology. However, this programme is not clearly documented to ensure that students have a consistent understanding of institutions and services in the UK, together with a common experience of the cultural diversity of the UK.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of students. All the required policies are in place and implemented effectively, with key policies published in the school's prospectus. Appropriate, recent training, in safeguarding of students has been completed by both the headteacher and staff. Arrangements are in place with the local authority for the training of a small number of recently appointed staff. Students report, in their response to questionnaires, that there is limited emphasis on healthy and safe lifestyles in the curriculum. Inspectors agree that, although aspects are covered particularly in biology, this is an area for further development. Arrangements for educational visits are thorough, including a role for the Greek Embassy in approving planned activities. All the health and safety issues from the last inspection have been attended to. Immediate action has been taken to correct the one remaining safety issue. Checks on portable electrical equipment have been put in place together with effective oversight of fire safety requirements and risk assessments for the premises. The school meets requirements in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All the required checks are undertaken to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The majority of checks are completed by the Greek authorities for staff seconded from Greece. The school also completes Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff. Evidence is kept on file of applications for CRB checks for recently appointed staff. All checks are recorded in the required single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

There have been improvements to the maintenance and decoration of the accommodation since the last inspection. Classrooms and other teaching spaces are of an adequate size to enable students to learn effectively. The school lacks specialist facilities for practical science, art (which is taught in the hall) and design and technology. Students' achievement is good despite these restrictions and the Greek Embassy remains diligent in its search for alternative premises to provide better facilities. Similarly, the space available for PE is limited and this restricts the range of activities available.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school prospectus provides clear, accurate and up to date information for parents and prospective parents. Copies of key policies are included within the prospectus. Written comments are not required on reports in the Greek school system. However, parents are provided with regular updates on the results of assessments, together with the opportunity to discuss their children's progress with their teachers.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints are fair and appropriate. The one formal complaint received in the last year was dealt with and recorded within the procedures laid down in the policy.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations").

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Produce a written scheme of work for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) to show when and how the curriculum is provided for all students.
- Maintain the impetus required to secure more suitable premises and accommodation.
- Increase the use of ICT as a tool for learning.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs		✓		
How well students make progress in their learning		✓		

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of students		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		✓		
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School details

Name of school	Greek Secondary School of London		
DCSF number	309/6081		
Unique reference number	101959		
Type of school	Greek State School in England		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1983		
Age range of students	12–18		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 41	Girls: 35	Total: 76
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day students)	No fees are charged		
Address of school	Avenue Lodge Bounds Green Rd London N22 7EU		
Telephone number	020 8881 9320		
Fax number	020 8881 9320		
Email address	hellenic_gym_lyk@yahoo.gr		
Headteacher	Mrs Antonia Valavani		
Proprietor	The Greek Embassy		
Reporting inspector	David Young		
Dates of inspection	4–5 February 2009		