



# St Andrew The Apostle School **Grand Opening Ceremony Edition** Newsletter 04.12.2025





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*Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of the School,*

*It was a momentous day for St Andrew the Apostle School as the community came together to celebrate the official opening of the new school building last Friday; an event graced by the Rt Hon Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson and His Grace, Bishop Iakovos of Claudiopolis.*

*The ceremony included Bishop Iakovos leading a service on behalf of His Eminence, Archbishop Nikitas of Great Britain and Thyateira, during which he blessed the new building and unveiled a portrait of His Eminence, the late Archbishop Gregorios. Archbishop Gregorios's vision and support were instrumental in the establishment of the school, and the portrait will now be displayed in the main reception as a lasting tribute to his legacy.*

*Guests at the event included local dignitaries, former and current staff, students, and representatives of organisations that partnered with the school and its Trust to bring the new building to life.*

*Ms Phillipson addressed the audience warmly, acknowledging the hard work and dedication that had gone into the project, and she also took time to meet with our Year 12 Politics students and the Student Council.*

*Speaking at the ceremony to open the campus, Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said: "I know that this school, like so many schools across the country, is at the centre of its local community. It's a real pleasure to be here for the opening of this fantastic new campus. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who made it possible, for all you've done for the*

children who will pass through this wonderful new school this year, next year, and for generations to come".

*The students asked her thoughtful questions about her life as a politician and about current events, and she responded with openness and encouragement. This interaction was a highlight for many of our students, who were inspired by the opportunity to engage directly with a national leader.*

*The opening ceremony also paid tribute to the extraordinary 12-year journey that led to the creation of our permanent home. This journey began with a group of local parents, led by the late Yiannis Pareas, our founding Chair of Governors, whose vision and determination were central to the school's establishment. In recognition of his contribution, the main school building has been dedicated to Yiannis Pareas, and his wife, Marina Pareas, unveiled the building's name during the ceremony, a moving moment for all present.*

*We have started the year so well in our new home. All visitors to the school, particularly at our Open Evening and 6th Form Open Evening, remarked on our ethos, which reflects our Orthodox Christian faith and purpose to see all students succeed. It is wonderful to see our students flourishing in the new facilities, which match their ambition and will support generations to achieve in all areas of their lives.*

*Mary Karaolis OBE, Chair of Governors and founding governor, echoed this sentiment, stating, "After twelve years, our hopes have finally come to fruition. This moment marks the result of tireless dedication from the school community, the Greek Orthodox Church, Russell Education Trust, the Department for Education and those who have supported us in the local community." Her remarks highlighted the collective effort and unwavering commitment that made this achievement possible.*

*Colin Mackinlay, CEO of Russell Education Trust, also shared his reflections, saying, "Since its inception, the school has grown into a vibrant centre of learning, and now that it has settled into its permanent home, its high academic standards and commitment to the development of every student as an individual are set to thrive even further".*

*His words underscored the bright future that lies ahead for St Andrew the Apostle School. The event concluded with heartfelt thanks to our building partners, Bowmer+Kirkland, and the Comer Group, which generously provided the land as part of the wider development of North London Business Park. Their support was vital in bringing this vision to reality.*

*The Grand Opening Ceremony was not only a celebration of a new building but also a testament to the perseverance, faith and unity of our school community.*

*The Chair of the Trust, Karen Lynch, spoke eloquently about the school's humble beginnings and the drive and vision of both His Eminence, the late Archbishop Gregorios and the late Yiannis Pareas who were both instrumental in our school becoming a reality*

*The courageous and faithful leadership of our Founding Headteacher, Rob Ahearn, was celebrated too. He established the Christian values in our School and we were thankful he was able to attend the ceremony with his wife*

*The ceremony marked a beginning of an exciting new chapter in the life of St Andrew the Apostle School, one in which our students will continue to flourish, supported by facilities that reflect their aspirations and a community dedicated to their success.*

***Christopher Martin | Headteacher***

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## Memory Montage

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*The Grand Opening of our new school building was not only a celebration of the future but also a reflection on the incredible journey that has brought us here. Over the past twelve years, St Andrew the Apostle School has grown, flourished and achieved so much thanks to the dedication of our staff, students, families, and friends.*

*To mark this special day, we gathered a collection of images that capture memorable moments from our history – from our earliest days to the present. We are delighted to share these photographs with you as part of this celebration.*

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## Religious Services - Reflection





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*As the Chaplain of St Andrew the Apostle Greek Orthodox School, allow me to firstly congratulate the Headteacher, teaching staff, pupils, governors and all involved in the Grand Opening. This historic and momentous occasion will be engraved in the hearts of many, for years to come. Chaplaincy is a service and a ministry which can provide the diverse and welcoming family of St Andrew the Apostle School with faith, pastoral care, theological and catechetical education and worship, acknowledging that, as Aristotle states, 'Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.'*

*It is an honour and a blessing for me to be a part of this journey with all of you, leading assemblies, conversing with the students not only about the Christian Faith but also about daily struggles, challenges, joys and concerns. The Church, as the Ark of Salvation and body of the Incarnate and Risen Lord, is truly here for each and every one of you along the journey of life - the sacred gift of life. Our chapel, within the school's new premises, will be your spiritual oasis, a communal place of worship - allowing you all to witness and participate in the Divine Liturgy - a quiet corner of prayer and reflection, a place we can acknowledge the ability to acquire knowledge and experience of God's healing presence in our lives, something we are all in need of. As we prepare to celebrate the nativity of our Lord, let us, in turn, accept His invitation to welcome Him into the manger of our own hearts this Christmas.*

*At your service,*

*In Christ*

*Father Gregory Florides | Chaplain*

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## Prayer





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*We would like to express our deepest gratitude to His Grace, Bishop Iakovos of Claudiopolis, for leading the service at the Grand Opening of our new school building and for delivering such a moving prayer. His words brought a sense of reverence and unity to the occasion, reminding us of the values that underpin our community and the faith that guides our school.*

*By blessing our new home, Bishop Iakovos helped us begin this new chapter with grace and purpose. We are honoured to share his prayer with the wider community so that all may reflect on its message and spirit.*

Christ the eternal light and infinite wisdom, the joy and truth of all, who governs all creation in inexpressible wisdom, the sun of righteousness Who enlightens the world with the light of knowledge and Who teaches through Your Scriptures,

Come, protect and guard our school, granting your grace and enlightenment to the students, the headteacher, all the teachers, governors and staff, upholding all of us in Your care. Enlighten the minds of our students who enter these new premises, so that they may in turn act upon Your will, working hard not only to gain quality education and expertise for ourselves, but in order to serve and minister to others. Clothe our pupils with the armour of righteousness, so that, through Your ineffable wisdom and love, they may bring hope to the world, and share Your light with future generations. Grant eternal rest to Gregorios the Hierarch and all the founders, benefactors and visionaries of this school who have fallen asleep, where the light of Your countenance forever shines. Remember Lord our Archbishop Nikitas, our Spiritual Shepherd and Father, Who guides and supports our school. We seek to serve You, the Prince of Peace and Master of our lives, under his omophorion with dignity and faithfulness, rightly proclaiming the Word of Your truth.

We also pray for this land, His Majesty King Charles, the Royal Family and the Armed Forces, for the department of Education and for all those in civil authority. Keep us Lord in the shadow of Your wings, through the intercessions of Your Holy Mother, the Theotokos, the

Great Three Hierarchs Saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom,  
of St Andrew the First Called, Patron of our school and all your Saints.

Amen.

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## Musicians



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*We would like to say a huge well done to our talented musicians who provided such wonderful entertainment for all our guests during the Grand Opening. Their performances added a special atmosphere to the day and showcased the incredible talent we have within our school community.*

*Platon impressed everyone with his Classical Guitar performance of Blackbird by Lennon/McCartney, playing with skill and confidence.*

*Parmis delighted the audience with a varied programme, including Marriage d'Amour by Paul de Senneville, Golden Dreams by Anoushiravan Rohani, Beethoven's Für Elise, and two beautiful Persian pieces, Jaane Maryam and Soltane ghalbha.*

*Martin gave a stunning recital featuring [Andante Moderato](#) by Florence Price, Chopin's [Impromptu](#), and [Rumores de la Caleta](#) by Isaac Albéniz, demonstrating both technical brilliance and expressive artistry. Please follow the links to listen to the beautiful music.*

*Each of these performances brought joy to the occasion and reminded us of the richness of music within our school. We are so proud of Platon, Parmis and Martin for their dedication, talent, and the way they represented St Andrew the Apostle. Their contributions made the day even more memorable for everyone present.*

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## Student Speeches





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*We are incredibly proud of the way our students represented St Andrew the Apostle School during the Grand Opening Ceremony, particularly Gaby in Year 7 and our Head Girl, Katerina, in Year 13.*

*Both spoke with confidence, warmth, and gratitude, capturing the spirit of our school community. Gaby reflected on his first impressions of St Andrew, sharing how the welcoming environment and respect for all faiths made his transition from primary school both easy and*

*exciting. He spoke about the friendships he has already formed, the engaging lessons he has experienced, and the opportunities available to every student.*

*Gaby reminded us of our school motto, 'Ever to Excel', explaining how it inspires students to give their best and strive to be the best version of themselves. He expressed pride in being part of the future of the school and thanked everyone who contributed to making our new home possible.*

*Kat spoke movingly about her journey from Year 7 to Head Girl, describing how the school's culture shaped not only her education but also her outlook on life. She emphasised that kindness is the value that has made the greatest difference to her and her peers. Kat highlighted the ambition, perseverance, and questioning spirit encouraged at St Andrew, and expressed her excitement about the new Sixth Form facilities, which she described as "feeling like a university setting."*

*As she prepares to study law at university, Kat said she will carry with her warm memories of her time here and will always be proud to have been the first Head Girl of this new chapter in our school's story.*

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## Student Council





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*Our Student Council represented our student body at the ceremony and met the Secretary of State for Education before the Grand Opening began. Here are their thoughts on proceedings:*

Being part of the Grand Opening was something we'll never forget. As the Student Council, we felt proud to represent our peers and to show how much this school means to us. Meeting the Secretary of State for Education was exciting — it's not every day you get to ask questions to someone who makes decisions that affect schools across the country. We asked about her journey into politics and what inspired her, and she answered with honesty that made us feel our voices matter. What stood out most was how she listened carefully to us, even though we're still young. It made us realise that leadership isn't just about making rules, but about hearing people's ideas and respecting them. We also loved being part of the ceremony itself, seeing the building blessed and dedicated, and knowing that we are part of the future of St Andrew the Apostle. The day reminded us that our school is more than classrooms — it's a community where kindness, ambition, and respect really count.

***Year 9 Student Council member, Konstantinos, also added:***

"The Grand Opening was amazing, and the student Council loved the occasion. An absolute honour to meet the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, and ask questions to some of the founding members of the school community. A real privilege. The official opening of our new school building was fantastic, and it marked the beginning of a new STA history."

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## Politics Class



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Our Year 12 Politics class also got to meet the Secretary of State for Education, for obvious reasons! *They said of this meeting:*

For us, the Grand Opening was a unique opportunity to connect what we study in class with real life. Meeting Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP gave us insight into the realities of political life beyond textbooks. We asked questions about current events, the challenges of public service, and how politicians balance personal values with national responsibilities. Her responses were thoughtful and candid, and they encouraged us to think critically about the role of politics in shaping society. What impressed us most was her willingness to engage with students — it showed that politics isn't distant, but something we can all be part of. Experiencing this in our new Sixth Form facilities, which feel like a university environment, made the moment even more inspiring. We left the conversation motivated to pursue our own ambitions, whether in politics, law, or other fields, and grateful to be part of a school that gives us these opportunities.

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## My Thanks





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*I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all the staff who worked tirelessly to make our Grand Opening such a successful occasion. The day was a reflection of the dedication, professionalism and care that define our school, and it would not have been possible without the collective effort of so many people.*

*I am especially grateful to Mr Antoniou, Mr Hounsell, Ms Al-Sikafe, Ms Walt and many colleagues from the Russell Education Trust, whose commitment and hard work ensured that everything came together so beautifully.*

*I'd also like to thank Mr Browell, Mr Walch and Ms Poole for supporting the Student Council, Year 12 politics class and our musicians so caringly on the day.*

*Their attention to detail and willingness to go above and beyond made the day feel seamless and welcoming for all our guests. It was inspiring to see how much pride they took in representing our school and how their efforts helped showcase the very best of St Andrew the Apostle.*

*To all our staff, the beating heart of the school, thank you for your energy, your teamwork, and your dedication to our students and community. The Grand Opening was a day we will remember, and it was made possible because of you.*

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## Innovate



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*We would like to extend our thanks to Innovate and their staff for preparing the refreshments for our Grand Opening Ceremony. The food and drinks were beautifully presented, thoughtfully prepared, and enjoyed by all who attended.*

*Their professionalism and attention to detail helped make the day feel even more special, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for our guests. From the first cup of coffee to the final bite of cake, everything was wonderful and greatly appreciated. We are grateful for their hard work and contribution to such an important milestone in our school's journey.*

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## Safeguarding at STA

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*At St Andrew the Apostle School we take safeguarding and child protection issues very seriously.*

*We believe that all those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

*Prior to employment all staff (paid or voluntary) are checked.*

*The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for Child Protection is Ms Walt.*

*The deputy designated safeguarding lead's (DDSLs) for Child Protection are Mr Martin and Ms Bicarregui.*

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