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# NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDITION



**ANDRIA ZAFIRAKOU**  
FROM ALPERTON  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL HAS BEEN  
NAMED AS THE  
WINNER OF THE  
**GLOBAL TEACHER**  
**PRIZE 2018**



# HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

It was a tremendous honour to be in the auditorium on 18th March when Trevor Noah announced that Andria Zafirakou was the winner of the Global Teacher Prize 2018. What was less obvious was that the award ceremony took place at the end of a packed and absorbing two day conference – the Global and Education Skills Forum, hosted by the Varkey Foundation and Sheikh Mohammed of Dubai.

There were some amazing speakers: Priyanka Chopra spoke about education and the media in India, Simon Schama on the importance of History in shaping current policy, and Al Gore lectured on climate change. However, what is most vivid in my mind are the personal stories from everyday people. We heard accounts of the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting from three students who survived the ordeal. They went on to set up #NeverAgain and changed the gun law in Florida. We also heard the life story of Mohamed Sidibay who was recruited as a child soldier in Sierra Leone and fled to America and is now training to be a lawyer. The conference also offered Master Classes from teachers around the world, created debates in a House of Commons setting, offered boardroom discussions from prestigious CEOs, panel debates with subject experts as well as 'Ed Talks' on topics as diverse as youth activism to socio-emotional skills and special needs.

I even got the opportunity to meet two of the greatest cricketers of all time - Brian Lara and Wasim Akram.



Photo credit: Varkey Foundation



Photo: Selfie with Andria Zafirakou and special guests at GESF

## WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT



Andria Zafirakou, art and textiles teacher at Alperton Community School was announced as the winner of the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2018 on Sunday 18 March at a prestigious ceremony in Dubai.

Andria has been chosen from more than 30,000 teachers from 170 countries for her achievements in the classroom and community that provide a model of excellence for the teaching profession.

Now in its fourth year, the prize awards \$1 million to an exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to their profession, and is awarded under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai.

The award ceremony was hosted by comedian and actor Trevor Noah and included a special musical performance by award-winning singer Jennifer Hudson. Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton was also involved in delivering the Global Teacher Prize trophy on stage.

Andria is the first teacher in the UK to be awarded the prize and our school is extremely proud of her extraordinary achievement.



Photo credit: Varkey Foundation

# MOMENTOUS ARRIVAL AT HEATHROW AIRPORT

Andria receives a fantastic reception at Heathrow airport, welcomed by 100 Alperton students, governors, family, friends, politicians, dignitaries and BBC Breakfast

"Congratulations to Andria on this amazing and well deserved achievement, beating over 30,000 other teachers from around the world. This award shows her outstanding dedication and commitment to supporting young people's learning and development and ensuring that every student has the chance to succeed."

**Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council**



Mona Shah, Chair of Governors at Alperton Community School proudly holding the Global Teacher Prize 2018 trophy



Photo credit:Varkey Foundation



Photo credit:Varkey Foundation

Back in the UK, Andria received a glorious welcome at Heathrow airport. Crowned with a laurel wreath, she was greeted by 100 students from Alperton Community School, colleagues, friends, family, governors, politicians, dignitaries and the media.



Photo: Ben Thomson, BBC and Alperton students

The atmosphere was amazing and Andria was thrilled to be reunited with her family after a week's absence.



Photo credit:Varkey Foundation

She received a fantastic welcome from our Brent community - Mayor of Brent Cllr Bhagwanji Chohan, MP Barry Gardiner and Councillor Muhammed Butt - who all came to the airport to congratulate "the world's best teacher".



What a wonderful reception for @Andriazaf when she arrived back in Britain this morning — officially now "The best teacher in the world"  
You make Brent proud, Zaf!



2:19 AM - 21 Mar 2018

33 Retweets 74 Likes

2 33 74

She was also greeted by members of the Varkey Foundation: Chief Executive Vikas Pota, Chief Operating Executive Kate Noble and Head of Marketing Rebecca Warbrick.

BBC Breakfast broadcast the event live from the airport. Ben Thomson interviewed both Andria and a few of our students, who characterised Mrs Zafirakou as being "the best", "helpful", "outstanding" and "perfect."



**UK Prime Minister  
@10DowningStreet**

"Congratulations to @AndriaZaf on behalf of the whole country. Winning the Global @TeacherPrize is a wonderful achievement and all pupils and fellow staff at @AlpertonCS must be incredibly proud" - PM

# CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

From Heathrow airport, Andria was escorted directly to 10 Downing Street to meet with the UK's Prime Minister Theresa May, who congratulated Andria in person on her amazing achievement.

"Being a great teacher requires resilience, ingenuity and a generous heart. These are the qualities that you share with your students every day. To be chosen from more than 30,000 nominees in 173 countries is an incredible achievement. It's a fitting tribute to everything you've done for your pupils at Alperton Community School" (PM Theresa May)

Andria had the honour of being congratulated as well in the House of Commons by the Leader of the Opposition Jeremy Corbyn and MP Angela Rayner.

"Absolutely amazing to hear this year's Global @TeacherPrize goes to @andriazaf @AlpertonCS! #TeacherPrize The best teacher in the world, we are all so proud!" (MP Angela Rayner)

Amongst other officials to congratulate Andria on winning the Global Teacher Prize 2018 was Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds and Minister of State for Education Nick Gibb.

"It is thanks to teachers like Andria that standards are rising in schools across the country. You only have to meet Andria to see how her upbeat optimism is so infectious. Her love of teaching and her dedication to her pupils is truly inspiring and motivating." (Nick Gibb)

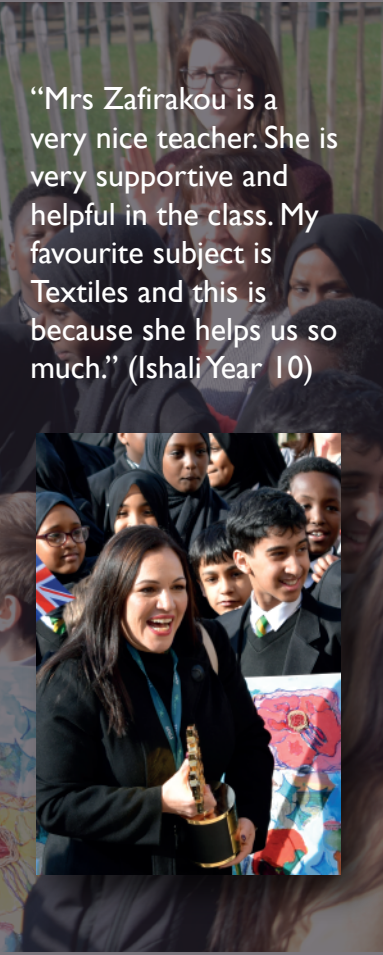


Photo: Andria Zafirakou with Leader of the Opposition Jeremy Corbyn and MP Barry Gardiner



Photo: Andria Zafirakou with Minister of State for Education Nick Gibb





“Mrs Zafirakou is a very nice teacher. She is very supportive and helpful in the class. My favourite subject is Textiles and this is because she helps us so much.” (Ishali Year 10)

## ITV NEWS AND CHANNEL 5 INTERVIEWING ALPERTON STUDENTS

“I wasn’t shocked that Ms Zafirakou won the Global Teacher Prize. I have been supporting her from the beginning and I knew she would win the award.” - Yusuf Y8

Photo: Andria welcomed by Alperton students

# BACK AT ALPERTON, ANDRIA RECEIVES A HERO’S WELCOME

On her return to Alperton Community School, Andria was greeted by hundreds of students who were ecstatic she won the prize.

Our Headteacher Gerard McKenna who accompanied Andria to Dubai and numerous members of staff were honoured and proud to welcome back the best teacher in the world.

ITV News and Channel 5 were recording the event and interviewed some of our staff and students.

“We are really proud of Andria for winning such a prestigious award. She is a wonderful teacher and member of the Senior Leadership Team and she truly deserves this award.” (Colleague Usha Mandalia)

“I’m home!” Ms Zafirakou told ITV News, who came to the school to record the event. “This award is not just for me, it’s for them as well. It is such a great representation of who they are and what this means to our community. I’m just so happy.”

“Ms Zafirakou is such a great teacher! She always makes sure we understand the work before setting it to us.” (Prareen, Year 9)

“I am really proud of Ms Zafirakou. She always puts so much effort into her lessons and deserves to win this award more than anyone.” (Latifa Y8)

“Mrs Zafirakou is very helpful and she really cares for us. She is also a very good artist. She is a very positive person, she really inspires us and we really like it when she greets us in our own language.” (Jinisha, Year 9)

*“Whatever your circumstances, whatever your troubles, please know that you have the potential to succeed in whatever your dreams may be. And that is a right that nobody should take from you.”*

*“Our school celebrates diversity and shapes students into real citizens who accept and appreciate one another.”*

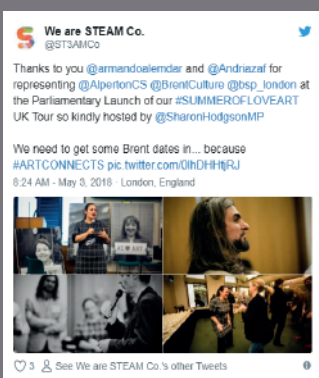
**Andria Zafirakou**



## Ms Zafirakou had the honour of meeting HRH Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

The world's best teacher was invited as a guest speaker at the launch of the Platform for Girls' Education led by the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, where she had the honour of meeting HRH Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

Ms Zafirakou and Alperton students on a fantastic bus tour offered by Golden Tours welcoming the Commonwealth Heads of Government. The bus was personalised with Andria's name and Alperton Community School written along the sides.



# LIFE AFTER THE AWARD

After winning the award, Andria has become a public figure - has been interviewed by many prestigious newspapers and has appeared on numerous TV Channels. As a result, she has been presented with some incredible opportunities, allowing her to enrich the life of her students and of students all over the world. "I have been given this incredible platform. I am changing the world!" Andria said in an interview with the Financial Times.

Since March she has participated in a series of events supporting art and design education, nationally and internationally.

In April, Andria visited the Argentinian Embassy with a group of students from Alperton Community School to learn about and support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 'iamtheCODE' London Global Goals Hackathon.



Later that month, Ms Zafirakou attended the launch of Boris Johnson's Platform for Girls' Education, an event promoting the education of girls worldwide. Andria's speech was very inspirational, drawing on her own experience of working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In May, Ms Zafirakou and the Head of Arts at Alperton Community School, the artist Armando Alemdar, attended the parliamentary launch of 'Summer of Love Art', an event hosted by MP Sharon Hodgson that aims to promote and celebrate arts and creativity in schools.





Andria has welcomed many personalities and media icons into our school, working with our students, sharing experiences and bringing lots of motivation and inspiration into the classrooms.

## Melvyn Bragg and Simon Schama visit our school to meet our students and the “world’s best teacher”.

In April, our students were privileged to meet the English historian and media icon Simon Schama, who visited our school to meet the world’s best teacher, our staff and students, and to explore subjects like Art and History. Our students had some fantastic questions for Simon, discussing his career, his books and his interest in Art History.

Andria described the visit as ‘mesmerising’ and said ‘his stories took us on a captivating journey.’

Simon had a great time visiting our school and said:  
“This is an extraordinary school with magnificent leadership from Andria and her fellow teachers. It was just a joy to be with the students - so open to the world, so smart, so hopeful. This is what Britain should be like - and in many places - is.”



In early May, Alperton Community School had the delight of welcoming Melvyn Bragg into the school. Melvyn was impressed with the school and with Andria’s achievements and wishes to work with us on a television piece over the upcoming months.

Melvyn had a particular interest in the value of arts in education and enjoyed touring the school, commenting on the warm atmosphere.



“It’s been such a fantastic experience for our staff and students to meet both Simon Schama and Melvyn Bragg. The following day, the students were asking when the guests could come back to visit and teach.”  
(Andria Zafirakou)



# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Alperton Community School celebrates Andria's success with colleagues, governors and guests from Brent Council and Varkey Foundation.



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Follow us  
@AlpertonCS  
Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn icons

"My calling in life is to make sure that every single child reaches their full potential."

Andria Zafirakou



Last night, got to meet this incredible lady, Andria Zafirakou. She won the Varkey Teacher prize for all of her wonderful work with kids. I hope all of her students are proud at Alperton Community School @gesforum @varkeyfdn #gesf #teachersmatter

