



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Section 48 Inspection Report

Date: 28 June 2017

School Name: Krishna Avanti Primary School Harrow



This inspection was carried out under the section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Address: Camrose Avenue, Edgware HA8 6ES

URN: 138688

School Details

Type of School:	Primary 3-11
School Category:	Academy with Hindu designation
Gender of Pupils:	Mixed
Number on Roll:	357
Appropriate Authority:	Avanti Schools Trust
Local Authority:	Harrow
Principal:	Mrs Bindu Rai
School Address:	Camrose Ave, Edgware HA8 6ES
Telephone Number:	02083813344
Email Address:	kapsharrow@avanti.org.uk
School Website:	http://avanti.org.uk/kapsharrow

Information about the School

Avanti schools, designated as Hindu faith-schools, welcome children from all backgrounds and beliefs. The Trust schools and the Hindu Education Authority as the religious authority are inspired by and draw upon the teachings of Krishna Caitanya, as part of the same religious tradition as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). This means that the nature of Collective Worship and Religious Education (RE) are broadly reflective of the practices and teachings of ISKCON.

The school opened in 2008 with its first cohort of Reception pupils. Currently, it has 357 pupils on roll aged three to eleven years. The school is organised over twelve classes, two each from Reception to Year three, one each from Years four to six and one part-time nursery class. Most of the pupils live within the school locality (Edgware) and come from working families with average incomes. Almost all the pupils are of Indian origin, with just 2% of pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds. As such, almost nine-tenths of the pupils speak English as an additional language. About half of the pupils speak Gujarati as their first language. The rest speak 19 other languages between them, with English, Telugu, Hindi and Tamil being the most common.

About 90% of the pupils practice the Hindu faith and the school offers about a sixth of its places to pupils whose families follow the ISKCON traditions. Other faiths represented in the school include Jainism (5.1%), Sikhism (0.8%), Islam (0.3%) and Christianity (1.7%). Seven pupils come from families that profess no faith. The parents of two pupils have opted to withdraw them from daily collective worship, however these pupils do take part in celebrations of religious festivals. The school has eleven pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities. Five of these have an education, health and care plan. Ten pupils receive additional funding to support their learning from the Pupil Premium.

The school has achieved the following awards:

- Three Faiths Forum Recognition Award
- Total Green School Award
- ECO Schools Sustainability Award
- Excellence Safety Mark Award

Lead Inspector: Pooja Chawla

Team Inspector: Florence Olajide

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors. The inspectors visited parts of four lessons and observed collective worship. They also observed a lunchtime club and spoke with pupils individually and in groups. They held meetings with the senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents and representatives of the school stakeholders committee. They looked at a range of documentation including pupils' written work, lesson planning, policy documents such as the Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE) Curriculum, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. The inspectors also looked at the school's previous Ofsted inspection report. That inspection took place in 2013.

Key Inspection Findings

1. How effective is the school in providing education for the Hindu life of the school?

The school provides an effective Hindu Education, which enables pupils to develop personal faith, a strong moral compass and character.

What the school does well?

- It provides a values-led curriculum, which successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social development and enables them to develop into confident, mature and responsible individuals.
- It provides an inclusive ethos where pupils from all backgrounds and religions feel welcome.
- It helps pupils develop a strong sense of personal spirituality which they draw upon to make sense of their world and which guides their daily lives.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

Leaders should:

1. increase the rigour with which they monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in religious education and the quality of collective worship; and act quickly to address any identified areas of weakness;
2. further improve the learning of younger pupils by:
 - a. ensuring that the teaching draws upon their experiences and provides them with opportunities for in-depth discussion about how concepts apply to their daily lives;
 - b. improving teachers' skill in using questioning and discussion to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of Hinduism.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

How effective is the school in providing education for the Hindu life of the school?	Good
How effective are the leaders and members in developing the Hindu life of the school?	Good
How well does the school, through its distinctive Hindu Character, meet the needs of all learners?	Good
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	Good
How effective is the Religious Education?	Good

2. How effective are the leaders and members in developing the Hindu life of the school?

Leaders and school stakeholders committee members have created a school ethos, which successfully fosters the Avanti Schools Trust's aims of educational excellence, character formation and spiritual insight. They ensure that pupils have access to an effective religious education curriculum and regular collective worship. The curriculum promotes a good understanding of the Hindu faith and other world faiths. It also promotes Hindu and British values extremely well and these make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Leaders promote diversity well and all groups of pupils feel welcome and included. Parents of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds within the school expressed how their initial anxieties were quickly dispelled by the school's caring and inclusive ethos. They note that their children have settled into school very well. Those with children with special educational needs also feel well supported. Similarly, staff from different ethnic or religious backgrounds feel included and appreciate the training provided by leaders to help them develop a better understanding of the school's ethos and religious values. Leaders have established appropriate systems aimed at safeguarding pupils and in discussions, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a range of dangers.

Leaders and the newly constituted stakeholders committee have begun the process of gathering information about the school's effectiveness from pupils, staff, and other stakeholders. However, the systems for achieving this are not yet fully established or rigorous enough to ensure that leaders address any identified weaknesses rapidly and promptly. Leaders are aware of this and are working towards improvement. For example, following recent feedback from pupils, leaders have created a lunch time club to teach pupils to play the *mrdanga* (Indian drum) and *kartal* (cymbal) so that they can participate in playing instruments during collective worship. This club has provided girls in particular, with access to an activity, which culturally, is a boys' domain.

Leaders maintain positive links with parents, carers and other organisations within the wider community. Parents are very positive about the school. They appreciate the various opportunities to engage in the life of the school and particularly like being able to attend Friday worship and assemblies. The school maintains links with other schools within the Avanti Trust and uses these networks to increase opportunities for staff professional development and to improve the quality of the curriculum and teaching. Links have also been made with non-Hindu schools within the locality to broaden pupils' horizons.

3. How well does the school, through its distinctive Hindu Character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school's Hindu character is strongly expressed through the values of respect, integrity, humility, courage, empathy, gratitude and self-discipline. These values permeate all aspects of the school's work including the PRE curriculum and day to day teaching, and are very

effective in developing pupils into mature and responsible individuals. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values and the links between these, values of living a Hindu life and the school's six core values. Pupils understand how the values relate to their daily lives and for example can draw parallels between school rules and rules that govern wider society.

Pupils demonstrate strong spiritual beliefs and insights. They are able to explain in depth, what faith means to them as individuals and how they practice this both at school and home. Pupils' moral and social development are equally strong. Pupils have a good understanding of right or wrong and their responses in discussion show they are able to put the needs of others above their own. They are tolerant of each other and treat one another with care and respect. They behave very well in lessons and around the school and have very good attitudes to learning and towards each other.

Pupils are developing a strong social, moral and religious consciousness. They regularly raise money for worthy causes and to support people less fortunate than themselves, for example, by making donations to food banks. They contribute to the life of the school through their roles as school or eco councillors and as monitors. Pupils' cultural understanding however, is not as strong as other aspects of their development. While the curriculum is effective in helping pupils to develop an understanding of other world religions, it does not yet enable pupils to develop sufficient knowledge about the range of cultures and communities that exist within modern Britain and the wider world.

4. What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Pupils engage in acts of daily worship either as a whole school community in the temple room or in their individual classrooms on selected days. Collective worship is performed with great enthusiasm and reverence in the temple room. Of all aspects of worship, pupils particularly enjoy singing spiritual songs and playing instruments (*Kirtan*). Different year groups take turns to lead this part of worship every day with great confidence and pride. Pupils strongly believe that these acts of collective worship play a significant role in preparing them emotionally and spiritually for their day. Key messages, after prayers, are chosen carefully by the teachers to highlight themes or values based on the important days in the Hindu calendar. Festivals and celebrations of other major religions and cultures are also included.

Leaders have begun to monitor the quality of collective worship and provide those who lead with informal feedback. However, they have not yet sought the views of pupils as to how aspects of whole-school collective worship could be improved. For example, while leading whole school assemblies, staff sometimes struggle to strike the right tone so that the youngest pupils are fully involved. Strategies such as the use of pictures and the repetition of *shlokas* (spiritual verse) are used to engage pupils, but this is not always effective. During discussion with inspectors, one of the older pupils reflected on the difficulty in comprehending the language and certain religious concepts on some days, and wondered how the younger pupils cope.

5. How effective is the Religious Education?

The school follows a structured curriculum based on ISKCON Hindu traditions that incorporates knowledge and understanding of a wide range of religious texts. It also includes the five main religions of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Overall, the teaching of religious education is effective. The curriculum helps pupils to develop a better understanding of who God is and their own position as a 'spirit soul'. Pupils are able to deeply reflect on and express their interpretation of their personal relationship with God.

The subject is mostly taught by specialist teachers although other staff, irrespective of their personal faiths and beliefs, make a very effective contribution in lessons. The teaching is most effective in key stage 2 where teachers use a variety of interesting strategies including drama, to help pupils develop critical thought as well as the tenets of the religion. Pupils find these interactive lessons stimulating and highly enjoyable. In a Year 5 lesson for example, through drama, pupils studying the ancient text of Bhagavad Gita enacted the story Arjuna, who faced with an ethical dilemma in the battlefield, sought divine guidance to resolve it. Through deep discussions where pupils were encouraged to draw on their literacy skills, they were able to carefully consider what they would do in a similar situation and give morally justifiable reasons for the actions they would take. However, the high quality discussion seen in this lesson was not typical of some of the other teaching seen, where there were missed opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding through effective questioning and discussion. In particular, the teaching did not always provide younger pupils with sufficient opportunities to draw on their own personal experiences and make practical connections in their learning.

Teachers use a range of religious artefacts, images and resources well to engage pupils in lessons that introduce new concepts of faith and practical worship. In recent months, pupils have had opportunities to carry out focussed studies of other religions. These have included visits to a Jewish synagogue, Gurudwara and local church. Spiritual leaders from other religions are invited to speak to pupils and the school draws well on the knowledge and expertise of teachers who practice both the Hindu and non-Hindu faiths.

Leaders have begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in PRE and provide teachers with feedback on how to improve their practice. However, this feedback is not precise enough in identifying what teachers need to improve, nor is it followed with prompt and effective action to secure rapid improvements to teaching. Further developments in these aspects of the school's provision should be incorporated into the school's improvement plan.