



KRISHNA AVANTI

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Krishna Avanti Primary School, Evington Hall, Spencefield Lane, Leicester, LE5 6HN
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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing on behalf of the leadership team at Krishna Avanti to address concerns raised by a recent petition that is circulating our school community.

As a school, we understand the concerns raised within the petition; these were first raised to the leadership team at our Townhall event, and further discussed in our recently established coffee afternoon sessions. We are mindful that the petition represents a small proportion of our parent body; one who's voice is valuable to the long term direction of the school. While it is disappointing that some of our community have felt the need to set up the petition, rather than continuing to engage in direct dialogue with the school, we will take the time now to address the petition concerns in the letter below. We want to reassure you that we will continue to work with our entire parent community to ensure that you have confidence in the leadership and direction of Krishna Avanti.

Staff recruitment

The leadership team have been open with our parent community on our recruitment approaches and are supportive to recruiting members of our teaching community from the Hindu faith community. Teacher recruitment is a national concern, and made more challenging by our religious designation. We would welcome support from our parents to share any upcoming vacancies to ensure and help us promote our schools so that we have a strong and suitable pool of candidates.

Further complexity comes with incoming changes to legislation that will require all teachers, in all schools, to be qualified, or on the route to becoming qualified. As a Trust, we have a number of routes to qualification, and utilise these at Avanti Fields and our other schools. We are open to supporting any new staff through this route.

A priority for myself, Mrs Thakore and Mrs Bridgmohun has been to secure the educational excellence of our pupils. Last academic year the school did not have any KS2 pupils working at greater depth in Writing, which meant that none of the pupils who graduated had an overall combined greater depth result. The school was additionally below national for combined greater depth at KS1, with all three measures of Reading, Writing and Mathematics below national percentages. As such, this year we have gone out for a number of teaching positions and have recruited highly skilled teachers who will support the educational growth and development of your children.

As a leadership team strongly aligned to the Avanti Way, we value the diversity that comes from our teaching team. The petition has mentioned developing the Sanatan Dharma of our pupils and I would like to take a moment to reflect on a particularly powerful analogy of this 'eternal law'.

Imagine the sun. In most English speaking cultures, it is called "sun". In other languages, it is referred to as "sol", "soleli", "Sonne", "Helios", "shams", "surian", or "suraj". But regardless of what we call it, everyone is referring to the glowing ball of gas approximately 93 million miles from Earth. We are all blessed by its sunlight and warmth. Similarly, God is above all such designations. Whether we have staff who refer to God as "Krishna" or by any other name, we are all referring to what nourishes our souls when we develop our own

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personal, loving relationships. The staff at Krishna Avanti are all aligned to the Avanti Way and making their own contributions to developing your children to become spiritually compassionate changemakers.

Unique curriculum and ethos

The leadership team is working hard to ensure that the delivery of the unique elements of the Avanti offer are balanced with providing enough time to teach the national curriculum at all levels of the school.

The decision to remove Sanskrit from Year 1 was made prior to the current leadership team joining the school by the Trust. Children were struggling to learn both phonics and Sanskrit; and we have a duty to deliver high quality phonics training to meet government standards.

All schools are waiting the outcome of the government's curriculum review and we will not be making significant changes until we received this direction. The school is finalising the curriculum model for 2025-26, and have taken on board the feedback of our parents and pupils in regards to some elements. We are currently exploring the following for next year:

- A widening the forest school offer to allow pupils in Reception, Year 1, 2 and 3 with a minimum of a 6-week block.
- Swimming beginning in Year 4 (summer term) and continue in the autumn term of Year 5. This would allow families to practice swimming over the summer holidays.
- Introducing specialist music provision in lower KS2.
- Introducing a more structured approach to students participating in Sanga with our Spiritual Wellbeing Lead (Chaplain).
- Reviewing and confirming the use of LCFC and Premier Education to support our PE and extra-curricular offer.

This year, we have also seen the introduction of the Year 5 Avanti Sings project launch. This is a Trust-wide initiative that we hope will become a permanent feature of our schools, however, are awaiting confirmation of this.

Spiritual opportunities

The leadership team respectfully disagrees with the opinions raised in the petition that the opportunities for spiritual insight and development have been reduced or watered down. This year we have continued to ensure that all pupils have various opportunities to nurture their faith.

We have organised the Year 5 Avanti Quest residential (and Year 6 residential will run in the Summer 2 term), whole school Diwali festival day and showcase and Gaura Purnima festival day (with Ratha Yatra planned for 27th June). All classes in all year groups will visit the ISKCON temple visits (some which are planned for Summer 2 term). Today we held Narasimhadev Yajna for the entire school community and are looking forward to the upcoming Year 4 trip to Bhaktivedanta Manor in the summer 2 term, and our Holi celebration planned for the last day of this half-term on Friday 23rd May.

Running alongside these experiences, we have promoted a wider understanding of other faiths and traditions through a Year 3 Buddhism visitor and talk, Christingle assembly, Gurdwara and Church visits for various year groups.

Collective worship is either run in the classroom or as a wider mixture of year groups each morning from 8:00am – 8:20am. In addition to this, we have introduced a whole school reflection session on a Monday afternoon for 30 minutes. **All staff** are present at the joint collective worship and reflection sessions, either actively participating the kirtan, or respectfully looking on and encouraging positive behaviour and participation of their class. A significant proportion of teachers are involved in leading collective worship and prepare their sessions on a rota throughout the term. No students are withdrawn from our worship opportunities.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00am – 8 :20am	Reception & Year 5 joint CW	Year 1, 3 & 6 joint CW	Classroom CW	Year 2 & 4 joint CW	Classroom CW
	Classroom CW Y1, 2, 3, 4, 6	Classroom CW Rec., Y2, 4, 5		Classroom CW Rec., Y1, 3, 5, 6	
1:20pm – 1:50pm	Whole school reflection				

At lunch time, children have opportunities to engage in Sanga with our Spiritual Wellbeing Lead and break time opportunities to come together in the worship hall for their own personal reflections. As we are in the summer term, our children have been enjoying the sunshine, but we will continue to ensure this is available to those who wish to access this provision.

From a personal perspective, learning of this petition has come as a shock and has been rather heartbreaking. I have personally worked with Avanti since 2012 and have successfully worked alongside two different Hindu parent communities in both London and Leicester. I have happily celebrated school and city wide events, connecting with the ISKCON community and other Hindu communities within the city. My personal commitment to the school, its staff and wider community is steadfast.

Mrs Thakore, Mrs Bridgmohun and I will be organising another townhall session in the summer 2 term, with details to follow next week. We would welcome the time to discuss the petition and our response with our parent community.

Hare Krishna.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Bardsley
Executive Principal

Anita Thakore
Head of Primary

Devika Bridgmohun
Deputy Principal