



AVANTILIFE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST



What a Judging Panel!



Pupils from Krishna Avanti Primary School, Harrow are set to become judges in the Blue Peter Book Awards 2022.

Pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 will read six shortlisted books, both fiction and non-fiction, before casting their votes for their favourite “Best Book with Facts” and “Best Story”. Krishna Avanti is one of only 12 schools nationally to participate in the contest which seeks to find the best

new children’s books written in the past 12 months.

Principal, Shriti Bellare added, “Our pupils are passionate about books and reading is a key focus in our school. We are delighted that they can have this wonderful opportunity to become even better readers.” The awards are managed by BookTrust – the largest reading charity in Britain. Winners will be announced on Blue Peter in March 2022.

AST Central Team Workshop





On Thursday 25th November, the Avanti Schools Trust Central Team participated in a full-day workshop; creating processes to serve our schools in a deeper and purpose-driven way.



It was an intensive day with lots of conversations and ideas flowing between the different departments. A special feature on the schedule was an interview with Nitesh Gor, CEO who shared the deeper purpose behind the Avanti ethos and his vision for the next 10 years!

First Ever Winter Fair at Avanti Gardens



Avanti Gardens PTA held their very first Winter Fair in early December. There was a wonderful and uplifting atmosphere with fun and entertainment for all ages. Set in the School's Theatre and Dining Hall, local businesses and individuals sold handcrafted wares and scrumptious delights, and children, families, and members of the local community absorbed the festive cheer and enjoyed the music, singing and entertainment.

The innovative yet cosy Santa's Grotto stole the show. For once, Santa did not have to climb up or down the chimney, but the children had to crawl along a chimney (not a real one!) to enter and secure a prime spot in Santa's Grotto. Another highlight, undoubtedly, was the effort that House Captains put into raising funds for their nominated charities by organising and hosting a 'Bring and Buy' stall.





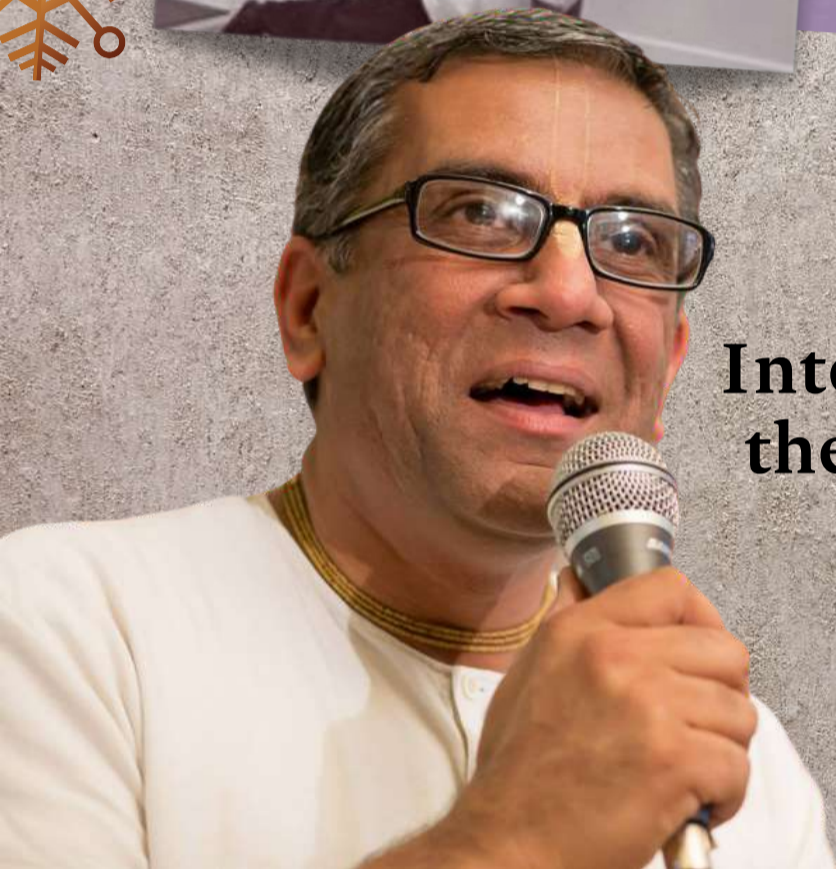
Little Yogis Turn to Teaching



A group of yoga ambassadors have been created at Avanti House Primary School. The eight pupils have been selected not only for performing unique yoga asanas, but for having a thoughtful and reflective attitude to life.



The ambassadors are expected to offer one-off yoga lessons to various Harrow schools during the second half of the Spring term.



Interfaith Dialogue with the Bishop of Leicester



The Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow paid a visit to Avanti Fields for a tour of the new school. Accompanied by Director of the St Philips Interfaith Centre Dr Tom Wilson, the Bishop participated in a Q&A session with the Year 10 students,

which included some very thoughtful and insightful questions. The Bishop's visit has supported the Year 10 students in their GCSE Religious Studies course to provide some real-life opportunities to learn more about Christianity.

We Shall Remember Them



Remembrance Day was observed by Avanti students and staff across our schools.

At Avanti House, students participated in a special service to show gratitude to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy today. The school's Combined Cadet Force laid a wreath on behalf of the school at the foot of a First World War cut out, and poetry and passages from the Bhagavad-gita were read by students.



Hair-raising Challenge for Avanti House Y12s

£1450 raised!

Avanti House Y12 student Neel Kalyan led a team of Y12 pupils to raise £1450 for Movember. The annual campaign involves the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's suicide.

Neel says it was the group's first attempt at raising money for charity and they were happy to have raised a significant amount for a worthy cause. A raffle was also held for Movember selling all 1000 tickets

Leicester Tigers Present Drive

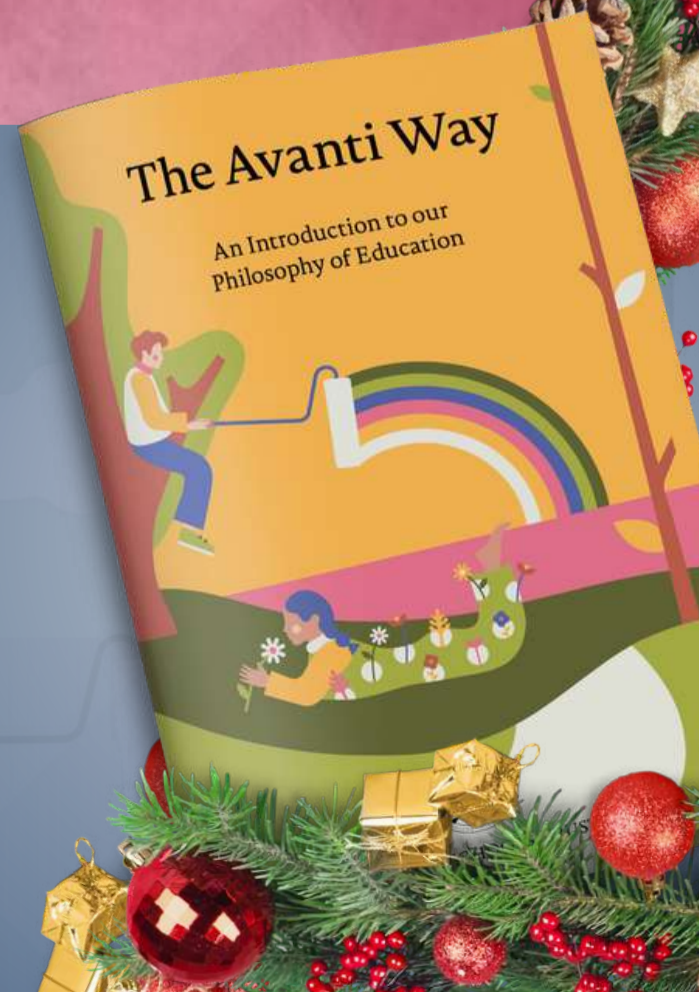


Krishna Avanti Primary School and Avanti Fields Secondary participated in the Leicester Tigers Foundation drive to collect Christmas presents for disadvantaged people in the City.

Pupils were invited to bring in presents which were collected by the Leicester Tigers Foundation and delivered across the City to those who need them most.

Wisdom from The Avanti Way

We are unique spiritual beings with incredible potential, and we achieve our full potential by discovering and nurturing all parts of ourselves – intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual.





Avanti in the Community

Focus Day at Avanti Hall



What is community? What issues exist in our community? How can we help solve these issues?



On Tuesday 7th December Avanti Hall, Exeter, held their second Focus Day of this academic year on the theme of 'Avanti in the Community'. Throughout the day, pupils explored learning questions such as: 'What is community?' 'What issues exist in our community?' and 'How can we help solve these issues?'

The Focus Day was also tied in with Christmas Jumper / fancy winter jumper Day. Pupils were invited to wear a festive / wintery jumper of their choice and make a £1 donation for 'Save the Children' and also support the St Petrock's 'Rough-Sleeper Winter Wish list 2021'. A volunteer from St Petrock's visited and enlightened the children on the risks and dangers of being homeless, especially at this time of year.

The Focus Day included drama, including the Year 10 GCSE group who wrote and performed their own devised piece based on the theme. The upper school had the opportunity to learn sign language and perform a rendition of 'Silent Night' for the school. The parent choir performed beautifully and the Reception class and Key Stage 1 children created Christmas items and performances for the Barton Place Nursing Home.

Pupils also learned about how the oceans and beaches are being severely polluted with plastics and waste, and created posters to encourage people to dispose of their rubbish properly as well as looking at supporting our elderly and animals in our community.



I Avanti because ...

"I feel extremely proud to be a part of the Avanti Trust family. I feel able to inspire, challenge and motivate others to carry the vision of the Avanti Insitute CPD programme into the next phase of development and I am genuinely looking forward to working alongside the whole of the Avanti team throughout the UK."

Rebecca Underwood | Head of Professional Learning

Meet the Principal

Mrs Joshi took the reigns as the new principal of Avanti House Primary School in September 2021. We ask about her role, vision, and her plans for the school.



Mrs Lalita Joshi | Avanti House Primary School

How would you describe your role at Avanti House?

LJ: As the Principal of an Avanti school, I am not only accountable for children's academic excellence but develop the child holistically. This approach is underpinned by our three-fold pathway of academic excellence, spiritual insight and character development. This means that I ensure that children do not only learn academics but also learn about human values and their relationship with God (or Krishna).

My role as a Principal is to provide leadership and strategic direction to the school system to achieve its vision. Above all, my main aim is to ensure that the children are safe, happy and reach their full potential by nurturing all parts of themselves – intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual.

The role of a Principal is fantastic and rewarding despite the day-to-day challenges that we face. Every single day is very different and will present unique and unexpected turns, whether it's a concerned parent, an unexpected leakage or a struggling child.

What does being Principal mean to you?

LJ: From a very young age, I sought my God-given purpose in life by reading a variety of books and eagerly asking existential questions to those around me. Growing up in a spiritual Hindu faith community inspired my desire to make a difference to the world by helping to provide opportunities for the kind of intellectual, moral and spiritual growth that had been made available to me in my youth.

Being a Principal at Avanti has enabled my professional goals to be aligned with my personal aims, thus instilling within me the real passion and drive to “serve a higher purpose by living a meaningful and satisfying life of contribution”. I am very inspired by the concept of servant leadership – I believe that my purpose is to serve the wider community at Avanti House Primary School and support children, teachers, staff, parents to become the best versions of themselves and find joy in giving.

What are your plans for the school community? What can we look forward to?

LJ: I have introduced a new concept to all the children called "The Bhakti Tree". Whenever the children choose to perform a small form of service for Krishna (God) or for each other, they add a leaf to the tree and write their action on the leaf itself. We have a “spiritual competition” and the reward is that that class will have the opportunity to bake something of their choice for our large Gaura Nitai deities and offer it in the shrine. The children are very excited about the competition and are trying their best to engage in spiritual activities.

Year 6 children had the opportunity to apply / interview for a yoga and meditation leader role to offer free yoga classes to various schools in Harrow. Two children who were selected for this have already been teaching lessons and we have received wonderful feedback from these schools. I would like children to engage with the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development (UNICEF). I would like children to be part of a campaign so that they can experience being a change-maker and that they too can make a difference in the world in their own small way. I will be working closely with our School Council and head boy/head girl to take this forward.

We are also planning to host family well-being events where everyone can come together as a school community to learn more about our school ethos and engage in kirtan and meditation together.

I am very passionate about applying findings from research to improve teaching and learning at our school and establishing a stronger culture of evidence-based inquiry and practice. This will enable all teaching teams to adapt their practice to ensure it has a real impact on pupil progress and achievement. I want to develop a culture where we recognise the teacher as a knowledgeable professional who is constantly reflecting on their practice in order to make enhancements on a day-to-day basis. This will also help us to comprehend how learning and working with others (collaboration) amplifies the impact of our research. I also believe that engaging in a stimulating critical analysis, debate and reflection will inspire and motivate teaching staff to reach their full potential.



We are a Heritage School!

Krishna Avanti Primary School Leicester has joined the Heritage Schools programme

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Delving into its heritage, Krishna Avanti Primary School has developed the local history curriculum, using the history of the school building and in particular the Faire Brothers and their impact on Evington and wider Leicestershire area. This has connected the children to their history and their potential to impact the future.

“It is really interesting to learn about our school...it is like a mansion,” said one of the children. “Someone actually lived here and that same person was the founder of the Evington memorial near Saint Deny’s Church!”



THE
VEDANTA

The perfect setting for our school retreats!



The Vedanta, formerly Branston Hall was recently acquired by the Avanti Foundation. Situated in the heart of Lincoln, The Vedanta is surrounded by rolling countryside and historic market towns and villages. This estate is cushioned by an award winning coastline with an array of walking trails to conjure one's love for exploration.

We are thrilled to be launching Avanti Quest: an immersive offering of spiritual insight and character formation where all attendees reflect, relax, connect, and grow together through a combination of outdoor activities, workshops, and small-group discussions.

From March through to July 2022, students and staff are being invited to continue their journeys of self-discovery at The Vedanta in Lincolnshire, a beautiful, purpose-built retreat centre

surrounded by 73 acres of nature and woodland. As well as providing refuge from the pressures of academic output and sometimes unhelpful stimuli associated with modern city life, the environment serves to open-up the Avanti Way like never before, and all that that means for one's physical, emotional, and spiritual potential.

Keep an eye-out for communications from your Avanti school around registrations which should be arriving in early January!



As 2021 comes to a close, we would like to wish our incredible Avanti community a wonderful Christmas and a joyful New Year! Our people are our soul and we thank you for your selfless hard-work, and sheer dedication in serving our schools through what has been a testing year! We hope you have a special and safe holiday break with your loved ones and look forward to seeing you in 2022!



Visit our website www.avanti.org.uk for more information

