

Bhaktivedanta Manor School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Bhaktivedanta Manor School is a small, independent co-educational school on the outskirts of Aldenham, near Watford, which opened in 1984. It is a Vaishnava Hindu school, which is open to all but it draws pupils mainly from the mixed ethnic community of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, around Bhaktivedanta Manor. It admits pupils from four to 11 years old and there are 41 pupils on roll. There are eight children in the Reception class (Early Years Foundation Stage); none is in receipt of government nursery funding. There are eight pupils learning English as an additional language. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The class rooms are situated in the Manor, which houses the temple. It is surrounded by extensive gardens and farmland. It is an active community that offers opportunities for study, worship and educational visits and attracts significant numbers of visitors throughout the year. The school aims to 'create a caring, personal and family-oriented school devoted to the nurture of spiritually-minded pupils who will help build ethical, prosperous and sustainable communities'. The last inspection of the school was in May 2008.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education and continues to meet its aims effectively. The quality of relationships and the focus on individuals within a strong community ensure pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour. Arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of pupils of all ages are given a high priority and are good. The school has continued to improve its provision since the time of the last inspection and now meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The school provides a good curriculum which has improved since the last inspection and continues to be developed effectively. The curriculum, including provision for children in the Reception class, is planned around a series of termly themes which take account of the mixed-aged class arrangements. These themes embrace all the required areas of learning and are regularly extended beyond the classroom with a range of high quality enrichment activities. Planning for the revised curriculum is recorded in a long-term overview but medium term planning to provide details of the

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

sequence of learning in all subjects is not complete. Children in the Reception class enjoy a stimulating learning environment in which, for example, phonics (understanding the links between sounds and letters) are used to develop children's early reading skills. The life of the temple and the faith community within which the school is based permeate all curriculum themes. Pupils embrace the fundamental values of the community which include a positive interest in life, respect and self-control, and honesty and responsibility. Literacy and numeracy activities are at the heart of pupils' daily timetables. Pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning in these subjects. Aesthetic and creative experiences are provided effectively through lessons in art, music and drama, including contributions to events within the temple. Displays on classroom walls illustrate the breadth of recent learning about the Second World War, the planets of the solar system, and world climate zones. Visits outside of the school provide stimulus and enjoyment in pupils' learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and has improved since the last inspection. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff contribute effectively to the development of pupils' confidence and their willingness to try new experiences in their learning. In the small classes, teachers have time to make sure that each pupil is engaged and active. Pupils work enthusiastically whether editing and improving their written stories, reducing fractions to their simplest form, or designing book covers and modelling the art of Kandinsky. Lessons proceed at an appropriate pace and pupils retain their concentration and commitment for sustained periods of time. In the Reception class, children gain immense enjoyment from reading 'talking books', practising their handwriting and learning through their own chosen activities. At times, there are missed opportunities to extend learning naturally from the classroom into the immediate outside area. However, excellent use is made of the wide-ranging opportunities in the grounds of the school for planned learning, for example in environmental science, for pupils of all ages. There is a satisfactory range of resources available to support learning in the classroom and the school has firm plans to increase the availability of computers and interactive whiteboards in classrooms as funds permit. All pupils experience success in their learning because teachers are very aware of their individual learning needs and provide challenging questions to encourage them to think carefully about what they are learning. At times, there is insufficient planning of alternative strategies to ensure that lower attaining individuals can manage the complexity of activities, or to challenge the most able to extend their learning into higher levels of achievement. Effective support is provided where required, particularly with the development of reading, for pupils who enter the school speaking English as an additional language.

The progress of children in the Reception class is assessed appropriately across all areas of learning and recorded in their learning journals. In Key Stages 1 and 2, National Curriculum levels are used to record pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Teachers are becoming increasingly familiar with the use of this approach to assessment and records which are now being continuously updated as pupils move through different classes and key stages. The data collected from the assessment of pupils' work across the full age range is not currently recorded in an accessible way which enables the school to evaluate whether individuals and groups of pupils are making sufficient progress over time. The

outcomes achieved by previous pupils, including their results in end-of-key-stage tests, indicate that they have made good progress. The current pupils, from a wide range of starting points, are all making at least satisfactory progress; for the majority, progress is good. Pupils are proud of the progress they are making; they can identify the levels at which they are currently working and the targets for improvement which they have agreed with their teachers.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The beliefs and values of the school permeate all aspects of its life. One of the school's published ideals emphasises 'joyful spiritual experience'. This is certainly fulfilled in the weekly assembly during which pupils, including children in the Reception class, join in worship in the temple, contributing to the music and taking an enthusiastic part in the singing. This ideal is also achieved in the ethos of the school, exemplified by the high quality of relationships between pupils and with their teachers. The school engenders a positive attitude to learning and pupils, from the youngest age upwards, enjoy attending school; their attendance is good. Their behaviour, in all age groups, is outstanding both in classrooms and around the wider school buildings and grounds.

Self-reflection is encouraged through the spiritual dimension of the faith community, through devotional art, music, dance and theatre. A number of pupils take an active part in additional spiritual studies sessions before school starts on four days a week. Pupils, in their questionnaire responses, are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the opportunities it provides. One pupil wrote: 'I love school! I feel so comfortable here. To me the whole school feels like a family'. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds develop their personal self-esteem and their respect for diversity of beliefs and cultures. They have a number of opportunities to contribute to the life of the school, the faith community and the wider community. Older pupils take on the role of prefects; they sing and perform for local elderly people at Christmas. All pupils celebrate a variety of festivals, and contribute to charitable collections; they are involved in community projects with a local school, and they welcome visiting pupils from other schools. These activities, and many more, contribute effectively to pupils' social and cultural development.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good. The safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority, including excellent arrangements for the supervision of pupils at all times in the buildings and grounds of the school. Appropriate policies are implemented consistently for the management of behaviour, to ensure that no bullying occurs, and to ensure effective commitment to child protection. Arrangements are in place for updating of child protection training for all staff and two members of staff have been trained to the appropriate level as designated persons for child protection. Procedures for fire safety include an up-to-date risk assessment and regular routine checks on fire safety equipment. Health and safety risks within the buildings and grounds are monitored effectively and any

required remedial action is implemented promptly. Risk assessments are completed for the full range of external visits undertaken as part of the curriculum. The school has a three-year accessibility plan which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

There are appropriate arrangements in place to check the suitability of staff and governors and these are implemented consistently. All the required details are recorded in an up-to-date single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is situated in the 70 acre green belt site of the Manor House which also houses the temple and shrine for the faith community. This provides great scope for well-used teaching opportunities outside the classroom, with additional immediate access to lakes, woodland, gardens and a farm. High levels of supervision ensure that pupils are safe at all times. A number of improvements have taken place since the last inspection, including a newly-refurbished classroom and a dedicated area for gardening and environmental studies. The classrooms are of appropriate size for effective learning. Since the last inspection, a fenced outdoor area has been added to the provision for children in the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. There are sufficient toilets and washrooms for pupils, staff and visitors, and access to suitable facilities for preparation and serving of meals. The premises are maintained in a good state of repair and decoration throughout.

Provision of information

The school provides, for all parents, carers and others, an appropriate prospectus which is currently being revised, together with a helpful parents' handbook. Details of all the required school policies are made available to parents and carers which is an improvement since the last inspection. Reports on pupils' progress in their learning are provided twice during each year, including a comprehensive summary of pupils' progress in each subject studied, together with suitable information about their personal development. Parents and carers have the opportunity for two consultation meetings each year to discuss their children's progress and regular newsletters are emailed to them to provide additional information about the school. Almost all the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's policy and procedures for the management of complaints meet regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Develop medium-term plans for each of the curriculum themes to show how the content and skills of each subject are developed between Years 1 and 6.
- Plan teaching activities, particularly in English and mathematics, which consistently support or challenge each individual pupil in every lesson.
- Extend the use of National Curriculum assessment data to evaluate the extent of pupils' progress over time.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Vaishnava Hindu		
Date school opened	1984		
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 13	Girls: 28	Total: 41
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,500		
Address of school	Hilfield Lane Watford WD25 8EZ		
Telephone number	01923 851000 ext 241		
Email address	bvmanorschool@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Harrison (Padma Dasi)		
Proprietor	International Society for Krishna Consciousness		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bhaktivedanta Manor School, Watford, WD25 8EZ

Thank you for your welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit very much, including the opportunity to speak with you about the school. The inspection judged that Bhaktivedanta Manor School provides you with a good quality of education. I was particularly pleased to see:

- the enthusiasm which you show for your school and your lessons
- the good progress you are making in your English and mathematics lessons
- how good the youngest children are at using the talking books
- that your questionnaires and comments show that you enjoy school, feel safe and believe you are making good progress
- the respect you show for your teachers and the way that everyone works together to make sure that you succeed
- your contribution to the music and singing in the temple and the enjoyment and pleasure which this provides for everyone
- the concentration and energy you put into your learning, for example in your painting, designing book covers, and taking an active part in physical education
- the number of visits that you make to places of interest to help you learn.

Your teachers work very hard to give you a good quality of education. I have asked them to make sure that the activities in all lessons are set at a suitable level to make sure that you understand how to do your work if you are finding it difficult, and that you have high levels of challenge when you are doing well. You can help your school to be great by continuing to work as hard as you do and by continuing to help each other to succeed.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Young
Lead inspector