

Bhaktivedanta Manor School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	919/6228
Unique Reference Number	117654
Inspection number	322257
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Sibani Raychaudhuri AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Bhaktivedanta Manor School is a small, independent co-educational school on the outskirts of Aldenham, near Watford. It is a Vaishnava Hindu school, which is open to all but it draws pupils mainly from the community of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, around Bhaktivedanta Manor. It admits pupils from four to 11 years old. There are 26 pupils on roll but currently, no one is below the age of five. There are seven pupils learning English as an additional language and no pupil has been identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. The class rooms are situated in the Manor, which houses the temple. It is surrounded by extensive gardens and farmlands. It is an active community that offers opportunities for study, worship and educational visits and attracts significant numbers of visitors throughout the year.

Evaluation of the school

Bahktivedanta Manor is a good school with outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school successfully meets its aims to encourage the achievements of pupils in gaining *'self-esteem, self-confidence and integrity within themselves through self-discipline.'* Pupils make good progress in numeracy and literacy because of good teaching. The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. It has improved since the last inspection in 2004, and is now meeting most regulations

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good with strengths in enrichment activities. It makes strong links to the Vaishnava Hindu traditions and culture, which are often used as starting points for writing and other creative activities within the framework of the National Curriculum. The curriculum takes into account national guidance and use of commercial materials, which ensure that the content of the lessons is generally appropriate for the age of pupils.

A broad range of subjects are offered and there is a good provision for learning basic skills. These include literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), which help prepare pupils well for their future lives. Literacy is used effectively across the curriculum as pupils learn to write for different purposes in history, religious studies and citizenship. Pupils are able to enjoy specialist subjects, which

include Spanish, music, art, drama, physical education (PE) and yoga. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education through assemblies, circle times and science. Citizenship programmes at Key Stage 2 effectively develop pupils' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in a society. The curriculum is enriched by many visits, visitors and a good range of activities that bring relevance to pupils' learning. The school makes good use of its surrounding gardens and farmlands for developing pupils' knowledge of the environment and its conservation.

Although the curriculum is well organised, it is not sufficiently well planned for mixed age teaching to ensure that pupils develop their skills and knowledge systematically during their two to three years in the same class.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall, and an improvement from satisfactory at the last inspection. Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally good and as a result, pupils behave very well and their attitudes to learning are good. Teachers offer pupils the opportunity to work in pairs and groups, contributing very effectively to their personal development. They generally have good subject expertise and pay attention to pupils' needs. However, work is not always sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of the more able as they often do the same task as others. Despite this, pupils make good progress because of small class sizes that offer individual attention and support to extend pupils' learning. Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively supported by teachers. Pupils make a good start in Key Stage 1 and this progress continues as they move up the school, achieving well at the end of Year 6. In the 2007 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieved well, reaching beyond the nationally expected levels. Pupils generally have good speaking and listening skills. They show strengths in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils' presentation of work is not always as good as their quality of work. Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching and their children's progress.

Assessment is satisfactory with some positive features. There is some useful information about pupils based on half-termly assessments, national tests and yearly optional tests. Although marking is not consistent, pupils get good day to day feedback from teachers who tell them how to improve their work. The school acknowledges that tracking of pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently rigorous.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This outstanding provision is a strength of the school. High priority is placed on pupils' spiritual and moral development as this lies at the heart of the school. Pupils have many opportunities for reflection and prayers at the school. Vedic devotional themes are prevalent in many lessons and pupils are encouraged to reflect on and link these to their work. Pupils understand moral issues and fairness to people very well. In citizenship, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have learnt how to make democratic decisions. This has led them to write a letter to the president of Zimbabwe, asking about the fairness of the country's election.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good. They are prepared well for their future lives as they acquire good skills in literacy and numeracy and their ability to work in teams. Pupils help in the classroom and some take on the responsibilities as monitors who look after younger pupils in the playground. They raise funds to help a child in India. Pupils develop a growing awareness of public institutions and services.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in and out of class. They understand very well right from wrong because of the school's strong code of conduct, constantly reinforced by staff. The cultural events, music, art and visits to museums and galleries promote their cultural development very well. The curriculum very effectively supports the development of pupils' respect for different cultures through learning about different religions and countries.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. A range of policies that take account of national guidance is in place. Staff know and care well for their pupils. Most staff have received first aid training. The staff are very successful in managing pupils' behaviour positively through modelling excellent manners. There have not been any instances of bullying or exclusions and pupils enjoy a high level of well-being. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through taking physical exercise, swimming, yoga and eating healthy meals that the school provides, using its organic produce from the farm. They have access to water, fruit juice and fruit at school. Staff have taken training in child protection at levels appropriate to their responsibilities. The school and the Manor carry out fire safety checks and a report from the authorities indicates that they comply with fire safety regulations.

The school has suitable plans in place to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out appropriate criminal record bureau checks for all staff that it employs, including those who have worked at the school for a long time. It maintains a single central register of staff. Procedures for appointing new staff are carefully carried out.

School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation and premises are suitable for the number of pupils on roll. The classrooms provide attractive learning environments with displays of pupils' work. There is good quality specialist accommodation for drama and a large room available for PE, yoga and music. The school has rectified the shortcomings in accommodation identified in the last inspection. There is now a new playground with opportunities for adventurous play. The playground and PE areas are clearly demarcated and

carefully supervised by staff. The school has made arrangements with the adjacent pre-school site to use its outdoor play area if the school has pupils under the age of five.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Most parents comment very positively about the school and feel that they get good information. The school supplies regular newsletters. Suitable written reports are sent to parents twice a year. There are parent-teacher consultations twice a year.

The prospectus has some omissions. It does not give names and contact numbers of the head teacher and the proprietor. It also does not make clear that parents may request particulars of the policy relating to bullying, of academic performance during the preceding year and details of staff.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear, written and fair complaints procedure. Feedback from most parents indicated that they are aware of the procedures. The procedures comply fully with regulations and specify clear time scales for the informal and formal stages of the resolution of any complaint.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of:
 - the school's address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
 - the proprietor's contact details (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request:
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying and child protection (paragraph 6(2)(h))
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k))

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve curriculum planning for mixed age classes to ensure that pupils develop skills and knowledge more systematically over time
- improve the quality of teaching further in order to challenge all pupils, especially the more able
- put in place a more rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress from Year 1 to Year 6.

School details

Name of school	Bhaktivedanta Manor School		
DCSF number	919/6228		
Unique reference number	117654		
Type of school	Vaishnava Hindu		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1995		
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 18	Total: 26
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1200		
Address of school	Dharam Marg Hilfield Lane Aldenham Watford Hertfordshire WD25 8EZ		
Telephone number	01923 851000 ext 241		
Fax number	01923 851006		
Email address	gcp108@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Harrison (Guru Carana Padma Dasi)		
Proprietor	International Society for Krishna Consciousness		
Reporting inspector	Sibani Raychaudhuri AI		
Dates of inspection	20–21 May 2008		