

Krishna-Avanti Primary School: Statutory (s48) School Report

Camrose Avenue

Harrow

HA8 6ES

Local authority: Harrow

Dates of inspection: 22.11.2010

School's unique reference number: 135171

Headteacher: Mrs Naina Parmar

Inspector's name and number: Dr Ramesh Kapadia 33918

School context

Krishna-Avanti Primary School opened in 2008 and had its first Ofsted inspection report in March 2010. It has new buildings and 114 children on roll, with slightly more boys than girls. There are four classes; the Nursery has 24 children and the others have 30 children respectively. Virtually all pupils are of British Indian background and almost 90% are at early stage of acquisition of English as an additional language. Very few pupils have a special educational need. Pupils come from a wide area around north London.

Judgement	1-4
How well does the school, through its distinctive Hindu character, meet the needs of all pupils?	2
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
How effective is the Religious Education?	2
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Y
The school meets the statutory requirement for Religious Education	Y

Meaning of Grades

Grade 1 outstanding

Grade 2 good

Grade 3 satisfactory

Grade 4 inadequate

How well does the school, through its distinctive Hindu character, meet the needs of all pupils? Good

The school's overall effectiveness was judged good in a recent Ofsted report; the school continues to meet the needs of its pupils well. The influence of the Hindu faith is evident in all aspects of the school. The curriculum is balanced and very broad. The Sanskrit language is taught, in addition to the National Curriculum subjects and religious education.

The school's documents stress the six ideals on which the school is founded: teachers make reference to the ideals in their weekly lesson plans. Many of the lively displays, based on children's work, show how these ideals influence the work of the school. For example, the preservation of the environment is featured prominently and an organic approach is taken to growing vegetables in the school's grounds. Posters show outcomes arising from visits to other faith schools, where children noticed the importance of light in various faith traditions. Pupils also studied the role and influence of the famous Indian poet, Tagore.

The school use texts from the Hindu faith to develop cross-curricular themes such as in the teaching of literacy. Original texts are used and sometimes the vocabulary introduced is quite difficult for children. Effective links are made to developing a range of skills in speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing. Achievement across the school is good, based on good teaching and attainment which is above average.

The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as was noted in a recent Ofsted report. The approach is based on the three Gunas (Sattva, Raja, Tama) and the pillars of Dharma – truthfulness, self-control, cleanliness, compassion. Pupils respond well and show outstanding behaviour during much of the day; their concentration slips occasionally when the teaching is not well matched to their needs. Hindu values are seen as central to relationships within the school. Community cohesion and tolerance are well promoted locally with secure plans to encompass a global vision. Other Indian religions such as Sikh and Jain are valued. Visits are made to other schools and communities, including Christian, Jewish, and Muslim.

The accommodation is very well suited to promote Hindu values with the school's centrepiece of a temple which is reflective, personal and meaningful for the pupils. Governors and the faith partner take an active interest in the school, with the willingness to probe critically and plan for the future. School leaders rise to the challenge in their determination to enable all pupils to flourish. As the school grows with pupils in Key Stage 2, it would be opportune to review the school curriculum to ensure comprehensive coverage of the core subjects to further raise attainment.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community? Outstanding

An act of collective worship is performed daily in the school, in line with statutory requirements. Collective worship is seen as central in the school and often led by pupils, in terms of saying a prayer and providing musical accompaniment. There is comprehensive evidence that the worship is valued by pupils, staff, governors, and parents, some of whom have made comments that they have thereby learnt more about the Hindu faith. This is evident from unsolicited emails from a number of parents, who also attend for prayers on Fridays.

Worship includes key symbolism –tilak; meditative chanting – japa; and devotional songs - kirtana. Sanskrit is not easy for pupils but they all try hard and some have learnt some of the verses well, even teaching their own parents. Regular evaluation of the worship is undertaken by staff, showing pupils' enjoyment and this process has led to some useful changes. Interviews with

pupils showed that they found the experiences in the temple to be memorable, especially remembering times when they led a prayer.

After worship there is a short period of time to read out the selected verse from the Bhagavad-Gita in Sanskrit, with children again taking part. A translation is given and the underlying meaning discussed such as the significance of rebirth and death. Teachers make reference to key elements of the chosen scriptures in other lessons, as appropriate, during the week.

The temple is near the hall where food (Prasad) is eaten. Pupils come into the temple in a respectful way and take an active part in the worship, often with a community member from the faith partner present to sound the conch. They leave quietly and some greet the headteacher individually before returning to lessons. The programme for collective worship is carefully planned using the Bhagavad-Gita and making references to the religious calendar and festivals: pupils knew that the month of Kartik had just ended. They also noticed that the previous weekend had been celebrated by the Sikh religion for the birth of Guru Nanak.

There are other opportunities during the school day for prayers, such as when partaking of food. This gives further support to the school's view of how collective worship plays a very effective role in promoting prayer and religious adherence.

How effective is religious education? Good

Religious education, which is also characterised as faith nurture, is a core subject in the school, along with English and mathematics. It is taught both as a discrete subject and in a cross-curricular way, with specific links made in lessons on literacy. There are also lessons in Sanskrit which are linked to texts in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Attainment in religious education is above average, with the majority of pupils in Year 2 already reaching Level 2 in the autumn term. All pupils are able to use some religious words and phrases, recognising links to real life, such as the eternal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Some know that rebirth can occur in different forms. Virtually all can recall the story of Krishna stealing butter as a boy, and some know his name when a child. Through visits to other schools, such as a Jewish one, they are becoming aware of similarities between religions, particularly in terms of underlying values. They recognise customs may vary but few are able to contrast and appraise the differences between religions, such as in their approach to the notion of God. They have experienced other places of worship and have made models to show a mosque or a church, applying ideas from mathematics in 3-dimensions for construction.

Teaching of religious education includes good features. Religious stories are used in English lessons to reinforce key skills such as the use of capital letters and full stops in considering a dispute between the Lords Krishna and Indra. Teachers are knowledgeable about the texts but sometimes spend too long time in whole class discussion, leaving insufficient time for individual writing. However, there are good opportunities for paired discussion.

The scheme of work has been developed internally within the school, beginning with a selected focus for each week, followed by a reference and study guide. Good links are made with themes and values from the Bhagavad-Gita with topics in each year group for each half-term. Some of the ideas are rather complex. Other faith ideas are mainly taught via festivals but the principles established in the agreed local syllabus are followed, so that statutory requirements are met.

Assessment records are kept and show that attainment in religious education is at least as high in the core subjects. Religious education makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. In particular careful links are made between the six ideals on which the school has been established and the curriculum. These include a healthy mind and

body, social and community cohesion and environmental responsibility. For example, all food is cooked with Hindu principles in mind, and a strong emphasis is placed on gardening. Community cohesion is fostered well by links with other faith communities. Overall, religious education contributes well to the distinctive Hindu character of the school. A stronger emphasis on the underlying similarities and differences between religions, as well as discussion of the meaning of the symbolism would help to raise attainment further.

Focus for development

- Develop the curriculum for Key Stage 2, paying attention to the coverage of the core subjects.
- Develop pupils' understanding of similarities and differences between religions.