

Nishkam Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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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}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Nishkam Primary is a Sikh independent day school in Handsworth, near to Birmingham city centre. It admits boys and girls aged from birth to seven years of age and there are currently 84 pupils on roll. The very large majority of children are from Indian families and were born in the United Kingdom. Nine children are at the early stages of acquiring English and no children currently have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage (Nishkam Nursery) consists of separate classes for babies, aged from birth to two years, toddlers, aged two to three years, pre-school, aged three to four years and reception aged children. There are 75 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; 40 of whom are currently in receipt of the nursery education grant. In addition there are currently nine children in Year 1. The school has two separate registrations with Ofsted. Nishkam Nursery is situated in the same refurbished Victorian building as the school and is led and managed by the same headteacher. It was registered with Ofsted in September 2009 and was inspected as an early years provision in March 2010. The overall quality of the provision was judged to be good. The primary school was opened in September 2010 and this is the school's first published report. The school provides a mix of Sikh and secular teaching and aims to 'provide spiritual development and nurture through a high standard of education and care'.

Evaluation of the school

Nishkam Primary school is highly successful in fulfilling its stated aims due to the passionate inspiration of the headteacher and staff which engenders an ethos for all children to feel valued and nurtured. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. In this family climate, children are exceptionally well cared for and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The quality of education provided is good and the behaviour of the children is outstanding.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The school meets all the requirements for registration. Safeguarding requirements are met to a high standard.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The good curriculum is carefully planned to meet the range of needs and interests of the children and takes account of National Curriculum expectations. As a result, all children including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those at an early stage of acquiring English, make good progress in their learning. The curriculum is underpinned by 24 moral and spiritual dispositions which form part of the local authority multifaith religious education syllabus. In addition, children follow courses in Sikh studies and Gurmukhi, a community language. There is good provision for physical education including swimming and regular outdoor activities in the school garden. The school's curriculum policy sets out clear objectives for learning. Personal, social and health education reflects the aims and ethos of the school and is taught through science, circle time, design, art and citizenship lessons. Schemes of work are good. They are well planned and provide clear guidance for teachers. The Sikh curriculum gives children the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their faith. The daily assembly and lunchtime prayers enable children to develop a strong sense of community. Children enjoy visits to places of interest such as the Sea Life Centre and Safari Park. The school provides a suitable range of extra curricular activities such as art and music workshops and 'paat' classes where children learn how to read from the Sikh scriptures. Children are encouraged to take on responsibilities such as monitors and helping to keep the school clean and tidy.

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment in meeting the full range of children's needs is good. The quality of teaching is good and generous adult ratios ensure that all children receive good quality care and guidance. Teachers throughout the school know all the children very well. Lesson plans are detailed and take account of different abilities. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to fully challenge those children who are more able. The school is aware that all children would benefit from fewer worksheets. In lessons, children settle quickly and are keen to learn. Classrooms are calm and purposeful learning environments and teaching is characterised by harmonious relationships. Children apply themselves well in lessons, working happily individually, in pairs or groups. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson children enjoyed recounting their school day with a partner and then sequencing the events together.

The quality of assessment is good. There are well-structured systems in place for tracking children's progress. Progress in key areas of learning such as reading, writing, mathematics and science are tracked regularly. Teachers use a standardised assessment system based on National Curriculum levels. Work seen in children's books and the latest school data indicate that children are making good progress in their learning. Children make particularly good progress in their personal

development due to the diligent care and attention they receive from adults. Work is regularly marked with positive comments and children report that they feel confident in asking for help during lessons. Homework is regularly set to consolidate basic skills. A very few parents and carers indicated through the questionnaire that they did not feel the school sets appropriate homework. The school is considering this issue.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents and carers typically comment, 'My child feels very at home at this school and very happy.' Children also report that 'school is like being at home with your family'. Personal development is a strength because the headteacher and staff successfully nurture the abilities of each child through praise and high quality care. Staff provide good role models for Sikh life. The spiritual and moral well-being of each individual child is at the heart of the school's ethos and a high priority for all staff. The school is beginning to track children's spiritual and moral development through the 24 dispositions. For example, information is gathered on their creativity, compassion, ability to make choices, contribution to the community, commitment and their ability to reflect on their work. Children enjoy coming to school, as shown by the above average rates of attendance and their outstanding behaviour. They do not recall there being any instances of poor behaviour or bullying at the school. Children have good manners, they are polite and respectful. This contributes positively to a strong understanding of right and wrong. Children have opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility as they are encouraged to look after their own belongings and tidy away after practical activities as well as undertaking small jobs around the school. There are regular opportunities for the children to perform at the Gurdwara, such as singing the Grace Prayer at a recent award ceremony. The religious education curriculum provides opportunities for children to visit non-Sikh local places of worship and learn about different faiths and cultures. The good personal, social and health education curriculum provides regular opportunities for children to learn about being a good citizen. Children make good progress in their learning and this contributes positively to their future economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for children's welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school provides a very calm, well ordered and safe environment. Small class sizes and good staffing levels mean that children are very well supervised at all times. Staff recruitment procedures follow national guidance and the required checks are systematically recorded. Very good attention is given to health and safety through regular fire evacuations, risk assessments and checks on equipment and resources used by the children. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and two senior members of staff have attended the higher level training for child protection. There are a good number of staff trained in first aid, including the requirements for young

children. Children demonstrate a keen awareness of keeping themselves safe, such as using the stairs sensibly. They report that they feel very safe in school and staff will always listen to their concerns. Parents and carers too report that the school keeps their children very safe. Healthy break time snacks of fruit, nutritious cooked meals at lunchtime and regular opportunities for outdoor exercise all contribute to children's excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. The school has recently achieved the local authority Healthy Settings Award. The school has sensible plans in place to improve accessibility and Disability Discrimination Act requirements are met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school fully complies with the regulations in respect of the checks made on prospective employees and volunteers, including Criminal Records Bureau checks on their suitability to work with children. The details of these checks are accurately recorded in the required single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is located in a two storey recently refurbished large Victorian townhouse. The internal decoration has been completed to a high standard and in keeping with the listed status of the building. The building is well maintained, clean and attractively decorated providing a calm and pleasant environment in which to learn. Classrooms are spacious, with high ceilings and good quality floor coverings. The outside play area is safe and provides a reasonably sized paved surface, grassed area and covered area for outdoor play and physical education. The Early Years Foundation Stage shares the same outdoor space and time is sensibly allocated for each class.

Provision of information

The school has established very good links with parents and carers. They are kept well informed about their child's progress through termly meetings and informal discussions. As the school only opened in September 2010 parents and carers have not yet received a full end of year report, although the school has a suitable framework in place. Parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive termly reports outlining progress in the six key areas of learning.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure in place which meets requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the requirements of the Early Years Register for the under-3s are met. Children join the pre-school class with skills that are broadly in line with developmental expectations for this age. Outcomes are good and children make good progress, particularly in developing their personal and social skills. Children are encouraged to develop their independence from an early age. For example, during snack time even the youngest children were encouraged to feed themselves. Good attention is given to promoting keeping healthy and hygiene routines are well established. All the classrooms are welcoming learning environments. They are well resourced and organised so that children have easy access to toys and play equipment. Routines are well established and behaviour is excellent. Children have access to trikes and ball games in the outdoor area but opportunities are missed to fully extend learning opportunities in early reading, writing and mathematical skills using the outdoor area. Staff are adept at keeping useful notes on children's progress as they move through the school and they use this information to plan a range of interesting activities. For example, children in the reception class particularly enjoyed using their knowledge of symmetry to find the total number of spots on a ladybird. Learning Journey logs are well maintained and include regular photographic evidence for key areas of learning. The quality of teaching is good and staff work closely with parents and carers getting to know the children very well. Good leadership and management ensure that there is close teamwork between all adults.

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:

- provide greater challenge for those children who are more able
- widen the range of planned learning opportunities using the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Faith Day School		
Date school opened	September 2010		
Age range of pupils	0–7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 17	Girls: 28	Total: 45
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 21	Girls: 18	Total: 39
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 12	Girls: 20	Total: 32
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)	£780		
Annual fees (childcare)	£6720		
Address of school	1-7 Soho Road, Birmingham B21 9SN		
Telephone number	0121 515 3665		
Email address	info@nishkamnursery.org		
Headteacher	Kulwant Singh		
Proprietor	Kulwant Singh		