

# Inspection of Gurukula - The Hare Krishna Primary School

Hartspring Cottage, Elton Way, Watford, Herts, Hertfordshire WD25 8HB

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Inspection dates: 22 to 24 March 2022

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy being part of this welcoming, inclusive and friendly school. They are enthusiastic when speaking about their learning and rightly proud of their work. Music, with opportunities to sing and perform are popular features of their day-to-day experience.

Kindness is at the heart of school values. This is reflected in pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around the school. They play and eat sociably together at break and lunchtimes. They feel safe in school. If they have a concern, they know they can speak out through their 'Network Hands' adult and the 'voice boxes' in classrooms. Bullying is extremely rare. Children in the early years are helped to settle in quickly as they become familiar with expected routines.

In all classes, pupils enjoy and listen carefully to the stories teachers read to them at the end of every school day. They get excited about school visits to interesting places, which help them to learn about new ideas. The range of after-school clubs are well attended. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of individual differences. They are taught about the importance of positive relationships from the outset. Consequently, Gurukula is a calm and purposeful place to learn.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders are ambitious for pupils in the school. Improvement actions have ensured that all the independent school standards are now met. The redesigned curriculum offers a broader range of subjects. Additions to pupils' learning include regular lessons in music, language studies and history. Subject leaders have thought carefully about how learning can be delivered successfully to meet pupils' different needs in the mixed-age classes. These leaders work closely with other teachers to help them to improve their knowledge in unfamiliar subjects.

The curriculum sets out the important information that pupils need to know and remember from the early years through to the end of Year 6. In many subjects, for example, in mathematics, history and science, the curriculum content is carefully sequenced so that it is taught in the most logical order. Pupils build new knowledge on secure foundations. In a few subjects, such as design and technology and geography, leaders' intent is not yet as well defined and implemented as it is in other subjects.

Ensuring that every pupil reads fluently is a high priority. In the early years, children confidently link letters to sounds and so they learn to read quickly. Older pupils read regularly and enjoy speaking about the characters in their books. Making sure that all pupils know and remember important subject-specific vocabulary is a key focus in every lesson.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same curriculum as other pupils and learn effectively. The special educational needs coordinator

(SENCo) helps teachers to make effective changes to the curriculum to meet pupils' individual learning needs. Additional specialist support, including counselling and play therapy, is available in school.

Teachers make regular checks in most subjects to make sure pupils remember the things they have learned, for example, using mind maps and 'flashback' questions. This is so that any misconceptions and gaps in learning are picked up and addressed quickly.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and outdoors is good. Relationships are respectful and positive. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. New pupils of different faiths and backgrounds rapidly become part of the whole-school community. In the early years, most children settle in quickly to expected routines and are responsive to teachers' high expectations. While bullying is exceptionally rare, pupils are looking forward to taking on the new roles as anti-bullying ambassadors.

Leaders ensure that pupils' positive behaviour, respectful relationships and acts of kindness are widely celebrated. Pupils say, 'We want to be kind to each other because we know that unkind words can last for a long time.' Most pupils attend regularly and are punctual to school. They are confident learners.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to discuss ideas and show respect for different points of view. They can explain clearly how the school's values link to British values, such as democracy and individual liberty. While effective overall, leaders are acting to ensure pupils revisit important content linked to relationships education in an age-appropriate way as pupils move through each year group. This is so that pupils are even better prepared for secondary education by the end of Year 6.

The reformed governance and trust team are skilled and experienced. They use their training well to ensure that they offer the right level of challenge and support to school leaders. Consequently, the quality of education has improved significantly since the previous full standard inspection in 2018. Staff say leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

All the parents who responded to Ofsted's survey during the inspection said they would recommend the school to others.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders and governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They make sure that all staff are suitably trained to spot any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. All the required pre-employment checks on new staff are completed. The safeguarding policy is up to date and made available to parents.

Pupils feel safe in school. They trust teachers to help them if they have a problem. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils to understand online risks and learn how to keep safe in different situations, including through talks from visitors such as the police.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- While the quality of education is good overall, the implementation of curriculum changes in a few subjects is still evolving. In these subjects, leaders do not always know how effectively pupils are learning. The detail of curriculum content and associated assessment is not consistently well-defined. This means that teachers do not have the precise information they need to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they complete the final stages of their planned curriculum development quickly so that pupils achieve as well in these subjects as they do in others.
- The PSHE programme plans do not identify clearly enough how pupils' understanding of healthy relationships and individual differences will develop over time. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared in this aspect as they could be to move schools at the end of Year 6. Leaders should expedite action to ensure that important content is revisited systematically, in an age-appropriate way, as pupils move through year groups, so they are consistently well-prepared to move into secondary education.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117654
<b>DfE registration number</b>	919/6228
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10210109
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Gurukula Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mohan Luthra
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gwyneth Milan
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£3,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 851005
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://gurukula.org.uk">gurukula.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@bvmschool.co.uk">admin@bvmschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 to 27 September 2018

## Information about this school

- The school is registered as a school with a religious character and a Hindu ethos.
- The school is registered to admit up to 60 pupils. There are 57 pupils currently on roll aged between 4 and 11 years.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is very low.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The headteacher took up the permanent post in September 2020, having previously held the interim headteacher post from February the same year.
- Since the monitoring inspection in September 2019, there has been a change of proprietor. The school's location, which at that point was temporary, is now the school's permanent site.
- Ofsted has conducted nine inspections and an evaluation of four action plans. These are:
  - 27 to 30 September 2004, a standard inspection when the school was judged to be broadly meeting its objectives.
  - 20 and 21 May 2008, a standard inspection when the school was judged to be good and the independent school standards were met.
  - 28 and 29 February 2012, a standard inspection when the school was judged to be good and the independent school standards were met.
  - 13 to 15 September 2016, a standard inspection when the school was judged to require improvement and was found not to meet all of the independent school standards.
  - 13 December 2016, when an action plan was evaluated and found to be acceptable.
  - 15 March 2017, an additional inspection when the school was found not to meet all of the independent school standards.
  - 24 July 2017, when an action plan was evaluated and found to be acceptable.
  - 11 January 2018, an additional inspection when the school was found to meet all of the independent school standards.
  - 25 to 27 September 2018, a standard inspection when the school was judged to be inadequate and not all of the independent school standards were met.
  - 9 January 2019, when an action plan was evaluated and found not to be acceptable.
  - 20 May 2019, an additional inspection when the school was found not to meet all of the independent school standards.
  - 19 September 2019, an additional monitoring inspection when the school was found not to meet all the independent school standards.
  - 20 January 2020, when an action plan was evaluated and found not to be acceptable.

- In March 2016, Ofsted conducted a material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). This was to consider the proprietor's request to increase the number of registered pupils from 30 to 60 because, for the past four years, the school had admitted almost twice the number of pupils that it was permitted to admit. At the time of that inspection, the school was found to be unlikely to meet the independent school standards relating to health and safety, the recording of sanctions and the suitability of staff and proprietors.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- This full standard inspection included a progress monitoring inspection. This was the third progress monitoring inspection since the school's full standard inspection in September 2018.
- Meetings were held with the proprietors, governors, the headteacher, class teachers, the school's SENCo and other school staff.
- Inspectors checked school policies and a range of other documents, including fire and health and safety checks, risk assessments, complaints records, pupils' safeguarding records and the pre-employment checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Inspectors carried out an in-depth review of the following subjects: early reading mathematics, science and history. They visited lessons and held meetings with subject leaders and teachers to discuss curriculum plans. Inspectors looked at pupils' books and met with them to discuss their experiences in school.
- The 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for school staff and 54 Ofsted Parent View responses were looked at, along with the 47 free-text comments which parents submitted. The lead inspector spoke informally with seven parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors also considered 17 responses to the questionnaire for pupils. They also gathered the views of staff and pupils in meetings and informal conversations around the school.

## **Inspection team**

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Varney

Her Majesty's Inspector



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