

Inspection of Gurukula – The Hare Krishna Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their close-knit community. They value opportunities to deepen their faith. Pupils enjoy leading worship, visiting the temple and joining in with daily singing. They apply religious teachings and make the right behaviour choices. Pupils are taught about other religions and cultures, so also have a sound grasp of wider society.

Pupils are expected to work hard academically. They enjoy the variety of subjects they learn about. Pupils study a curriculum that prepares them well for life in modern Britain, while also knowing the traditions of their beliefs, such as studying Sanskrit.

Most pupils achieve well by the time they leave for secondary school. Children in the early years settle in quickly and are well cared for by a dedicated team. However, some children in early years are not making as much progress from their starting points as they should.

Pupils take an active part in school life, such as through elections to the school council. Some produce a pupil newsletter. Others are reading ambassadors. Pupils perform at festivals, go on a range of educational visits and take part in clubs, such as yoga, crochet and sports.

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

The school focuses effectively on the spiritual development of pupils, while ensuring that their academic education remains at the fore. Pupils use their deep-rooted religious beliefs to develop perseverance, empathy and respect. The school successfully ensures that pupils have a global outlook. They have many opportunities to study other religions, lifestyles and beliefs that are different to their own.

Pupils access an ambitious, rounded and overall well-thought-out curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can recall what they have learned. Staff do pick up and address misconceptions. They make checks on pupils' learning to ensure knowledge has been secured in pupils' long-term memory. Older pupils are especially adept at making links between topics to show a detailed understanding of key information.

In some instances, these checks on learning are not informing precisely what teachers plan to teach next. This means some pupils are provided with work that is not extending their understanding further. Some staff are still developing their proficiency in how to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils who are ready to learn more. For pupils with SEND, work is more closely matched to needs. Coupled with accurate support plans, pupils with SEND achieve well and meet their specific targets.

Reading is a strength in the school. Pupils read daily and access texts that are rich in vocabulary and diverse in style. From early years upwards, pupils follow a systematic reading programme that develops their reading fluency. Most pupils read well for their age, with books matched to their ability. Any pupils who need extra help to catch up receive this in a timely manner.

Since the last inspection, the school has ensured that, in all subjects, it has identified the most important knowledge pupils need to know and when. However, this is not sufficiently the case with the early years curriculum. This means that children in early years are not getting opportunities to engage in activities that build on their prior learning well enough. Children do rehearse their current learning through role play, dance, art and drama, for example. However, these opportunities are not sufficient or ambitious enough to ensure the in-depth learning that the children are capable of.

There are seldom instances of unwelcome behaviour. Older pupils show exemplary conduct. Where pupils may become restless or chatty, staff deal with this quickly and effectively. Pupils do not worry about bullying, as it is rare. If it does happen, it is addressed. Most pupils attend school regularly. If this is not the case, the school takes swift action to support pupils' return to school.

Through personal, health, social and economic lessons, worship and circle time discussions, pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of diversity and difference. Pupils benefit from visits a variety of places of worship to gain a better awareness of other faiths. They accept the choices of others without prejudice. Pupils also know that discrimination is wrong and can explain this in discussion about their own life experiences. They learn about healthy relationships and how to avoid unsafe situations. They are well prepared for their teenage years.

The proprietor body and governors have the necessary skills and expertise to oversee the school's work effectively. They provide appropriate challenge and support to the school. The proprietor body and chair of the governing body ensure that all the independent school standards are met, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The building is well maintained and spacious. It is fit for purpose, with a range of facilities to support pupils' education. Classrooms are appropriately resourced. Effective risk assessments are in place to ensure health and safety requirements are met.

The proprietor body and governors are mindful of the pressures that are involved in running a small school. Staff do appreciate the care the school takes for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school ensures that pupils are kept safe. All staff have the necessary training to identify and report concerns about pupils' well-being. The school acts upon any

concerns quickly and seeks advice from the relevant agencies. The school also uses information about pupils' behaviour and attendance to support them in assessing potential risks to any vulnerable pupils. However, the way that this information is organised means that leaders' follow-up of concerns is not recorded as effectively as it could be to ensure rigorous oversight.

The school teaches pupils how to identify trusted adults through its use of 'network hands'. It also ensures that pupils learn to identify inappropriate behaviours by other people and how to avoid risky situations. Visits to the school by the police provide pupils with further information on how to stay safe online and when out in the local area. Most pupils can recall this advice. However, some younger pupils are less secure in their understanding of online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The early years curriculum does not clearly outline how children's knowledge builds over time. This limits how well children achieve as learning activities do not build securely on prior learning. The school should ensure that the early years curriculum identifies the key knowledge children should know and by when.
- The school does not routinely use checks on what pupils know to inform next steps in their learning. This means that some pupils are not having their knowledge extended when they are capable of this. The school should ensure that staff have the pedagogical knowledge to adapt learning activities to specifically meet the needs of pupils who are ready to learn more.
- The school's record-keeping systems for safeguarding are not fully robust. While this does not put any pupils at risk of harm, it would strengthen safeguarding oversight if follow-up to concerns were recorded more systematically.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	117654
DfE registration number	919/6228
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10342007
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Proprietor	The Gurukula Trust
Chair	Mohan Luthra
Headteacher	Gwyneth Milan (also known as Gunacuda Dasi)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,900
Telephone number	01923 851005
Website	gurukula.org.uk
Email address	admin@bvmschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 to 24 March 2022

Information about this school

- The school is registered as a school with a religious character and a Hindu ethos.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been no additional Ofsted visits since that last standard inspection in March 2022.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator, subject leaders, teaching staff and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with staff.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body, trustees and members of the governing body.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors spoke to the headteacher and proprietor, members of the governing board, staff and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons, observed social times and had a tour the school site.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governing body minutes. The lead inspector also reviewed a range of school policies.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted Parent View and spoke to a selection of parents and carers at the school gate. Inspectors also reviewed the staff survey and spoke to several pupils across all year groups.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Dawes

Ofsted Inspector

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