

Guru Nanak Sikh Voluntary Aided Secondary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131928
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	293890
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Whittaker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	564
6th form	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sant Baba Amar Singh Ji
Headteacher	Rajinder Singh Sandhu
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Springfield Road Hayes UB4 0LT
Telephone number	020 8573 6085
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Guru Nanak Secondary School is an oversubscribed school in a mixed socio-economic location drawing students from a wide area. It was incorporated into the state system in 1999 as a voluntary aided school. It is the only Sikh secondary school in the United Kingdom. Almost all students are from families with Indian heritage. Almost 100% of students have English as an additional language and speak Punjabi at home. The percentage of students on Free School Meals is below the average. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities or who have a statement of special need is well below national average. The number of students in the sixth form is much smaller than the national average but numbers are increasing considerably. The school has recently achieved specialist business and enterprise status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

One parent said of the school 'I am pleased that my children are a part of this school as they have made excellent progress both academically and spiritually'. This is an outstanding school, which not only enables students to reach exceptionally high academic standards but also to develop into mature, well-rounded young people prepared for the next stage of their education and life. Central to this is the strong sense of community and the excellent relationships amongst staff and students that contribute to their achievement and enjoyment of school. Students involve themselves enthusiastically in the life of the school and this results in them taking a pride in their school and being keen to do well.

Standards are significantly above average in all year groups. Throughout their time at Guru Nanak, students make outstanding progress and their results in public examinations at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 are significantly above average. Consistently outstanding teaching and the students' excellent attitudes are significant factors in explaining the high academic standards. Lessons contain interesting and challenging activities to which students respond well. However, in a very few lessons students' independent learning skills are less developed, which restricts them from making even better progress. Systems for tracking and monitoring students' academic progress and subsequent support are very strong.

The curriculum is outstanding at Key Stage 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. The school continues to strive to ensure that the courses offered meet the needs of all students. Business and Enterprise college status is beginning to have a strong impact across the school. Curriculum provision has been broadened, and there has been substantial support for community partners. The school is aware of the need to use their specialist status to drive improvements in teaching and learning across the school and is already supporting departments in introducing enterprise strands to their schemes of work. There is a wealth of extra-curricular and enrichment activities for the students and the majority of them get involved.

Students feel very well cared for and are treated as individuals. Teachers know the students exceptionally well and there is a wide range of support systems in place. Students particularly appreciate their opinions being sought through forums such as the school council.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. Staff are committed to getting the best from the students and team work is a key strength amongst all managers and teachers. The headteacher and school leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have made many improvements since the last inspection. For instance the school has significantly improved the planning and monitoring arrangements across the school. The school is exceptionally well placed to make further improvement. Guru Nanak School enjoys an excellent reputation in the local community and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent with two children at the school sums up the sentiments of very many who wrote to the inspection team when she says 'The excellent progress our children are making shows they are both receiving an excellent education.'

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The quality of provision in the sixth form is outstanding and has improved since the last inspection. Standards are significantly above national averages and achievement is outstanding. Teaching and learning are improving and are now outstanding. Teachers have very good subject

knowledge and expertise with the best lessons characterised by clear objectives, a brisk pace and challenging activities. Opportunities for independent learning are well-developed and the quality of care is excellent. As one student commented, 'the teachers know my needs and they know me as a person.' Personal development is outstanding and students demonstrate exemplary attitudes, behaviour and maturity in lessons. They communicate very effectively and there are outstanding relationships built on a strong sense of mutual respect between staff and students. Effective monitoring ensures students are clear about their targets and how they can improve. Regular reporting enables very effective communication between the school and home.

The curriculum in the sixth form is outstanding. The school, aware of the need to further broaden and diversify the choices available, has introduced a range of additional options. This has resulted in present Year 11 students being able to choose new courses such as BTEC sport studies. A full range of opportunities are provided for involvement in the community and many students work in the lower school, for example, as classroom support or as mentors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students start Guru Nanak School with standards that are in line with national average. They make outstanding progress throughout Key Stage 3 and achieve significantly above average results in the national tests at the end of Year 9. In particular, students achieved exceptionally high standards in mathematics and English with a very high proportion achieving the highest levels in their examinations.

Throughout Key Stage 4 students continue to make outstanding progress and by the end of Year 11 consistently reach very high standards. In 2007, 100% of students achieved 5 or more A* - C grade GCSE passes. These results are significantly above the national and local average. Ensuring all students make maximum progress has been made a high priority by the school. In particular, careful monitoring of any underachieving students leads to effective targeted support. Inspection evidence shows that currently students in Years 10 and 11 are all making outstanding progress.

Focused support for the very small number of students with statements of special needs, behaviour and moderate learning difficulties means that these students achieve as well as others in the school.

The excellent progress is consistent throughout the whole school. In the sixth form students attain outstanding standards. In 2007 the GCE A-level pass rate was over 97% with 40.4% of all examinations taken passed at grade A or B.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are excellent in the main school and in the sixth form. Students value education and want to succeed. They thoroughly enjoy school and all it has to offer and this is reflected in their very good and much improved attendance rates.

Attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. Students are articulate, confident and show courtesy towards each other and to the adults around them. They describe the school community as being like a family and feel very proud of belonging to it. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent throughout the school. Students are reflective and thoughtful and show an excellent understanding of both Sikhism and other religions. Those who belong to faiths other than Sikhism say that they feel fully included in every aspect of school life. As one student commented, 'I didn't join a faith school. I became a member of a family.' Assemblies, led by students, are joyful occasions with excellent opportunities for them to explore their faith and reflect upon a wide range of issues. Students show an outstanding awareness of what it means to be a citizen of the United Kingdom in the 21st century. They feel safe, happy and secure in school. They know the importance of healthy living and the need to work safely. They engage enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities and competitive sport. The school council is effective in promoting students' rights and responsibilities. A wide range of responsibilities, such as the sixth form 'buddy' system enables students to become independent and self-motivated young people. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Exemplary behaviour and a thirst for learning make a significant contribution to the outstanding teaching and learning. Strong relationships between teachers and students create the right conditions for learning. Students are not afraid to make mistakes because they know that teachers will help them to refine their ideas and, hence, correct their thinking. Meticulous planning ensures work is exceptionally well pitched to students' needs and provides a high level of challenge. As one student said: 'work is never easy but nor is it so hard that we can't do it.' Learning objectives are clearly identified so students and teachers are clear about the purpose of the lesson. In most lessons, good use is made of interactive whiteboards. Occasionally, lessons are a little too directed by teachers with limited opportunities for students to work on their own or in groups. In the best lessons, students are very actively engaged through tasks that are exciting and enable them to be adventurous and creative in their thinking. Work is well marked but written comments do not always provide enough pointers for improvement. However, teachers willingly give of their time to help students understand difficult ideas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is exceptionally well tailored to the aspirations and interests of students and their families. Provision for subjects such as science and mathematics is strong and very well balanced by a wide range of creative subjects. The English curriculum takes very good account of the students' needs as learners of English as an additional language. The recently acquired business and enterprise specialism is already making a very positive impact. Most subjects have incorporated business and enterprise strands very well into their programmes of study. A dynamic programme for personal and social education and citizenship gives students opportunities to engage in lively discussions about modern day issues. This and the wider

curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, are particularly successful in providing a full range of first hand experiences. These enable students to learn about their own faith and cultural heritage whilst at the same time exploring what it is to be British. Students relish the opportunity to examine migration in geography where their personal and collective family knowledge provide an excellent starting point.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides an outstanding caring and supportive environment in which students can flourish as both individuals and as part of the community. This is a school where every child really does matter. Child protection procedures are robust, thorough and fully comply with legal requirements. There are very good procedures in place to ensure the smooth transfer of students from their primary schools. Careers advice is effective and enables students to make informed choices about their future education or employment. Procedures for promoting good attendance are thorough and effective.

Academic guidance is excellent. There are highly effective strategies to support students who are not achieving well enough both in the main school and in the sixth form. The school works very closely with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that students receive excellent levels of support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Guru Nanak School is exceptionally well led by the dedicated headteacher and leadership team. All staff have a shared commitment to high academic standards and the promotion of students' personal development. They particularly appreciate the opportunities to be consulted and involved in any changes that are put in place.

Rigorous and robust systems are in place to monitor the work of the school including the quality of teaching and learning, leading to a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development by school leaders. This has led to significant improvements since the last inspection. In addition, actions are always accompanied by measurable success criteria that allow senior leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of any changes over time.

This is an inclusive school and a variety of well-established systems exist to support all students. Links with the community are outstanding and specialist school status is well led and beginning to have a positive impact on the school. Professional development activities are increasingly effective in developing the capacity of all staff. In particular, this has improved the quality of work of middle leaders who now play a pivotal role in developing and evaluating provision including teaching and learning and the monitoring of students' progress.

The governing body knows the school very well and provides the headteacher with excellent support whilst offering suitable challenge.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

02 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Guru Nanak Sikh Voluntary Aided Secondary School, Hayes, UB4 0LT

Following our visit to Guru Nanak School we would like to share our findings with you. We thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for the helpful way you talked to us about your school and your work. We are pleased that you enjoy school and the many opportunities it provides, particularly the after-school activities. We are equally pleased that you are very respectful to staff and other students. Standards in national tests and examinations are significantly above national average. Progress continues to improve and is now outstanding. We can now report to you that the Guru Nanak School is providing you with an outstanding standard of education.

The school is a very happy and friendly community where everyone is valued equally. Your teachers are very committed to helping you and they look after you exceptionally well. Your headteacher is working very hard, with the rest of the staff, to give you even more opportunities to learn as well as you can.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to focus on planning lessons, which provide more opportunities for you to develop independent learning skills.

We wish you all the best for your future success.

Roger Whittaker

Lead Inspector