

Nishkam School West London

390 London Road, Isleworth, London TW7 5AJ

Inspection date	3 July 2017
Previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
This inspection	1

Faith Education	Good 2
Collective Worship	Outstanding 1
Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development	Outstanding 1
Leadership, Management and Governance	Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

The overall distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Sikh multi-faith ethos school

are outstanding

- Leaders, governors and the Trust are united behind an ambitious vision for the school which places excellent academic success alongside developing responsible citizens who put others first.
- As a result, the school's ethos leads to its pupils' excellent academic achievement which is matched by their outstanding personal development.
- The values that the school promotes are evident in every aspect of its work so that pupils of all backgrounds and beliefs understand their shared responsibility to each other and the wider community.
- Pupils acknowledge that their excellent behaviour results from living out the values that the school promotes. They say that, 'in every value there is a kind of respect. Each respect has its own meaning and each meaning has a power'.
- Faith education unites the promotion and nurture of faith with the study of religion and belief so that pupils develop levels of understanding of the nature of faith that are much higher than might be expected nationally.
- Collective worship is a central element of school life. It is inclusive, values all faiths and affirms all who attend so that they develop a deep respect for worship and prayer.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional so that the school is a peaceful and harmonious learning community where individuals matter.
- Leaders, governors and the Trust have a well-developed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development so they are well-prepared for the school's ongoing expansion.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in a process intended to complement an Ofsted inspection by reviewing those elements of the school's work that define its faith-school character. This inspection was carried out by two independent and experienced inspectors to a framework developed by the Nishkam Schools Trust.

Inspection team

John Viner

Lead inspector

Tajinder Kaur Jagdev

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nishkam School West London opened in September 2013 as a two-form entry Free School, which is a part of the multi-academy trust of schools known as the Nishkam School Trust.
- It is a Sikh multi-faith school, currently housed in converted commercial premises in Isleworth. A new school building is being constructed elsewhere in the borough.
- Currently the school has 246 pupils in Years R, 1, 2, 3 and 4. Although the school has a policy of open-enrolment, the majority of pupils on roll are from Sikh backgrounds, with an above average proportion who speak English as an additional language. There is a lower-than-average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium or with special educational needs.
- While the majority of the school are of Sikh heritage, around a third of pupils are from *Amritdhari* (formally initiated) or *Sahajdhari* (non-initiated) Sikh families.
- Currently, pupils are drawn from Sikh, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and secular traditions.
- Pupils make excellent progress from the time they join the school and the academic standards they attain are well above national averages.
- The school was judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in September 2016.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that, when planning work in faith education, teachers' assessments enable them to recognise pupils' high levels of spiritual awareness and their deep understanding of faith and belief in order to stretch those who are older or more able
- Develop marking and assessment systems that more accurately reflect pupils' understanding of and learning from religion, focusing on the accuracy and precision of their learning and promoting their deeper levels of thinking.
- Develop further ways in which pupils can make a direct contribution to collective worship.
- Secure the quality of teaching and leadership of Faith Education so that there is capacity for sustaining high standards as the school grows.

Inspection judgements

Provision of Faith Education is good

- Faith Education unites the promotion and nurture of faith with the study of religion and belief and pupils develop levels of understanding of the nature of faith that are much higher than might be expected nationally. They have a very good understanding of the Sikh *Dharm* (spiritual tradition) and a broad range of other religious beliefs in a multi-faith context.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils are frequently inspired by their learning and make good connections between the key faiths they study and recognise both differences and similarities. As a result, pupils could reflect on the similarities between six faiths but knew that, while the key figures generally pointed people to God, the Buddha pointed his followers to their own condition.
- There is a strong link between the focus on the school's values and faith lessons and, although this means that the values are reinforced, this is sometimes at the cost of precision and accuracy in learning about religion.
- As pupils move through the school older pupils are less inspired by faith education than younger pupils. This is because the work that is set for them does not always engage them or challenge them at a deep enough level.
- Consequently, although pupils' knowledge of key faiths is beyond that of similar pupils nationally, their higher spiritual starting points are not always recognised or taken fully into consideration in planning. Neither do they receive feedback to their written work that deepens their thinking. Thus, although they have a good knowledge of key faiths as well as the Nishkam values, older pupils do not always have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge or broaden their key skills of evaluation, reflection and analysis.
- The programme of study has so far met the needs of the school and has secured high standards, relative to national expectations. However, while there are good systems in place for measuring pupils' progress in faith development, assessment of their academic study of religions and belief does not sufficiently indicate their achievement in relation to their age.
- As a result, teachers do not always have enough information to know how to further develop their knowledge. Nevertheless, as the school grows and there are increasing numbers of older pupils, the school is preparing to introduce a new Trust syllabus that, with the appropriate training and support, will further raise standards and strengthen pupils' knowledge.
- While Faith Education is taught by a specialist teacher, class teachers have recently begun to take joint responsibility so that they develop their own subject expertise. Associate teachers (teaching assistants) are well-trained and make a strong contribution to the effectiveness of faith teaching.
- Faith education is strongly led and leaders have a realistic appreciation of its strengths and areas to improve. This is building capacity that will develop as the school grows.

The quality of collective worship is outstanding

- Collective worship is a central aspect of every day school life. and all members of the school community understand its importance in the corporate life of the school and its commitment to *Man Neeva Mat Uchi* (be humble and be wise).
- Because it is rooted in the Nishkam values, worship is a time when pupils of all religions and none come together to share their common identity and respond positively to the values which the school promotes.
- Worship gives pupils a genuine experience of celebrating faith, where they learn about the traditions and practices of key world faiths. Pupils agree that, in doing so, they deepen and strengthen their own individual experiences of faith.
- Pupils sing the Nishkam Song, 'God is One', tunefully and enthusiastically, knowing that this is a regular reminder of the equality of faiths and the reverence in which each is to be held. This enthusiasm reflects the excellent attitudes of respect and reverence that pupils bring to worship.
- There are many good opportunities for pupils to contribute to worship through asking questions, contributing their thoughts and acting in role play. This helps them to respond to the values that the school promotes. However, these occasions are limited and pupils have little opportunity to lead aspects of worship themselves.
- The whole school community takes part in worship and, because it is inclusive and inspirational, they are engaged and affirmed by it. The use of prayers from different religious traditions is a key strength, confirming to pupils the importance of prayer as a common feature of faith and helping them to appreciate its nature and purpose.
- While they do not regularly lead prayers in acts of worship, pupils lead daily prayers in class and often write their own prayers. Their positive attitudes to prayer and reflection are evident in the end-of-day reflection times, held in each class. Pupils take time to reflect on the experiences of the day, to review how and when they have demonstrated the school's key values, and respond seriously and thoughtfully.
- The excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the many spiritual aspects of worship ensures that they set down important foundations for their lives so they will be able to draw on their experience of worship as they develop autonomy in their own responses to faith and belief.

The quality of the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**is outstanding**

- Through the excellent promotion of the Nishkam values, pupils develop a shared sense of the spiritual dimension of life and seek to deepen their understanding of the nature and destiny of humankind. They not only learn the core values that the school promotes but understand that these are a foundation for their lives and a source of strength which they will be able to draw on as they get older. These values underpin the life of the school and are evident in every aspect of its work. They inspire the excellent, warm and trusting relationships between and among adults and pupils so that this is a harmonious learning community where individuals matter.
- The introduction of the Nishkam Values Passports enables pupils not only to reflect on their demonstration of the core values that the school promotes but to take responsibility for deepening their own understanding of the values and how they are shown in practice. Pupils are delighted with these passports, treat them carefully and use them both for writing notes and as a source of information about each value. They proudly produce their passports to illustrate a point or show their own progress and growing awareness of the way that the values have an impact on their behaviour and their lives.
- There are clear links between the school's values and pupils' excellent attitudes. Pupils say that, 'we think about what we like and what values we have and how we can use them in the future. That's how we decide our ambitions'.
- Pupils' moral understanding is highly developed so that they are able to listen sensitively to others, even when they disagree with them. They know how conflict can be resolved justly and fairly. As a result, they behave impeccably and demonstrate care towards each other so that insults and bullying are extremely rare.
- There are excellent systems to support pupils' behaviour and give them opportunities to reflect on times when they have fallen short of the school's very high expectations, Pupils say that, 'if you do something really naughty, you go to reflection' and that this helps them to change their behaviour.
- Parents say that the school has 'a beautiful atmosphere' and that they have no doubts about sending their children here. They comment very favourably about the effectiveness of pupils' cultural development. They value pupils' visits to different places of worship, saying that the school 'does much more than we can as a family'.
- Pupils acquire a well-developed understanding of and respect for all faiths and cultures. One parent noted that they did a lot of research before sending their child here saying, 'I am not a Sikh but I wanted my child to have that diversity.'
- An outcome of the excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is that they treat all members of the school community with great respect, use the Nishkam values confidently and naturally, and in an assured manner, explain how they apply to their lives.

The leadership, management and governance of the school as a faith school**are outstanding**

- Leaders and governors have implemented the Trust's commitment to 'honouring the spirit' by establishing very high expectations of the way that adults conduct themselves in their interpersonal relationships and engagement with pupils. This has created a school that lives out its declared mission of being about 'more than academic excellence, more than a school and more than self'. In this way pupils develop mature attitudes of mutual care and respect. One parent commented that, 'the school...was not what I was expecting; it was everything I was looking for.'
- The leadership of religious education and faith development has secured the high standards that pupils achieve but, because subject teaching has been vested in a single specialist, there is not the capacity for this to be sustained as the school grows. Leaders and governors recognise this are taking robust action to build the capability that the school needs.
- With the support and guidance of the Trust, leaders and governors ensure that all classroom staff receive the appropriate specialist support they will need to extend and develop their subject knowledge and confidence. This is to be achieved through the introduction of a new programme of study that is more challenging than the syllabus used to date and which will promote pupils' deeper engagement with the nature of faith and belief, whatever their own background.
- Leaders and governors have secured the highest quality of collective worship so that it is a time of affirmation for the whole school community. Pupils develop a real and personal understanding of worship and prayer such that their parents say that, where they pray at home, this is influencing the way they think and practice, regardless of faith or belief.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development runs like a golden thread throughout the school so that pupils do not only develop positive attitudes of tolerance, respect and understanding but understand how they prepare them to play a part in modern Britain. They develop as confident individuals with the capacity to be leaders in their adult lives.
- Leaders and governors are rightly proud of the high standards of teaching throughout the school so that pupils progress from their starting points to attain academic and personal standards that are significantly higher than their peers nationally. In faith education, where older pupils do not make the excellent progress of their younger peers, standards still remain much higher than might be expected nationally.
- Together, leaders, governors and the Trust successfully promote the school's Sikh and multi-faith ethos so that it shines as a beacon of hope in the community it serves.

What inspection judgements mean

School Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their faith journey
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their faith journey
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full SIFEiNS inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school is inadequate when it is failing to provide its pupils with a Sikh multi-faith education that prepares them for the next stage in their spiritual journey

School details

Unique reference number	139720
Local authority area	Hounslow

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-age school with a faith designation
School category	Academy free school
Sponsor	Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha
Age range of pupils	4-18 but currently 5-9 years of age
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	N/A
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bahader Singh Panesar
Headteacher	Funmi Alder
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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