

NISHKAM PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM



FROM 'REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT TO
OUTSTANDING' IN 2 YEARS

By Cathy Heels, Headteacher, Nishkam Primary
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Nishkam Primary School opened in September 2011 as a two-form entry school. It was the first Free School in Birmingham and one of only the first 16 free schools in the country. Our pupils are happy and well-adjusted individuals who have a very strong sense of community.



The school is part of the multi-academy trust of schools known as the Nishkam School Trust. It is a multi-faith school with a Sikh ethos, with up to half of its admission places being open to children of all faiths and the remaining half to those of none. At almost 45%, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

Nishkam Primary School is a model of community cohesion and mutual support for diverse communities. It provides outstanding academic education, which nurtures character, values and inspires the practice of faith in a multi-faith setting. The school is also part of a larger vision to regenerate the area of Handsworth in Birmingham.



The ground work to provide values-based education and caring environments began nearly 20 years ago. It was initiated by our school Patron, Bhai Sahib Bhai Dr Mohinder Singh OBE, whose vision to nurture 'good human beings' whilst promoting community self-help and self-reliance, in an area of high deprivation and diverse communities. The community investments have been the subject of national and local media coverage.

The school had its first Section 5 Ofsted inspection in June 2013, towards the end of the second academic year after opening, where it was judged to Require Improvement. After this



inspection, the Headteacher left the school and Mrs P.K. Brom, Deputy Headteacher became Acting Headteacher from September 2013 to mid-April 2015. She was ably supported by the Assistant Headteacher. The school was inspected under Section 48 (inspections of faith schools) in December 2014 and was judged as Outstanding. A new Headteacher joined the school in April 2015 and four days later Ofsted visited to complete the school's second Section 5 inspection. The school was judged to be Outstanding in all areas.

A number of factors have brought about this rapid improvement:

- The explicit teaching of our 24 dispositions and values enable our children to understand how to become a positive contributors for a global family; this is not only demonstrated in displays of etiquette, empathy, honesty and service for others, but a genuine respect of all faiths and backgrounds. This foundation has led to a strong drive of self-motivated culture for learning from pupils and staff alike.
- A clear aim and focus by all staff to achieve 'Outstanding' at the following inspection at around 2 years.
- A rigorous cycle of fortnightly meetings supporting acting senior leadership.
- A relentless drive towards the delivery of quality first teaching including action points from the first inspection, for example, questioning by teachers to ensure depth of learning and accelerated progress within lessons. A rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of learning enable all groups of pupils to make excellent progress. The triangulation

of observation evidence, learning outcomes and detailed data analysis ensure areas for improvement are revealed quickly and actioned immediately.

- The development of middle leaders and a model of distributed leadership has also increased the capacity in the school to improve pupil progress.
- Associate teachers providing high quality support for learners in the classroom. They are all qualified to degree level and the school uses these specialist skills to further enrich the curriculum. A bespoke training programme to develop their teaching skills further also creates a learning community across pupils and all adults.
- A clear appraisal system which rewards outstanding classroom practitioners.
- The Nishkam School Trust takes a supportive lead on finance, premises and HR; this allows school leaders to focus entirely on Teaching and Learning.
- Enrichment of the curriculum is a priority, where high quality learning opportunities are incorporated e.g. archery, horse riding, healthy eating workshops

Whilst the senior school leaders have driven high quality teaching and learning as a priority to secure the best education for all pupils, they have also ensured the expansion of the school towards capacity in September 2015 has been a smooth and efficient process.

For more information on Nishkam Primary School please visit;

www.nishkamschooltrust.org

