

ST JAMES

Sanskrit @ St James

An Educational Initiative That Needs Your Help



“I believe that the influence of Sanskrit literature will penetrate not less deeply than did the revival of Greek literature in the fifteenth century” Schopenhauer

St James Schools

St James Schools in London, founded in 1975 for girls and boys from 4-18 years of age, is a unique educational establishment combining elements of enlightened learning from both eastern and western educational traditions. The vision of the founders which has been realised was to offer an education inspired by the highest philosophical principles which draws out and magnifies the unique talents inherent in each individual. Pupils come from a variety of cultural traditions. The approach seeks to show how the wisdom at the heart of every spiritual tradition has the capacity to unite us all. Parents are attracted by the ethos, the high academic standards and the practical application of fine principles.

Since their founding, St James Schools have been preparing young people to achieve their full potential as universal citizens. Young people emerging from the education system today need more than outstanding academic achievements; they need character and a firm foundation for living responsibly and effectively in society. To this end we have used principles inspired by diverse traditions, often drawing from the rich literary tradition of the West such as the works of Plato and Shakespeare and Sanskrit classics such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata.

From an Old Boy

“I was at St James on the first day in 1975 and by the time I completed in 1985 was convinced that it was the best education possible. I resolved to help so that others could send their children there.”

From Ralph Lucas, Editor of the Good Schools Guide:

“The aim of the school is to teach community-led, socially-inspired leadership. Pupils are to follow as well as lead, and serve as well as to be served.”

The Distinguishing Character of St James Schools

In the education offered, St James Schools effectively employ Eastern principles to complement a very English curriculum. All this has flourished alongside the accepted pillars of the English public school education, such as science, sport, choral singing, and the study of ancient Latin and Greek. Consequently, the Schools offer all students a curriculum that nourishes the whole being: spiritually, educationally, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

A Growing Demand for St James Education

For the past several years the enrolment at the three schools has continued to grow. There are now 830 pupils with a large waiting list of families wishing to enrol their children in the schools. The academic year 2009–2010 saw the largest growth in applicants for St James as well as public recognition for the achievements of our students in the national press. There are an increasing number of parents who want their children to experience a St James education.

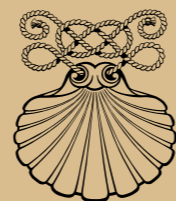
2010 also saw the launch of the St James Schools’ Building for the Future campaign, a multi-million pound programme of much-needed new and improved facilities to support and enhance our first-class education offer. Plans have been approved for a comprehensive programme of renovations and improvements that address pressing needs to increase and improve space and facilities at both the Olympia and Ashford locations.

Junior boys receiving an award at the Sanskrit Speech Competition;



Helping St James

You can learn more about St James Schools by visiting our website www.stjameschools.co.uk
If you would like further information on ways in which you can support us financially, please contact Mr Paul Palmarozza at St James Schools, Earsby Street, London W14 8SH; Tel 020 7348 1777 or sanskrit@stjameschools.co.uk.



Sounding practice

From a Parent

“Having put five children through the schools, I am convinced of the value of a St James education.”

Meditation

St James offers to its pupils stillness and meditation practices, which are to be found in both Eastern and Western traditions. Amongst other benefits, these practices significantly improve the faculty of attention. Gradually more and more schools in the UK are adopting meditation as a practice for this reason.

The Special Place of Sanskrit at St James

- One of the founding principles of the Schools was that the teaching of language was to be based on Sanskrit. The reason for this is that the Sanskrit language is full of profound concepts and stands at the root of very many eastern and western languages, illuminating their grammar and etymology.
- The language serves as a medium by which the cultures of East and West are shared and explored.
- Sanskrit is taught to all Junior School pupils. In the Senior Schools many pupils take the option of continuing with Sanskrit up to GCSE, AS and A Level, following which some students pursue the subject at University.
- The teaching of Sanskrit in the Junior School, as well as establishing the basic rules of grammar, emphasises the beautiful sounding of vowels and consonants, together with precise and elegant writing of the letters.
- Each year the St James Junior School Sanskrit Speech Competition is held, during which each class recites by heart passages from spiritual Sanskrit classics, followed by an English translation.



Preparing for the public examinations

Kamalesh Sharma, previously High Commissioner of India and now Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, speaking following a recitation by pupils of texts from the Rig Veda and Upanishads:

“The profound words that the children were learning by heart would be with them for life, and there is no greater gift they could receive.”

Our Record and Achievements

- Under our guidance and using the materials we have developed, nine associated schools around the world currently include Sanskrit in their curriculum.
- In 1993 we helped to establish a system of Sanskrit public examinations which are now set annually by the Cambridge International Examinations Board (CIEB) in cooperation with St James.
- Sanskrit teaching programmes have been developed which are now arousing wider interest and are in increasing demand.
- ‘St James Publishing’ was formed to produce quality textbooks, including Sanskrit books. There are more than ten Sanskrit textbooks now available designed for pupils from 4 to 18 years of age.
- Nearly 2500 of our pupils over the years have enjoyed and benefited from the linguistic discipline of this language as well as the cultural learning experience it has provided.

Sanskrit @ St James

In order to further the teaching of Sanskrit, it is proposed to enhance our activities in order to enrich the work of St James Schools and to provide a range of services to other schools. The work will initially be in these areas:

• Teaching Materials

To enhance and expand the existing teaching materials including text books, teachers’ guides, and a website designed to support both the junior school curriculum and the senior school GCSE and A Level exams.

• Teacher Training

To offer teacher training programmes for both beginner and more experienced teachers, plus provide a mentoring service via both face-to-face meetings and online communications. A database will also be developed of international Sanskrit scholars/teachers who could be approached for teaching posts.

• Communications/Promotion

To develop a programme to increase awareness of the benefits of teaching Sanskrit in schools, including regular publications to keep interested schools up to date with new developments.

• Bursaries / Funding Support

If sufficient funding is available, to offer bursaries to encourage the study of Sanskrit from Junior School up through University. We would also support teacher training programmes and the continuation of the public examinations offered by the CIEB.

From a St James graduate who studied Sanskrit to A Level and then at Oxford University

“I am so privileged to be studying Sanskrit.”



Sanskrit lesson

Our Relationship with the Indian Community

St James has created a rich relationship with the Indian community. As well as offering Sanskrit to our pupils, our shared values are reflected in the establishment of cross-cultural links. Some of the ways in which this has been expressed are a cricket tour of India by St James boys playing in a series of matches with local teams and participation here in London at events due to their special knowledge of Sanskrit e.g. our pupils were invited to recite Sanskrit verses at Buckingham Palace to mark the start of the Commonwealth Games baton relay.

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग्भवेत्

May all be happy,

May all be without disease,

May all creatures have well-being

And none be in misery of any kind.