

JVB LONDON GYANSHALA

Spiritual classes for 4-14 year olds



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A message from H. H. Acharyashri Mahapragya

Malevolence and depravity are smothering the world. There is an abundance of ways to damage moral values. With pragmatism, consumption is also growing rapidly. Under these conditions, Gyanshala has a compelling function.

Our brain has two components. The left hemisphere is responsible for the growth of common sense, knowledge and intelligence. The right hemisphere works for the development of spirituality.

Sadhus, Sadhvis, Samanis and other instructors have a special responsibility to see how to teach at the Gyanshala. A professor can teach college students but teaching five-year-old children is challenging.

A Gyanshala should:

1. Be scientific and progressive
2. Use a spiritual as well as a psychological approach
3. Emphasise behavioural training along with conceptual training.

Gyanshala is not just a concept - it is the science of living.

Our Mission

With the blessings of H.H Acharyashri Mahapragya and under the guidance of Samanijis, JVB London Gyanshala for children opened its doors in 2004 with the opening of JVB Centre itself and has been educating children since then. However, last year in June 2008 JVB Gyanshala introduced a more structured curriculum and systematic approach aligned with its goals.

JVB London Gyanshala strives to impart to its students, life skills for physical, mental and emotional health, a stress free and peaceful life, and spiritual bliss. It also strives to inculcate life values in children that help them to grow into responsible adults, who respect their fellow beings, who care for their environment, who tolerate other religious beliefs and who have empathy for those who are less fortunate.

Curriculum

Children ages from 4 to 14 are placed in three groups: Kinder Gyan Group, Gyan Group and Darshan group. Classes are conducted by Samanijis and young teachers. Each class is divided into the three categories:

- Science of Living (Yoga and Meditation) –approx 20 Min.
- Learning Jainism – approx 20 Min.
- Understanding Jainism – approx 20 Min.

The curriculum covers topics such as Jain History, Jain Philosophy, Jain *Mantras*, *Shlokas*, Jain Prayers & Rituals, Jain Festivals & Pilgrimages, *Preksha* Yoga & Meditation. From 2009, a three-year course book that contains all study material is being provided to all students.



Students will remain in the same group for duration of three years. All students have to go through a written and practical examination in March and it is only after completing all three years that the students will progress from one group to the next. At the end of each academic year certificates will be awarded to students based on their examination results and yearly attendance.

Students' Experience

"Gyanshala gives us the opportunity to learn so much varying from physical things such as yoga to theoretical things like Jain history, culture and concepts. It gives us the chance to learn from the Samanijis and the informative teachers in a very relaxed and stress free atmosphere." (Sneha Jain)

"Gyanshala is fun whilst allowing us to gain knowledge about our religion. Every lesson, we do something new as we learn." (Priyanka Jain)

A word from the teachers

"We feel privileged that the Samanijis have given us the opportunity to promote and enhance the learning and teaching of Jain philosophy and religion amongst young children. Teaching the students allows us to elaborate our knowledge and stay connected with them." (Natasha Shah & Pooja Jain)

What the parents say...

"Gyanshala is an excellent, accelerated moral, educational, cultural and spiritual programme for the children. It caters for various age groups and is imparted by "professionals" and dedicated volunteers in a very encouraging manner. Immense gratitude goes to the Trustees for providing a free spiritual and educational experience to children." (Rajeev Shah)

"When I see all the children coming out of the Sunday Gyanshala classes, their smiling, relaxed faces show that they have had a wonderful time. Through Yoga, they have learnt positively how to deal with stress and how to look after their bodies. Learning about Jainism gives them a framework for distinguishing right from wrong and thus helps them in making the right decision in their everyday life. Spending only one hour a week at Gyanshala every Sunday has such a positive effect on the children for the rest of their week and I would recommend parent take advantage of this wonderful opportunity we have here at Sayer Centre." (Veena Shah)