



**Bright Sparks School India      Registered Charity No. 1126402**

**Annual Report & Accounts f/y to 31st March 2023**



**BS Pupils**



**BS pupils sponsored @ MPS Secondary**

**Trustees**

Sharon O'Connor (Chair)  
Vijay Anand  
Olivia Bryan  
Tim Burley (Secretary)  
Chris Gall  
Gail Edwards (Co-Founder)  
Liz Hill  
Marion Rose  
Emma Sleight

**Accountant**

Simon Main

**Registered Address:**

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## **Bright Sparks School India 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 - overview**

One hundred and two school-aged students and three 'learners' attended Bright Sparks School over the academic year April 2022- March 2023. (Learners are older children who join in particular classes to gain skills, eg, writing Hindi. This is often to enable them to access other educational courses.) All the children come from families where the parents are illiterate or have minimal literacy skills.

The students comprised 48 girls and 54 boys aged 4-14 years, the majority being in the age range 6-12 years. In addition, the charity supported 12 alumni to attend a local fee-paying NGO secondary school called Mohali Public School (MPS) which has a similar ethos to Bright Sparks and offers English as a medium for learning. (8 further funded students joined MPS at the end of this period).

Bright Sparks School has six year groups, comprising a small Kindergarten class and classes 1-5. All children followed the Punjab State curriculum which includes Maths, Hindi, Punjabi, English, Social studies and (from Class 3 on) Computer studies. In March 2023, all the students sat exams to assess if they could progress to the next class or graduate to secondary school. 65% of the students performed very well in these end-of-year exams, and all passed their exams successfully.

In addition to these classes, Bright Sparks runs a homework club to support the schoolwork of the older students, and ex-students attending MPS and other government secondary schools. During this academic year, one of the staff members left which resulted in a reduction of hours available to support the homework club. As we start the 2023-24 academic year we return to a full staffing model and former levels of support for the homework club.

One former student is currently supported through a BA in Computer Studies at Chandigarh University and has been averaging 80% scores, another alumni student is being supported through a course which supports routes into government jobs.

Most of the class teachers have been in post for a number of years ranging from 5-21 years, thereby providing continuity and an established way of working as a team. Part of the strength of their approach is that although each has responsibility for one class, they move between classes and teach to their strengths, so students benefit from the expertise of those with enhanced Punjabi, Hindi or other skills.

The Head Teacher Rita Mohan, also the longest-serving teacher, has a consultative, collaborative style of working which serves the students and staff well. The teachers express satisfaction with their work, but can be critical of their relatively low pay and lack of benefits - something UK and Indian Trustees are aiming to improve on.

### **UK and India trustees**

During February, two UK Trustees visited the school. As well as spending time in classrooms, and with staff, they were able to meet with alumni attending secondary schools, and school leavers now running their own businesses or in skilled jobs. All

were extremely appreciative of the opportunity given to them by Bright Sparks School. For example, one young man now 23 years spent five years at Bright Sparks, progressed through secondary school, then did a 6-month electronics training course. He secured a skilled job with a Medical Instruments firm making breathing apparatus for children, (especially crucial during the Covid pandemic). He said that without Bright Sparks, he would have been an illiterate manual labourer like his father and that he would be forever grateful to Bright Sparks.

Over 2022 a new group of 7 Indian Trustees was formed including a dentist, a doctor, a retired teacher and a local donor. The group has registered a new trust and bank account and has applied for FCRA status which will facilitate international transfers which currently require intermediaries.

The UK trustees spent time with the Indian trustees discussing progress at the school, future aspirations and how the UK and Indian charities will work together going forward. One item agreed was to create an administrative post of 'co-ordinator', with responsibility for tracking alumni so as to support them in their studies, or into work. Another responsibility for the co-ordinator is to engage with local businesses who have social funds, with a view to fundraising within India to support Bright Sparks. By the end of this period, a part-time candidate was appointed to begin to develop this role, beginning 1st July 2023.

The UK Trustees remain overall managers of the school at a governance level - paying salaries and now rent directly. But it is our intention to pass this responsibility on to Indian Trustees once they have established their operating model & methods.

### **Finances, fundraising, pay and premises - 3Designated Capital Fund**

This period has seen many significant changes for Bright Sparks. Early in 2022 we began Trust fundraising securing a valuable new income stream. At a time of rising costs which impact poorer people disproportionately we have been able to increase salaries by 25% over two increments, and we also provided a one-off cost of living payment equivalent to 10% of annual salary.

Annual income for the period increased to £30,159 and costs funded by the UK charity increased to £21,632. Donations provided locally and not included in these accounts - largely linked to a single donor who has been paying the rent, but also some salary expenses - totalled £7,200.

At the end of this period the local donor who has been paying the rent has become unable to do so. The Trustees have established a Capital Reserve Fund which held £15,000 at the end of March 2023 to mitigate against rising costs. We anticipate annual costs for the UK charity to now increase to £25,000 - £30,000.

### **Future plans**

Over the late Spring/ Summer of 2023 UK Trustees have begun working on a capital campaign to explore the potential of buying the school premises, estimated value £150,000.

**Income year to 31.03.23**

Grants from trusts and foundations	£15,850
Individual donors (incl. corporate match & 3rd party Gift Aid claims)	£13,523
HMRC Gift Aid Claim	£786
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£30,159</b>

**Expenditure year to 31.03.23**

Teachers salaries	£10,839
Utilities and general school expenses	£1,444
Mohali Public School fees	£2,412
Alumni sponsorships	£2,554
School equipment (tablets & laptop)	£1,050
Contribution to Trustee travel costs to India	£1,000
Fundraising, marketing and administration	£2,336
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£21,632</b>

**Balance on Year** **£8,527**

**Funds carried forward from yr end 31.03.22** **£18,087**

**Total funds at 31.03.23** **£26,614**

**Balance sheet**

Designated Capital Fund - school rent, repairs & future purchase	£15,000
General reserve - school running costs	£11,614
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>£26,614</b>

**Notes to accounts**

As we move into 2023 - 2024 the UK charity will take on rental costs of £6,000 per annum and have also approved a 25% increase to salaries and 1.5 new posts.

Costs across 2023 - 2034 are anticipated to be between £25,000 - £30,000.

**Signed & dated by Sharon O'Connor - Chair**

**Signed & dated by Simon Main (FCCA) - Accountant**

## Former Pupils



**Jai**

“My current position is entirely due to Rita and Bright Sparks School”

Jai works for Walnut Medical Instruments making oxygenating machines for children.



**Sukanti**

“Bright Sparks has meant so much to me, I’ve had help with college fees, as well as constant moral support”

Now studying fashion and looking forward to a career in fashion and textiles.



**Raju**

“Bright Sparks has been everything to me, it changed my life and gave me a future”

The first BS pupil now in his 30s works in a publishing and print business.