

CFBT EDUCATION SERVICES

# The Gyan Shala Programme

AN ASSESSMENT OF PATNA CENTRES

April 2013

*An assessment report of 25 Gyan Shala centres in Patna that evaluated the effectiveness of the programme in providing quality education to the students from underprivileged background.*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the behest of the Gyanshala management, CfBT Education Services, India conducted a quality assessment of 25 GS centres in Patna, Bihar to assess the quality of education in the centres and benchmarked them against national and international standard.

The tools for benchmarking the quality in the centres were the ones developed by CfBT Education Services through international research. The framework used in various global contexts, particularly in the UK and the Middle East was customized to suit the Indian standards. This assessment is based on a set of quality indicators developed from quality inspections conducted worldwide and adapted to suit the Indian context.

The objective of the quality indicators is to ensure that purposeful teaching and learning coupled with a challenging and appropriate curriculum, pastoral care and leadership will ultimately contribute to school effectiveness.

The eight quality indicators used for the assessment included: (i) Students attainment and progress in key subjects: Hindi, Mathematics, Project work (ii) Students' personal and social development; (iii) Teaching and Learning;(iv) Curriculum; (v) Infrastructural facilities and resources; (vi) Partnership with parents and the community; (vii) Leadership and Management; and (viii) Overall performance of all the centres. The 25 centres were randomly selected and two experienced education specialists visited these centres to gather data and evidences. The evidences were analyzed to rate the aspects of provision in the centres. A four point rating scale was used to judge the indicators. They are Outstanding, Good, Acceptable and Unsatisfactory.

The Assessment Handbook which outlines the set of quality indicators ensured that the quality of assessment was of the highest quality and that the judgments made by the assessors were fair, rigorous and consistent. The School Quality Indicators in the Assessment Handbook are structured around the following eight central questions.

- *How good are the students' attainment and progress?*
- *How good is the students' personal and social development?*
- *How good are the teaching and learning?*
- *How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?*
- *How good are the staffing, facilities and resources for learning?*
- *How good is the partnership between the parents and the school?*
- *How good are the leadership and management of the school?*
- *How well does Gyan Shala perform overall?*

## **1. The Context**

The GS model was developed and engineered by a team lead by Mr Pankaj Jain, a visionary who dreamt of providing quality education to students from poor economic background. GS aims to provide an amicable school environment to the children from poorest families. The model was initiated in the heart of Gujarat state, Ahmedabad. Later it spread its wings to the slums of Bihar. GS placed emphasis on learning based education instead of teacher centric learning. There was an extensive reengineering of the pedagogy to meet the needs of GS learners.

Gyan Shala model offers single room, grade specific classes in the available space in low income neighborhoods. Classes are grouped in clusters managed by senior teachers. Students work in groups, seated in specifically designed furniture to allow collaborative work and attention from teachers for different tasks.

### **Key strengths**

- An innovative model addressing the educational needs of the underprivileged children with definite outcomes
- Provision is not compromised in the single room accommodations with meager facilities
- The care, commitment and dedication of the dynamic leadership team and staff.
- The polite and well behave students and their loyalty to the centres.
- Parental support is the mainstay of the model.

## **2. The Assessment Methodology**

The assessment was conducted in the month of April 2013 and was carried over a period of one week by a team of two experienced assessors who evaluated the effectiveness of the Gyan Shala learning centres in a holistic manner and benchmarked them against international best practice and standards. The centres were visited as per a given schedule.

**Table 1: Sample Size for the Assessment**

Sample	Elementary
Grade Observed	Grade 3
Number of Centres	25
No. of Clusters	5
Subjects Covered	3
Total no. of Classes	73
Total no. Teachers	25
No. of Assessors	2
Assessor Days	6

The processes of classroom teaching were observed in detail assessing areas of teaching, learning and assessment. Apart, key stakeholders were interviewed followed with the scrutiny of students' work samples and other relevant documents. Data was collected from different sources to validate the findings on every key aspect.

Out of 100 centres, 25 were randomly selected in which 73 lesson were observed. A total of 75 teachers and students interactions were completed from the above centres. A discussion was also planned with the core team consisting of team leaders, project managers, designers', senior supervisors and supervisors to assess the essence of leadership and management of the GS program. Focused group discussions were also held with other key stakeholders such as parents and students to validate the findings.

**Table 2 Number of persons interviewed**

Stake holder	Number
Team leaders	01
Area manager	01
design team	04
Senior supervisor	4
Supervisors	4
Centre teachers	25
Students	400
Parents	200
Total number interviewed	639

## **2. The Procedure**

70% of the assessor's time was spent in observing classroom transactions, while the remaining time was utilized to interact with the students, the teachers and the parents. In addition, infrastructural facilities and resources within the centre were observed and recorded. Time was also spent on studying the samples of students work to assess the students' attainment and progress levels. The following standards were assessed using qualitative descriptors and quantitative terminology.

### *2.1 Assessing the academic progress of students*

Assessment was based on how well the students were doing in lessons and how much progress they were making in relation to their starting points. Assessors made judgments in each centre about students progress in key subjects of Hindi, Math and Project Work based on classroom observations and students' performance in school based tests , how well they were doing in lessons and how much progress they were making in relation to their starting points.

### *2.2. The students' personal and social development*

The attitudes and behavior of students in and about the school and their relationships with the staff was observed. Assessors also looked at attendance rates, punctuality and students understanding of the local environment and appreciation of the local traditions and culture. They also paid attention to the students' knowledge and understanding of Patna and India in the world and the implications of local and global environmental issues.

### *2.3. Teaching quality and how well the students are learning.*

The effectiveness of the teaching methods was assessed and how well the students were learning as a result of different methods. The assessors also assessed the teachers' knowledge of their subjects and how to teach them. They judged how well the teachers checked the students' work and how well they helped the students to improve its quality.

### *2.4. How well the curriculum meets the educational needs of the students.*

Assessors looked at the breadth and balance of the curriculum in each centre and how well it served the interests and abilities of the students.

### *2.5. How well the facilities and resources in the centre's protect and support the students?*

Assessment was done of each centre's arrangements to ensure the health, safety and security of students in all parts of the centre including access to toilet and water facilities used by the students. They looked at how the centre managed the students' behaviour and the quality of the support and care it offered to individuals. They assessed how well the school kept a check on the students' progress in the subjects they were studying.

*2. 6. How well does the partnership with the parents and the community support the students?*

Assessors looked at how well the centre engaged with the parents and how well they engaged the parents in the learning of their students. Assessment was also done to find out how well the centres partnered with the wider community and engaged with them in garnering their support.

*2. 7. The quality of the leadership and management.*

Assessment was done to find out how well each centre was being led and managed, looking at how effectively the centre resources were being used for the benefit of the students. They assessed how aware each centre teacher was of its strengths and weaknesses and how effectively they made improvements. They looked at how well the centres engaged with the governing body and the effectiveness of the school's governing body.

*2. 8. The school's overall performance (how well do all the centres perform?)*

Finally, assessors made a judgment of Gyan Shala's overall performance, concentrating on how well it was delivering its promises to the parents and its capacity to improve further in the future. A four-point scale was used to express the judgments on all the seven indicators.

***Terminology Used***

To maintain consistency throughout the assessment the following terms were used with reference to the indicators with the following definitions:

<i>All:</i>	100% or very close
<i>Almost All:</i>	90% and more
<i>Most:</i>	More than 75% quarters but less than 90%
<i>Majority:</i>	More than 50% but less than 75%
<i>Minority:</i>	More than 15% but less than 50%
<i>Few:</i>	Up to about 15%

Box 1 shows the four point rating scale that was used by the assessors to make judgments' regarding all the quality indicators as defined below:

**Box 1 : The Assessors' Rating Scale**

<b>Four Point Scale</b>		<b>Definition of Each Point</b>
4	<b>Outstanding</b>	exceptionally high quality of performance or practice
3	<b>Good</b>	the expected level for effective schools
2	<b>Acceptable</b>	the minimum level of acceptability that all key aspects of performance and practice should meet or exceed
1	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	quality not yet at the level acceptable for effective schools

The set of quality indicators and this Assessors Rating Scale have been contextualized to assess the unique Gyan Shala programme from the process and indicators that were used by CfBT to support (i) inspection of over 3,000 schools annually in England under contract with OfSTED; and (ii) inspection of all public and private schools in Dubai on behalf of the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau.

Box 2 summarizes the different areas and aspects that have been incorporated in each assessment area.

**Box 2 : Assessment Focus Areas and Aspects**

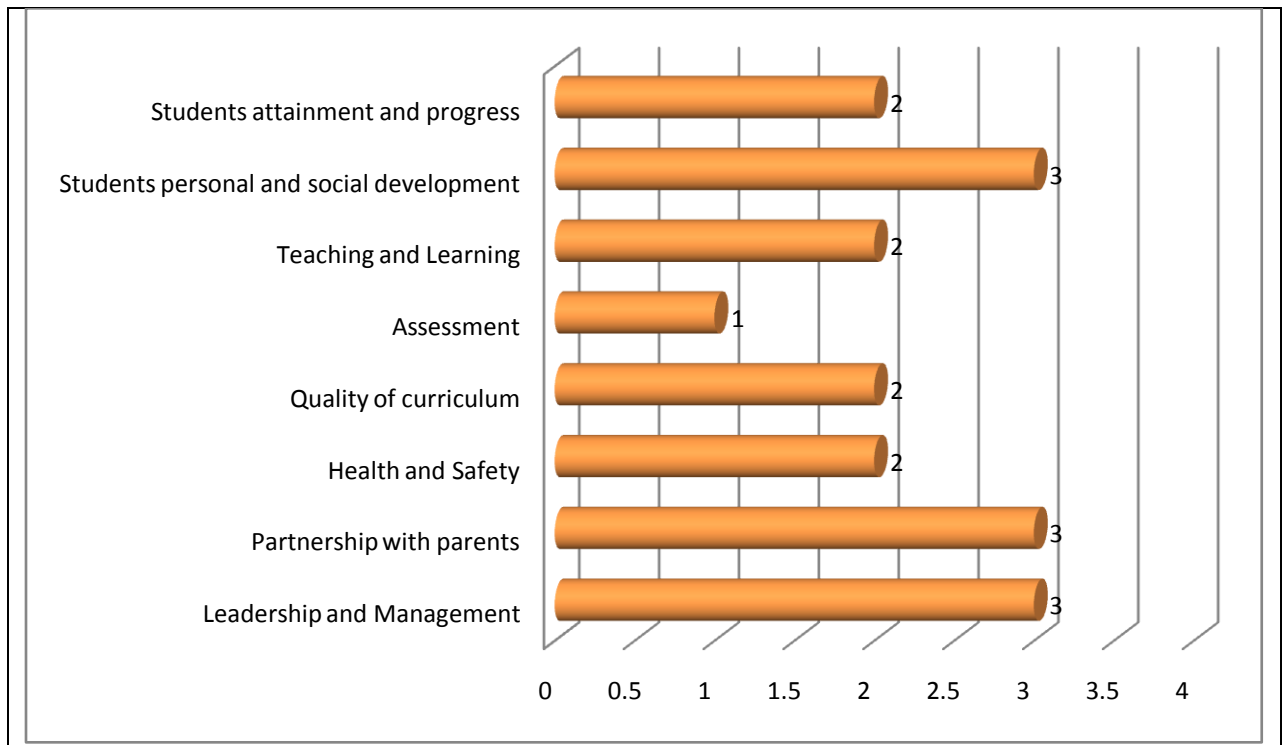
<b>Focus</b>	<b>Specific</b>
(1) <i>Attainment and progress</i>	(i) Attainment in Hindi (ii) Attainment in Mathematics (iii) Attainment in Project Work
(2) <i>Personal and social development</i>	(vi) Overall department (vii) Student attendance
(3) <i>Teaching and Learning</i>	(viii) Teaching for Effective Learning (ix) The Quality of Students' Learning (x) Assessments
(4) <i>Curriculum Quality</i>	
(5) <i>Staffing, facilities and resources</i>	(xi) Infrastructural facilities and resources (xii) Health and safety
(6) <i>Partnership with parents</i>	
(7) <i>Leadership and Management</i>	(viii) Leadership



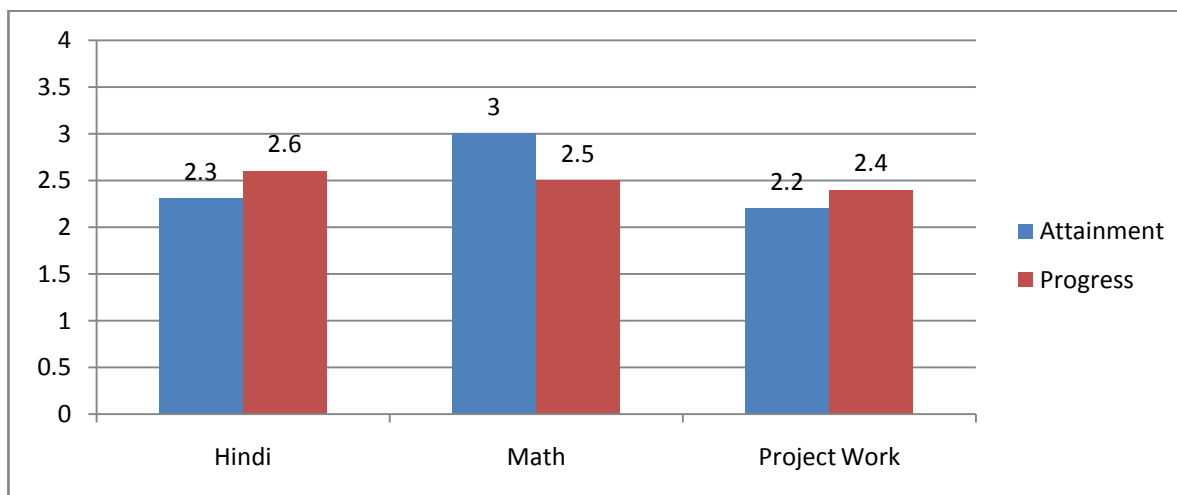
### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

Section 3 deals with the assessment findings across the seven focus areas across the fourteen specific aspects

***Overall performance of GS centres in Patna is Acceptable***



### 3.1. How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?



The above graph shows that the students have better knowledge of Math concepts than other subjects. They show better attainment in Math in comparison with Hindi and Project Work.

The overall performance of the students in the key subjects was **Acceptable** across the centres. GS has a weak documentation of internal examination record. The Shalas follow question wise analysis method to get an overview of students' performance and progress in different subjects which did not give a scientific picture of the students' attainment levels, therefore it was difficult to arrive at a judgment based on the data provided for analysis. However in lessons observed and in their recent work, most students demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with national age related expectations, which place the indicator at an appreciable level. Findings and observations by CfBT assessors are follows.

Attainment in Hindi and Project work was acceptable and good in mathematics.

Attainment level in Hindi was **Acceptable**. Almost all students were able to recall the sounds and matras. Most were able to read words and stories confidently. Very few were able to narrate the story on their own. There were spelling errors in written work with poor calligraphy skills. There was little use of punctuation in written work. Most had acceptable speaking skills.

Few students demonstrated good vocabulary in the usage of words like gyan yagn, gyani and trishul trupti, trushna etc for letters "gna" and "tra".

Attainment level in Project work was **Acceptable**. Most were able to express the concepts verbally but were unable to answer in written form. Most were able to

recall words on their own. They could read the pictures, identify the characters and complete the answers but were weakly developed in framing sentences on their own. Most were able to complete the simple patterns but could not explain them logically. Most described the picture correctly. Most contributed to the discussions on topics like human body, Makar Sankranti or different vehicles used for transportation or a house.

In Math students' attainment was **Good**. Almost all demonstrated good understanding of the four mathematical operations and place value of two digits numbers. Most were able to count numbers in tens and ones to form two digit numbers and were able to guess before and after numbers. They were able to use abacus correctly. All of them recalled the number names in English and wrote the expanded form of two digit numbers. Few were able to convert ones to tens while working with base ten blocks.

Progress in Hindi, Project work and Mathematics was **Acceptable** overall in many instances due to tasks being insufficiently matched to their particular learning needs.

The students used class room resources such as abacus to demonstrate progress in counting skills and making comparative statements, for example, bigger and smaller for shape and number.

Key strength

*Students are better in using mathematical calculations*

Recommendations

*Improve the attainment levels in Hindi and project work.*

*Provide opportunities for independent work.*

**3.2. How good is the students' personal and social development?**

The students' personal and social development was **Good**. There were important strengths in students' personal and social development. At grade 3, they were confident and highly motivated learners who took great pride in their school (centres). Positive and supportive relationships prevailed throughout the school between the students and the staff. Almost all students had a clear understanding of centre's rules and followed them. Most exhibited good behaviour demonstrating

restrain in and out of the classroom. The students discussed their centres at home, with family and friends. They were well groomed and displayed healthy habits. They had great regard for their teachers who supported them well. They responded positively to all instructions. The students carried out social responsibility and took care of school resources such as worksheets, pencils etc. The average attendance in each term was around 90%.

### **3.3. How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?**

Teaching for effective learning was **Acceptable** in all the centres. In all the subjects there was a range in the effectiveness of teaching. The majority of teachers had secure subject knowledge and planned appropriately to meet the range of learning needs of the students in their class. The lesson plans were developed in consultation with the senior design team that supported the strategies of classroom delivery. There was uniformity in the teaching strategy followed by the teachers. There was a strict adherence to teaching guide. Questioning and discussion techniques were the predominant methods practiced by teachers in classes. These methods addressed the needs of most students. The materials and resources were used appropriately to facilitate better understanding. Teachers used abacus, flash cards etc, few used the resources creatively to maximize learning.

In the best lessons, teachers deployed a range of strategies to engage the learners in active participation and questioning was used effectively to develop critical thinking skills. These lessons were interactive and provided opportunities for all students to enhance their application skills. However, teaching remained inconsistent across the centres. Though the teaching met the needs of most learners, there was insufficient differentiation for the least and most able students. Opportunities to apply *knowledge in real life situations or making cross curricular links were often missed because of the theoretical presentations in lessons.*

The quality of students' learning was **Acceptable**. Students had positive attitudes to learning and responded appropriately to their teachers. Most were confident in contributing verbally to their teachers' questioning and they worked well collaboratively when given the opportunity. In class, almost all students exhibited good behaviour for learning and listened respectfully to their peers. However, in a few lessons, students were restless, off-task and paid little attention to instruction. Across the centres students were able to relate their learning to real life experiences but there were few opportunities in lessons for students to develop their research and enquiry skills to extend their learning. There were very few opportunities for hands on experience for students that hampered the

development of experimentation skills. They participated in meaningful discussions. Most students questioned and cited relevant examples to demonstrate their learning.

Assessment was **Unsatisfactory** across the centres. Few students were able to complete their assessment independently within a stipulated time. Assessment techniques were not customized to measure the learning of newly enrolled students in the centres who were unable to follow instructions. The assessments were teacher led. There was no evidence of self or peer assessment. Apparently, the assessment data was not used to inform planning. Within lessons, assessment was rarely used to reshape a learning task or to extend learning beyond the plan. Assessments often measured the progress against taught units rather than application of acquired skills. In Project work worksheets could not measure the students' learning due to the design that focused on students' writing skills.

<u>Key strengths</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
<i>Adherence to teaching guide to maintain uniformity across centres.</i>	<i>Use simple differentiation strategies for effective implementation of curriculum.</i>
<i>Students' active participation in group activities and their positive attitude towards learning.</i>	<i>Provide more time for "student talk" to enable the development of important skills.</i>
	<i>Assess your students time and again through MCQs, quiz, project work etc.</i>

### **3.4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?**

The curriculum was **Acceptable** across the centres. The curriculum was broad and balanced. There was progression in learning activities from year to year. Curriculum ensured the acquisition of knowledge required to pursue higher education in the nearest government schools. It is reviewed and updated regularly by the design team. The best features of NCERT and different curricula are blended to suit the needs of GS students. The curriculum promotes the development of cognitive skills among students. It ensures that the students learning levels are on par with other local private and public schools. The curriculum provides scope for the development of social skills and leadership qualities due to which the students collaborated well in small groups. However it offered less scope for developing creativity and independence. Cross-curricular links were not evident in lessons. Opportunities for the development of critical

thinking, problem solving skills and independent learning were limited.

There were too few enrichment activities that supported students' learning. Very few extra-curricular activities contributed to the learning and personal development in a small way. The resources provided were sufficient to transact the curriculum effectively. There were no modifications to meet the needs of gifted and talented students and students with learning difficulties. There is a lack an understanding of local issues, history and culture of Patna among the students.

<u>Key strengths</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
<i>Internalization method of learning</i>	<i>Introduce indoor activities such as chess, carom board, business, Chinese checker etc for extended learning</i>
<i>Activities that engages all students.</i>	
<i>Emphasis on key subjects that fits the instructional time of three hours.</i>	<i>Develop partnership with companies/schools that allow the students to use their ICT facilities.</i>

### **3.5. How well the facilities and resources in the centre's protect and support the students?**

The quality and quantity of accommodation, resources and health and safety was **Acceptable**. Students were kept safe throughout the day. Few centres were close to water bodies. The centers were well maintained. Each centre is manned by a single teacher. Most of the teachers' posses plus two qualification and are well experienced.

Each centre has a support staff. The teachers are regularly trained for implementing the specific GS curriculum. The centres have age appropriate furniture, three tables and benches of three different colours and a carpet to facilitate collaborative learning. Each centre is provided with a green board, racks, fan, time piece and a box to store resources. The classrooms had colorful displays that are updated regularly. The facilities allow for the effective transaction of curriculum. There were few centres which were too small with little space for movement, few lacked toilets. Most teachers and students were unaware of child protection policies.

Key Strength

Recommendation

Availability of basic facilities for transacting the unique curriculum.

The premises should be maintained well. Provide first aid kits in all centres

**3.6. How well does the partnership with the parents and the community support the students?**

Partnerships with parents and the community were **Good**. The centres maintain productive links with the parents and community to enhance students' learning. Parents were very supportive of the centres. They felt communication with the centres was effective. They felt welcome in the centres. Their issues were resolved effectively. The Parents' Teacher Committees met once in a week, however avenues for parental participation in centre activities were limited. The parents and the community were not active in key decision making processes.

The parents visited the centres frequently and interacted with the teachers. They were aware of GS vision. They enjoyed a good rapport with the teachers, supervisors and the senior supervisors. School reports gave parents a picture of their child's attainment and progress. However, parents were not active in key decision-making processes. All parents appreciated the efforts of GS in providing quality education to students. They are the brand ambassadors of GS who collaborate to establish new centres and arrange for accommodation.

GS reciprocates by honoring them as guests on special days like an annual day. However links with the external community to maximize learning were weak.

Key strength

Recommendation

Productive links with the parents.

Develop partnership with agencies that facilitates student learning such as state libraries, community health centres etc.

Parental relationship is the strongest support system.

**3.7. What is the quality of leadership and management?**

The quality of the leadership was **Good**. The Chairman had a high profile and provided clear direction and accountability for staff and students. The senior staff including the design team, senior supervisors and others complemented him well. Through good team work at different levels the core team ensured that teachers

focused on improving their teaching to raise standards. The centres follow clear academic and administrative procedures. A common vision synergizes the staff to achieve good results.

CPD is the sustainable force of the GS teaching model. Leaders devise practical strategies to secure further improvement. GS has a unique organogram with five tiers leadership structure. Strong professionalism binds the leadership that plans strategically to improve teaching and learning and students' achievement levels. However, there was still some variation in the quality of leadership across the centres. In a few areas more effective strategies were needed.

The strong leadership ensured that the objectives of GS were met through continuous planning and review of the program. Precise planning is the strength of the program that allows the delivery of a unique curriculum in unique settings.

The day to day management of the centres was good. The teachers, supervisors and the senior supervisors coordinated well to run the centres. Supervisors' visit to centres twice a week provided adequate support to teachers. .

### **3.8. How well do the centres perform overall?**

The overall performance of the centres was **Acceptable**. The centres perform well in almost all key aspects of its work. They deliver well on the aspects of its promise to its parents. The attainment and progress of the students was in line with age related expectations. Teaching strategies met the needs of most learners. However, there were discrepancies in using attainment data for improving instruction. Though the curriculum was child centric, it still offered insufficient opportunities for many students to develop critical thinking, collaborative learning and research skills consistently. Very few enrichment activities boosted students' engagement and success in their learning. Students had little scope for physical education. The core team worked well together to review and improve the curriculum in all subjects. There were more than meager facilities and resources to support the delivery of curriculum. Arrangements for health and safety of students and management of the centres were "Acceptable." Relationships with parents and the local community were good. Almost all parents, students and teachers agreed that students were well looked after and safe at the centres and that they were respected and valued. The leadership and management of the centres was good. The senior staff is capable of leading further improvement through continuous evaluation and its reflective practices



#### **4. Conclusion**

Gyan Shala is doing yeomen service to improve the provision for the children of underprivileged communities living in the slums of Patna. GS excels in innovating several practices to meet the needs of these students. GS students are passing out with definite outcomes and are successfully competing with other students to pursue courses for higher education. However, there are areas of improvement for GS to consider to further enhance its provision.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are suggested to improve the GS program in Patna.

- Improve attainment and progress in all key subjects by using robust assessment strategies and use of attainment data to improve planning
- Provide regular feedback to all students so that they take ownership of their progress
- Ensure teaching and learning in all key subjects across all centres includes experiential learning and differentiation of instruction
- Provide high quality professional development to enable teachers to plan learning activities independently which offer appropriate levels of challenge for students of all ages and abilities
- Review the curriculum to provide enrichment opportunities for all students across all phases and meets the needs of all learners
- Ensure that cross curricular links strengthen the conceptual understanding of students
- Improve the learning environment by providing additional learning resources
- Involve the community to improve instruction in all centres
- Conduct rigorous self evaluation for improving standards