Date of visit: 8 February 2011
Who made the visit: Purnima Mandal and Ujjayini Sikha
Who they met: Jabesh Dutt, teachers and students

Visit Report

The day we visited was also the day of Saraswati puja (a festival) – hence the children had the day off and were in the dorms. So we did not see any classes going on.

We saw computer rooms and were told internet connectivity was there and the computers were used by children.

We visited the classrooms and saw the desks, books, and other equipment the children use. We felt the rooms can be a little more organized and the books can also be kept in a more orderly manner.

The children were so full of joy. We visited the girls' dorms. The girls welcomed us into their rooms very lovingly.

Later in the evening we had a small gathering in which the children were divided into 2 groups and team players came and performed for their respective teams.

We then had a conversation with the teachers and Jabesh in the office. We learnt that the school had taken the children on a trip to Digha (a tourist spot by the ocean). We saw pictures which showed that the children had a very good time there.

Suggestions:

- It would have been nice if there had been a small Saraswati puja celebration organized in the school. Saraswati puja is about praying to the goddess of knowledge and hence it is celebrated with much gusto in schools and small communities in West Bengal.
- Understand the childrens' ability to use computers. What is the progress?
- How comfortable are the children? The dorms looked a little overcrowded. On days when the heat, humidity get oppressive do they have sufficient fans/ceiling fans etc.?
- In terms of nutrition understand what food is given to the children on a per week basis
- It would be nice to have surprise visits rather than planned. I understand that most of the times that is not possible but if we go on a regular weekday that might work out.

Overall

It's amazing to see how happy the children are. I would like to think they are normally that way and not just because someone from a faraway land visited them.