

School Report June - September 2013



The school opened in the first week of June. Three children left and two new students, Vijay and Ajay joined and have quickly settled in. This year five children will be appearing for the 7th standard exam. and Abhilash will be continuing his 10th standard studies for NIOS. We were happy to hear that two former students have passed the State Board exam for 10th standard. One of these two children has been struggling against great odds as he has no parents and has had to take responsibility for many things at home. Karthik passed with a first class and is now continuing his studies in a nearby college.

Kamala left in April after more than twenty years' service. We will miss her but hope that she recovers her health as she was in pain from rheumatoid arthritis for some years. We are fortunate to have Santhosh's mother who comes once a week to teach Hindi. In June a young teacher joined, Sumalatha. She has completed her D.Ed. but has had very little teaching experience but we are hoping that she will be a support and enjoy working in a different kind of setting from the conventional school.

From mid-June to mid-July we were fortunate to have a young enthusiastic volunteer who helped in drama and re-organizing the library. On Fridays Sharala and her daughter Shanthi come to offer activities during the Free Choice period. These have included painting and using the 'Scratch' programme for the computer.



The small children's learning area

Changes in infrastructure

During the holidays we made some major changes in the use of buildings. Firstly we changed a classroom into a kitchen and dining space.



The new kitchen and dining space



The smokeless 'chula' made in February 2013 is now adjacent to the dining area.

Sita Vanam, the room which had served as library, storeroom, computer room and Teacher's Resource room had become so crowded with things that we decided to use another room for the library and the computers.



The computers in a separate space

The library

We now have one room allocated for a library. Roshan (a volunteer) has been coming once a week to work with the older children with library activities. The classes have included making origami books, thinking about designs for book covers and investigating the wide variety of books.

This made the Teachers' Resource room a much more manageable space.



The new library space

Workshop on computers and puppetry

The first two weeks of school started with a workshop for ten children along with fifteen children from another school.

During the two week camp the children made puppets, and began to understand how to interact with a computer so as to programme an object to react to an action.

They tried to create a story with the idea of action and reaction.

Here we used MakeyMakey as an interface between the computer and the puppets. They programmed and recorded on "Scratch" a language designed by the Lifelong Kindergarten at MIT, Boston.

This was a good learning experience for children bringing together craft skills, narrative awareness and technical knowhow in using the computer in a creative and purposeful way.



Practicing



Performance using puppet

See the slide show attached.

Drama of 'Animal Lessons'

In July the small children did a small drama adapted from a book and video called "Animal School (**See**" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJeyNywDxPc&feature=youtube_gdata_player). The story is about inclusion and tells how different animals excel in what they do best and the folly of forcing pupils into one mould. The children very much enjoyed the experience and worked with Bhamani (a volunteer who is a student at Delhi University) and Santhosh Padmanaban. The final presentation was an informal one for the children and teachers but conveyed the story well and dramatically.

Music and drama

Every week since June the small children have enjoyed making music and doing drama with Imogen. They did an adaptation of the story of Peter and the Wolf using a variety of animals and birds. At present they are engaged in a small story about a scarecrow who was frightened to scare the crows away. They will be making a puppet show.

Talking about anger

Following an incident in the older children's class this group has been discussing the different ways we can respond to provocation other than using violence. The children also recounted their experiences of violence at home and reflected on their feelings and what might have been the alternatives. Such open discussions are very important as children are often exposed to violence and aggression.

Raksha Bandan

In August we celebrated Raksha Bandan. In addition to tying threads for each other we each also tied a thread for one tree that we would protect in the coming months. This has been a tradition in the school for some months. This year we have been fortunate to have good rains and the garden is flourishing.

Application for Accreditation with NIOS Basic Education Programme

In August Santhosh and I met the Regional Director of the NIOS Programme. He was extremely cordial and strongly encouraged us to apply for Accreditation and assured us verbally that we would be able to continue under the NIOS Basic Education Programme 'umbrella'. There are some minor hitches in our application such as an old address on the Certificate of Registration which dates back to 1981. We are in the process of trying to rectify these details. We have been informed that our application would be processed within one year of submission.

A film on teaching and learning based on Sita School

The film “Chikka Putta’ is almost finished. It was an exciting experience to show the children the film and watch their responses. The film has used footage taken over a period of 18 months from activities in the school. The trailer is available for anyone to see. The final film will be out by the end of the year. We will first be showing it to the parents to ensure that they are aware of what the film is about.

[Chikka Putta | Small Things, Big Things on Vimeo](#)

▶ 3:02 ▶ 3:02

vimeo.com/70111500

Forward plans

Many of the activities mentioned above will be continuing such as the library class and the music and drama classes. In addition the 7th standard children will be preparing for their exams. There is a plan to have a sports day.

We are very much hoping for some clarity about our affiliation with the Open School in the coming months.

On behalf of the teachers and children we would like to thank all those who have helped us in the last few months . This has been on many fronts including workshops and volunteering but also those who have ensured our funding has continued.

Jane Sahi

September 2013