

Poetry: Sarojini has been working with the younger children - Karuna and Spandana groups in compiling books of poetry. Children select, write and draw pictures for each poem. It's a collection of songs and poems they like along with their own creations. The children shared their work with the rest of the school in the Morning Prayer gatherings.



Independence Day celebration: Independence Day is a day to reflect on the community that is larger than just the village that the children belong to. The children while not losing the importance for their own local contexts learn more about the rest of the country. Awareness is an important aspect than just the customs. The children learn the meaning of Tagore's 'Jana gana mana' in its entirety (not just the first two stanzas that form the National Anthem). The other stanzas celebrate communal and social harmony. A few children spoke about some of the learning they have had in classes leading to Independence Day. One group of children are continuing to learn more about concepts of nation, state and their relationship to the local community.



Choice of activities: We wanted to bring in more freedom of choice in the schedules for the children. Now, some hours every week is set aside for children to choose an activity from a list of possibilities. This ensures that children do pick up an activity and get involved. One of the positive outcomes of this exercise has been a grouping chosen by the children yet cutting across ages and usual friendships. A discussion also happens on what are the possibilities of additional activities. Many of the choices are ideas from children. Some kids chose to play with wooden blocks – making structures, villages, celebrating festivals etc. We gave a box of clothing and accessories for kids to do anything they like. A group of kids first tried on and came up with roles on their own. After a short while a skit was also organized by them! Some other kids chose to do art and patterns in different forms. Some kids chose to read. A group of kids experimented with wires and simple electrical connections and they proudly displayed their lighted chariots.



‘Belti’ park: Over the last couple of months we have been organizing the playground to have a lot of adventure and obstacle courses. The effort is to develop various motor skills of the kids, improving their fitness, while giving the kids opportunities to do fun activities on their own. While we could have a vision on how the various challenges in the course could be tackled, the children could play with it in many different ways. We have been collecting old tyres to do tyre swings, jumping platforms etc. We also used a lot of bamboo poles (available in school) to create an obstacle course. We made a rope ladder with tough rope and bamboo. We used an old volleyball net to create a web for smaller kids to move around. We plan to work on more ideas in the coming months.

Phonetics in English learning: Jane has been trying out a new teaching methodology in phonetics to introduce new sounds of English and not just letters. The approach is to use certain actions and images to associate sounds for e.g. showing the thumbs for the sound ‘th’. Children in Chandana group are doing a lot of exercises with the new approach.

One of the children just joined the school after dropping out of the convent school. He will need a lot of support as he has lost out on a lot of learning because he was marginalized in a large class. Jane attended a class of a teacher in Aditya mallya school who uses the same approach. But, she recognized the need to adapt the teaching material to the local context in a sustainable way.

Computer sessions: Over the last few months, we have been working with the older children (alumni of Sita School who come for weekly evening computer sessions) to create a movie about the village and school's history or passage in time. We interviewed a few elders in the village and teachers. We plan to interview parents, students and also shoot old sites, wells, houses etc.



Spandana group have been animating their own story (attached as appendix) born out of input from everyone in the group. The children worked on their own except when there was a dispute about who should start the story. Karuna group has been working on creating a video collection of their English poems.

Symmetry: Kamala has been working with the children on symmetry and its prevalence in our day to day life. The children did a lot of interesting and fun activities to learn more about symmetry. An interesting game was to sit down, lie down or make any shape on the ground as pairs of similar heights. An outline would then be drawn with chalk around the symmetrical pair of kids. Other kids have to guess how the pair had positioned themselves to get that pattern on the ground. The children loved this activity and came up with very interesting combinations. In the process, they realized which patterns can be called symmetrical and which cannot.



Appendix

Story by Spandana group (translated from original Kannada write-up):

Ajay and Roshan lived in one village. Roshan was sitting on top of a tree. Ajay ran. He was tired so he sat under a tree.

Roshan was on that tree. He plucked some apples and dropped them down, they fell on Ajay. He ate some of the apples and put some in a bag. Ajay began to run.

Ajay was going home on the path. He went the wrong way and went to the forest.

A hungry lion came. The lion chased Ajay. More animals came. Then all the animals made a circle.

Ajay's father and mother went to the police. They told the police that a boy called Ajay was lost. The police asked for Ajay all over the village. Next the police went to look in the forest.

Ajay had gone to that forest. He stayed in one house there. In that house there lived a lion, a squirrel, a dog, a cat, a mouse and a deer. Ajay was frightened and ran away. The lion ran after him to give biscuits and coffee. The police found them and then they all went to Ajay's house.