

Teachers Day: It is a tradition in Sita School that the kids have a special program for the teachers on Teachers day. Every year there is something new and a surprise in store for the teachers. The kids pool in money (a nominal amount for every kid) and come up with a program, give simple gifts etc. The teachers were taken on a long procession along the path leading to the school and were made to sit under a special 'pandal'. The pathway was neatly decorated with 'kolams' and flowers. The pandal was made with bamboo poles that kids had collected and it was draped with beautiful sarees that the kids had got from home. We were entertained with a creative dance and drama show choreographed and rehearsed by the kids themselves. The elder kids took the initiative and helped the younger children with their roles. Later, a games session was organized for the teachers and we had great fun taking part in the games. After a special lunch the festivities ended.





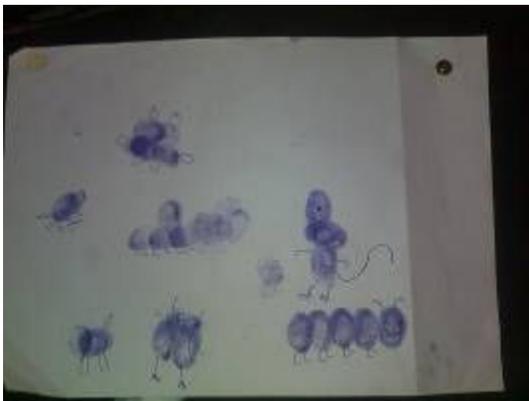
Runners' Trip: Team Asha runners made a trip to Sita School to know more about the efforts and interact with the children and teachers. They came on a Saturday morning and the kids welcomed them with signboards. The children, teachers and runners did a short run along a marked route. Some of the kids helped support the run with water points. After the run, everyone had a hearty breakfast of 'avallaki'. The kids performed the same program that they had done for the teachers. The audience loved it and was all praise for them. Later, we all sat in a circle and had a round of introductions. The children took turns in explaining various aspects of the school and the daily schedule. Some of the younger kids spoke about what they liked the most in school. This gave the runners a good idea about the school. After the introductions, we were taken on a brief tour around the school by the teachers and kids. There were discussions on the teaching methodologies in the classroom and assessments. The runners then left for the city.



Weaving: The kids spend time in the afternoons doing weaving. We use rags and waste cloth to make patterns in the portable frame. The children have done some very interesting designs. This helps their fine motor skills and focus.



Thumb prints: Another interesting activity we did in the last month was to use thumb prints and leaf prints to create different images. The children came up with a lot of unique designs on their own after starting with a few examples from Arvind Gupta's book.



Koodappa – Kaliappa: The younger children have been facing challenges in associating the concept of addition and subtraction to the symbols “+” and “-“. So, Kamala in discussion with Jane, introduced the characters of ‘Koodappa’ (‘koodu’ is to add) - a burly man and ‘Kaliappa’ (kali’ is to subtract) – thin and scrawny man. This will help the kids associate the symbol or character with the concept better.



Enormous Turnip: The Spandana group is enacting a story they learned in class. The story is about a farmer who grows an enormous turnip and finds it hard to pull it out. One by one all the family members, the dog, cat and even the mouse join him in pulling it out. Finally, they all pull it out and have a grand feast. The kids had a great time organizing themselves, dressing up and also delivering the dialogues. This was an interesting way to learn conversational English. In the other classes the children drew pictures depicting the story.



Phonemes: We have recently started a new way of introducing English letter sounds (the 42 phonemes) rather than beginning with the conventional alphabet. Each sound has a distinctive action usually associated with the sound. For example ‘qu’ is introduced as one sound and associated with the hand making the motion of a duck quacking. Initially the children cover all the sounds with one example and then learn the variations of the same sound with different letter combinations . For example the children first learn ‘ai’ sound as in ‘rain’ and then

later connect the same sound to 'ay' sound and 'a_e' sound such as in 'plate'. The children have responded positively to this method of using sound, action and picture.



Computer: Last month the elder kids went to 'Ulichikannahalli' to interview Saddam's family about the history of the village, lifestyle etc. We found it an interesting experience as we received a warm welcome and the children learned about a religion and culture that they are not accustomed to. We had a very good interview with a lot of interesting discussions. The younger kids are continuing with their projects.



Friday Free Activities: The Friday free activity sessions have been very interesting to observe. A group of children put up a couple of plays for everyone. One story was about a teacher who was 'stylish' and concerned about appearances, but did not come to class in time. Another story was about a girl who is ordered around by her mother to do all the work at home. In a funny way the girl keeps mixing up the instructions and is chided by her mother. In the end, the mother realizes that she should have explained and helped her better. Another group of kids have been exploring various constructions with small pipes. They made a small fountain with a pipe and lots of small holes. They have also been having fun with batteries and bulbs and we want to explore some simple experiments further.