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Report from Yvonne Coulson 2015

Chitardi Rajasthan January 16<sup>th</sup>. To February 12<sup>th</sup>

Pre departure was straight forward as I had met up with Dianne. She briefed me well on what to expect, however she did not know how cold the mornings were in early Jan. travelling on the open jeep! We resorted to buying a jumper in Sanjay's shop.

Orientation. On the Saturday morning Mukesh came to the hotel and introduced himself. Devinder, the head was away on a course. We travelled in a closed vehicle to the school and were greeted by boys beating drums and Arpita draped a gold scarf around our necks in welcome.

We visited all the class rooms and introduced ourselves to the children and staff. Then we discussed with Mukesh what we would teach and with which classes. I chose classes 6, 7, & 8, and would do 1 science a week the rest English, with the possibility of some more science. The time table was 3, 1 hour lessons,

10.45 -12.00 class 8,

12.05-1.05 class 6 then lunch break,

2.00-3.00pm class 7, we would be picked up at about 3.15pm.

We also learned there would be no school on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan because of the local elections.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> was to be Republic day, no lessons but need to be at school for 8.30am special activities till 11.00am the rest of the day free.

Note from *people and places*: volunteer are sometimes confronted with such unforeseen interruptions to their work schedule – hence our emphasis for volunteers to 'be prepared for the unexpected'

We were returned to the hotel for lunch and were met by the Rawat who invited us for drinks before dinner that evening. We needed the rest of the afternoon to unpack and relax the previous days had been very long travelling. We enjoyed our drinks and the Rani was very keen to know what we were going to do at the school. We were glad that there was no school on the Sunday and explored the hotel which is a huge old palace, and walked around the little town's narrow streets and along the lake side.

Work experience.

The hour lessons gave time for a variety of work to be covered on the topic and allow for singing or a rhyme, to close the session. A teacher was always available to translate: Om or Laxmi if it was science, Mukesh for English.

Class 8 we covered basic electricity, circuits, conductors/ insulators.

Parts of the body, with flash cards, internal organs ready for respiration, circulation and digestion. Led to the singing of head shoulders knees and toes!!

Sun, moon and planets, the seasons

In English we talked and wrote about themselves. Read the story of how the Elephant got his trunk, Rudyard Kipling lived very near here for some years. Past present and future. Wrote about their friend. Silent letters. How to plan a story "Story Web" Superlatives with flash cards concentrated on the exception ones eg. Good, better, best. Wrote a precise of Elephants Child ready for the final day's presentation and illustrated on cards.

Wrote letters to my children in Swinford, this they did find difficult.

Class 7 Temperature, introduced the class room thermometer, and a graph for daily recording. Took their temperatures with forehead thermometer. Demonstrated the digital thermometer. Talked about "normal" body temp. The temperature was recorded every day, - they would remind me if I forgot. Planted broad beans in jars, and studied how they grew, root then shoot etc. recorded in their books. Eventually we re-potted the best ones in soil in larger pots. We also grew cress on felt, comparing seed size and rate of germination. Body parts using flash cards. Sun, earth and seasons. English we worked on a sheet about themselves, and then their friend. Read "super worm" to them. They wrote out the poem ready to learn it. Past, present and future. Constructed sentences using p,p,and f . On the day after republic day children missing from 7 and 6 so had them together and read Handa's Hen discussed it and sang old MacDonald. We did some craft work making spiders from pipe cleaners, to go with Superworm. We also learnt 1 finger 1 thumb etc. Superlatives using the flash cards, were shy about getting into 3's if a mixed group.

Class 6 Introduced the topic of magnetism, difficult to demonstrate as all tables are metal, resorted to working on the floor. Filled in work sheets on attraction and repulsion, tested a variety of objects to find which are magnetic. Used small plotting compass to work out the magnetic fields of various magnets.

The body parts with flash cards, stuck them on a large diagram . Grew cress on felt. Introduced electricity, simple circuits only

1 cell, 1 bulb dim; 2 cells, 1 bulb bright.

Worked on English sheet about themselves. Reminded them English is written sitting on the line as opposed to Sanskrit which is mainly below the line. Read them the story of "monkey Puzzle".

Superlatives with flash cards in groups of three, worked outside on the veranda. Sun ,earth and seasons.

Each class spent time practising their presentation, with emphasis on pronunciation and volume.

All 3 classes had a lesson on the UK, where it is, how it is made up of 4 countries hence the name UK.

Each class had a story from "Indian Tales in English." Class 7 & 8 knew the story from Rajasthan, I told it in abbreviated form to 6 &7 too wordy for them, from the book 8 coped quite well. They also heard the story from Gujarat. The Rajasthan story would be good if any one there over the Divali season.

One interesting event was the distribution of iron tablets and folic acid to the girls 13 and over to prevent anaemia due to lack of iron in their diet some of the more frail boys also had these.

The following week the whole school had worm tablets, worms are very common among the children and can have a very debilitating effect on their health.

They get these treatments twice a year and the medication is provided by the WHO. Good to see it in operation.

Resources left. In large metal cupboard in head's room

6 red small plastic collection trays 6x12

Collection scissors:

12 small infant, 4 medium, 2 large

3 dozen pencils, 3 packs felt tips. 3 pks pencil crayons, 2 pks split pins. Small bag felt squares.

Electricity classroom kit in box

Magnets classroom kit in box

Set of 12 plotting compass

1 prism

1 classroom thermometer with graphs

1 digital clinical thermometer and 2 head strip thermometers.

1 pack of A4 coloured card.

Charts: - Solar system, the earth, the moon, the Seasons

Big books: - Monkey Puzzle, Handa's Hen, Superworm, The Elephants Child, Indian tales in English.

Input for future volunteers

Pronunciation is a problem for staff and children especially the 'f' sound, they talk with closed mouths need to open their mouths to form many of our sounds. Songs etc. help here.

The children and staff were most responsive and I felt it was a worthwhile trip. I would recommend it to future volunteers.

It would be better for a couple or 2 individuals as hotel has few guests who stay more than 2 nights and are often in big groups, an individual could find it lonely.

**Note: we always endeavour to place a minimum of two volunteer together, or at least, overlapping**

The staff were very friendly and we had dinner at Devinder's home and at Arpita's, we visited Ohm and his wife at his room.

The Deogarh Mahal is an interesting place to stay with very friendly staff. It is clean, quite spacious rooms but not a lot to do. Free Wifi. We took the train safari on the Sat morning there was no school and walked around the town and lake after school and on Sundays. Jodpur quite far for a day trip you would need to take Sat as well as Sunday off.

Yvonne Coulson February 2015.

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