

On the roof

As planned I was able to set up the new play material on the roof and began by working with the pre-nursery/Nursery A children.

I took the children up in small groups and familiarised them with the puzzles, building bricks/blocks, and the learning material that we had made at the last Jeevan School training session.

On the first three days one of the two class teachers accompanied me and on the fourth day I took groups on my own. I encouraged the teachers to be hands-on and work with the materials too; the feedback so far has been encouraging and I think they can see the value of spending time on these new activities.

As for the children, you don't need to understand Hindi to know that they think the sessions are great fun!

We take for granted that a 3/4 year old can build bricks and make a simple puzzle, but these children have never seen such things before. With repeated demonstrations and encouragement they learn that they have to pick up the puzzle pieces and lay them back down in the right place – they can see where a puzzle piece should go and try ramming the pieces together to make them fit. Another interesting technique is building a brick tower from the bottom up.



The best-laid schemes

What I had hoped to do was progress up through the nursery classes to upper and lower kindergarten, working in a similar way with the children and teachers; however, as the great Scottish bard Robert Burns reminds us: 'the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft' a-gley'.

I took ill on the evening of the 12th and it was a week before I was eating and feeling half-human again. My host family has been so very kind, running room service for me, fetching the doctor (ten minutes after he was called he was here, made his diagnosis and prescribed 4 different pills and a syrup, all for a call-out fee of Rs.150, which is approximately €2.50!!) and making sure I knew which medicines to take and

when. Asha and Pierre were also there giving help, advice and delicious oranges, which tempted me back to eating.

Being ill meant that I missed out on Children's Day on the 14th, but I did see some of the fun and games that ran up to it. All the classic games like musical bumps, musical chairs and the three-legged race were there.

I also missed the Jeevan School teacher training on 20th November. I hope to contribute to the session on Saturday 27th. Let's see what the next two weeks bring

Sylvia Livingstone