



Achyut Patwardhan School

Krishnamurti Foundation India, Rajghat, Varanasi

Photo Album



Built environment

The school is endowed with low intensity, green, spacious and aesthetically rich study and play environment.

The cosy and closeted structure ensures that all children and teachers see each other every single day thus fostering knowing and banishing anonymity.

Trees, plants, insects, soil and water are children's constant companion. With the four seasons bringing veritable changes with each, the school is where young minds meet with nature in the most unobtrusive manner.





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Learning spaces

Children at schools spend an enormous amount of time inside buildings. Open, well lit, ventilated and spaced out interiors that merge seamlessly with green exterior is conducive to learning.

APS is gifted with such spaces. No class has more than 25-30 children. Seating arrangement is made to ensure adequate space between children. Desks and benches are safe and ergonomic for the child. The rooms generally open up into well lit and green exteriors giving a comfortable feeling.

Library and assembly spaces are large and typically host limited children for any activity. The computer room too is similarly arranged.



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Books & the young

Reading books is about finding new friends. Can what is called a 'library' be that space where real friends and the imagined characters of books come alive together?

The school has long since realized the potential of this space called 'library'. It required us to challenge the image of a library as one where an archetypical loner sits in a corner alone with books. Rather at APS, library can be noisy, fun and as group an activity as anything else is.



If teachers do not embrace reading, why will children? The school is on a continuous journey to take the children and adults together on this path of exploration.



Reading outdoor

Given the importance the school gives to reading, no effort is spared in creating spaces to enable reading. Outdoor reading by children has taken off in a big way especially in times of pandemic.

Books are hung between trees. Children are free to pick and choose their book, sit in a posture of his/her comfort and read away. Teachers are available to assist to choose books. Group reading is also encouraged.

We have also commenced lending books to the home of children to further reinforce reading habits.



Curiosity leading the way

Science, formally speaking, at APS is a work-in-progress. Years of focus on liberal studies of language and numeracy had relegated science to one of secondary importance.

Recognizing this issue, the school has made humble attempts to bring about rigor to the discipline of science. The science lab has been recently renovated allowing children to conduct basic experiments.

The school also uses annual science days and exhibitions to spur the curiosity of the young minds. Visits to scientific institutions, visits by guests with scientific background and investing in books of science are part of this endeavor.

We are aware that this is a long journey yet we are determined to walk this path in the years to come.



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Finding a friend in a computer

The 21st century heralds the coming together of man and machine to achieve heights never seen before. Children of APS, like any other child, need to discover the beauty in a computer and not be intimidated by its prowess.

The computer Lab has ample IT resources, uninterrupted leased line for bandwidth and trained teachers to assist. Group exercises are encouraged so that children help each other.

The school has in a fairly short time witnessed impressive transformation in the confidence of children in being able to use these resources.





Getting to know the soil better

Our living environments increasingly has separated us from the roots literally! To bring the connectedness back, all that is needed perhaps is the shovel and spade.

The rich surroundings of the school with orchards, farms, a thriving dairy, a forest nursery and gardens invites children to participate in its care and tending. The agricultural program at school aims not just to connect by heart but also to provide students a scientific temper in understanding.



Seed programs, water management, mulching and orchard growing is integral to the education of children with a dedicated teacher providing the necessary guidance.





Culture- a binding force

The children of the school come from the surroundings of Varanasi that are steeped in traditions. Festivals are a way of life, an ushering of seasons and celebration of fraternity.

The school and home come together in celebrating the festivals of the region. Children make the symbols of the festivals, sing the songs and dance the dance. Food is always part of these celebrations.

The rituals break the barriers of gender, caste and class helping children discover the self in the other.





Nutrition

APS's nutritional program has always been an attraction in the villages around. The school has innovated within its limited budget to improve health outcomes through a well planned mid day meal program. Pulses, eggs, vegetables, dairy products and fruits are alternately tried along with carbohydrates.

Taste is key. The cooks come from local village while Teachers carefully take feedback of children and also watch waste to minimize it. Cultural events also provide opportunity to introduce appropriate meals to enliven the atmosphere.





Bridging indoor and outdoor

Children need to step out of homes and school to see the world outside. This is key for their cognitive growth and personality development.

At the school, the outdoor visits can have different objectives: learning, fun, taking responsibility and exploring the near. This can take the form of visit to Sarnath museum, walking along the ghats of Varanasi in the morning, eating the favorite malaiyo sweet or visiting the water testing facility.

Conscious attempt is made to let children use this opportunity to plan the entirety of such trips including taking responsibility for handling expenditures.



Born out of his deep compassion for fellow beings, Krishnamurti invited his friend and social reformer Achyut Patwardhan to engage with the villages in and around Rajghat. Over the last six decades or so of its existence, thousands of students have graduated out of the school. Hundreds of teachers have dedicated their working life to the school.

What remains over the decades is difficult to gauge. Yet, it is without doubt that the school has provided a safe and joyous space for the children. It remains our endeavor to keep it so. We invite you to join us in this journey.



Photograph: Achyut Patwardhan on the right with J. Krishnamurti

“A school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the student explore, not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their own behavior. “

J. Krishnamurti