Site Visit Report

Biswajit Parida, CLE Trust

Date of visit: 18th March 2022

Duration of Visit: 9 am IST to 5 pm IST

Visited sites:

a. Sri Aurobindo Integral School, Basundhara, Cuttack
   https://www.saisbasundhara.org/

b. Residential hostel

Purpose:

To conduct an independent review of the school as requested by Asha Purdue chapter, USA.

Site Visit Schedule:

a. School visit & Introduction with all teachers
b. Meeting with Management trustee and teachers
c. Floor Visit to residential hostel (All teachers and children’s rooms, washrooms, other facilities, interaction with the parents)
d. Interaction with school children (Introduction of children, one-to-one conversation with children, children’s programmes like dance, songs, rhymes and distribution of some gifts and sweets to children)
e. Break for lunch (Visit to the food mess and interaction with children)
f. Lunch with the Hostel warden, caretaker and management trustee
g. Google meet call with CLE Trust to introduce the school coordinator
h. Face to Face meeting with teachers
i. Finally, alavida !!!

SCHOOL VISIT & INTRODUCTION WITH ALL TEACHERS

School is located in a beautiful campus, near the river bed of Mahanadi in Cuttack, well protected by a boundary wall and iron gate. The gate closes after 6 pm in the evening for the safety of the girls and women in the campus.

School is a standalone building having enough rooms for the classes from KG to Class 8. There is a pooja room for Sri Aurobindo and Maa with a serene and calming atmosphere. The rooms are huge equipped with black boards, chairs and tables for the children. The rooms are well ventilated and there are cleaning staff to clean the school on regular basis. There is a computer room where two laptops are kept and the students are taught computers in this room. The school has hygienic wash rooms as well as a kitchen.
I met the management trustees (Bidhu B Mohanty, Snigdha Biswal, Sarmistha Mohapatra, Sagarika Patnaik) and the 7 teachers: Suraj, Lora, Dharitree, Jayashree, Sasmita, Bhagyashree, Rashmita in the school and I interacted with them for nearly 1.5 hrs after which I went to the hostel.

On that day, the school was closed for the children because of a local festival called Dola Purnima and the children were in the hostel.

Points of discussion:

a. Progress in the school
b. Children’s involvement
c. Teachers’ concerns and their aspirations
d. Issues in the school

All classes are conducted on regular basis as per the timelines provided by the State government. The teachers are conducting extra-curricular activities like yoga, gardening, cleaning of the complex, badminton, morning prayer, exercises. The computer classes started from March, 2022 and is in progress. Particular care is given to maintain a good level of hygiene in the school, hostel premises. There is a proper resource room for the teachers to conduct meetings, work on their class preparations and also to interact among themselves.

During COVID 19, the teachers prepared an academic schedule to interact with the students over the phone and the teachers shared their positive experiences with me. However, the regular classes were hampered due to lack of connectivity in remote places or unavailability of mobile phones. Fortunately, the schools reopened soon after and the students were able to catch up with all that they had missed during lockdown.

I was happy to note that the management, trustees keep a close eye by visiting the school on regular basis and get a firsthand feedback on issues such as:

a. food for the children
b. miscellaneous expenses
c. issues in the hostel and their resolutions
d. fund raising
e. children’s academics and their daily requirements

Snigdha Mam teaches the students on regular basis and also guides the teachers to review the children’s progress.

The students are regular to the school. Books and notebooks are provided to the children, (which I checked in the hostel). In the evening hours, the teachers spend time with the students by helping in their hometasks or offering them assistance in their areas of concern. Prayer and yoga are part of their daily activities. The children, teachers and other residents of the school jointly celebrate various festivals and occasions like Holi and others.
Teachers discussed their concerns and their aspirations. They thought that the food being served could be better and I was assured by the management and trustees that they were giving this a priority and would make the needed changes by building a cafeteria and a kitchen. It would take some time to complete the project as the fund requirement is quite huge. The teachers have the option to visit their hometown and spend time with their families whenever they desire. This serves as a motivating factor for them.

A gentle suggestion was offered by me to hone up their English skills as I could observe that the teachers and students were comfortable in communicating in Oriya only. Since then English classes are being conducted for the teachers from April of this year.

**Visit to Residential Hostel**

Around 11 am, I reached the hostel and was astonished to see many parents and new joinees who were completing their school joining formalities. Harapriya, the superintendent was busy completing the admission procedures and interacting with the parents. The teachers chipped in to help complete the admission process and it took them nearly an hour to complete the formalities. Positive feedback from parents, children and a solid reputation built over the years is drawing many prospective parents to the school, many from remote, faraway districts of Odisha.

I visited the children’s and teachers’ rooms and was happy to see the facilities being provided to the children. The rooms were neat, tidy and clean. The children were enthused to greet me and show me around. The hygiene in the hostel is very good.

We met the 60+ students in the conference room (of the first floor). I got introduced to all the children, I enquired about their interests and their future aspirations. I was pleasantly surprised to know that few are aspiring to be administrators in the future or choose careers in sports or become a singer which were not encouraged earlier in Indian homes. The children entertained us with songs, beautiful dance performances and rhymes.

All these events were memorable and I carried back fond memories of my visit. A special thanks to the children and teachers for their efforts to make my visit worthwhile. It was good to observe that the children are being well cared for and attention is being given to develop their talents in both academics and various extra-curricular activities. Besides, they have performed in various events in inter school competitions and won many accolades.

Outcome of the meeting with Children (ACTION PLAN)

- a. Provide opportunity for the children in the hostel to play badminton and organize guitar classes in the future.
- b. Learn computers in the next one month (good progress observed in last 2 months)

I also got an opportunity to discuss with the visiting doctor and this is a good facility being provided to the residents of the hostel.
A Final note:

Meeting with CLE Trust (Rahul Pandey, Leela and Imtiaz)

Joint Google meet happened between the school management trustee members, teachers and CLE trust members. It was finalized that English online classes should be initiated for both the teachers and students. In the last 2 months, English classes for teachers have been started and teachers are getting benefitted out of it. Online classes for children will start in another one week (week of 16th May).

Overall, my feedback about the school and teachers:

a. School is in a progressive path
b. Teachers’ performances are good. They are doing a fine task of developing the students wholistically. Special mention goes out to Suraj and Harapriya for the school’s overall development. Harapriya is very good in terms of administering various activities and managing the 60+ children.