

BROMHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (BES)

WARDHANNAPET

Report of annual inspection visit 26 – 28 February 2013

The annual visit was made by Trevor Ogden and Felicity Leinster (both members of the management committee of BES), Violet Wallbridge and Tim Pedley.

We visited in the afternoon of Tuesday 26th February, immediately after a long and delayed flight from Gatwick, for a full day on Wednesday 27th including the school's Annual Day celebrations, and again in the morning of Thursday 28th.

Upon turning into the 200 yard track down to the school we were met by all the children lining both sides of the track, who then proceeded to escort us to the school led by drums and much excitement.

The purpose of the annual visit is mainly to remind the teachers and administrators of the school of BBC's total financial involvement in the running of the school and to encourage staff, the Kondety family and, above all, the children.

Our first afternoon was taken up with demonstrations of two, fairly energetic, team games of what can best be described as advanced forms of tag. The children really enjoy both the exercise and the competition that these games bring. Now that the school playground has been properly levelled there is much opportunity for such exercise. Previously physical exercise seems largely to have been covered by military style drill moves but under the new headmaster organised games are much more to the fore.

Wednesday saw us performing an Open the Book version of the Good Samaritan. It is really encouraging to see that the children enjoy and are used to these Bible stories. Indeed, on Thursday we interrupted a full school assembly where one of the new teachers, a Christian as opposed to a Hindu, was encouraging singing of Christian songs, which they clearly know. This was not put on for our benefit; they did not know we would be arriving at that time.

We were also shown an exhibition where the children demonstrated a number of small scientific experiments that they had been taught – most encouraging. On Wednesday afternoon we had discussions with Ramaiah Kondety and the headmaster about how the school was doing and more detail of the points covered follow in this report.

Wednesday evening saw the Annual Day Celebrations in front of 100 children and probably in excess of 150 parents and other adults, comprising singing and dancing various speeches (the Indians love these!!), prize giving and contributions from Trevor and Tim with greetings from Felicity and Violet. Trevor gave a short talk, aimed at the adults, based on the story of the Prodigal Son while Tim reminded the children that, regardless of their circumstances, in

God's eyes they are Special and has great plans for each of them. The headmaster gave his annual report, a feature that did not occur under the previous head, and a copy of this will be posted on the website www.bromham.org/india.

We can report that the school is now functioning well. There appears to have been a period after the death of the previous head when the school was in danger of losing its direction, but this has been rectified by the new head, Mr M P Ramanadham who, now retired, was for many years headmaster of a local secondary school. Although now living in and travelling daily from Warangal, he is a native of Wardhannapet. Indeed, he was headmaster to Ramaiah's children. He spends much of his time instructing and encouraging his young teaching staff. Whereas the previous head and his wife were the loving surrogate grandparents these young children needed in their first experience of education and school life, Mr Ramanadham brings many teaching and management skills to the job. This is reflected in the way the staff are responding.

In addition to the head there are two teachers who were there on our previous visit and two new additions one of whom, a science specialist, also brings a much needed Christian presence to the staff room. He also appears to be quite musical.

Please take time to read the head's report, in which he says that 80% of the children are achieving 'A' grade, which is so encouraging. The weaker children are not forgotten and are given special coaching, especially in Maths and Telugu.

This summer a new teacher will be required as the fifth, and last, class is added. Additionally we understand that it is a government requirement that a school of five year classes has a dedicated PE teacher and a suitable candidate will be sought. Currently the salary level of the teachers is substantially below our annual budget and therefore at that level the budget will cover the cost of 6 teachers. We discussed the level of salaries. We are told that whilst the government sets a higher suggested minimum wage, the level that BES pays its staff is equal to what the other schools in Wardhannapet pay. Whilst both we and Ramaiah would like to pay more, Ramaiah does not wish to antagonise either the village or the other schools by being seen to pay substantially more and thus run the risk of poaching the best staff. Having seen the village situation for some years now, we agree with that approach.

We returned with many pictures that the children have drawn and letters that they have written to the children of Bromham Lower School. We have taken class photographs and one of the whole school and these will be put on the website.

Generally the children are healthy at present, all immunized but they often have gastric and viral illnesses. The school is going to apply to local government to host a health camp on the premises during the summer holiday when many medical specialists will be there to monitor the health of all the children and, to some extent, their parents. The toilets are kept very clean and we have provided more soap and hand washing posters. There is evidence that soap is being used, which is a good step forward.

Clean drinking water continues to be provided on a daily basis.

To date the school has provided bananas for all the children once a week to supplement their diet. Our budget has always been for two a week and we have asked that this provision is raised to twice a week immediately.

All building work on the school is now complete. Since the visit in 2012 the school hall has been completed which can accommodate all the children. Should additional rooms be required in future, the hall has been designed so that partition walls could easily be constructed to form 3 rooms. In addition to the hall there is a teachers' office and four classrooms with a fifth room ready for occupation by class 5 in the next academic year. The furniture for this room is already in place. Two cupboards are on order to house the library which has been funded by Bromham Lower School. The stage has now been fully completed.

As recently reported to the church, a bore hole has now been successfully drilled to provide a reliable source of water. This is about to be linked to pumps to enable water to be stored on the roof for washing and toilet purposes. Funding for this was provided some time ago by Bromham scouts who continue to be enthusiastic in their support. This year they raised funds to enable us to present to the school a new digital camera and various CDs and books of Christian children's songs and some musical instruments. We were able to sing to them and the children and teachers joined in. There was sufficient remaining for us to give the school cash which they are going to use to purchase volley ball nets and equipment.

It is proposed to create a rainwater collection pond in the far corner of the school site, for general use in the dry months.

It is hoped this year to instigate various programmes in the school premises for adults in the village on such subjects as youth education awareness, health issues, Christianity, and ladies' issues. These will incorporate a free meal which should be all that is needed to make them attractive! We will be advised of what the likely cost is once this has been investigated but it is likely to be a minimal sum.

Nine of the children now come from outlying villages and this number is expected to increase. Originally the school arranged for taxis for these children but this has proved to be a completely unreliable option. The children presently walk the 2 kilometres to school which is not a long distance in these parts. However the school would like to consider the purchase of a 20 seater vehicle to enable these children to be transported safely to and from school. It would also be used for other school purposes. We have asked Ramaiah to investigate the likely cost of purchase of a suitable used vehicle, together with running costs and a driver. He will let us have these figures in due course which will enable the team to discuss the proposal in more detail. Suffice it to say at this stage that, thanks in no small part to the generosity of Marks and Spencer plc throughout 2012, the India fund is substantially in credit.

We are happy to report that the school is now running very satisfactorily and well within budget. It was agreed that the school would operate to current budget for 2013 and 2014, at which time it will be at full capacity. The only variation to budget thereafter would be an inflation increase. Early in 2015 we shall draw up a 4 year plan which will be presented to local government to enable them to consider if they would give a grant to make BES an "aided school". This might mean having less of a Christian influence but we have to plan for a position where BBC, whether corporately or through the direct giving of individual members, is unable to provide funds for the continued running of the school.

Our thanks to all who support the school, either through prayer or sponsorship.

Trevor, Felicity, Violet and Tim