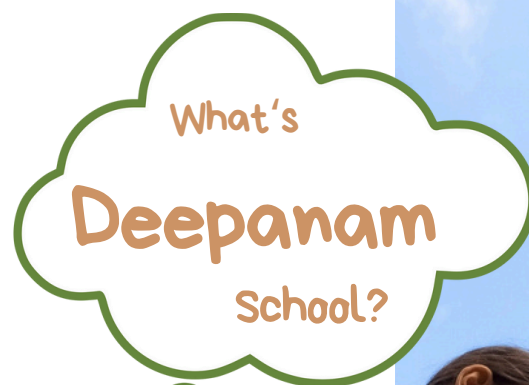


DEEPANAM SCHOOL

March 2025 | **newsletter** | Vol. 3



Well...

Located in a lush green and beautiful campus in the international township of Auroville, South India, Deepanam is a unique school for children between the ages of 7 to 14 years.

Founded in 2006, Deepanam is a movement towards an unending education. Our aspiration is to cultivate a nourishing environment that helps children become lifelong learners.



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OUR EIGHT-YEAR
LEARNING PROGRAM IS
DIVIDED INTO FOUR
MIXED AGE GROUPS.

THE MIXED AGE GROUPS
PROVIDE ABUNDANT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
EXPLORATION AND PEER-
LEARNING.





DEEPANAM SCHOOL

Growing up in Auroville

When I ask my students in the class “What do you love about Auroville?”, the children’s responses are always heartfelt and full of wonder:

“I love the freedom here.”

“I love to climb trees.”

“I love my school.”

“I love nature”

Growing up in Auroville is a unique experience. The freedom, the connection to nature, and the openness of learning create a nurturing environment for children. But beyond these simple joys lies something deeper—a connection to a larger vision.

Auroville is not just a place; it is an experiment and a dream that The Mother envisioned—an experiment in human unity, higher consciousness, and integral education.

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT OUR
CHILDREN KNOW WHAT
AUROVILLE DREAMS TO BE,
AND WHO THE MOTHER AND
SRI AUROBINDO ARE.**

At Deepanam, we create a space for this deeper connection. Every year, we celebrate Sri Aurobindo’s birthday, where children present his life story, recite his poems and sonnets, or chant Sri Aurobindo’s Gayatri mantra.



Auroville Week

End of February is special here, for we celebrate both Mother's and Auroville's birthdays.

This month, then offers a special occasion to explore the qualities represented in Mother's symbol: qualities like sincerity, peace, aspiration, and perseverance. We do not seek to 'teach' these, but rather discover and experience them through stories, activities, and reflection.



Learning and experiencing these qualities from a young age adds great value to their growth.

Children become deeply immersed when we share stories about Auroville and The Mother.

These stories spark their imagination and help them feel more connected to the place they are growing up in. These stories awaken something within them, a sense of belonging, purpose, and quiet inspiration.

A child's a deeper journey

In Auroville, education seeks to go beyond the learning of facts, training the mind or working on behaviour. It is about growing in consciousness, in connection, and in joy.

And perhaps, when a child says, "I love Auroville because I feel free," they are touching something far deeper.

**THE FREEDOM TO BE, TO
LEARN, AND TO GROW IN THE
LIGHT OF A LIVING DREAM.**

The aim is to introduce, our children to The Mother, Sri Aurobindo and many layers of Auroville, its evolving nature, its spirit of adventure and progress, and the deeper purpose it holds as our shared home.

Priti



Light Group

Age 6 to 8 years

The third term of the year with this age group witnesses wonderful growth. Students have finally settled in, adapted to each other, the approach to and rhythm of the work. They have formed strong bonds with their teachers.



Morning Circle

Conversations and reflections

Our circle times of sharing become moments of discussion and reflection or actions, reactions and perceptions.

The more we discuss attitudes with this age group, the more we are constantly surprised by the refinement and clarity of observations.

In any collective, there will be friction. We noticed that the kids spent quite a lot of time complaining about others, telling each other off and seemed to completely forget that they could also share good things about each other.

TO LOVE TO LEARN IS THE MOST
PRECIOUS GIFT THAT ONE CAN MAKE
TO A CHILD, TO LEARN ALWAYS AND
EVERYWHERE.

— Mother



Towards trust

Naturally in an environment of complaints, some found it difficult to accept suggestions and corrections from others, which came off as accusations which they felt they needed to protect themselves from.

We need patience and courage to accept feedback, and speak gently of the improvement we and others can make.

The idea of sharing positive things and areas for improvement came from the kids themselves.

Aurevan

BEHOLD THE CHILDREN
OF THE EARTH AND SKY!



Butterfly reflections

One Thursday morning, students picked out each other's names and shared three things they really liked and enjoyed about their friend, as well as two things their friend could improve.

These were written out on the black board and discussed. Each student then received a beautiful, colorful paper butterfly. On it, they wrote for themselves: three things that their friends had said they liked about them, and two things that a friend suggested they could improve. Some added their very own observations about themselves too.

Gomathi

Gomathi had started the exercise with the students, and then I thought, why not do the same for teachers and parents — to make it fair.

And so we did.

Anu



Learning to learn Independence and a love for books

Learning to learn, perhaps begins with choice. Loving to learn perhaps with enthusiasm, and a sense of one's own growth and progress.

In the first four years of Deepanam, each child follows a personal work plan, deciding how to move through their morning.

In Light Group, academic subjects like Math and English happen three times a week for 90mins.

And then—painting, experiments, stories, chanting, ATB, dance, theatre, library time, board games and legos, and exploring Auroville.

Because of this open structure, and encouragement to each child to find their own rhythm, and their own way of way. The start of the year can feel chaotic—by the third term, the shift is striking: their independence, confidence, focus, and sense of purpose & joy in the work have quietly bloomed.



Learning Tamil

For 6-8-year-olds in the Light group, Tamil classes focus on simple phrases, colors, numbers, and days of the week.

Interactive activities like songs, games, and flashcards help children grasp basics while enjoying traditional Tamil cultural elements.

For the students already familiar with the language, we introduce reading and writing and key elements of Tamil culture such as couplets from the Thirukkural.

Suguna & Kamala

THE BLUE SEA DANCES LIKE A GIRL
WITH SAPPHIRE AND WITH PEARL
CROWNING HER LOCKS.



Awareness Through the Body

The planes of the being

This term with Light and Peace Groups, we looked at a model of the being—physical, vital, mental, and subtle physical.

To explore the vital, children played a short game with pauses to observe emotions and how calmness could be restored through breath and sensation. We ended with a quiet moment, eyes closed, feeling subtle energy between the hands.

Those who could concentrate were amazed to sense something invisible—describing it as warmth, a magnet, tingling, or a soft cloth—realizing how uniquely each person experiences it.

The work on the physical body started by learning body parts, joints, and bones through coloring and games, followed by exploring posture, spine alignment, and foot awareness.

The focus then shifted to evolution, with children embodying each stage from amoeba to human. We discussed how progressively we evolve towards perfection and growth in consciousness



During this class, many shared a deep wish to grow as better human beings—caring for one another and the planet, and imagining a world without war, pollution, or poverty.

In the next class, a cooperative game helped children see that success came from helping one another. Instead of blaming, they encouraged those facing difficulty.

In our reflection sessions, students spoke about how it felt good to be part of a supportive group, where trust and mutual respect naturally grew through shared effort.

Patricia



Peace Group

Age 8 to 10 years

Children in this age group are full of questions and energy. They enjoy figuring things out together, working on projects, and diving into real-world experiences. There's a growing ability to listen, focus, and take responsibility—mixed, of course, with plenty of movement and laughter.



Learning

Beyond the Classroom

Children love field trips—whether within Auroville or beyond. These experiences offer hands-on learning that goes far beyond classroom walls, helping children develop essential life skills such as managing their belongings, supporting each other, and adapting to new environments and rules. In these settings, learning happens naturally and practically.

Each field trip sparks curiosity and rich conversations, nurturing not just skills but also resilience, empathy, and lasting memories that shape their journey of becoming.

WHAT IS GOD AFTER ALL? AN ETERNAL
CHILD PLAYING AN ETERNAL GAME IN
AN ETERNAL GARDEN.

— Sri Aurobindo





This year, we embarked on several exciting trips. As part of our project on different landforms, we explored two canyons in Auroville—one near Forecomers and another near Nine Palms.

The children were fascinated to witness the natural formations and how they contribute to our ecological systems.

TELL ME AND I FORGET. TEACH ME AND I
REMEMBER. INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN.

— Benjamin Franklin



Another highlight was our visit to the Pichavaram mangroves and the Chidambaram temple.

We also enjoyed a forest picnic right here in Auroville.

Each trip offered a unique blend of adventure, wonder, and deep learning, bringing classroom lessons to real life experience.

Tamizh Selvi & Priti





Quality Gratitude and Creative Writing

Gratitude is one of the most essential qualities one can cultivate in life. However, amidst our daily routines, we often forget to acknowledge and appreciate what we have and the contributions of those around us.

As part of Auroville Special Week, the Peace Group initiated a 21-day Gratitude Challenge, encouraging students to consciously practice and reflect on gratitude in their lives. Additionally, we delved into an in depth discussion on the quality of gratitude, guided by the teachings and quotations of The Mother.

The results were mixed, as some children were deeply touched by the experience, while others responded to it with a more neutral perspective.

Being in Auroville, it offers a environment where values are explored naturally rather than imposed on children.

The discussions and reflections during this period allowed students to develop a deeper understanding of gratitude, recognizing its presence in their daily experiences and interactions.

To further internalize the concept of gratitude, students engaged in a creative writing exercise focused on acrostic poems. Using the theme of gratitude, they crafted poems that highlighted their personal reflections and expressions of thankfulness.

Additionally, they were given the freedom to explore other qualities of their choice, allowing for a broader engagement with positive values.

Through discussions, reflections, and creative expression, the children developed a deeper appreciation for gratitude in their daily routine.

This initiative fostered self-awareness while highlighting the importance of recognizing and valuing life's positive aspects and the contributions of others.

Pritit



GRATITUDE: IT IS YOU WHO OPEN ALL THE CLOSED DOORS AND LET THE GRACE WHICH SAVES PENETRATE DEEPLY.

— Mother





Tamizh Language

For the 9-10 year olds in the Peace group, Tamil classes focus on practical language skills and cultural immersion. Students learn basic phrases, numbers, colors, and days of the week through interactive methods like traditional Tamil games, including "cillar" and Kabaddi.

Festivals like Pongal and Saraswati Puja are introduced with hands-on activities, such as making kolams.

These engaging lessons foster both language acquisition and a deeper connection to Tamil culture.

Suguna

BE ONLY A BURNING FIRE
FOR PROGRESS, TAKE
WHATEVER COMES TO YOU
AS AN AID TO YOUR
PROGRESS AND
IMMEDIATELY MAKE
WHATEVER PROGRESS IS
REQUIRED.

— Mother



Grace Group

Age 10 to 12 years

Since the beginning of the school year, we have been connecting to The Mother's flowers and their spiritual messages.



The Mother's Flowers Never Tell a Lie

Every Thursday, as part of the morning circle, each of us would pick a Bloomo! card and read out aloud the name of the flower and the message carrying the significance to the entire class. Initially, the children found it hard to read words like 'psychic', 'supramental', 'consciousness', 'immortality' which carried deeper meanings and perhaps were not part of their everyday vocabulary.

As we approached the last term, we observed that reading the messages in the cards was a breeze for many.

The
'Never Tell a Lie'
card was a
favourite for
this group.





The 12 Qualities

In February, the sixth graders were engaged in exploring the 12 qualities of The Mother as part of the Painting classes.

Each one chose two qualities and worked on illustrating the flowers representing those qualities. They also used watercolors to paint the illustrations and created the entire set of 12 qualities together.

The fifth graders along with the sixth graders, prepared an oral presentation of the 12 qualities in four languages – English, French, Tamil and Sanskrit.

It was the first time that the group learnt the 12 qualities in Tamil and Sanskrit.

Narmadha & Shaalini



Sea Change

Programme

For Auroville's birthday, to deepen our connection with the community, Deepanam collaborated with Wasteless, an Auroville unit, through their 'SEA Change' programme— an innovative 5-lesson course, designed for ages 10–13, educates students about marine plastic pollution and the science of microplastics through fun, hands-on activities.

Teaching the Grace group was inspiring. The children spoke about microplastics with enthusiasm, showing real curiosity. The programme included experiments, games, videos, and quizzes, all grounded in the latest research. Students especially loved the outdoor tag games that illustrated how fish mistake microplastics for plankton.

On March 17, our students became teachers, sharing their learning with parents and other classes during a lively 'Sea Change Celebration'.

The Wasteless Team



Creating a Safe Space

Social Emotional Learning

Initially when I started my classes in Grace Group in 2018, the students named my class 'Gopa Class', not knowing what this class is meant for.

Back then, it was my humble attempt to get to know the 10-13 year old students, who were at a very interesting developmental age, with lots happening with their bodies, cognition and social relationships.

I held weekly group sessions to get to know their inner and social worlds as they struggled with self identity/beliefs, friendships and their relationships with adults.

It was a safe and non judgmental space provided to share about their feelings/thoughts and the connection to their behavior, and observing others share similar feelings too.

Students engaged in exploring their inner worlds through various reflective activities and games, and learning to manage their emotions through coping tools. They understood themselves through brain science and used mindfulness exercises to connect with themselves. Learning social skills and communication skills empowered them to navigate their relationships with peers.



Over the years, my class has evolved organically, leaning on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) framework, with decades of evidence in research showing positive impact on students in terms of self awareness, self management, responsible decision making etc., leading to better classroom climate.



With Auroville schools already having a strong base of Integral Education, which offers a holistic approach that nurtures the whole child-body emotions, mind and spirit, there is room for SEL to continue to evolve and align into a curriculum.

It has been a fulfilling journey so far, as I have built beautiful relationships with the students, teachers and parents. The biggest impact of SEL that I can observe, is that it helps students to take care of their mental health and seek help with less hesitation, even when they get into high school.

I believe these are lifelong skills, and are as developmental, as reading, writing, and mathematics. The earlier we start practicing this with the students, the better equipped and adjusted they will be as adults.

Gopa



BE GRATEFUL FOR ALL ORDEALS, THEY ARE THE SHORTEST WAY TO THE DIVINE.

Mandala

A tool for self-expression

In the Mandala class, the students of Grace group embarked on a creative and personal journey through the art of mandala expression.

Beginning with basic mandalas using ready-made "skeletons" in both Black & White and colour, they gradually learned to construct their own using compasses and protractors, developing technical skills and confidence.

Exploring monochrome colour palettes encouraged focus and a deeper understanding of colour, while the "Flower of Life" mandala offered a bridge between sacred geometry and aesthetics.

As the weeks progressed, students created mandalas inspired by holiday memories, emotional states, and free-form ideas—each piece a unique window into the student's inner world. Our Inca-inspired mandalas for the Tintin play added a touch of cultural storytelling.

TO WATCH THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE STARS:
MOTIONLESSLY MOVING WITH THE MIGHT OF EARTH,
THEY SEE THE AGES PASS AND ARE THE SAME.



The way mandalas are taught in this class goes beyond traditional patterns. Here, they become tools for self-expression, reflection, and creative freedom. Students are encouraged to explore their emotions and visions in a safe and inspiring space.

IT HAS BEEN A JOY TO
WITNESS THE STUDENTS'
GROWTH IN CREATIVITY AND
CONFIDENCE.

They inspire one another while remaining true to their own unique styles, making this semester a truly rewarding experience.

Cleo



Faith & Hope

Age 12 to 14 years

National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) began in 2018 for Faith group as a daunting yet exciting challenge: write as many words as possible in thirty days.



'As You Like It'

A joyful journey on stage

The Faith and Hope group at Deepanam performed As You Like It, and it was a performance to remember.

Taking on a Shakespeare play is never easy, especially with its old and poetic language. At first, many students found it difficult to understand and speak their lines clearly.

But slowly, with practice and support, they began to enjoy the rhythm and beauty of the words. They worked hard to bring the story to life, and their efforts paid off.

One of the biggest challenges during the practice sessions was regular attendance. With so many students—36 in total—it was tough to have everyone present at the same time.

Some missed rehearsals because of illness or other reasons, and it was not easy to keep the flow going. But the group stayed positive and kept helping each other.

In the end, each student gave their best and stood confidently on stage.

Mahavir



A special moment in the play was the beautiful dance performed by the Peace group, children aged 9 and 10. Their joyful and well-coordinated dance brought a fresh energy to the play and won loud applause from the audience. The play also included a lively song that made the audience smile and added more fun to the story.

A huge part of the success of the play goes to Bhakti, who directed the play and designed the costumes. Managing a big group of students, organizing rehearsals, creating props, and making sure everything came together on time was a huge task. But she handled it all with care, creativity, and calmness.

THE COLORFUL COSTUMES
AND BEAUTIFUL SETS ADDED
CHARM TO THE WHOLE
PERFORMANCE.

The final show was a mega event. Families, friends, teachers, and many others from the community came to watch. The laughter, applause, and smiles in the audience showed how much they enjoyed it. It was not just a play, but a celebration of teamwork, creativity, and joy.

The students felt proud of what they had achieved. Many of them overcame their fears of speaking on stage. They learned to express, to listen, and to support each other.

The performance of As You Like It was not just a success—it was an experience they will remember for a long time.

Mahavir



As we liked it

Students' impressions

Through all the ups and downs, I feel that we all did well and we all did our best so I don't regret it one bit.

Raaya

I always get this really happy feeling when I say a line and the audience laughs. If you think about it, the only other way you'd ever get two hundred people to laugh at something you say is if you're a comedian or in a play.

What I'm trying to say is that an audience gives certain scenes more meaning. Their reactions—whether it's laughter, sadness, or even an "aww"—let you know what really works. And in the end, it's a great feeling to have people see what you've been working on for one or two months. It makes you feel like you've actually accomplished something.

Luce

I played a minor character that had to sing. Although I enjoy singing, I had never performed an English song before, but this experience gave me the courage to perform any song.

I had never heard of Shakespeare before, so this was a completely novel sensation for me.

Harshana



Awareness Through the body

This month, with Hope, Faith and Grace Groups, we focused on emotions—how they come and go like clouds in the sky. We are not these clouds, they simply pass through us.

Children explored this through partner work, eye contact, trust games, and concentration exercises to observe their inner experience. Each session ended with a short debrief to reflect on what arose.

We also worked on differentiating between body sensations and emotions—how they're connected and how to put them into words.

Recognising emotions helps us learn that we always have a choice in how we feel.

The Circuit

The objective of the circuit is to be a mirror of life.

We find ourselves in situations that we can't control but we can always control how we feel and that we are self directed beings who have the power to decide how we feel at any time. Feeling good and the sense of well being is our responsibility.



ON THE CIRCUIT WE EXPLORE OURSELVES, FIRST WITH EYES OPEN. THEN WITH EYES CLOSED AND CROSSING OTHERS, MEETING OTHERS ON THE PATHS.

The circuit offers situations that are a mirror of our daily lives.

The circuit gives the children a chance to observe themselves in different situations in a safe space, and thus becoming aware of patterns, habits, the way one uses oneself, physically, emotionally and mentally.

THIS IS USEFUL AS YOU CAN GET TO KNOW YOURSELF BETTER AND THUS CAN DIRECT THIS IN A POSITIVE WAY IN DAILY LIFE.

Natascha



Edible Weed Walk

Hope group students took an Edible Weed Walk at Savitri Bhavan with Nina Sengupta, an ecologist and passionate advocate for sustainable foraging.

This walk introduced students to the often-overlooked world of edible weeds—nutritious, resilient plants that grow abundantly in our surroundings.

While walking through the Savitri Bhavan, students discovered that many common weeds are not just edible but also packed with nutrients. Nina shared fascinating insights into how these plants have been traditionally used for food and medicine in different cultures. With each plant identified, students got to touch, smell, and even taste leaves and flowers, transforming their understanding of what food can be.

She also questioned and brainstormed about biodiversity, sustainability, and food security and explained how local wild edibles can be nutrient rich and tasty addition to our daily plate.

The experience was educational and also encouraged students to see weeds not as unwanted plants but as valuable resources. By the end of the walk, students left with appreciation for the often overlooked weeds and a curiosity to explore more about it in their environment.

Mahavir



Cultural Heritage

Kathak and Odissi

Deepanam School hosted a captivating dance presentation by renowned Kathak and Odissi dancer Yogini and her students Simran, Aarohi, and Isha –current and past students of Deepanam.

The event was designed to introduce Auroville youth to the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India through two of its classical art forms.

Yogini shared that classical dance was never intended as entertainment, but as a path to progress and offer oneself. She explained how these art forms have been preserved across generations.

The session was interactive: through expressive storytelling, intricate footwork, and graceful movements and questions, students learned the meaning behind gestures and stories. These young dancers demonstrated the dedication and discipline essential to mastering these rich traditions.



Accents across the school

Theater's as a tool for learning.



An amphitheatre At the centre of the school

Theater is an exciting way to teach students that helps them learn, express themselves, and develop important skills.

For more than ten years, Deepanam has used plays and performances as an important part of education. Through theater, students build confidence, creativity, and better ways to communicate. Drama lets children explore new ideas, play different characters, and most importantly enjoy the process.

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT THEATER IS HOW IT BRINGS CLASS GROUPS TOGETHER. IT CONNECTS STUDENTS OF ALL AGES AND THEIR TEACHERS IN A SHARED CREATIVE PROJECT.



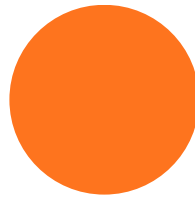


At Deepanam, students perform in English, French and Tamil and act out stories from many cultures. They learn about acting but also about working together, expressing themselves, and speaking in front of a big audience.

THEATER CREATES A
PLACE WHERE EVEN THE
CHILDREN WHO ARE VERY
SHY, SLOWLY BECOME
MORE CONFIDENT AND
FIND THEIR VOICE, NO
MATTER THEIR STARTING
POINT OR LANGUAGE
SKILLS.



THE FOOL DOTH THINK HE IS
WISE, BUT THE WISE MAN KNOWS
HIMSELF TO BE A FOOL.



Painted Sets

At Deepanam, the backdrops, props, and costumes for school plays are created through steady effort by the school team. The last term, backdrops line the open space —painting is done in the mornings and evenings, stitching during free slots, adjusting things to fit just right.

These preparations shape the mood of each performance.



“ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE, AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY PLAYERS”

From Light through Hope Group for 8 years straight, Deepanam students explore the theatre to celebrate many occasions like Sri Aurobindo's birthday, Mother's birthday, annual cultural programme and open house.

This has a powerful impact on overall fluency, their vocabulary improves, and they also learn to speak with clarity and conviction.

Theater is not simply about memorizing lines or amusing the parents—it's about collective creation, collaborating with peers, and placing one's sense of self aside.

And perhaps above all, theater is a space of joy, discovery, and connection. It encourages students to step out of their comfort zones, embrace challenges, and celebrate their progress.

Every performance is a new opportunity to learn, grow, and inspire others—making theater an unforgettable part of education.



“AND THEREBY HANGS A TALE”



TO LOVE TO LEARN IS
THE MOST PRECIOUS
GIFT THAT ONE CAN
MAKE
TO A CHILD, TO
LEARN ALWAYS AND
EVERYWHERE.

- Mother



Lending a hand

Deepanam School is growing in numbers, constantly developing its curriculum and updating materials.

Currently it is in urgent need of additional classrooms to welcome new students for the coming school year.

If you would like to help with fundraising efforts, or have contacts you can reach out to, please do get in touch with us.

With much gratitude,
Deepanam Team

DEEPANAM
SCHOOL



deepanamschool.org



deepanam@auroville.org.in



+91 (0)413 262 2450