

staff acknowledge the home language and accept it when the child uses it, so far at least one of the staff having been able to speak each language necessary! One day a week, Merry also runs a training session for parents, when representatives of 18 families attend.

Merry Barua believes in treating all the children as normal by not playing on their disability, but this means it is hard for her to get funding from charities. So far she has had money from the Danish Embassy in Delhi, who have sponsored a fund-raising concert and the production of a video (a copy of which WMAS now possesses). Merry is hopeful that the Indian Government may recognise autism as a specific disability later this year, which may enable her to get some government funding. This will follow a long campaign of letter writing from interested bodies around the world, including the NAS, at Merry's instigation. The present financial situation means that they cannot even afford to have a signboard painted for the outside of the school (which didn't make it easy for me to find it!) What Merry would really like is to be able to send her two trained teachers to England to see our schools in operation. Also there is a desperate need for equipment for the school. In addition to all this, Merry was visiting Mumbai (Bombay) at the beginning of March, to try to organise parent-members in that area to start their own support group rather than rely on her answering their 'phone calls.

I found my time with Merry and her staff inspiring and was grateful to them for making me so welcome. It really shows what can be done with determination and love. The main memories I brought back with me were of the peaceful atmosphere, the professionalism of all the staff and their evident love for the children, accepting each one for his/her self. Oh yes, and the strains of 'Old McDonald had a farm' which were coming from the junior classroom as I left!

