11th October 2026

Dear friends and supporters,

We hope this letter finds you well, as ever.

We currently have 499 children enrolled (up from 475 last year), and there is much to report in this letter. Firstly, we have benefited from the Corporate Social Responsibility programme of an AI and robotics company, STEMpedia, through which our school has been given robotics learning kits and three two-day trainings in beginners' robotics coding/programming and AI over the course of the last 8 months or so. This has initially been for classes 10-12 but we are now starting basic robotics training from class 4.

In terms of out-of-school-hours activities, Gaurav invested equipment and chemicals to teach girls in the final two grades, classes 11 and 12, in soil testing. This provides practical application of concepts they are learning as part of the science studies and is something of direct relevance to the communities in which they live. This is a fertile farming area, with many small farmers working on little to no information about mineral and health profile of their own soil. Gaurav wants to help girls to set up small soil testing businesses in their own home villages as a form of employment generation. While many girls go off for higher education, many stay home and study remotely, so this is something that they could do while living at home with their families and which could give them independence and confidence. The hope is that they will also educate their own farming family members on the importance of soil health.

This year we have also been making a number of changes and upgrades to the play and sporting facilities at school. We have had a bit of a gap in terms of sports training because Priti, our wonderful Tae Kwondo teacher left, having got married and moved away from the area, and it is very challenging to find a replacement. We found one promising person, but she left unexpectedly after just two months, also citing marriage as the reason – not something she disclosed at the time of being hired. We had a large space on the roof of the main building that we have decided to finally develop into something specific – we now have two courts up there that can be used for either badminton or pickleball. We are also about to get two table tennis tables. We have also added to our stock of athletics equipment (hurdles, agility equipment) which will be getting used by classes under the leadership of our new sports teacher. She is

quite young and an ex-student of ours, and is learning her way along, using online resources and advice from Gaurav and other staff who had been involved to some extent when Priti was still here.

We have also decided to change the use of our more ornamental garden areas at the front of the school (inside the boundary wall) to develop play areas for our youngest students, around age 4, while outside the school walls we still have the larger sports field and another area on the other side of the front path is being developed as another sports area for younger classes. We are fencing this in order to keep small children safe from village dogs, etc.

Last month (26-27 September), Gaurav and four other staff members again took class 12 (21 girls aged around 17) on a school trip to Delhi, because last year's trip was a great success and this year's class asked to go as well. The two-day, one-night trip was even more packed than last year's. Parents brought their girls to the school at 4am in order to get the full day in Delhi, and they all set off by bus. They again stayed at a major Gurudwara (Sikh temple). Over the two days, they visited:

1. Akshardham Temple
2. Qutub Minar
3. Several Gurudwaras
4. Old Delhi
5. Humayun's Tomb
6. The National Museum
7. Nehru Planetarium
8. Jantar Mantir
9. Sarojini market for shopping for souvenirs

Again, the girls had never experienced anything like what they saw in Delhi. It is great for them to get a small taste of the highs (many historical, educational and fun places to see) and lows (terrible traffic and dirty air) of big city living. Once again, they were quite overwhelmed and tired by the end, but they had a wonderful trip.

Otherwise, school life continues as usual, with our staff quite stable with little turnover. The usual challenges crop up from time to time, and are dealt with as they must be, by Gaurav and our very able head teacher. I travelled to India on 6th October and will be here until 17th April (with Christmas back in Edinburgh this year). In winter we will be preparing for another major school performance. We had planned to do this last year, but other challenges meant that we decided to put it off to this year. We seem to have settled into a pattern of doing a big event every 2-3 years with smaller events like the one we reported last year, in between.

Best wishes to you all,

Joanna, Gaurav, Rosemary, and everyone at the school in Chakarsi.