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Elementary School in Ranipet

Questions

This is an elementary school in a small town where the children are taught in English. What do you notice about this classroom? How is it similar to your classroom and how is it different?

Compare this photograph with the village school in photograph number 2. What seem to be the differences between town and village schools?

What questions would you like to ask a child in India about their school?

What do you think is on the identity badges the children are wearing? What would you put on a badge like this for your school?

Teachers—why not try modelling a formal Indian lesson—read an instructive passage out loud then repeat it leaving gaps at points—the children should chorus out the missing word.

There is a set of genuine lessons for Tamil Nadu schools in the workcard section of the CD

Background

Education is compulsory in India, although many children in poorer villages will not be educated beyond the elementary school stage i.e. beyond age 10 (Year 5). These children in the photograph are from richer homes as their parents can afford uniforms. They are being taught in English although they will speak Tamil at home. University education is in English, so in order to attend university when they are older pupils have to be educated in English speaking schools.

This classroom in Beattie Memorial School has furniture, the pupils have books and there are home made wall displays. In poor villages the school would probably not have any of these things. In this school the playground, which doubles as the assembly place, will be shaded by trees. The windows do not have glass, and walls will be thick to keep the classrooms as cool as possible.

The education is formal in style – the children are standing, not because they have done something wrong, but because they are answering a question. A lot of teaching is done through repetition and questioning techniques. The pupils will also stand respectfully when other adults enter the room.

These children are wearing government identity badges around their necks – this is not the practice in all schools, but is quite common.



