

THE CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME

This year, The Indian School undertakes a new initiative, The Citizenship Programme to engender in children through social projects, field work, and excursions, awareness about their Rights and Responsibilities as future citizens of the country.

Children constitute India's richest and most promising resource. The country has about 400 million children below the age of 15. In the span of a few years these children will constitute a substantial proportion of our adult population. How they turn out as individuals and as citizens will determine our future as a society and a nation. The values that these young and impressionable minds imbibe in their formative years is going to impact not merely the choices they make for themselves as individuals but also what role they see for themselves as citizens, what contribution they choose to make to the society outside of their immediate families. What ethics will they practise in the profession they choose for themselves? Will they have a sense of responsibility towards society outside of their own families? How gender sensitive will they be? How much time will they have for senior citizens? How will they look upon the underprivileged and the marginalized? All this and much more will be determined by the exposure that young citizens receive during the formative years of their education.

A good school is not merely a passport to a good college, and a good college to a handsomely paid or glamorous job. In this shortsighted and oftentimes mindless pursuit of what is perceived as success, the education system fails to adequately expose children to the

vast ocean of opportunities that lies beyond the scoreboard of marksheets and overlooks the necessity to engender life-skills to equip young citizens to excel both as individuals as well as in their contribution to society. Corporate Social Responsibility has now become a fashionable thing. But a sense of social responsibility must be engendered much earlier in the life of an individual if it is to bear fruit. Our initiative in Citizenship is aimed at exposing and sensitizing school children to the larger society they are a part of, to create an ambience where children are provoked into pondering about the vast challenges of the society we live in, to enable them to break out of the bubble of a blinkered education and equip them to become tomorrow's leaders. The idea is not to influence though as much as to provide exposure to enable children to question, to debate to seek and implement their own solutions. True to our name, The Indian School moots this initiative to create not merely 'successful' but more enlightened and responsible Indians. We begin by launching this initiative at The Indian School but hope to spread it to other schools in Delhi and around the country, the endeavour being to tap the fabulous potential and enthusiasm of children to send forth into society, responsible and caring citizens.

