

Bhawna's Journey in Patang

Bhawna Diwakar joined The Heritage School last year. She was quiet and used to get distracted in class. In one-on-one sessions, she mentioned that she feels 'stupid.' She shared that her classmates made fun of her because she could not speak in English. She joined *Patang* soon after and due to the persistent effort and support of Ms. Bhawna Kapoor, her last session's *Patang* teacher; she became happy and enthusiastic in classes.

Bhawna's mother complained about her watching a lot of television. She also mentioned that if she does want to watch cartoons, she should do so in English. It was clear that the child was under pressure to perform as inferred from conversations with her and her mother.

However, Ms. Kapoor never forced Bhawna to speak in English. She felt that she should not obstruct the child's thought process. She recalls, "when allowed to speak in Hindi, she [Bhawna] could engage in reflective discussions and showed sensitivity towards her classmates." Initially, she felt that her written work was incomprehensible and made disconnected sentences. Apart from positively reinforcing her responses, Ms. Kapoor also paired her with Mohit, Bhawna's classmate who stutters. She could read and speak the text out loud while he could not. He could write. Together, they could present their work well. As a result, both of them grew confident and began learning rigorously.

Bhawna is also very good with Mathematics. Although she was new to JodoGyan, the Maths programme followed by Heritage; she always tried her best to learn. Her current *Patang* teacher, Mrs. Urmila Boora has also appreciated her keen interest in Maths and algebraic skills.

Under Ms. Kapoor's tutelage, Bhawna grew interested and felt more able to study; she watched television a lot less and began studying at home. She reminisces how her student once came up to her and asked, "Guess how much I studied yesterday?" and let the answer out, "two hours." She learnt from her classmates. In one of the life skills sessions Bhawna laid her doubt out,



"We will be nice to people, now that we understand them, but what about the other people, who will tell them to be nice?" Her classmate then calmed her down by suggesting that one person will tell another and so-on and therefore, everyone will know. All the classmates helped each other grow emotionally.

During Parent life skills workshops, which her mother attended and was engaged in, she understood how to get involved and understood her child's situation eventually. As she says, "Bhawna is a lot happier now, and I feel different as well. I get less angry. Bhawna, everyone says, is doing well in studies. I want her to do well in life and



make us proud.” We could not have put this in better words. We are happy to see Bhawna grow from strength to strength, and hope that she continues on this upward trajectory.