Vadivelu (computer teacher to all students from 4th to 8th standards.)

He joined Aikiyam School in 2012.

Vadivel was born in Kuilapalayam in 1980. He went to school in Pondy until 5th standard and then moved to Udavi School, and later After School (now NESS) in Auroville. Around that time a second-hand computer was given to his older brother, and he was able to use it. He started reading computer manuals and learned everything he knows by himself from studying them, including graphic design, trouble shooting and networking. Then he worked for several years as a graphic designer, for various companies including one of his own, but he did not find that satisfying, and was very pleased when Shankar invited him to teach at Aikiyam. He has always felt happy and relaxed working with children, which he had already done as a sports teacher. So, today, he is particularly happy to pass on his knowledge of computers to the students.

Vadivelu likes the way we teach at Aikiyam, which respects each child's unique way of learning. His way is to observe each child and give him space where he can explore. He is there to help when a child gets stuck. Although there is a curriculum to follow, he does not put any pressure on children who have difficulty with it, but lets them find what they like to do, and then helps them if they have a problem.. In his experience every child can learn to use the computer, if they find what they like to do.

He shows the students a sample of something that the students might want to do; for example, a postcard-size invitation with a story inside. He then asks them, "Do you think we can do something like this?" Then the students go to the internet and find images and software they can download to do the project.

Vadivel says, "They teach me through their questions. For example they say to me, 'I will have cashew fields to take care of when I graduate, so why do I need to use a computer?' Then, I let them learn that they can get information from the internet about fertilizers and natural insecticides, crop yield, or packaging and processing. They see that the computer is a tool. Students also learn by watching videos, responding to questions and completing on-line quizzes. They attempt challenging assignments and step toward mastering significant technological skills, all while exercising their knowledge of English." He says, "If the students' English is not strong, they cannot read the information on the net. As their English improves, by 8th standard we will be able to develop more technical skills such as using Photoshop or other software." He hopes to get a camera soon so he can teach graphic design and photo editing.

Vadivelu is also a martial arts enthusiast and does kalari kayapptu.