Kolkata: When Jadon Sancho, Danny Loader, Angel Gomes and the rest of the England team covered thousands of miles to take part in the U-17 World Cup, they never imagined they would feel at home in a faraway land. But on Thursday, the team got a sweet taste of Indian hospitality as the players and support staff visited Newtown School.

From signing jerseys and sneakers to clicking selfies and displaying some deft football skills, the young turks had their hands full on the campus, which has won this year’s British Council International School Award.

The players were escorted by Fifa officials amid tight security but the school students took over as the team walked into the campus. Armed with markers and cellphones, the students were on the prowl for their “wow” moment. “Signed shoes is such a fantastic football ritual,” gushed Palak Majithia, a Class VIIIA student, showing off her own autographed pair.

Also present at the school were budding footballers, who are part of the UK-supported Kolkata Goalz program.