

Chair Person Thoughts

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatulahi wa barakatuhu

A very warm welcome to you all as we return to school after a lengthy absence. Over the years we have faced many situations, but the one we face now is totally unique, with new challenges.

Alhamdulillah, all the staff, together with Sister Neena, have worked hard to ensure the school is safe for our children and adults. Insha Allah, with these measures in place, we will start this year positively to enable us to have a very productive year.

As you can see from the newsletter, the focuses for this year are wellbeing and diversity. Wellbeing is nearly impossible to attain if society does not celebrate the diversity of its people. Regarding our focus on diversity within school, we do not want it to be tokenistic, but the means of making long-term meaningful impact.

As with everything, greater success is achieved by working together. We hope that you will work with us so that we gain a greater understanding of our different communities. Please help us by educating us on cultural differences that we need to be aware of. We are open to suggestions and discussions, so please contact Sister Neena if you can provide a valuable insight to help us in achieve this goal.

May Allah put barakah in our efforts and allow us to be a united ummah, one that celebrates the differences in heritage, culture and skin colour. Ameen.

Date Valley School Autumn term Newsletter

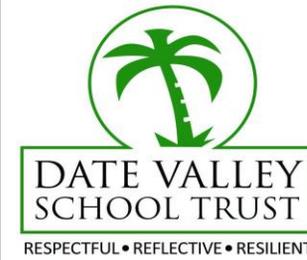


Head teacher's Reflections

The unprecedented events of the past 7 months remind us that none of us know what lies ahead. Islam teaches us that Allah (SWT) is the best of planners and we are in safe hands. It is important for us to gather our thoughts and ponder over the following questions:

- What have we learnt through these unprecedented times?
- What do we NOW hold to be of great importance?
- What do we want to focus on within our lives having reflected on the past 7 months?
- What changes have we made in terms of our goals, aspirations and relationships with others?

I feel it would be beneficial to discuss these questions with your family and discuss how everyone is feeling. Communication and expressing feelings have become very important. Building and maintaining strong relationships with friends and family (people we love) is also an area we should continue to work on too.



"At Date Valley we are respectful, resilient and reflective learners."

Wellbeing

What does the term 'mental wellbeing' mean?



we define mental wellbeing as children and young people's happiness, life satisfaction and positive functioning. Young advisors described this as:

“ Children and young people feeling good, feeling that their life is going well, and feeling able to get on with their daily lives. ”

At Date Valley we are exploring ways to ensure that our children are able to make a smooth transition back into school. We want them to feel safe and be happy and confident learners.

Wellbeing at Date Valley

After our INSET training on Wellbeing on Wednesday 2nd September we will begin to have:

1. A dedicated time in the day set aside to address wellbeing
2. More discussion-based tasks – ‘Philosophy Circles’, to provide a platform for expressing emotions, ideas and thoughts on a range of topics and themes
3. A Happiness Box in each class to allow children to share what makes them happy and what they are grateful for.
4. Explore opportunities for mindfulness tasks.

COVID Information

At Date Valley we have been working extremely hard to ensure that we are compliant with government guidelines and are providing a safe environment for our children to return to school. The following communication has been sent out to all parents. Please ensure that you are up to date with our COVID arrangements and are well informed about our systems and procedures.

1. *Parent letter: sent on 24th August*
2. *Information powerpoint on measures in place for the safe reopening of school: sent on 24th August*
3. *Video illustrating safety measures put in place for school reopening: sent on 28th August*

Attendance

From September 2020 attendance will be monitored by the school, in line with government guidelines and children are expected to attend school, as a legal requirement.

You are no longer permitted to keep your child at home if you feel a little anxious about sending them back in.

If your child is unable to attend school due to a clinical need, you will need to provide evidence of this. If this is the case please book an appointment to speak to myself about your personal circumstances.

If your child is clinically vulnerable, you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school. Please refer to the government guidance for this: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Diversity at Date Valley

There has been much discussion about Diversity after the George Floyd incident. We want to share with you what we are doing at Date Valley and have been doing for the past two years.

At Date Valley we recognise the importance of appreciating and celebrating Diversity. Cultural diversity is one of the basic characteristics of human society and is an asset, indispensable to the progress of humanity. Cultural diversity means to show respect to the beliefs and practices of different religions, communities and ways of life.

Diversity continued...

The Quran assures us that we can live in peace and harmony, with people of other faiths. Islam advocates for us to explore commonalities to promote a peaceful co-existence. How can we do this? We need to ensure we learn about other cultures and celebrate our similarities and differences and how diversity enriches our lives.

How do we ensure our children grow up to be global citizens? At Date Valley this is a journey that we have embarked upon and we will continue to refine and enhance our teaching and learning.

We have recently revised our History curriculum to make it more relevant to our unique setting and to allow our children to explore their own heritage and celebrate the achievements of their predecessors. Our revised curriculum map on the website illustrates this.

We have introduced Diversity through our Key Stage 2 Learning Friends. We also aim to:

1. Ensure we invite a wide range of diverse external speakers
2. Plan discussion-based tasks based on themes such as equality, race, religion, culture through Philosophy Circles
3. Promote effective questioning using ‘how?’ and ‘why?’ questions to deepen children’s thinking.
4. Develop our children’s knowledge and understanding of the cultures within and outside school.

Reminder of our Learning Friends at Date Valley

Each learning friend has a key skill that will help our children develop the ability to become independent learners and thinkers. These skills will support their character development as well. Each year group has their own set of Learning Friends in the classroom. Please recap these with your child.

Learning Friend EYFS & KS1	Qualities / key skills	Image	Introduced in which year group
Bertie the Bee	Sharing ideas Working well with others Listening well Responds well to what others say Negotiating		Nursery
Tommy the Tortoise	Not giving up Willing to take risks A hard worker Not getting distracted		Reception
Sid the Spider	Making links and connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking previous learning to current learning • Linking experiences from home to school • Linking experiences between subjects 		Reception
Clara the Cat	Curiosity Asking questions Investigating things Exploring and looking for answers Learning from making mistakes		Year 1
Ursula the Unicorn	Creativity Imagination Generating and developing ideas		Year 1
Polly the Parrot	An awareness of the feelings of others Building on what others have said Developing reasoning Developing rigorous thinking		Year 2
Oscar the Owl	Reflecting on past learning Planning ahead Self-awareness Thinking about – how, when, who, what and where		Year 2

Key Stage Two Learning Friends

Children in Key Stage Two are aware of these people and why they are linked to their given key skill. Please discuss with your child what they know about these Learning Friends and when they have discussed this key skill in their lives.

Learning Friend KS2	Qualities / key skills		Image
Annie Zaidi	Teamwork		
Ibtihaj Muhammad	Resilience and hard work		
Ibn al Haytham	Asking questions		
Muhammad Ali	Great thinking		
Abdul Sattar Edhi	Valuing others		
Naima B. Robert	Creativity		