

Headteacher's Reflections

Taken from Romina Afghan's blog

We have returned to school after a number of lockdown phases. We all return hoping that we can continue to attend school rather than resume online learning.

The first half term flew by in the blink of an eye, and as we start Autumn 2, I want us to focus on **Communication**. We have spent so long being contained within our homes with limited interactions with others; this is not something natural for us as humans. Communication is a key skill to success and is one of our school focus areas. Staff received training about effective communication in one of our INSETs, which was very useful.

What does our faith say? The prophetic paradigm to follow is we should create the loving connections we all want to have. We should always communicate as if we see the BEST version of the person in front of ourselves.

When we communicate with the person by seeing the best version of them, we actually hold space for them to become that person MORE. We help them to become more of the best version of themselves. We help them to see themselves differently, and that in turn, will touch their hearts and stay with them forever. That will help us to build the kinds of bonds and loving connections that nurture your heart as well as theirs. It is why the sahaabah were ready to "take a bullet" (or an arrow!) for the Prophet ﷺ - because of the loving and UNCONDITIONAL positive regard he had for every single human being.

That is our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. That is our model, and by the will and help of Allaah, when we aim to follow him, we can look forward to some amazing results in our relationships. Communication with positivity, love and thinking the best is something we feel is a good start to the term.

Date Valley School Autumn Term Newsletter



Whole School Focus

At Date Valley we are focusing on the areas outlined below in order to raise standards. It is key that we keep the profile of these areas high throughout the year.

These will be linked to our whole school transformation plan.

1. COVID systems
2. Reading: Daily reading, comprehension and reading for pleasure
3. Spellings
4. Storytelling with our new text-based literacy scheme, Power of Reading
5. Maths language/Problem solving
6. Handwriting
7. Wellbeing
8. Communication throughout the school
9. Philosophy Circles: Open discussions with Y questions



DATE VALLEY
SCHOOL TRUST
RESPECTFUL • REFLECTIVE • RESILIENT

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

Positive Communication with Children

Following on from the headteacher's reflection, I wanted to share with you a video that had a profound effect on our team. It made us all realise that the little things have a great impact on our children. Small communications that we miss have an effect on their moods and mindset.

This is why the way you start the day or end the day with your child is important. Please do watch this video and see what changes you might decide to make to improve communication with your children. The digital world we live in has had such a negative effect on being effective communicators.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxyxwShewI>

We feel secure in knowing that at Date Valley we start our day by greeting the children in a way that shows they are loved and cared for, allowing them to start their day positively.

Below are some useful sentence starters you can use to encourage discussion and to obtain effective communication when interacting with your child about their achievements or school day.

1. *I am proud of you*
2. *Look at what you have accomplished*
3. *I'd love to hear about it*
4. *One step at a time ... you're doing well*
5. *You have figured it out, you are awesome*
6. *Fabulous job you are really listening*
7. *That's very kind of you*
8. *I love you*
9. *I appreciate what you just did*

Headteacher Focus

My focus is ensuring that all lessons have the key ingredients to be a 'Good' lesson. These have been developed within our training days for two years now. Teachers use peer observations, sharing good practice and self-reflection to support this process of change.

I conduct drop-in lesson observations daily to ensure that the training implemented is followed through into daily teaching practice. Lessons contain the elements of a Good lesson and we are now on the journey to become consistent in this. After multiple lockdowns and disruptions to normal school life, it is important we continue to re-evaluate our lessons.

Here are some of the areas I am looking at within lessons this term:

- Pre-lesson starters mini task
- Celebration of a learning objective
- Clear understanding of the success criteria
- Mini tasks that are engaging and fun
- Teacher talk is at a minimum
- Good discussion and group work

Dates for the Diary

15th – 19th November: National Anti Bullying Week

Monday 15th November: Odd Socks Day

Friday 19th November: Wear Red for Racism Day

Wednesday 17th November: EY Animal Show

Monday 22nd November: Primary INSET (Primary Closed / EY Open)

Wednesday 24th November: EY Parent Workshop: Focus on Play (time to be confirmed)

Attendance

<i>Class</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Reception	96.69%
An-Nur - Y1	98.13%
Ad-Duha - Y2	97.35%
Al-Fajr - Y3	97.10%
At-Tariq - Y4	98.87%
Al-Buruj - Y5	98.07%
Al-Buruj - Y6	93.83%

At-Tariq has achieved the best attendance this term. Well Done!

Good attendance is an excellent achievement; this only contributes further to the children's progress and success at Date Valley.

The collective attendance of Al-Buruj has been a challenge this term. We urge the parents to support outstanding class attendance.

Philosophy Circles

At Date Valley we have a dedicated allocated weekly slot in the timetable to conduct Philosophy Circles (PC).

PC allow children to make sense of the world in their own way. It allows them to discover and test their own belief systems against those of others.

These are the skills we are focusing on:

- Participation: It supports children who are quiet and shy in class
- Disagreement: Its purpose is to talk energetically and understand that it is ok if we disagree with others!
- Challenge: To put across your point of view on a matter in a clear and concise way is a challenge and you have to think about what you are saying.
- Empathy: Some children are inflexible in their thinking and need to listen and acknowledge the views of others. Learn to extend their understanding on the basis of others
- Forming opinions: It is important to form opinions and not follow others. To listen to both sides and make a decision on what you think.

Our children are all learning to be CARING THINKERS this term. Ask your child what skills are needed to be a caring thinker.

Here some questions that you might like to start a discussion with as a family one evening!

1. What if it was to rain chocolate rain? (Year 1 / 2)
2. What if you could stay up all night? (Year 1 to 3)
3. Should we always keep a promise? (Year 3 to 6)
4. Why is it important to always be yourself? (Year 1 to 6)

Pupil Voice

We are in the process of selecting our leaders within each year group, this will form the pupil voice of the year.

Currently applications for Peer Mediators (Year 3) and Eco Warriors (Year 4) are being reviewed. Results will follow soon.

After this, Year 5 Lead Learners will be released for the children to apply. This role will require children to observe lessons and comment on pupil behaviour, learning and interactions.

Electing Ameer and Ameera is approaching soon too. The first phase has been completed. Year 6 were asked to complete an application and the shortlisting has taken place. During Autumn 2, the shortlisted candidates are required to put a presentation together to share in assembly to year 1 – 6. They will need to convince the school as to why they are the best candidate and what they plan to do if elected. During Parliament week all children will vote for their favoured candidate, results for this will be shared with the community.

These roles in our school are valuable as children have the chance to become part of the decision-making process and running of the school. It provides a chance to use skills such as speaking, listening, decision making, presenting, communicating and organisation etc. These skills will assist them in being confident and having self-belief in themselves.

PTFC UPDATE

As salaamu alaikum

The PTFC is for the parents, pupils and teachers. We are happy to be back at school with an exciting, fun packed year ahead of us, to bring the Date Valley community together in support of the school.

Our first Food & Bake sale took place on Thursday 20th October, just before half-term, and Alhamdulillah **£1969.75** was successfully raised, which will be put towards playtime equipment and woodwork for Early Years.

We are hoping to hold regular coffee mornings and events for parents to get together. Our next upcoming evening event for Mums will be the "Sisters Self-Care Soiree" on Saturday 20th November.

Insha Allah the more volunteers we have, the more we can achieve together in helping the school. Please get in touch with Amalia Qamar (Umm Sulaiman (Y3) & Hiba (Reception)) or Juveria Ahmed (Umm Zakariya (Y5), Yusuf (Y3) & Sumayah (Reception).

Bike to School Week

Date Valley School is part of TFL's STARS scheme, which encourages young Londoners to travel to school sustainably, actively, responsibly and safely by championing walking, scooting and cycling. STARS supports pupils' wellbeing, helps to reduce congestion at the school gates and improve road safety and air quality. We participated in Bike to School Week to help us work towards getting the Gold Accreditation.

Y2 created posters, identified parts of the bike and the material they are made from for Bike to School Week. They learnt about how pollution causes illness and diseases. They also identified parts of the body and how cycling helps different internal and external parts of the body.



Trips and workshops are back!

We are pleased to announce that we have organised many workshops and external visits for our children for the Autumn Term. These are valuable learning experiences that support the children's understanding of their topics. Let's share some highlights of what we have organised so far.



We welcomed One Day Creative to hold a workshop called Ola Brazil for Year 5 & 6, as an enhancement to their topic of Brazil. They learned about the history of Brazil, all about the Amazon River, the amazing animals and the fabulous food of Brazil!



Year 1 & 2 took a trip to Wandle Industrial Museum, where they looked at historical displays and engaged in a Printing workshop all linked to the local Mitcham area. This was part of their Geography topic 'Our Local Area'. We would like to thank all our parent volunteers who supported the trip.



We also have the following workshops / trips booked for the rest of this term:

- EY animal handling workshop
- Y1/2 Great Fire of London drama workshop
- Y3/4 DT workshop, building Roman Chariots
- Y3/4 virtual tour of the London Mithraeum
- Y4 trip to Natural History Museum
- Y5/6 trip to Museum of London as part of their History topic, Stone Age to Iron Age
- Healthy Eating workshop for Primary
- NSPCC 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' virtual assembly for Primary