

EYFS POLICY

DATE PALM STATEMENT of INTENT

At Date Palm our vision is for the School to ensure our pupils grow like a Date Palm tree – with **strong foundations, lofty branches and produce fresh fruit**:

- ✓ To build **Strong Foundations for Character Development** that:
Instil values; inspire each pupil; display best manners.
- ✓ To have **Lofty Branches of Educational Excellence** that will:
Provide a broad and varied range of experiences and learning opportunities;
help each pupil progress and develop in all aspects; support their skills and talents.
- ✓ To produce **Fresh Fruit that provides services to their Communities** in order to:
Become responsible and confident citizens; make a positive difference;
commit to charitable endeavours; become effective contributors towards Britain's future.

Reviewed by	Position	Signature
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Reviewed: January 2023

Next review date: January 2025



DATE PALM
PRIMARY

Building foundations for life

EYFS Policy

Intent

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory framework for the EYFS Department for Education 2014)

At Date Palm our team is dedicated and committed to creating an environment that is safe, nurturing and promotes the highest standards of education not only in the Early Years curriculum but in the Islamic curriculum too. Classes are structured and planned to ensure that children’s interests are at the centre of their learning, providing opportunities that are rich with possibilities and build their confidence.

The aims of our EYFS curriculum are to build young pupils to become:

- Competent learners (through play)
- Resilient
- Capable
- Confident
- Communicators
- Independent
- Creative
- Curious and inquisitive
- Self-assured
- Accepting and empathetic
- Positive
- Brave

Through our curriculum pupils are exposed to a range of experiences, learning, cultures, world knowledge that broaden their understanding equipping them to become confident life-long learners. Focusing on *Froebel’s* theory of education in early years and recognising that children have unique needs and capabilities practitioners, teachers and assistants all contribute towards the planning of the sessions and are driven to ensure that they are enriched personalised and aspirational. A stimulating environment designed with the use of everyday materials, activities and practical work through engaging play helps establish productive and creative children harmonising with God and the world. Teachers use a child-initiated approach to planning ensuring that every child’s need are tailored and met and practitioners are able to capitalise in interests shown during the sessions. Planning is not fully completed the week before allowing for a flexible and adaptable approach helping



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make quality assessments of the children's learning. The National Curriculum sets the expectations of what children should learn in the academic year, however we recognise that every child is unique and we celebrate and welcome every difference in our school community

Nursery is usually a child's first experience of learning away from home and at Date Palm we believe that children should feel welcome, happy and safe. The environment at school should be engaging and a place where they experience and discover new learning, widen their horizons and develop a lifelong love for learning. It is important that the practitioners are able to enable children to master a depth of knowledge and skills essentials in each area of learning. Taken from the guidance documents published by the Department for Education, we intend to make our curriculum a place where children are exposed to a range of rich, exciting and first-hand learning where the creative thinking of a child is enhanced through our child-initiated planning helping children personalise the curriculum to suit their needs. We hope that each child is given the ability to flourish and be the best they can be growing strong roots like a Date Palm Tree.

At Date Palm it is important that the children are well equipped for life outside of school and believe that a child's time in Nursery helps build their character, personal development, health and wellbeing and prepares them to make positive and valuable contribution to the wider community. Giving children a chance to be the focus of planning helps establish where development is needed focusing on that particular child's learning and developing a deeper social and cultural understanding of each individual child. The method of teaching used at Date Palm is in line with the *Waldorf* method of teaching which aims to create well-rounded students through a broad curriculum including art, physical education and emotional and social education.

Implementation

We focus on a play-based approach to learning giving children a grounded start to their educational journey building their confidence as they learn to explore and think about problems and how to solve them. Our child centred planning helps practitioners plan activities based on a child's interest creating opportunities of depth of knowledge and personal development. Through observations we are able to identify a child's preferred learning style enabling activities to be more productive and demonstrate the various characteristics of effective learning. Through our team planning sessions, we aim to design open ended activities paving the path for the way children to; use their creative and critical thinking in problem solving, being actively involved in their learning, demonstrate characteristics of effective learning. We value the importance of learning outdoors and although the space is limited, we ensure that children have access to the play area and will plan activities based on the theme for the week.



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Following the principals of Frobel and Waldorf, we understand that play is crucial for the development of a child and encourages creativity but we also have direct teaching time as recommended in the Early Year framework which encourages planned and purposeful play through a mix of adult led and child led activities. Teachers will plan to focus on introducing and consolidating skills in phonics, mathematics, literacy, Islamic studies and their own personal and emotional development.

At Date Palm we know that parents are a child's first educator and believe that having a strong and trusting relationship with parent's helps enable practitioners bring out the most of the children. Before a child starts his/her journey at Date Palm, they are offered a home visit during the term before they start allowing the practitioners to collate data regarding a child cultural capital. Practitioners are able to discuss home life, routines, milestones reached, personal experiences etc. Parents are given 'All About Me' sheets when they join which they need to fill in about their child's likes and dislikes current interests and any concerns of development they may have. Through this, practitioners are able to enhance on their key child's learning and focus on their next steps creating an individualised curriculum which helps build a well-rounded student.

We share children's learning and progression through

- Tapestry: an online app allowing parents to have access to their child's learning. Children are continuously observed and assessed through planned and spontaneous observations. Photographs and videos are taken and uploaded daily and weekly giving information to parents about their child's learning. Parents are encouraged to also upload activities they may have done at home or on holiday. Tapestry allows their entire journal to be downloaded and kept as a digital learning journal. Tapestry also helps the practitioners to discuss next steps in the planning meeting and also see which areas are in need for more assessment and attention. It allows the teachers to assess their level of thoroughness in terms of their observations and helps assess which areas the children are falling short of in their development. The observations allow the teachers and practitioners to assess the children's goals and they are used for the final attainment results. Tapestry is a fantastic way of collating data on all the children's development from 2-5 years old. We are able to track and monitor progression throughout the years highlighting areas of concern and areas where a child is excelling in.
- Parents evening: parents are given a report on their child's learning and next steps and have another opportunity to meet and sit with their child's key worker. Parents are given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the curriculum and how we plan for their child. They are given details of next steps and how best they can help their child achieve those.
- Interest sheets: All About Me sheets, are given throughout the year to help ensure that any changes of interests or new likes/dislikes are shared with the teacher
- Quick catch up sessions during dropping off or picking up if feasible.
- Reception parents also are given extra training regarding the curriculum and what the national expectations are for all reception aged children. In the first half term

parents are given phonics training using the RWI scheme and also how to best support their child in early reading and writing. Throughout the year parents are encouraged to come to school and read to their child in the school's library

- SEND communication books are used for children identified with an educational need.

Our Early Years curriculum incorporates the statutory requirements and standards set out by the Early Years Foundation Stage and we are committed to deliver quality early years experiences to all the children who attend Date Palm. Using the framework to plan age-related experiences we are able to create a purposeful and exciting journey for every child. We have high expectations not only in the attainment of a good level of development in the EYFS but also in their manners and Islamic identity and have always successfully meet the national levels.

Our planning is broken down into themes and are planned on a weekly basis from the Medium-Term Plan. Practitioners are encouraged to come up with different activities which are engaging and challenging and have a purpose to learning skills and acquiring new knowledge. As the curriculum has high expectations classroom environments are changed, modified and added to throughout the year creating a stimulating classroom. Children are encouraged to help make those changes and are asked for their input into what they feel best suits their room. Through our child centred approach we believe that children are able to feel a sense of belonging and build confidence knowing that their education is of great importance to Date Palm and we listen to what they want. During the weekly planning sessions teachers discuss the impact and intent behind activities, high level questioning, and what transferable skill is to be taught.

Wanting to develop children to be well-rounded, it is important that the planning is holistic and has strong and meaningful cross-curricular links. The more able children are challenged further in their learning and supported with tasks that offer greater depth and those children who find some learning a little too challenging are supported appropriately and are encouraged to develop at their own pace or learn in a style that best suits their individual needs. We ensure that all children have access to the curriculum and do not exclude children regardless of their abilities. SEND children are given intervention extra time in the sensory area. Depending on their EHCP, targets are discussed on a weekly basis with the SENCO and activities are drawn up. Assistants are sent to appropriate training for better understanding of that child's needs and then they would deliver the programme and how Date Palm is able to meet that child's needs. Date Palm take pride in providing an inclusive environment, where learners demonstrate high levels of enjoyment in their education; focusing on individual successes and individual goals as well as those set out by the EYFS framework.

The curriculum is always evolving and changes are being made to make the curriculum more accessible, challenging and creative improving a child's experience at Date Palm. The Early Years Coordinator is constantly monitoring, reviewing and celebrating good practices



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developing the team to all work harmoniously and making sure that the children are the centre of all stages of the planning and curriculum. Staff are given opportunities to develop their knowledge of the EYFS and support is given throughout.

We follow the Early Years Statutory Framework (2021) for the Early Years Foundation Stage published by the DfE. The framework sets the foundations for an Early Years curriculum and areas of learning that must be covered by all settings.

Communication and Language Development: involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development: involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, control, spatial awareness and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional development: involves helping children to develop a sensitive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feeling; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Literacy Development: involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading material (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics: involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skill in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, space and measures.

Understanding the World: involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places technology and the environment.

Expressive art and design: involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing thought, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art music, movement, dance, role play and design technology.

In our preschool we focus on the prime areas of learning. They form the foundations of learning helping the child become confident learners ready for the next stage in their lives. These areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.



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From Nursery the children will work on all areas of learning and will have a range of adult led activities as well as activities based on the children's interest, these activities will be available both indoors and outdoors allowing children to explore whilst learning.

Key workers

All children are allocated a key worker. The key worker will have the main responsibilities for their group of children. The allocation system ensures that personal attention is given to the needs and development of each individual child and gives better opportunities to develop a special bond with the child ensuring the child feels safe and happy. The key person is a familiar figure who is accessible to both the parent and the child. Through this the key worker is able to plan activities based on the child's needs and interests. Parents also have a person that they can speak to, to discuss latest news and developments of their child. During the term parents are encouraged to fill in a form detailing their child's interests, activities they have participated in whilst at home, changes to their lives and even concerns that the parent may have. This helps the Key worker have greater depth of knowledge of their key child and develops a stronger and more effective relationship with their child.

We have a 1:4 ratio in the pre-school and a 1:8 ratio in the nursery.

Transition

Every child is different, some children settle in on the first day and some take longer. Entry of children is staggered over a period of two weeks helping them transition into the setting. Parents are given a settling in session to ease in the nursery and depending on the needs of the child can be 1 hour long or 3 hours. From there the key worker and parent will work together how best to help their child transition into the setting. We are very sensitive to the needs of a settling child and form a plan of action for those children who may take longer to settle.

If a child needs to move to the reception class, children are given a day when both parents/carers and children are welcome to visit the reception class and teachers. They have a half day of teaching and see what reception class timetable looks like.

Sleep Routine

As young children sleep it is our job as professional practitioners to ensure that young children are safe and well throughout the period in which they are resting. We will support this by doing the following:

- We will aim to work with parents/carers requests, but it will need to be acknowledged that young children's routines may change when they encounter new experiences/environments.
- The temperature of the room will be monitored to make sure it is not too hot or cold.
- We will aim to ensure children are well spaced out for sleep and/or rest times.
- We will aim to settle children according to their individual sleep needs and routines.
- We ask parents to complete sheets on their child's sleeping routine with the child's key person when the child starts, and these are reviewed and updated at timely intervals.
- Staff will consult with parents on how they would like their child settled to sleep e.g. patted to sleep or comforter used. Children will be encouraged to settle themselves where possible and this will be dependent on their stage of development.
- Children will be made comfortable when put down to rest/sleep, e.g., shoes and outer clothing removed, made comfortable on sleeping mat/cushions etc.
- A dynamic risk assessment will be carried out to ensure every child is safe e.g., no bags or toys with strings/bows which may cause harm to any child, correct temperature in the room etc.
- The well-being of each individual child will be checked every ten minutes whilst they are asleep. This will be recorded on the sleep chart and initialled by the person checking them. Staff will observe the child's temperature, colour and breathing.
- All used sleep mats will be sprayed and wiped down with anti-bacterial spray after use with a paper towel, the paper towel will be disposed of immediately.
- Children in the Nursery Room (3-4 years) do not generally need to sleep, but if they wish to do so, especially if they are attending all day, their needs will be accommodated.

What will happen if a child stops breathing:

- If an emergency arises and a child stops breathing the responsible staff member will call for help by calling through a colleague to assist them.
- Where necessary if resuscitation is required, this will be carried out by a qualified First Aid Practitioner and this will take place in the nearest vacant space.
- Whilst resuscitation is taking place a staff member will call for an ambulance as well as make contact with the parents/carers of the child.



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Impact

Our curriculum is progressive, well planned and of high quality providing the best start for very child. Centring around the notion that every child is unique and a commitment to deliver a curriculum which is balanced and broad we believe that our early years makes a positive impact on the cognitive development and social and emotional development of all children. We ensure that staff have good knowledge of a child's cultural capital, their development, home life, previous experiences all help ensure that the child has the best and most meaningful experience at Date Palm. Our weekly planning meeting is a perfect opportunity to brief all staff about any new changes to a child's life or routine helping maintain a positive relationship between staff, parents and all children. Tracking children's attainment and progression help ensure that children are provided stimulating activities which have set goals and objectives. Through the positive relationships children build confidence and have a deeper self-awareness of who they are and what they can achieve. In addition to children's levels of involvement and engagement with activities assures a deeper level of learning and development. This can be seen through the active learning environment which has a buzz of 'can do attitude', 'give it a go' and learning.

Throughout the year, staff sit together and review the progression of children and attend moderation with the coordinator and other schools helping to ensure that the judgements of the practitioners are accurate and evidenced. Tower Hamlets also moderate the judgements and give advice where needed. By the end of Reception, a final assessment is made of the children's attainment against the guidelines and children are judged if they have achieved a good level of attainment (GLD). Any child who is identified with Special needs are closely monitored by the SENCO and they along with the child's key worker will work together to ensure that the child is given further opportunities of learning and has access to the curriculum depending on their individual needs.

SEED, a major study of over 6000 children in England in 2015-2020, found that children who spent more time in a quality early years education setting between the ages of 2 – 4, had a positive impact on their cognitive development and social and emotional development regardless of their social background. We believe that children make the most rapid changes and progression between the ages of 0 – 5 and hope to be able to invest in this age group giving children opportunities to take risks within a safe environment. Although research into best practice is still fairly new in Early Years SEED identified three key factors contributing to Good Practice:

- Tailoring practice to the needs of children



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- Skilled and experienced staff
- An open and reflective culture

Encouraging staff to be reflective has helped Date Palm develop a strong setting where parents have praised the quality of the curriculum delivered to the children and the good knowledge of their child's individual needs. We believe that although all the children have different starting points, they all will make good progress academically, emotionally, creatively, physically and socially. Through our inclusive practice children will be equipped for the next stage of their academic lives.

On leaving reception class we believe the children will:

- Have strong communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Will listen to others waiting their turn and show respect to the views of others
- Have pride in their achievements and always striving to do and be the best they can be
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and perseverer when they are faced with a challenge
- Become confident in themselves and develop a sense of awareness
- Be kind thoughtful and be considerate of others and their needs and have a stringer awareness of their responsibilities in the wider society.
- Be mindful of oneself and a greater sense of self worth
- Have a GLD
- Meet the ELG set out by the DfE

Monitoring the curriculum comes in different stages. The teachers evaluate and discuss the daily activities, what went well and what needs to be extended. They look at the objectives and if they were met and what needs to change or added with the hopes to ensure children are given opportunities to meet their full potential. Using Tapestry, we are able to track the thoroughness of observations and teachers are able to assess which areas needs some attention and focused planning. Co-ordinators monitor the curriculum and celebrate children's achievements and work together with the practitioners in developing an inclusive practice.