



'♫Do Re Mi Day Nursery aims to be an inspiring and imaginative place to give children the best learning opportunities and to create amazing memories'.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

This document sets out how we approach teaching, learning and assessment at ♫Do Re Mi Day Nursery.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS is the mandatory statutory guidance document that all early years settings and reception classes follow in the first 5 years of a child's life. This statutory document states what children are expected to learn, how they could learn best, and how to incorporate best practice into early years, the key at Do Re Mi is HOW we interpret this document in our setting.

The EYFS is made up of 7 areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematical development
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive art and design

The first three of these areas are known as the 'prime areas'; the areas that are '*particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning*' (EYFS, 2021: 8). These prime areas are then strengthened and applied through the four 'specific areas'. Our educational programme at ♫Do Re Mi (our Curriculum) ensures that our activities and experiences cover all of these areas in an inter-connected approach, recognising that they are all interrelated and should not be focused on in isolation, but rather holistically.

Our Approach

"♫Do re mi day nursery aims to be an inspiring and imaginative place to give children the best learning opportunities and to create amazing memories."

Here at ♫Do Re Mi we favour a child centred and creative approach, placing an emphasis on the **process** of learning rather than a product or an outcome (end result). Our focus is to help children to develop both the skills and attitudes needed to become confident individuals with a lifelong passion for learning.

Why?

Children are individuals and all learn in different ways which is why we try to have a dynamic approach to the curriculum, engaging the children in every possible learning experience that we can offer them in a fun and exciting way, leaving them wanting more and more each day. To enable this, it is important that we consider both the learning environment and the role of the supporting practitioners.

How do we do this?

Within each session at ♫Do Re Mi, we offer a child centred approach following children's own individual interests. The key here is the adult and child interactions, how we observe the children

during their play and what we do with the learning opportunities and interests we have noticed from the children. We also work very closely with parents and take the time to find out what the children are interested in and what they have been doing at home, incorporating these interests into their nursery day. Through this inquiry-based approach, and home and nursery interests, the children are able to build upon their lifelong learning skills each day at ♪Do Re Mi, building up the confidence and skills needed for, ultimately, 'school readiness'.

What influences each day at ♪Do Re Mi?

Alongside the children's current interests, our biggest emphasis is on the *process* of learning rather than the product or outcome. Therefore, to incorporate 'best practice' into our setting, we use the '*characteristics of effective learning*' to guide us, which is the process of **how** children learn and this consists of:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creativity and critical thinking

The Learning Environment

For children to learn and develop, the environment must be set up in a way that enables this to happen. It is imperative that Practitioners fully understand the role of the environment to support children's development and aid them on their learning journey. The quality of each area should be continuously assessed both indoors and outdoors to ensure children are getting the maximum benefits from all areas within the nursery.

Children should be provided with an environment that is safe for them to explore whilst challenging their learning and enabling them to make choices and become more independent. The environment should be set up to allow for children's learning and development across all seven areas as well for children to display the characteristics of effective learning (*how* children learn).

To help further children's development it is important for children to be able to return to explorations daily and to explore new ideas. Children need to be given time to thoroughly explore the learning experiences, practitioners need to appreciate that it is fundamental that children are given opportunities to build on what they did yesterday or even a few weeks ago. Giving children time is precious as it enables them to fully explore their ideas and concepts which is highly important for children growing and developing on their journey of learning.

For a high quality learning environment, rich with opportunity, practitioners should:

- Plan each area carefully – where is it within the room/outdoor space? Does it value all people? Does it offer stimulating resources? Does it allow children to take risks and explore?
- Equip each area with basic resources, which allows staff to enhance the areas according to children's individual interests or next steps.
- Ensure that the space is visually attractive and appealing. Are the children motivated to touch, explore, experience?
- Model caring for the space and taking pride in the room

The role of the staff

It is the role of staff working in the play spaces to provide teaching and support, by responding to the children's individual interests and needs, enhancing the environment where appropriate to take children's learning to the next level. Staff observations, interactions and dialogue are key to this. Staff demonstrate outstanding practice through using open ended questioning, using language to support learning and use skills and knowledge to scaffold children's learning.

To do this, practitioners need to really know their children – what are their interests? Where are they at on their learning journey? Which areas do they need further support with? When staff know their child well, this determines how they scaffold learning, or why they set up a certain provocation or learning experience (the intent).

Group times

Group times at 🎵Do Re Mi are a very important time of the day for both practitioners and children, especially in pre-school. Group times on a Monday morning are usually a great chance for practitioners and children to have the chance to have a chat and find out all about what the children have been up to over the weekend with their families, to find out what they have enjoyed and bring ideas into nursery for us to act upon throughout the week. Practitioners use this time as a chance to make some plans for the week through information gathered there and then acting upon current interests straight away.

Group times are sometimes led by the children coming up with an idea and skilled practitioners go with the flow and allow children to express themselves and their ideas which we encourage from the children.

Pre-school group times can also be adult led and consist of an activity from 'letters and sounds', mathematical activity or something else from our medium term planning to bridge the gaps in children's learning, but again this will usually come from skilled practitioners knowing where groups of children are in their development and planning something for group time following their current interests.

In our Adventurers and Explorers rooms, 'group times' tend to focus on practitioners working with their key children on songs, rhymes, turn-taking, sharing stories, and pre-cursor activities to letters and sounds and pre-school mathematical work.

We also have sessional music group times throughout the nursery; working on rhymes and songs from our 🎵Do Re Mi musical learning programme which has a large focus on communication and language and speech development, as well as musical development.

Impact

Here at 🎵Do Re Mi by favouring a child centred and creative approach, with an emphasis on the **process** of learning rather than a product or an outcome (end result), the **impact** of our approach makes a huge difference to the children in our care each day giving children the chance to be children. They are able to create their own curriculum with the help from skilled practitioners each day and learn lots of new and exciting things from their own interests without really realising they are learning. Our children are able to take their own risks, come up with their own ideas reflecting upon these as they go giving them the confidence and life skills they need to be competent learners all ready for the next leg of their journey when they leave us and have a lifelong passion for learning.

ASSESSMENT

Practitioner knowledge of their children is key. We have working practices in place to ensure information about the children's learning and development is recorded in a useful and relevant way.

Observing

Each week begins with a blank sheet of paper on the board in each room, with the only things written in advance being specific things staff need to think about throughout the week (such as birthdays, children who will be settling in, special events, learning intentions, etc.).

Every day at 🎵Do Re Mi, we offer a child centred approach following children's own individual interests. The key here is how we observe the children during their PLAY and what we do with this evidence we gather from individual children. As well as observations from the children at nursery we also welcome ideas from home about where the children have been over the weekend, what they are interested in as well as what they are currently learning to do and share this information with us at nursery to build into our nursery day.

By observing individual children or groups of children continually through the 🎵Do Re Mi day, our highly experienced staff find out so much from the children. The things we are looking for whilst observing and listening to them are:

- What are the children interested in?

- What ideas are the children coming up with?
- How are the children learning?
- What are they enjoying during their play?
- How is their learning moving on through this experience?

Where next?

After observing the children during their play, skilled staff reflect on whether to act 'in the moment' to scaffold or develop the learning taking place in front of them. For example, adding a new resource into the environment to enhance the child's learning then and there, or an idea may have come from the child and the staff member acts upon the idea right there in the moment scaffolding the child's learning to work towards the next level of their learning through dialogue and interactions.

Recording

All of the children's learning observed by the staff is recorded onto our 'blank paper planning' so staff can easily follow where an interest has come from, where it has been taken by the children or staff and where it could possibly go next. This may be as an adult directed activity to extend or develop the learning, or an enhancement in the room to see where the interest could possibly go to next.

Staff will reflect on how this evidence of learning links to the EYFS, and the characteristics of effective learning that have been displayed. This also informs their knowledge of each child, and where they are on their learning journey. There may also be self-reflection, such as what they could have done to make the experience even better.

THE CHILDREN'S JOURNEY

Starting at ♪Do Re Mi

When a child starts at ♪Do Re Mi we work closely with the parent, both to get to know the child and ascertain where they are at. This is done through completing an 'All about me' starting points document, and observing the child for the first couple of weeks they are with us. This information is recorded on the child's 'Individual Learning Journey' sheet.

Learning Journals

Each child's learning and development is shared through photos and observations recorded in their individual learning journal. At ♪Do Re Mi, these are available online through 'Tapestry' to enable parents 24/7 access. This means that when staff observe a child displaying a development in their learning, they will take a photo and write a 'Learning story', recording the special moment and describing what took place. Over time, this builds up and gives a photographic and written account of the wonderful journeys their children go on during their time with us at nursery.

Parents also have access to their child's next steps and activities they could do at home following on from observations at nursery. Parents are encouraged to upload observations about what their child has been doing, learning or enjoying at home for practitioners to share with the child at nursery and to continue with during nursery time, working in partnership with parents.

Children's Individual Progress Journey (Expected levels of development)

After observing children in their play, scaffolding, recording information gathered on the planning, writing up learning stories which are shared in the learning Journal, the next step is recording the child's progress on their Individual Progress Journey. This is a working document informed by 'Birth to 5 Matters', which staff use to record where an individual child is in their development, and is a tool to be used to highlight where a child needs to go next, or identify any areas where progression may be a concern.

Monitoring

Monitoring staff knowledge of the children in their room will be ongoing by Room Leads and Senior Management. This will mainly be done through questioning.

At the end of each term Room Leads will review progression maps and progress journeys with practitioners to identify any concerns, or trends that can be identified through the room, ensuring all practitioners have a good understanding of where the children are at, areas that need to be focused on, or where they need further stretching.

How is this information used?

The knowledge from the individual progression maps informs staff knowledge of what they need to specifically focus on for each child. These learning intentions will not necessarily be planned for in advance as the children's interests can change day by day. The key thing is staff marrying together their knowledge of what the children need to achieve / experience and combining this with a current interest, or what is happening on the day. Therefore it is imperative that staff have the knowledge of their children and skills to address their learning needs, weaving these into our nursery day as and when is needed building up the children's skills to progress to the next level through a gradual learning process.

In pre-school, this review of progression maps helps identify where the biggest gaps in learning are, which provides the specific focus for the following term. We create a list of 'learning intentions' for the following term which all Pre-school practitioners are familiar with and understand what we need to look out for or plan as a next step throughout the term. This is recorded as a Pre-school Mid Term Plan – a flexible framework to structure the learning in pre-school.

ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is kept in the office in the key person's group file.

'All About Me' Starting Points: These are completed over the child's registration visit and settling-in sessions at the setting in conjunction with parents. These initial observations are also recorded on the child's individual progress map and learning journey summary.

Observations: These are completed weekly/fortnightly for every child using tapestry. Progress is also recorded on individual progress journeys.

Progression Journeys: These are completed as the children display new learning and record their progress against expected level of development in the 7 areas of learning.

2 Year Checks: At around 24-27 months, a 2 year check form needs to be completed. At an Integrated review with the child's health visitor and parents, the child's learning and development will be discussed and any concerns flagged.

Term Dates

We work in three equal terms for assessment purposes:

Autumn Term:	1 st September – 31 st December
Spring Term:	1 st January – 30 th April
Summer Term:	1 st May – 31 st August

These term dates are fixed irrespective of the school terms and where Easter falls, so that progress is tracked equidistant at 4 monthly intervals.

At the end of each term Progression journeys will be checked for each child. Room actions will be considered based on this information. This progress information will also be communicated to parents who will be offered the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with their key worker.