



مدرسَة جِيمس مَتروبول الواحة
GEMS Metropole School
AL WAHA

POLICY

Literacy

Approved by:	Lynsey Seeley
--------------	---------------

Last reviewed on:	August 2025
-------------------	-------------

Next review due by:	August 2027
---------------------	-------------

MISSION

Lead, nurture and succeed.

VISION

A sustainable and inclusive community hub, nurturing future leaders.

Nurturing
LEADERSHIP



MTW Whole-School Literacy Policy

Context and Rationale

This Literacy Policy outlines the approach to the teaching and learning of literacy at GEMS Metropole School Al Waha (MTW) for the Foundation Stage (FS1 & FS2) and Primary (Years 1–6). It reflects the school's vision, mission, and values, and aligns with the National Curriculum of England, the UAE National Agenda, and GEMS Education priorities.

Literacy is central to all learning and enables pupils to access the full curriculum. At MTW, literacy encompasses reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, comprehension, and digital communication. A strong literacy curriculum develops confident communicators and critical thinkers who can engage meaningfully across all subjects, preparing them to succeed academically, socially, and globally.

Policy Objectives

At MTW, we provide a purposeful and inclusive literacy curriculum that develops pupils' ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively across the curriculum. We aim to nurture learners who can comprehend, analyse, and respond to a wide range of texts and express their understanding clearly in oral and written forms.

High-quality literacy teaching empowers pupils to access all subjects, achieve their potential, and become responsible global citizens and future leaders.

Aims

Our literacy curriculum ensures that every child becomes a confident, fluent, and motivated reader and writer, develops a rich vocabulary and strong comprehension skills, communicates effectively in speech and writing across all subjects, engages critically with texts, ideas, and media, demonstrates creativity and clarity in written and oral expression, and applies literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum, including STEM, humanities, arts, and languages. In line with the UAE National Agenda and Vision priorities, literacy is embedded as a daily habit and a visible part of school culture. Participation in international benchmarking assessments (PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA, NGRT, GL) supports national goals and ensures high standards and accountability.

Our literacy curriculum aims to foster a lifelong love of reading and writing, build a strong language-rich environment across all subjects, develop transferable literacy skills for academic success, promote understanding of diverse genres, cultures, and media, strengthen digital literacy and research skills, support creativity, critical thinking, and structured expression, ensure equity through appropriate challenge and targeted support, develop oracy, discussion, and presentation skills across the curriculum, provide internal and external opportunities for Gifted and Talented learners, and engage parents as partners in literacy development.

Teaching and Learning Approach

Literacy is integrated across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils engage with high-quality texts, purposeful writing, and structured discussion in every subject, from FS1 to Year 6. Critical thinking, comprehension, and communication are explicitly developed through both subject-specific and cross-curricular learning.

MTW uses the Read Like a GEM (RLaG) programme for reading, alongside a broader literacy approach that develops writing, speaking, listening, and vocabulary.



Primary

Weekly Literacy Structure

FS1 has four phonics sessions per week; rich oral language and storytelling are embedded daily. FS2 has five phonics sessions per week, including guided reading and structured writing activities. Year 1 has four phonics lessons per week, plus three literacy-focused reading and writing sessions. Year 2 has three phonics sessions per week, including guided reading and writing. Years 3 and 4 have three literacy lessons per week, integrating reading, writing, and oracy. Years 5 and 6 have four literacy lessons per week, with extended cross-curricular application. Writing is taught through structured sequences linked to high-quality texts, with explicit teaching of composition, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and academic language. Oracy is developed through discussion, debate, and presentation activities in all subjects.

Foundation Stage (FS1 & FS2)

FS1 focuses on a love of books, storytelling, rhyme, mark-making, and early print awareness. Oral language and listening skills are developed through songs, stories, and purposeful talk. FS2 follows a systematic phonics approach taught through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds, with daily, structured, progressive sessions. Progress is tracked in depth, with targeted interventions for gaps. Phonics is directly linked to Big Cat Phonics for decodable reading practice.

Vocabulary and comprehension are explicitly taught through thematic texts, storytelling, and cross-curricular experiences. Early writing and mark-making are integrated into play and purposeful activities.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2)

Reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds and guided reading sessions. Writing through text-led units, focusing on composition, spelling, grammar, and handwriting. Oracy through structured partner talk, storytelling, and discussion. Cross-curricular literacy is integrated into science, history, geography, and arts. Home reading is supported through Collins Online Library. Flexible interventions are guided by assessment data.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

Exposure to a wide range of high-quality texts (Big Cat, Collins Online E-Books, class novels). Writing across genres and subjects with explicit teaching of style, structure, and accuracy. Reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and research skills are applied in all subjects. Oracy skills developed through debates, presentations, and collaborative projects. Use of NGRT, GL, and PTE data to inform grouping, planning, and differentiation. Digital literacy integrated across subjects.

Literacy Across the Curriculum

MTW promotes literacy in every subject, ensuring pupils can read, write, speak, and listen effectively in context. Examples include science and STEM: writing explanations, recording observations, interpreting diagrams, and reading technical texts; history and geography: analysing primary and secondary sources, developing structured arguments, and using subject-specific vocabulary; arts and humanities: evaluating artistic and cultural texts, writing reflections and critiques, and presenting ideas orally; languages: developing vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and translation skills across Arabic and additional languages; digital literacy: navigating online information, writing for digital formats, and critically evaluating sources.

Subject teachers are responsible for integrating literacy objectives into lesson planning, with explicit teaching and scaffolding where necessary.

Guided Reading Model

Guided reading is aligned to pupils' independent reading levels, supporting comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary development. Skills taught in class are applied independently in guided reading, with progression tracked and reinforced through cross-curricular reading and writing.

Key literacy skills include vocabulary and academic language development, comprehension, retrieval, inference, prediction, summarising, synthesising, understanding authorial intent, structure, and purpose, and application of literacy skills across subjects.

Key Features of Literacy at MTW

Daily, systematic phonics teaching (Little Wandle) linked to decodable reading (Big Cat). Writing, oracy, and literacy skills embedded across the curriculum. High-quality texts and digital resources in all subjects. Daily read-aloud and talk-rich activities. Explicit modelling of reading, writing, and speaking strategies. Use of scaffolds and sentence stems to support writing and oracy.

Book Banding and Resources

Books are matched to pupils' reading and phonics levels using a colour-coded system. Placement is informed by teacher judgment, assessment data, and progression in reading, writing, and comprehension. Cross-curricular resources are used to embed literacy across subjects.

Home Literacy and Parental Engagement

Pupils are expected to read, write, and engage in oral language activities at home. Parents are encouraged to listen to their child read and discuss texts, support writing and oral expression at home, and record and review literacy activities in communication diaries. Targets are shared and reviewed three times per year to track progress and set next steps.

Classroom and Library Provision

Classrooms provide language-rich environments with print and digital texts, writing tools, and talk opportunities. Teachers hear pupils read and provide structured writing and discussion activities regularly. The library offers fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and digital texts. Pupils have timetabled sessions and access to recommendations. Arabic Story Times are integrated in the Early Years.

Assessment

Assessment is ongoing, formative, and cross-curricular, covering reading, writing, speaking, listening, and vocabulary. Summative assessments include NGRT, GL, and PTE, with progress tracked on Go4Schools. Outcomes inform planning, intervention, and professional development.

Intervention and Inclusion

Targeted interventions ensure all pupils make progress in literacy, including 1:1 and small-group support in reading and writing, structured comprehension and phonics interventions, and monitoring via Upstrive, PASS, and teacher assessment. Support is provided for higher-attaining pupils, SEND learners, ELL students, and Gifted and Talented pupils.

Secondary Phase (Key Stage 3-4)

At MTW, literacy is a whole-school responsibility and a core driver of high-quality education across Key Stages 3 and 4. The secondary literacy strategy builds on the foundations established in the primary phase and ensures that all students can access, engage with, and excel within the curriculum.

Literacy provision in the secondary phase supports the school's SDP priorities by:

- improving access to learning (Quality of Education)
- removing barriers for vulnerable learners (Inclusion and Equity)
- supporting confidence and engagement (Wellbeing)
- using assessment to inform intervention and improvement (Assessment and Improvement)

Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)

Intent

In Key Stage 3, the literacy curriculum is designed to secure a strong transition from primary, consolidate core reading and writing skills, and ensure all students develop the academic language needed to access the secondary curriculum.

The focus is on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, writing accuracy, and disciplinary literacy, enabling students to engage confidently with subject-specific texts and tasks across the curriculum.

Implementation

Termly reading assessments (NGRT) are used to identify students requiring additional literacy support. This then enables targeted literacy interventions, delivered for identified students, including ELL learners and Students of Determination.

All students participate in regular structured reading opportunities, including ERIC (Everyone Reads in Class). This effectively models reading strategies such as retrieval, inference, summarising, and interpretation. Subject teachers explicitly model how to read and interpret subject texts; respond to written questions; structure extended responses. Writing expectations are consistent across subjects, with scaffolding used where appropriate to support access.

All students participate daily on the online literacy intervention Reading Wise, which adapts to each learners needs and capabilities.

A whole-school Word of the Week programme supports the explicit teaching of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary.

Impact

By the end of Key Stage 3, students demonstrate increased confidence and stamina when reading extended texts. Students show improved understanding and use of subject-specific vocabulary. Literacy gaps are identified early and addressed, ensuring students are prepared for the demands of Key Stage 4.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11)

Intent

In Key Stage 4, literacy provision focuses on exam literacy, academic precision, and disciplinary writing, ensuring students can meet the demands of GCSE specifications and assessments. The emphasis is on accurate interpretation of exam questions, confident use of subject-specific terminology, and the production of clear, structured written responses.

Implementation

Reading and assessment data continue to inform targeted literacy support where required. Reading strategies are applied directly to GCSE texts, sources, and examination questions across subjects.

Teachers explicitly model high-quality exam responses and explain how marks are awarded. Additionally, accuracy in spelling, punctuation, and grammar is reinforced within subject contexts. Teachers provide literacy scaffolds strategically to support students without reducing challenge.

All students participate daily on the online literacy intervention Reading Wise, which adapts to each learners' needs and capabilities.

A whole-school Word of the Week programme supports the explicit teaching of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary. Vocabulary instruction focuses on subject-specific terminology, command words and examination language.

Impact

By the end of Key Stage 4, students demonstrate improved comprehension of exam questions and source materials. Written responses are sharper, well structured, and more accurate. Students use subject-specific language with increased confidence and precision, supporting improved examination performance.

Literacy Across the Secondary Curriculum

In Key Stages 3 and 4, all teachers are teachers of literacy. Subject teachers are responsible for explicitly teaching the literacy demands of their discipline, including:

- subject-specific vocabulary and terminology
- how to read and interpret texts, sources, and questions
- how to structure written responses appropriate to subject conventions

Literacy is planned, taught, and reviewed as part of high-quality teaching and learning across all subjects.

Assessment, Monitoring and Intervention (Secondary)

Literacy progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 is monitored through:

- formative classroom assessment
- summative reading assessments (including NGRT)
- examination of progress on the online intervention tool Reading Wise
- scrutiny of student work across subjects

Assessment information is used to identify students requiring additional literacy support; evaluate the impact of literacy interventions; inform teaching, curriculum planning, and staff development. Targeted literacy support is provided for, students below expected reading levels, ELL learners and Students of Determination. This ensures equitable access to the curriculum for all learners.

Monitoring and Review (Secondary Phase)

The effectiveness of literacy provision across Key Stages 3 and 4 is monitored regularly to ensure it continues to support high-quality teaching, inclusion, and student progress.

Monitoring includes:

- analysis of reading assessment data (NGRT)
- review of literacy intervention outcomes
- scrutiny of student work across subjects
- learning walks and lesson observations with a literacy focus
- student voice and feedback on reading and writing confidence

The Secondary Leadership team work collaboratively with the Literacy Lead, Heads of Department and SENCo to review literacy provision and ensure consistency across subjects. Findings from monitoring are used to refine practice, inform staff development, and address areas for improvement.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Primary Leadership Team to ensure it reflects current practice, statutory guidance, and evolving pupil needs.