GFM Literacy Policy: Primary and Secondary

Published Date:	01 September 2026
The Policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly, in the light of any significant new developments. The next anticipated review date will be:	**20 October 2027**

This policy is applied at GFM alongside our school's vision, mission and values.

1. Vision

At GEMS Founders School Al Mizhar (GFM), we believe that literacy is fundamental to academic achievement, personal development and lifelong learning. We are committed to ensuring that every student develops the knowledge, skills and confidence to communicate effectively, access challenging learning and express their ideas with clarity and purpose.

In alignment with the GFM vision, *Grow, Flourish, Mindful*, we aim to empower students to celebrate uniqueness, think critically, communicate confidently and become innovative, creative problem solvers who contribute positively to the world in which they live.

Literacy is the responsibility of every teacher and is integral to every subject. Through a consistent, inclusive and ambitious whole-school approach, we ensure that students develop the reading, writing, speaking, listening and vocabulary skills required to succeed across the curriculum and beyond school.

We recognise that literacy development is a shared responsibility between the school, students and families. All students, regardless of starting point, language background or additional learning needs, should have equitable opportunities to become confident and capable communicators.

2. Purpose and aims

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent whole-school approach to literacy across EYFS, Primary and Secondary.

The policy aims to:

- Develop students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening across all curriculum areas.
- Ensure that literacy is explicitly taught, modelled and reinforced in every subject.

- Develop students' academic vocabulary, subject-specific terminology and ability to communicate complex ideas.
- Promote a love of reading and establish positive reading habits throughout school.
- Enable students to understand, interpret, evaluate and respond to increasingly complex texts.
- Improve the accuracy, fluency, structure and quality of students' written communication.
- Develop students' confidence in discussion, presentation, debate and collaborative learning.
- Identify literacy needs early and provide timely, evidence-informed support.
- Ensure that EAL, SEND and other identified learners can access ambitious literacy experiences through appropriate scaffolding and targeted intervention.
- Promote high expectations for literacy, including spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting, presentation and the accurate use of subject-specific language.
- Strengthen the partnership between school and home in supporting students' literacy development.
- Monitor the quality and impact of literacy provision through assessment, quality assurance and student outcomes.

3. Policy Links

This policy applies to all staff and students across EYFS, Primary and Secondary, including Sixth Form.

It should be read alongside the GFM English and Reading Across the Curriculum Policies

The English Policy establishes the teaching and learning expectations for English as a discrete subject. The Reading Across the Curriculum Policy sets out the school's specific approach to reading development, reading culture and targeted reading intervention.

This Literacy Policy provides the overarching framework for literacy across the school. It ensures that reading, writing, speaking, listening and vocabulary development are explicitly supported in English and across all other curriculum subjects.

4. What does Literacy mean at GFM?

Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to understand, interpret and communicate information effectively.

Reading: The ability to read fluently, accurately and with understanding; interpret meaning; make inferences; evaluate information; and engage critically with a range of texts.
Writing: The ability to communicate ideas accurately and effectively for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate vocabulary, structure, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Speaking and listening (oracy): The ability to articulate ideas, listen actively, engage respectfully in discussion, ask questions, explain reasoning, present information and respond appropriately to others.

Vocabulary: The development and application of general academic vocabulary and subject-specific terminology to support understanding, reasoning and communication.

Disciplinary literacy: The ability to read, write, speak and interpret information in ways that are appropriate to individual subjects. For example, evaluating evidence in History, explaining processes in Science, interpreting problems in Mathematics and analysing sources in Humanities.

These areas are interconnected and should be developed progressively throughout a student's education.

5. Principles of effective literacy provision

All literacy provision at GFM will be guided by the following principles.

High expectations

All students are expected to communicate accurately, engage with appropriately challenging texts and develop increasingly sophisticated language skills. Literacy expectations should reflect students' ages, stages of development, starting points and curriculum requirements.

Explicit instruction

Teachers will explicitly teach the vocabulary, reading strategies, writing conventions and communication skills required for success in their subjects. Students should not be expected to acquire unfamiliar literacy skills through exposure alone.

Consistency across subjects and phases

Staff will use agreed whole-school approaches and routines while adapting their application to the needs of individual subjects and age groups.

Inclusion and accessibility

All students will have access to ambitious learning. Appropriate scaffolding, modelling, vocabulary support, visual resources, adapted texts and structured opportunities for communication will be used where necessary.
Progressive development

Literacy instruction will build on prior learning, with increasing expectations for independence, accuracy, fluency, analysis and sophistication as students progress through the school.

Assessment-informed practice

Teachers will use assessment evidence to identify strengths and gaps, plan responsive teaching and evaluate the impact of interventions.

A culture of reading and communication

Literacy will be visible and valued throughout school life, with opportunities for students to read widely, express their ideas, engage with different perspectives and develop a lifelong interest in language and literature.

6. Implementation: literacy across the curriculum

6.1 Reading

Reading is central to students' ability to access the curriculum. All teachers are responsible for developing the reading skills required in their subject.

Teachers will:

- Provide regular opportunities for students to read high-quality, age-appropriate and subject-relevant texts.
- Model fluent and expressive reading where appropriate.
- Explicitly teach students how to approach different text types, including textbooks, articles, historical sources, scientific explanations, data-based texts and examination questions.
- Teach strategies such as prediction, questioning, annotation, summarising, inference and identifying key information.
- Check students' understanding rather than assuming that accurate decoding indicates comprehension.
- Support students to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, diagrams, instructions and written questions.
- Encourage students to read independently and develop the stamina required to engage with longer and more challenging texts.

- Provide opportunities for students to discuss, evaluate and respond to what they have read.

The school's Read Like a GEM (RLAG) framework will support consistent reading practice across subjects and phases. Relevant strategies, including *Pause & Process*, *Expand It*, *Plan to Shine*, *Word Up!* and *Say–Show–Go*, should be embedded where appropriate to support comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, academic discussion and extended writing.

The specific assessment and intervention arrangements for reading will be set out in the Reading Across the Curriculum Policy.

6.2 Writing

Writing is an essential means through which students demonstrate understanding, develop reasoning and communicate learning.

All teachers are responsible for teaching the forms of writing required in their subject.

This includes recognising that successful writing in different disciplines has different purposes, structures and conventions.

Teachers will:

- Model high-quality written responses and make success criteria explicit.
- Teach students how to plan, organise, develop and edit their writing.
- Explicitly teach subject-specific writing structures, including explanations, evaluations, arguments, reports, analyses and extended responses.
- Support students to construct clear sentences and coherent paragraphs, using appropriate connectives and precise vocabulary.
- Reinforce accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and subject terminology.
- Provide regular opportunities for extended writing where appropriate to the subject and learning objective.
- Teach students how to use evidence, examples, quotations, data and reasoning to support their ideas.
- Provide feedback that identifies how students can improve the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of their writing.
- Ensure that written presentation is appropriate to the task and supports clear communication.

Students should be encouraged to act on feedback, edit their work and develop independence in improving the quality of their written communication.

6.3 Speaking and listening

Oracy supports the development of understanding, confidence, reasoning and effective communication. Students should have regular opportunities to articulate their thinking and engage meaningfully with others.

Teachers will:

- Model clear, accurate and purposeful spoken language.
- Establish expectations for active listening, respectful discussion and constructive disagreement.
- Provide structured opportunities for paired discussion, collaborative learning, questioning, explanation, presentation and debate.
- Teach students to use appropriate academic vocabulary and sentence structures when explaining their thinking.
- Encourage students to justify opinions, develop arguments, respond to alternative viewpoints and build on the contributions of others.
- Support students who require additional preparation or scaffolding to participate confidently.
- Provide opportunities for students to communicate for different audiences and purposes, including formal presentations and subject-specific discussions.

Oracy should be planned as a purposeful part of learning rather than treated solely as an informal activity.

6.4 Vocabulary development

Explicit vocabulary instruction is a core element of literacy provision.

Teachers will identify and teach the vocabulary students need to access and demonstrate learning. This includes:

- General academic vocabulary that supports learning across subjects.
- Subject-specific terminology essential to understanding disciplinary concepts.
- Unfamiliar words and phrases that may present barriers to comprehension.
- Words and expressions that support analytical, evaluative and extended written responses.

Vocabulary should be introduced in context, explained clearly, modelled in use and revisited over time. Knowledge Organisers, visual prompts, glossaries, examples, retrieval activities and structured sentence frames may be used to reinforce understanding.

Students should be encouraged to use newly acquired vocabulary accurately in their speaking and writing. Teachers should address misconceptions and distinguish between everyday meanings and subject-specific meanings where relevant.

7. Phase-specific implementation

The principles of this policy apply across the school, with provision adapted to students' developmental stages and curriculum requirements.

7.1 Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS, literacy development begins with communication, language, listening, speaking, early reading and early writing.
Provision will:

- Develop vocabulary through meaningful interaction, conversation, storytelling, songs, rhymes and shared reading.
- Promote a love of books and an understanding of stories, information texts and print.
- Develop phonological awareness and systematic phonics in line with the school's agreed early reading approach.
- Support children to recognise sounds, develop decoding skills and build early reading fluency.
- Encourage mark-making, early spelling, handwriting and purposeful writing.
- Provide language-rich environments with opportunities for children to communicate, ask questions and express ideas.
- Identify emerging speech, language, reading and writing needs and respond promptly.
- Work in partnership with families to support communication and early literacy at home.

7.2 Primary

In Primary, literacy provision will strengthen foundational skills and develop increasing independence, fluency and comprehension.
Provision will:

- Build on early language and phonics through systematic development of reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension.
- Provide regular opportunities for independent, shared and guided reading, as appropriate to the phase.
- Develop understanding of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and subject-specific texts.
- Explicitly teach vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence construction.
- Develop students' ability to plan, structure, write and edit for different purposes and audiences.
- Establish clear expectations for written presentation and the application of taught skills across subjects.
- Provide opportunities for structured discussion, explanation, questioning and presentation.
- Identify students who require additional support and ensure that intervention complements classroom teaching.
- Encourage reading for pleasure and establish positive reading habits that continue into Secondary.

7.3 Secondary

In Secondary, literacy provision will support students to access increasingly complex subject content, develop disciplinary expertise and communicate with precision and independence.

Provision will:

- Develop students' ability to interpret complex texts, evaluate sources and distinguish between evidence, opinion and inference.
- Explicitly teach advanced academic vocabulary and the language demands of individual subjects.
- Develop students' understanding of command words, examination questions and the conventions of subject-specific responses.
- Model high-quality analytical, evaluative, explanatory and extended writing.
- Reinforce accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and appropriate written presentation.
- Develop students' ability to construct sustained arguments, justify conclusions and use evidence effectively.

- Provide regular opportunities for academic discussion, debate, presentation and collaborative reasoning.
- Identify and address gaps in reading comprehension, vocabulary, written accuracy and academic communication that may limit access to the curriculum.
- Prepare students to communicate effectively in GCSE, vocational, A Level and post-16 academic contexts, as well as further education, employment and wider life.

In Sixth Form, literacy should reflect the increased independence, precision, evaluation and subject-specific communication expected at advanced level.

8. Inclusion and targeted support

GFM is committed to ensuring that every student can access the literacy demands of the curriculum and make progress from their individual starting point.

Teachers should maintain ambitious learning objectives while providing appropriate support for students who experience literacy barriers.

Support may include:

- Pre-teaching key vocabulary and concepts.
- Bilingual glossaries and visual supports.
- Chunked texts and instructions.
- Guided reading and teacher modelling.
- Sentence starters, writing frames and structured discussion prompts.
- Worked examples and model responses.
- Additional opportunities for oral rehearsal before writing.
- Appropriate assistive technology and accessible learning materials.
- Targeted reading, language or writing interventions where assessment indicates a need.

Students who are new to English should be supported to develop English proficiency while drawing on their existing linguistic knowledge and experiences. EAL should not automatically be treated as an indication of low ability.

Students with SEND should receive support in accordance with their identified needs and relevant provision. Reasonable adjustments and individual strategies should enable meaningful participation without unnecessarily reducing the level of challenge.

Particular attention should be given to groups identified through school assessment and

monitoring, including Emirati learners, early readers, students new to English and students with additional learning needs.

Interventions should be evidence-informed, appropriately targeted and monitored for impact. Students' progress should be reviewed regularly, and support adjusted in response to evidence.

9. Home–school partnership

Families play an important role in developing students' language, reading habits and confidence in communication.

The school will support parental engagement through appropriate guidance, communication and opportunities to participate in literacy initiatives.

This may include:

- Sharing recommended reading lists and age-appropriate resources.
- Providing guidance on supporting reading comprehension, vocabulary and discussion at home.
- Encouraging regular reading and meaningful conversation.
- Sharing information about literacy progress and relevant support strategies.
- Promoting family reading challenges, events and wider GEMS reading initiatives.
- Providing accessible resources and guidance for families where appropriate, including support for students learning English.

Parents are encouraged to foster positive reading habits, discuss books and learning with their children and communicate with the school if they have concerns about literacy development.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Senior and Middle Leadership Team

- Establish literacy as a whole-school priority.
- Ensure that this policy aligns with the school's vision, curriculum and improvement priorities.
- Allocate appropriate leadership responsibility and support.
- Monitor implementation through the school's quality assurance processes.
- Review literacy outcomes and ensure that actions are informed by evidence.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate professional development.

Phase and Subject Leaders

- Ensure that literacy is appropriately planned into their curriculum areas.
- Identify the specific reading, writing, speaking, listening and vocabulary demands of their subjects.
- Support teachers in implementing agreed strategies.
- Monitor students' work and learning through appropriate quality assurance activities.
- Use assessment information to identify patterns, gaps and priorities.
- Share effective practice and identify professional development needs.

Teachers

- Recognise their responsibility for developing literacy within their subject or phase.
- Explicitly teach and model the literacy skills students need to succeed.
- Use accurate subject-specific language and reinforce agreed literacy expectations.
- Provide opportunities for purposeful reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Check students' understanding and respond to literacy barriers.
- Adapt teaching and resources to support inclusion and appropriate challenge.
- Provide feedback that supports improvement.
- Contribute to assessment, intervention and quality assurance processes as required.

Inclusion and EAL Teams

- Support the identification of literacy needs.
- Advise teachers on appropriate adaptations, scaffolding and intervention.
- Work collaboratively with class teachers, subject teachers and phase leaders.
- Monitor the progress of students receiving targeted support.
- Support the development of accessible resources and effective classroom practice.

Students

- Engage positively with reading, writing and speaking opportunities.
- Make appropriate use of subject-specific and academic vocabulary.

- Listen respectfully and contribute constructively to discussions.
- Present work to an appropriate standard.
- Respond to feedback and take increasing responsibility for improving their literacy.
- Read regularly and develop independent learning habits.

Parents and carers

- Support regular reading and positive communication habits at home.
- Engage with school guidance and recommended resources.
- Encourage their children to discuss their learning and interests.
- Communicate relevant concerns about literacy development with the school.

11. Staff development

The school will support the effective implementation of this policy through relevant professional development and collaborative practice.

Training may include:

- Explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Reading comprehension and fluency strategies.
- Disciplinary literacy and subject-specific reading.
- Modelling and improving extended writing.
- Developing academic discussion and oracy.
- Supporting EAL and SEND learners.
- Using assessment evidence to identify and address literacy gaps.
- Effective feedback and the development of independent learning.

Professional development should translate into consistent classroom practice and measurable improvements in students' learning.

Designation	Name	Signature	Date
Executive Principal/CEO/	**Akram Tarik**		**19 October 2027**
Principal	**Mia Chorfi**		**19 October 2027**

Next policy review date: 01 October 2027