



**DUBAI  
BRITISH  
SCHOOL**  
EMIRATES HILLS

# Reading Policy

This document is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Principal	
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## Aim

Our overarching aim for reading at Dubai British School is to promote high standards of literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. This supports the Dubai vision set out by H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum who said, 'Our goal is to make reading a daily habit that is deeply ingrained... It is the duty of relevant institutions to make this law a reality'.

To promote high standards of literacy at Dubai British School, we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- develop their confidence and independence when reading for different purposes
- are able to use a range of reading strategies when exposed to a new text
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences modelled in their reading.
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas, supported with evidence from the text
- are competent in the skills of speaking and listening, asking and responding to questions and participating in discussions, demonstrating understanding of what they have read.
- are proficient and reflective by being exposed to a range of books (fiction and non-fiction), from a variety of cultures and genres
- develop a love of reading which grows further than the classroom/ book to ensure that they become life-long learners.
- meet the National Agenda target to ensure that the students in the UAE rank among the best in the world in reading

## The Teaching of Reading

Reading sessions, across the school, focus on developing pupils' competence in both word recognition and comprehension as outlined in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Reading. Skilled word reading involves both the decoding of unfamiliar words and the recognition of familiar words. At Dubai British School, our understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words begins in EYFS, whereby phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to secure independent decoding. This is achieved by the implementation of the Letters & Sounds systematic synthetic phonics teaching programme. As pupils progress to the Primary and Secondary School; greater emphasis is placed on whole text understanding through skim, scan and reading for meaning skills development and understanding the implications of the social, historical and cultural context of a given text.

## Primary School

### Foundation Stage:

In Foundation Stage, reading is promoted across the curriculum. Children are encouraged to read through continuous access and exposure to books in dedicated reading areas, both indoors and outdoors. Furthermore, wherever possible, books are displayed as a stimulus for learning and discovery in continuous provision, for example, in the Sand or Construction Areas. In lesson planning, texts are frequently used as a focus for learning, both fiction and non-fiction. In FS1, a half-term topic is dedicated to the work of author, Julia Donaldson. In both FS1 and FS2, the children learn about traditional tales and develop an appreciation of books using the skills of Talk for Writing as described by Pie Corbett. Dress-up days such as Witches' and Wizards' Day (Room on the Broom) and special events such as our Gruffalo Crumble picnic help to promote a love of books, characters and storylines.

Phonics is introduced in FS1 using the Letters & Sounds approach enhanced by resources from Jolly Phonics. Simultaneously, children are introduced to a structured DBS Storytelling scheme which develops the language and skills of storytelling. In FS2 children are grouped by ability and continue to be taught through the Letters & Sounds approach; this happens for 40 minutes per day. The children's progress is monitored carefully as they move through the approach through termly phonics assessments of each child, and additional support is put in place, if required. All FS classes go to the Library each week and have shared story time in classes several times a week. Reading fluency and comprehension is supported through individual reading with the teacher and Learning Assistant (once a week in FS2) and questioning is used during this time to consolidate and extend children's comprehension. Phase-specific word lists of decodable and high frequency words to practice are also sent home. Throughout the year, online activities and apps e.g. Teach your Monster to Read, are shared with parents to support and encourage reading and literacy skills.

### Key Stage 1:

In Year 1 and 2, children are taught phonics and reading through the Letters & Sounds approach for 30 minutes a day. They are streamed based on their phonetic knowledge and read books selected to match their reading ability. The children are taught to read and spell words, through blending and segmenting phonemes. They are also taught to read and spell high frequency words and tricky words, which cannot be segmented phonetically. In Year 1, planning of phonics allows children to use and apply new learning through a range of carousel activities. Whereas in Year 2, planning is based on an initial assessment of the phonemes and lessons are used to close gaps and allow children to practice and apply the phonemes within a context. Reading interventions take place in both year groups to develop fluency as well as consolidate understanding and application of phonemes.

Guided Reading is taught for 2 hours each week in Key Stage 1. In Year 1, teachers frequently use assessment for learning in relation to the reading skills by focusing on a different reading skill each week, for example inference. In Year 2 Guided Reading is carried out in line with the English policy. Further opportunities are available to Year 2 pupils to develop their love of reading and develop their reading skills by evaluating book covers and making predictions and inferences on the plot and characters. This also exposes children to a range of new fiction texts. Across Key Stage 1, we encourage the use of parent volunteers during Guided Reading lessons to enable children to read to additional adults on a regular basis.

School library visits are scheduled each week to support and develop the habit of reading for pleasure, in both English and Arabic. During this time children are having a 'story time' whereby they are able to discuss themes and key features of the story, as well as develop their own opinions of the text.

## Key Stage 2:

In Years 3 to 6, two lessons per week are allocated to teach Reading. These are skills-based sessions focusing on reading objectives in line with curriculum expectations and ensuring acquisition and application of higher order reading skills. Guided Reading sessions are purposeful and allow children to work independently as well as with an adult. A different focus group is taught by the teacher during each session, whereby the children will be taught new skills in order to progress with their Reading. Activities are then carried out to follow up with the text focus and promote the application of skills previously taught. Teachers carry out regular formal and informal assessment of students' reading abilities during this lesson.

Children also visit the library once a week where there is a collection of books of various genres in both English and Arabic languages. There are increased opportunities to use the school library to promote reading for pleasure and develop research skills.

In Key Stage 2 all students choose books from the 'Accelerated Reader' library as and when they complete their current book. The 'Accelerated Reader' scheme allows pupils to read books within a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range that is appropriate and accessible for the child as well as providing a level of challenge. It gives them ownership over their reading and through their choice of genre and author children become more adept at choosing books. Once children have read their chosen book, they are given an opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension by completing an online quiz linked to their book (fiction or non-fiction). They are also able to widen their range of higher-level vocabulary by completing a vocabulary quiz linked to their book. Children are motivated by Accelerated Reader as the points each child accumulates from the quizzes is display on the classroom Accelerated Reader display board. This scheme is also incentivised by obtaining prizes at key milestones to further develop the motivation and love of reading.

All classes within the Primary School start the year with a book week which engages children, allows them to deepen their understanding of a set text and explore this book across all the subjects of the curriculum.

Within English lessons, class teachers use a range of strategies to teach reading skills and develop children's enthusiasm for reading across a variety of genres. These include:

- Shared Reading, including use of the interactive whiteboard;
- Whole Class Guided Reading of the same text;
- Focused Reading sessions in smaller groups where high-quality discussion is facilitated by a teacher or Learning Assistant;
- Reading of texts and comprehension activities linked to the English genre or Wow Learning theme;
- Reading for pleasure opportunities in inspiring environments (corridors and classrooms). In FS there are themed reading areas linked to topics, whereas in Key Stage 1 and 2 these areas are linked to a chosen author. The author focused reading area provides further exposure to a range of new texts from various cultures and disciplines. It also allows children to leave their responses about books they have read and make recommendations.

These strategies are also employed across the curriculum to support children's developing literacy in all subjects.

## Other strategies

- Browzly, an online reading for pleasure platform, is used across the school. Children are encouraged to read books which match their reading ability, review them, and are encouraged to use the platform at home.
- Competitions are frequently devised to encourage and raise the profile of reading. These include challenges set by the English Subject Leader, as well as amongst specific Year groups.
- World Book Week is celebrated annually across the school. The celebrations include local and international author visits, booksellers, poets, storytellers and a range of carefully considered book-related activities.
- Emirates Literature Festival is an annual focus; children enjoy visits from authors as well as participating in competitions such as the Chevron Readers' Cup and Taaleem writing competition.
- International Arabic Reading Challenge for students in Years 2 – 6
- Arabic reading schemes: Majdalawi Masterpieces, Oxford and online platforms BravoBravo and 3asafer
- Every class in Key Stage 1 and 2 has a 'Readers are Leaders' book which allows children to leave book reviews about stories they have read and develop further responses to the text.

## Home Reading

Reading at home is an expectation for all children each evening to support the children's progress and increase fluency and understanding.

In Foundation stage and Key Stage One, there is an expectation that Student Diaries are signed on a daily basis to evidence reading done at home, with an adult. When children have been moved up a 'Book Band' this is recorded into the diary to keep parents informed.

In Key Stage Two, children are encouraged to record their Accelerated Reader quiz scores at the back of their Student Diaries and log new books taken out from the library. Parents are well informed of their child's progress on the Accelerated Reader scheme through regularly updated quiz scores and changes to any ZPDs. Children are expected to read at home alone, with an adult or be read to each evening for 20 minutes. Parents are encouraged to visit the Accelerated Reader library with their child and engage in discussions about the text, in order to form connections to the book as well as a promote the enthusiasm to read.

Home Reading is purposeful as children's reading targets are shared three times a year with parents through school reports. These reading targets are shared with children as part of their personalised learning so that they are aware of their current achievements and also their next steps in learning.

Browzly is used from FS2 to Year 6, through which children read and review a range of fiction and non-fiction texts to read at home. This breadth of exposure to various texts encourages our pupils to develop knowledge of themselves, others and the world around them.

Pupils are assigned their reading levels following assessments, and 'Book Bands' are used to ensure they are reading at the appropriate level. Children are encouraged to change their books at least once a week to ensure progress through the book bands.

## Secondary School

### **Strategies for Developing Whole School Development of Literacy.**

In the Secondary School we believe that tackling the literacy demands in all our subjects will increase the students' chance of success. We recognise that literacy skills are both general and subject specific. As such the schools operates a policy that recognizes the differences between faculties, and how priorities and focus areas can vary between them. There is a standard set of focus areas that all strategies can fit under; as below

1. Prioritise 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum
  - Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.
  - Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.
  - All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.
2. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject
  - Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.
  - Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.
  - Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech
3. Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts
  - Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.
  - To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.
  - Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning, can improve students' comprehension.
4. Break down complex writing tasks
  - Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.
  - Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and support students by modelling each step.
  - Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality
5. Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject

- Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students' skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.
  - Reading helps students gain knowledge which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students' understanding of ideas.
  - Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.
6. Provide opportunities for structured talk
- Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.
  - High quality talk is typically well structured and guided by teachers.
  - Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.
7. Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students
- Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.
  - Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.
  - Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions

**Please refer to the separate Secondary document, 'Reading Across the Curriculum', for further detail and for all faculty information.**

### **Example: Development of reading skills in English lessons**

(please see the Secondary specific document for all other faculty information)

Pupils develop reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. Pupils are exposed to range of different texts types and reading strategies to decode the information.

### **Spelling Bee – KS3**

Our students in Year 7-9 are given a list of challenging and complex vocabulary (both in meaning and spelling) to learn as part of a KS3 competition. Teachers equip students with the skills to be able to learn, drill and quiz themselves, to ensure that this vocabulary becomes more familiar over time. We have ensured that these words are those which are Tier 2, whereby they are not just specific to their studies in English and are therefore transferable and can be used in a variety of subjects and contexts. Students also have the opportunity to learn the vocabulary outside of school, before taking part in a class competition. This will ultimately lead up to a celebration in the form of a 'Spelling Bee' where students compete as representatives of their Houses, by remembering the most spellings accurately.



## **Increasing Tier 2 vocabulary usage across the curriculum – KS3, KS4, KS5**

Leading on from our KS3 spelling bee, we ensure that we equip our learners at all levels to extend their vocabulary as standard. We are putting an increased focus on 'Tier 2 vocabulary' which increases the use of sophisticated vocabulary and can be used across the curriculum. One approach in doing this, for example, is the use of 'Freyer Diagrams' where students focus on their basic vocabulary usage and independently find ways to improve and expand on this. Students are regularly reminded of the importance of using this vocabulary outside of the English classroom. We are also exploring wider opportunities to raise the profile of Tier 2 vocabulary outside of the English classroom.

## **Reading Challenge – KS3**

Building on from a pilot scheme in the previous academic year, we are delighted to be offering an extended reading challenge across the KS3 year groups. Students are provided with a vast list of 'approved suggested texts' which cover a variety of topics, ideas and time periods. Students will read the text and complete their reading challenge booklets to demonstrate their engagement. We have deliberately selected texts which have cross-curricular appeal to ensure we are broadening the reading scope of our learners.

## **Wider reading opportunities – KS4, KS5**

Students are regularly encouraged to engage with wider reading, perspectives and theories from a variety of sources. This could include engaging with historical material to inform their understanding of a class text in English Literature or engaging with theoretical material in Psychology to understand key principles in English Language. At A-Level, students are given reading lists and independent study tasks. We see it as important that students make connections between what they are learning in English to their other subjects across the curriculum.

## **Raising the profile of Critical thinking skills – KS3, KS4, KS5**

Our department encourage our learners at all levels to consider their studies with a critical perspective. We therefore put an emphasis on their ability to be critical thinkers through a range of strategies, such as open questioning, ranking activities, self-reflection, personal target setting, debating, discussion, interpretation tasks and challenge activities. We ensure that we are embedding these skills within our learners at all ages so that they feel confident in taking these skills into their studies across the curriculum.

## **Year 11 School newspaper – KS4**

This academic year will see the launch of a new student-led newspaper launched by a group of Year 11 journalists. Students will be using their journalistic skills to present viewpoints, ideas and perspectives about the school community as a whole. As well as enhancing the writing abilities of the contributors to the newspaper, we anticipate that students will be broadening their opportunities across the curriculum.