Reading Literacy in Arabic as a First Language and English

Policy and Procedures

NAME OF POLICY	Reading Literacy in Arabic as a First Language and English
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	January 2026
DATE OF REVIEW	August 2027
RELATED POLICIES	The Reading Literacy in Arabic as a First Language and English, Strategic Plan.

Reading

Rationale

At Cambridge International School Dubai (CIS), we share a passion for reading and a love of books. We know that the development of reading skills, along with speaking and listening skills, is crucial to the progress that children make across the curriculum. We are determined to enable our children to become confident, enthusiastic and effective readers. We have high expectations for our students and encourage them to approach books actively and with passion.

Reading- Aims and Objectives

At CIS school, we aim:

- to encourage both boys and girls, of all levels and abilities, to develop a love of reading
- to foster an interest in words and their meanings and to gain an appreciation and love of books from a variety of genres
- to enable our children to find interesting books, to read with enjoyment and to evaluate and justify their preferences
- to enable our children to read confidently, fluently, accurately and with understanding
- to employ a full range of reading cues- phonic, graphic, syntactic, and contextual. This is to allow children to monitor, correct and make sense of their own reading
- for children to develop suitable technical vocabulary, through which children may discuss the understanding of their reading
- for children to develop reading skills in tandem with those of writing, so that the children may function in society as literate readers for life
- to develop and create a wide range of reading opportunities across the curriculum and to make reading exciting, meaningful and relevant
- for children to be able to use books confidently and accurately to find out about the world and develop deeper understanding
- to celebrate the gift of reading and appreciate the rich variety of books, stories and texts we have in school, in libraries, online and at home
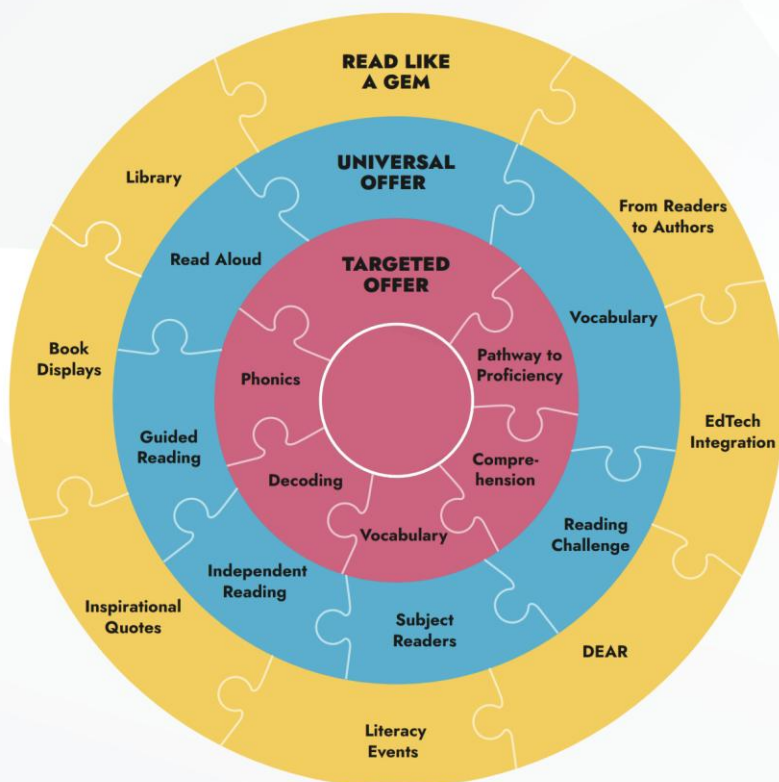
The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum has a specific progression for the development of Reading. We plan our reading opportunities based upon the statutory requirements but enhance our teaching of reading further by including a range of exciting and engaging reading experiences. This starts at the planning stage by basing half-term topics around a core-text, along with providing an abundance of reading around the curriculum opportunities, to the provision we offer students and the enrichment activities that they participate in.

Read Like a GEM

GEMS Education have developed a strategic framework to support the development of reading for all students. The Read Like a GEM framework ensures that all students receive bespoke provision, to their level and area of need. Through the utilisation of assessment data from a range of sources, including the NGRT which is administered at 3 points in the year, each child accesses intervention on the ReadingWise platform to support their learning. This structured approach ensures consistency with the teaching of reading, whilst continuing to promote the importance of reading, throughout the curriculum.

All students receive the Read Like a GEM provision, all students receive the universal offering and some students, identified for intervention, receive the targeted offer which can be viewed below:

At GEMS, we believe in cultivating a **world-class reading culture** where literacy is celebrated, valued, and seamlessly woven into the fabric of school life. Successful implementation relies on the **daily integration of reading strategies** and a **school-wide commitment** to fostering a strong reading culture **The library serves as the beating heart of the school**, providing access to a wealth of resources that inspire both **reading for pleasure** and **academic growth**. We achieve this through our **Universal** and **Targeted Offer**

Verbal Reasoning

Verbal reasoning involves listening and reading. Demonstrating verbal reasoning requires speaking and writing. At CIS, we believe verbal reasoning involves making meaning based on the information given, going beyond that information to a better understanding and applying verbal skills to new learning. While speaking and listening are part of verbal reasoning, most formal verbal reasoning involves reading and writing. Also, while verbal reasoning sometimes refers to any task involving language, it most specifically refers to more complex thinking tasks, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation of text. At its core, it is interactive reading that results in a change in background knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. As such, CIS encompasses verbal reading in its core reading curriculum.

The following skills are followed at CIS:

1. **Understand** – Understand the meaning of words, sentences and entire texts. Understand relationships among words and among concepts and understand the structure of the text. Reason from incomplete data, inferring missing information or connections.
2. **Interpret** – analyse and draw conclusions from and about discourse. Identify authors/speakers' perspective and assumptions.
3. **Evaluate Discourse -** Identify strengths and weaknesses. Raise questions about the implications of discourse. Consider alternative explanations.
4. **Incorporate** with knowledge base and beliefs. Evaluate differences between one's knowledge base and beliefs; integrate new information into one's knowledge base.
5. **Create New Understandings -** Move beyond the reception of knowledge to the use and application of knowledge.
6. **Seek and Solve Problems -** Identify areas that require further thought and research. Develop possible explanations and test them. Apply knowledge and verbal reasoning strategies to new problem situations.
7. **Communicate -** Write, present, explain, define, persuade, teach, provide feedback to and interact with people from a variety of communities of discourse.
8. **Monitor** one's own comprehension, reasoning and habits of mind. Use multiple criteria to monitor comprehension while reading, change strategies when comprehension is unsatisfactory & use multiple strategies for overcoming obstacles in problem solving.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Our children's journey into reading starts by using a wide range of books as both guided and independent resources, to provide our children with a rich, varied diet of reading materials. The range of books we use to teach reading ensures that our children read a range of quality texts that cover a variety of genres as their reading skills develop. We also have book areas in every classroom, as well as a supplementary library, and an online library (Discover Destiny) for children to use.

In the EYFS, children are guided in choosing the correct books for their reading level, and this links to their Floppy Phonics level. We believe that children need to experience miles and miles of reading when they begin to read and so we encourage parents to read with their children as often as possible. As children become more confident readers, they are encouraged to choose their own books, which suit both their interests and reading needs. Our aim is for children to develop ownership over the books they choose and to be confident in talking about the reasons for their choices.

Strategies for the Teaching of Reading
School has agreed fundamental ingredients that we believe are central to becoming a fluent, competent and effective reader based on research and the contents of the 2014 Curriculum.

Reading skills are split into two categories, following the principles of **decoding** and **comprehending**. Each of these is taught in isolation at times and together as appropriate, with teachers **explicitly discussing and explaining the skills that need to be employed to become 'a good reader' (ADDENDUM 1)**.

Decoding: At CIS, **explicit decoding skills** are taught by using **Floppy Phonics** as a basis for phonics teaching. This promotes a strong and systematic emphasis on the teaching of synthetic phonics to aid the teaching and learning of reading. As part of this scheme, children will be taught to:
- discriminate between the separate sounds in words
- learn the letters and letter combinations most commonly used to spell sounds
- read words by sounding out and blending their separate parts
- study written representations of a sound and how it looks
- recognise on sight vocabulary identified as 'Tricky Words'

Reading Comprehension: Reading comprehension skills are taught through Whole Class Reading sessions, Shared Reading sessions, Guided Reading sessions, Reciprocal Reading sessions, and opportunities to practice and consolidate skills through independent reading and other follow-up activities. Teachers/teaching assistants will use a wide range of strategies to enhance the teaching of reading. Some of these are outlined below:
- modelling and discussing the features of written texts through shared reading of texts
- using drama to enhance and deepen understanding of the text read
- demonstration - e.g. how to use punctuation when reading, using a shared text
- explanation to clarify and discuss e.g. need for grammatical agreement when proofreading
- questioning - to probe pupil's understanding of a text
- investigation of ideas - to understand, expand on or generalise about themes and structures in fiction and non-fiction
- discussion and argument - to justify a preference
- learning how to answer questions in writing as well as in discussion
- provision of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction genres, for the children to choose from

Answering Questions: In addition to explicit teaching of decoding and comprehending skills, we also explicitly teach children how to answer questions about what they have read following the REED approach to answering questions **(SEE ADDENDUM 2)**. This starts with oral discussion and moves to formal written methods as children's skills and understanding develop. In order to be able to able to answer questions efficiently, we teach children how to:
- Fast skim read to get an overview
- Closer, slower read for detail
- Read questions analytically – what is the question asking?

- Scan text for key words and synonyms
- Closer read of text in vicinity of key words
- Focus on vocabulary
- **Not to answer without checking by re-reading**

As children move through school and become more confident and proficient readers, we teach them how to answer a wide range of questions. These include:
- Matching
- Sequencing
- Labelling
- Multiple choice (tick box)
- Finding and copying
- Filling in a gap
- Underlining

We improve children's ability to answer questions in writing by:
- Demonstrating through shared reading, follow up and challenge (feedback) & through guided reading time activities
- Teaching each question type in linked pairs
- Focusing on one or two different question types at a time or for a time
- Consistent practice through school
- Using traditional comprehension tests sparingly to support teacher assessment judgments

Whole Class Reading:
We follow the Whole Class Reading approach in Primary school which aims to improve comprehension, vocabulary and reading fluency and above all foster a sense of shared reading experience. The lesson is divided into four parts:

Part 1: Teacher begins to read to class, modelling expression and inference
Part 2: Students begin to take over
Part 3: Students read independently
Part 4: Differentiated questions

Cross-Curricular Reading / Reading Around the Curriculum:
CIS provides a wide range of opportunities to develop reading skills across the curriculum. We actively encourage children to become fully involved with their learning and encourage them to read a range of topic books which will support their work across the curriculum. This may be done by researching internet sites, gathering information from non-fiction texts in school or from the local library. During this academic year, books or whole class texts are being introduced across EYFS and Primary. This allows children to learn from whole texts, rather than extracts. Students in Primary are provided with recommended reading lists each half-term linked to their given topic. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are also taught using the text as a starting point that provides context and meaning. Core texts are planned into each half-term which link to each year groups chosen theme to ensure that connections between areas of learning are present.

Reading opportunities include:
Shared Reading:
The whole class shares a core text, which is beyond their independent reading levels, often using an enlarged text (paper or ICT based). Shared reading provides a context for teacher modelling, teaching and applying reading skills (word, sentence and text level).

Individual Reading:
As a school we have considered the time constraints imposed when listening to individual readers. TAs are used for reading sessions with DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time taking place each day in class in Primary and a weekly lesson takes place in Secondary.

Adults Reading Aloud:
Whenever possible, at least once daily in EYFS and KS1 and at least three times a week in KS2, all class teacher's/teaching assistants will read aloud a range of stories and texts to children. We believe that giving children the opportunity to hear an adult read aloud allows them to comment on and make sense of the events and experiences within a text. These sessions also allow teachers to deepen a child's understanding, by asking literal and inferential questions.

Helicopter Stories in EYFS:
Helicopter Stories is an accessible and child-led approach to education that is adopted within EYFS. It is rooted in storytelling and story-acting, it helps teachers and practitioners to support the needs and development of each-and-every child. In its simplest form, Helicopter Stories lets children dictate their stories which are written down verbatim, exactly as they are told, by the teacher. The children then gather around a stage and the stories are acted out. Alongside the simplicity of this approach is an ethos that is child-centered, creating a culture of curiosity and wonder at the dexterity of children's imaginings during both the telling and the acting out of their stories. This holistic approach uses the power of storytelling to develop key curriculum areas such as creativity, communication and language, personal, social and emotional skills in the Early Years classrooms, giving children's stories a voice in a safe space.

Talk 4 Writing:
Talk 4 Writing has been introduced to EYFS-Y3, with the intention that if a child can say it, they can write it. In EYFS it is well suited to the already embedded Helicopter Stories, and enables the teachers to teach and further improve the stories generated by the students. During the imitation phase, reading a core text collaboratively is essential, before students can move onto reading it independently. The text is deconstructed, and students are introduced to the narrative/genre through a story or non-narrative text. Students are fully immersed in exploring the story, the story structure, language features and authorial intent. Throughout the Talk 4 Writing process, students are exposed to a range of wider reading opportunities by reading a range of similar genres/text types. The thematic approach to the curriculum allows students to fully explore the links made within Talk 4 Writing and across the whole curriculum. A full list of 'recommended reads' are shared with the students through Discover Destiny for Primary students.

Enrichment Activities:
We enrich our reading experiences by providing opportunities for visitors to come to our school to share stories or by focused events, such as World Book Day, Roald Dahl Day, National Poetry Day or whole school Book Fairs. Throughout school, children are encouraged to read books by various authors and discuss the styles in which they write and the themes within their books.

Parents as Partners
We firmly believe that parents who share the same passion and vision for reading make an enormous impact on their children's progress and enjoyment. We really value the encouragement and support that our parents give when their child is reading at home. Communication is vital and we encourage parents to make a written comment in the school reading record, to show how their child has demonstrated understanding, fluency and enjoyment when reading to them. This reinforces to the children how important it is to read regularly at home and at school. It also allows them to experience the pleasure of reading with an adult or parent and share special moments together.

To support our parents further, we offer reading workshops at school to help them gain a better understanding of how they may help their child reading at home.

Home-School Reading/Access to Books:
Students access books in a variety of ways including:
- Class libraries
- School Library
- Online Library (Destiny Discover)
- CENTURY Tech- Reading Comprehension texts
- Floppy Phonics online books and Oxford Owl

- Literacy Planet (website)

Promoting Reading/Enrichment:
At CIS our students access an abundance of enrichment opportunities to encourage and motivate them to read. They include but are not limited to:
- Book Clubs and ECAs
- 3x Book Fairs in school each year
- Author Visits
- Participation in a range of competitions including Emirates Festival of Literature competitions – Chevron Readers' Cup, Oxford story writing, Poetry Recital, CIS Readers' Cup, Read Aloud day
- Voices of the Future Generations – Story Writing
- Annual visits to the local Al Twar Library
- Book Week and dress-up theme days including Roald Dahl Day
- Parent reading sessions in school
- Helicopter Stories for EYFS
- Rhyme Time for EYFS
- Summer and Winter reading competitions
- Poetry recital competitions
- Inter-School Literary competitions
- Author of the Month (voted for by the students)
- Library Student Leaders
- Cambridge Cup Reading competition
- EAL students receive additional classes led by TAs

Assessment of Reading
Since the move away from NC levels, school is developing a range of assessment tools to record and ensure progress and to identify children who require additional support. These assessments are still being developed and reviewed to ensure that they are of the highest quality and accuracy possible.

All reading assessments should be diagnostic and aimed at increasing the quality of reading teaching that our children receive; however, information about each child's reading needs can also be used to support summative judgments about progress.

In-School Assessments:
- Termly updated records that are dated to show progress, using Rising Stars Assessment
- Termly, or more frequent, Floppy Phonics progress checks, identifying specific sounds that require further practice/application outside of phonics lessons
- Literacy Planet homework information available to Year 1 and 2 teachers, tracking reading at home
- Year 1: children take part in the Phonics screening in the Summer term. Children who did not pass the test in Y1 retake the test at the same time of year in Y2
- CENTURY Tech data shows progress in reading against key objectives
- Destiny Discover data shows how many books students have accessed and read
- NGRT GL Assessment monitors attainment and progress from Y2-Y10 and is administered three times a year.
- PTE Progress Test in English provides an indication of attainment and progress year on year at the end of each year

Monitoring and Evaluation
The English subject/curriculum leader monitors and evaluates the teaching and learning of reading on a regular basis across school, supported by the Head of School and other SLT members. This is to ensure that continuity and progress is evident. Any child not making sufficient or expected progress is identified and additional support for Wave 1 teaching or intervention is put in place (see the SEN policies for further detail and information). Staff regularly inform parents of their child's reading progress by writing in their home/school record books, discussions at parents' evenings and through the annual reports of

children's progress in reading.

Class teachers have an essential role in monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning taking place in their class and in subsequent planning that is based on accurate and effective teaching. The monitoring and evaluation of the achievements made in this area of the curriculum is carried out through the guidelines on monitoring and evaluation.

ADDENDUM 1

READING STRATEGIES

What makes a good reader?
A good reader:

- **uses prior knowledge** to support understanding (think about what they already know about a subject and what they know about books)
- **keeps checking that what they are reading makes sense** and *expects* what they are reading makes sense
- **looks for and makes links to develop meaning,** and actively thinks about what they are reading across sentences, paragraphs and whole texts
- **asks questions** and **clarifies** to improve their understanding
- **skims**, **scans** and **reads** closely (can read *quickly* or *slowly,* depending on what they are looking for)
- uses a range of strategies to locate or infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases, like **considering syntax and word class, morphology and etymology**; **using a dictionary or thesaurus**
- **annotates text** (chooses which words are most important and *doesn't highlight everything*)
- **visualises their understanding** of what they read (draws sketches or diagrams; builds a mental picture of characters and settings to make links or help explain)
- **makes predictions** (uses their prior knowledge linked to evidence in the text – *not just guessing*)
- **summarises understanding** (*can pick out the most important parts* of the story or text)
- **adapts reading strategies for different purposes** or according to the text type (knows about the different features of texts and what sort of information each feature provides)
- **immerses themselves in a text** (can focus and concentrate on text for sustained periods of time)
- **apply understanding of how whole texts are structured** (recognise themes and conventions used: e.g. how characters and events develop or change through a text)
- **apply understanding of how authors use language to create affect**, such as tension, pace and bias

What makes a good reader/decoder?
A good reader:
- **practises reading regularly** (every day)
- **expects what they are reading to make sense**
- **chunks up a word** that they are unfamiliar with (looks for part of the word that they might know: high frequency words or affixes) and **then puts the word back together**
- **looks at any pictures** and thinks about what the word might be, linking it to the picture
- **skips over an unknown word** and reads to the end of the sentence (and **then thinks about what the word might be**)
- **gets their lips ready and says that the first sound of the word**, reads to the end of the sentence (**and then thinks about what the word might be**)
- **re-reads the sentence** and **thinks about if it makes sense or not**
- **stretches out an unfamiliar word** and splits it into phonemes (and **then blends the phonemes** together again)
- develops a **growing sight vocabulary of high frequency words** (that can be read without sounding out)

ADDENDUM 2

The REED Approach to Answering Questions

REED – **Read** and **review** the question
Model this process during shared or guided reading
- Focus on what the question is asking – try to understand what it is looking for
- Identify key words – *Joey, gang, change* – in question. Look out for pronouns and synonyms
- Draw on prior experience (personal, textual and cultural) – what does it mean to change? In what way do people change?
- Identify a strategy for finding out/ answering the question – skimming, scanning, highlighting, etc.
- Think about what parts in the text you will start looking at.

R**E**ED – **Evidence** collection
- Collect examples of times when Joey is with the gang (skimming and scanning)
- Mark (highlight/ underline) text
- Read the sentences/ paragraphs around each of the events you have located. Highlight useful examples

REE**D** – **Evaluate** the evidence
- Relate events in the text to the idea of changing. Look for:
- Patterns
- Strongest examples
- What the examples add up to
- Any contrary evidence
- Make an interpretation

REE**D** – **Draft** the answer
- Know the point you are trying to make
- Use the best evidence in the answer
- Paraphrase and useful supporting evidence
- Make the point as clearly as possible

Answering Questions
- Review all the evidence that has been collected – what does it tell you?
- Identify key bits of evidence for use in quotation or paraphrase
- Re-read the question and the collected evidence
- Construct and answer, stating and explaining the point or argument, backing up with evidence (quotation and paraphrase)
- Then ask the same or very similar question so that children can practise the approach you have demonstrated
- Show how different questions can target the same areas
- Teach questions in related pairs or threes, one to demonstrate the process and how to answer, one for children to work independently (applying what you have just taught them) and one to build confidence (this is a similar approach to teaching an aspect of Maths)
- Demonstrate both aspects of the sequence: finding evidence and constructing an answer
- Teach key strategies

ADDENDUM 4

Reading skills in lessons