



LITERACY POLICY

POLICY FOR	Literacy
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Heads of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
REVIEW DATE	June 2025
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RELATED POLICIES	Teaching and Learning Policy, Reading Policy, Assessment Policy



Executive Principal / CEO

The Westminster School is a popular choice amongst parents who want their children to encourage fluency in English. For the majority of them English is not their first language and usually not spoken at home. TWS prioritizes acquisition of fluency in English, which is the key to students' success in the rest of the curriculum, in their external examinations and in preparation for entry to University Courses.

The Westminster School is a popular choice amongst parents who wish to encourage fluency in English for their children. For the majority, English is not their first language and is typically not spoken at home. In response, TWS prioritizes the acquisition of fluency in English—alongside strong proficiency in Arabic—as both are essential to students' success across the curriculum, in external examinations, and in preparation for university studies. This dual-language approach supports academic excellence while reinforcing cultural identity and global readiness.

1. Rationale

Literacy is one of the fundamental elements of learning; it concerns the way students access and interact with every kind of written text. High standards of literacy lead to success, both at school and in adult life. Our vision is to provide a wide variety of learning opportunities that will focus on the development of students' levels of literacy. These opportunities will also help our young people become confident, independent, lifelong learners, who can make a positive contribution to society and are prepared to be able to lead a good and successful life. This will significantly improve their life chances by ensuring social equity and mobility so that they are prepared to compete in a global economy.

2. The aims of The Westminster School include:

- Enabling students to read and write confidently and with understanding.
- Encouraging reading to enhance vocabulary and build a bank of words with their meanings, thereby enabling students to identify and correct their own mistakes.
- Developing accurate spelling patterns through the use of phonics and syllabic pronunciation.
- Encouraging students to reflect on their reading—whether Fiction or Non-Fiction—in their writing, to further develop comprehension and expression.
- Fostering an understanding and appreciation of poetry.
- Introducing students to narrative writing and verse, with a focus on plot, character development, and setting.
- Guiding students to draft and write by selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary and understanding how these choices influence and enhance meaning.
- Emphasising the importance of planning, drafting, and editing their own work.

- Encouraging the use of a wide range of cohesive devices to ensure clarity and flow within and across paragraphs.
- Promoting the use of technical vocabulary, idioms, and subject-specific phrases to support understanding across the curriculum.
- Developing imagination, creativity, and critical awareness.

These skills will continue to be nurtured as students progress to higher stages. However, as the curriculum broadens to include a wider range of subjects, the time allocated for these areas will be reduced. It is therefore the teacher's responsibility to plan and structure classroom instruction in alignment with the above objectives.

Aligned with the UAE Centennial 2071 and the National Strategy for Literacy, the Westminster school places strong emphasis on fostering a literate, knowledge-based society. The policy envisions equipping all learners with advanced literacy skills—both in Arabic and English —empowering them to think critically, engage actively in civic life, and contribute meaningfully to the nation's sustainable development. Literacy is positioned not only as a foundational academic goal but as a national priority for social and economic progress.

3. Links with other policies

- TWS Curriculum Overview
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Reading Policy
- Homework Policy
- Marking Policy

4. English across the Curriculum:

English language skills dramatically improve when they speak English throughout the day, for example, on the playground, in the hallways, on the bus or while communicating with friends. This enhances the study of English in a natural and automatic way. Teachers of all subjects must find ways to encourage and promote the use of English.

- All teaching staff to be responsible to raise standards in Literacy
- Ensure that students acquire a level of literacy that will enable them to cope with the increasing demands of subjects in terms of specific skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers to permit communication only in English at all times
- Teachers to ensure that students are given opportunities to speak during lessons
- Students to speak or answer in complete sentences
- Students should be encouraged to articulate their thinking, explain their reasoning, and read their work aloud to the class or peer group as part of developing communication and reflection skills.
- Vocabulary specific to the subject & "key words" to be carefully taught and used.
- Each teacher is expected to address inaccuracies in students' spoken and written English, exercising sensitivity, discretion, and professional judgement.

- Teachers should use every opportunity to speak to students in English, even outside the classroom environment, although *it is not appropriate or acceptable to punish students for speaking in their mother tongue*.
- All school activities, sports and daily communication with students should be conducted in English.
- Demonstrate the value of literacy skills to students through engaging activities, competitions, and a structured reward system.
- Emphasise the central role of literacy in the teaching and learning of all subjects.
- Provide targeted support and mentoring for students with individual literacy needs.
- Encourage parents to actively support and promote reading at home.
- Celebrate students' achievements in literacy through recognition and reward.
- Promote reading not only for academic development but also for pleasure, to enhance communication and lifelong learning skills.

4.1 English Lessons

All lessons identify specific opportunities to develop literacy skills and address all aspects of literacy across each year group. All teachers have a clear understanding of the National Curriculum for England and how the skills, concepts and knowledge relates to their own subjects and lessons. Spelling, punctuation and grammar rules are explored in depth and common misconceptions are addressed and practiced regularly.

4.2 Learning Through Talk - Speaking and Listening – Oral Language

Model effective examples of successful speaking and listening for students, showing them how to use language precisely and coherently.

Place explicit value on oral work as well as written work recognising that discussion of topics is usually an essential precursor to any written work.

Teach students how to participate orally in groups and in the whole class, including:

- Speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English.
- Justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication.
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas.

This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

- Structure tasks in lessons so that students know the purpose for their listening, providing note-taking frames as appropriate.

- Provide students with the opportunity for public speaking in a formal setting like assemblies and in lessons and through debating activities.

4.3 Learning Through Reading - Comprehension

Act from the belief that reading can be an acceptable barrier to learning.

Show students strategies to help them to:

- Read with greater understanding, enabling students to infer and deduce meanings and recognise the writer's intentions.
- Skim and scan text to locate and use information.
- Follow a process or argument.
- Give opportunities to practise sifting, selecting information and taking notes from texts.
- Develop the ability to summarise.
- Synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading.
- Review and monitor the reading demands placed upon students in each subject area, ensuring that reading for understanding is explicitly taught.
- Ensure that a variety of differentiated reading texts of appropriate levels are available to help develop the reading skills of all students.
- Provide opportunities to research and investigate printed words, moving images and ICT texts.
- Ensure that the texts are suitably challenging to encourage inferential reading skills.
- Ensure that students understand the purpose of texts
- Reinforce the understanding of subject-specific words and terms.
- Encourage wider reading and independent reading in a variety of forms including newspapers, books and magazines – subscribe to subject specific magazine such as e- magazine to encourage development of subject specific academic voice.

4.4. Learning Through Writing

- Encourage students to write in a wide variety of forms for different audience
- Use of modelling process and writing process to improve the quality of writing
- Make connections between students' reading and writing, so that students have clear models for their writing.
- Set high expectations in terms of presentation using accurate punctuation, correct spelling, Standard English and legible handwriting.
- Ensure that communications around the school and internally are correctly spelled and punctuated.
- Emphasise coherence in written work.

In addition, in order to enhance Spelling, each department will:

- Revise key vocabulary.
- Teach agreed learning strategies which will help students to learn subject spelling lists.
- Test or revise high frequency words regularly.
- Set personal spelling targets.
- Encourage the students to correct their spelling mistakes and learn to spell words correctly.

5. Assessment

- Assessment is used to inform lesson-planning, maintain the pace of learning, and set targets for all students.
- Grammatical and spelling errors are marked, and students are encouraged to correct their mistakes.
- In the Primary classes the National Test Specification Framework is followed and the skills in SPaG, Reading and Writing are assessed separately to support students with specific interventions to develop better fluency in mastering the language. Speaking assessment is conducted at the start and the end of the year to track the progress of students' oracy skills.
- Phonic Screening checks are part of Key Stage 1 assessments.
- Reading is also assessed and monitored through Online reading platforms.
- Students appear for the UAE International Benchmark assessments - Progress Test in English (PTE) and **The New Group Reading Test (NGRT)** and as prescribed by the KHDA.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if needed.



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