

**GEMS**

مدرسة جيمس وينشستر الخاصة – الفجيرة

**Winchester Private School**

FUJAIRAH

# GEMS Winchester School, Fujairah

## Reading Policy

*PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL WORLD CLASS BRITISH EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCES FOR ALL*

<b>Policy First Adopted/ Last Reviewed</b>	January 2023
<b>Policy Holder</b>	Primary and Secondary English Leads
<b>Date of review</b>	June 2025
<b>Date of next review</b>	June 2026

**Linked Policies:**  
**Multilingual Policy**  
**Phonics Policy**  
**Teaching and Learning Policy**





## Implementation

### Approach

At GEMS Winchester Private School Fujairah, the development of strong reading habits is a whole-school priority, driven by the Read Like a GEM (RLAG) strategy. This includes universal exposure to high-quality texts, explicit reading instruction, and tailored support for EAL learners.

- FFT Phonics is taught daily from KG1 onwards to build secure foundations in decoding, blending, and segmenting.
- ReadingWise is embedded as a targeted intervention tool across all phases to support students with reading fluency, decoding, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. Students access personalised learning modules during lessons or interventions, with progress tracked digitally.
- FlashAcademy is used to accelerate vocabulary and grammar acquisition, particularly for EAL students, through structured in-class, homework, or intervention use.
- Guided reading takes place at least three times weekly in differentiated groups, with pre-teaching of vocabulary and structured teacher modelling.
- Daily reading routines, class read-alouds, and curriculum-linked texts promote both reading for pleasure and academic literacy.
- RLAG Essentials are embedded across the school through Do Now reading, read-alouds, partner reading, vocabulary scaffolds, and the use of modelled reading in line with TLAG.
- Reading is integrated across the curriculum, with cross-subject vocabulary explicitly taught and reinforced in every classroom, supported by subject-specific texts and visual scaffolds.
- Reading environments feature RLAG-aligned displays, sentence stems, and book corners, while SIMS behaviour tracking and reading leaderboards celebrate positive reading behaviours.

### Assessment of Reading

In KG, reading is assessed through the FFT Phonics programme, focusing on phonemic awareness and early decoding skills. From Grade 2 onwards, reading is evaluated using standardised tests including the NGRT (twice a year) and PTE (annually), which measure reading age, comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. ReadingWise is used as an intervention tool to support students needing additional help with decoding and comprehension. Ongoing teacher assessments such as guided reading and comprehension tasks further inform personalised support to ensure all learners, including EAL and SEND, make strong progress.

In Middle and Secondary School, reading is assessed through a combination of standardized tests and internal assessments to ensure a comprehensive understanding of each student's progress. The NGRT (New Group Reading Test) is administered twice a year to measure reading age, decoding, and comprehension skills, helping to identify gaps and inform targeted interventions. PTE (Progress Test in English) is also used annually to assess reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary in context. In addition, ongoing internal assessments such as comprehension tasks, literature responses, and vocabulary quizzes are embedded in the curriculum to provide regular feedback on students' reading development. Teachers track reading fluency, inference, and critical thinking skills through guided reading sessions and classroom discussions. The data collected is used to personalize support, challenge higher attainers, and ensure that all learners, including EAL and SEND students, make measurable progress and develop into confident, independent readers.

### Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Phonics

At GEMS Winchester Private School Fujairah, FFT Phonics is our chosen systematic synthetic phonics programme. It is implemented daily from KG1 through the early years and lower primary to ensure secure foundations in decoding, blending, and segmenting. Lessons are carefully sequenced, fast-paced, and interactive, supporting children in



developing automaticity and accuracy in reading from an early age.

FFT Phonics provides consistent language, structure, and routines across all classes, ensuring fidelity of delivery. Teachers are regularly trained to deliver the programme effectively and adapt it to support students with different learning needs, including EAL and SEND. Regular phonics assessments are used to monitor pupil progress and to inform groupings and intervention planning. The use of FFT's high-quality resources, including decodable readers, supports children in practising newly taught phonemes and graphemes in context. Through FFT Phonics, we aim to ensure that all students develop strong word recognition and early reading confidence.

### **Reading Wise**

Reading Wise is used across the school to support reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and reading fluency. It forms a core component of the GEMS-wide Read Like A GEM (RLAG) strategy, ensuring consistency and ambition in reading outcomes across all GEMS schools. The platform is embedded in our whole-school approach to reading, providing personalised learning pathways that complement classroom teaching.

Reading Wise is particularly effective in accelerating progress for EAL learners and students reading below age-related expectations. Its evidence-based modules focus on decoding, fluency, and vocabulary, while also developing key comprehension skills. Students access Reading Wise during timetabled lessons and are encouraged to continue their reading practice at home. The programme's adaptive technology ensures that content is tailored to each learner's needs, and progress is tracked digitally to inform planning and targeted intervention.

As part of our commitment to inclusive, high-quality reading provision, Reading Wise supports every student in becoming a confident, independent reader. It is a key tool in raising attainment, narrowing gaps, and fostering a strong reading culture across the school.

### **FlashAcademy – Home Learning and EAL Interventions**

FlashAcademy supports our EAL learners by offering flexible and differentiated modules in vocabulary, grammar, and sentence construction. It is used both in class and as a home learning tool. This ensures continuity of language acquisition beyond the classroom. Teachers assign modules based on individual EAL needs, track student progress via the teacher dashboard, and use outcomes to inform next steps in intervention. FlashAcademy is especially effective for developing general academic vocabulary and accelerating basic English acquisition in newly arrived or emerging bilingual students.

### **Organisation**

Phonics is taught daily in the lower years for, forming the foundation for early reading. As students progress, guided reading continues in small groups at least three times per week, tailored to reading level and language needs. Each child reads aloud to an adult at least once a week to build fluency and confidence. Daily opportunities for shared and independent reading are built into lessons across the curriculum. Teachers model reading regularly and ensure that reading is an integral part of every classroom.

### **Expectations / Targets**

With over 90% of students learning English as an additional language, our expectations are ambitious yet realistic. FFT Phonics is used to ensure strong foundations, while Reading Wise provides additional pathways for students to meet or exceed age-related expectations. All students are expected to make consistent progress toward becoming fluent and independent readers, and those needing extra support are identified and monitored closely. Students who are not reading regularly or accessing home learning platforms are identified and supported.



## **Progression and Teaching Sequence**

Reading follows a clear, structured progression aligned to FFT Phonics and Reading Wise. Students move through reading levels based on assessment data. Guided reading lessons follow a consistent sequence: pre-reading vocabulary and prediction, during-reading questioning and modelling, and post-reading tasks focused on comprehension, discussion, and related writing. Spoken language and cross-curricular links are also developed through reading activities.

## **Group Reading**

Students are grouped for reading based on assessment data to allow for targeted instruction. Reading takes place in small groups regularly, with opportunities to read aloud and respond to texts. Progress is tracked consistently to ensure every learner is developing fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary at their level.

## **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary development is a key focus across the curriculum. Teachers pre-teach key words before reading and provide ongoing opportunities for students to use and apply new language. Visual aids (Widgit), translation support, and repeated exposure ensure that vocabulary acquisition supports comprehension and language growth, particularly for EAL learners.

## **Environment and Resources**

Print-rich environments are a priority across classrooms and corridors. RLAG displays are used consistently across classrooms and corridors, including vocabulary walls, recommended reads, and sentence stems. Each classroom includes accessible reading areas with a variety of texts. Libraries are stocked with diverse books suited to different reading levels, interests, and languages. Visual supports, picture books, and translated materials are provided for EAL and SEND learners to ensure all students can access reading independently. Displays and learning walls feature key vocabulary, sentence structures, and modelled examples to reinforce reading and language development. Reading materials are also available in shared areas and continuous provision spaces, encouraging students to engage with books throughout the day and fostering a strong school-wide reading culture.

## **Middle and Secondary Reading Provision**

At the middle and secondary school level, the reading policy continues with the same structured and inclusive approach, but with advanced texts, more analytical objectives, and stronger emphasis on skill mastery and application. Reading instruction remains central to English and wider curriculum delivery, embedded through subject-specific reading strategies, guided reading sessions, and independent reading opportunities. All teaching methods, topics and structures are aligned to the English National Curriculum.

## **Structured Reading and Targeted Support**

Reading is delivered through targeted whole-class and small-group instruction, guided by ongoing assessment data. GEMS Winchester Fujairah uses triangulated feedback from learners, teachers, and parents to identify areas of development and ensure that learners receive appropriate scaffolding. Students with emerging proficiency, including EAL learners, receive additional support through structured interventions—these may include vocabulary pre-teaching, annotation modelling, decoding practice, and focused questioning during reading. Data from NGRT, teacher assessments, and classroom observations are used to inform both short- and long-term planning.



## Advanced Reading for Higher Attaining Students

For learners working at or above age-related expectations, reading lessons are pitched to challenge and extend critical thinking. These sessions include analyzing literary and informational texts, evaluating writer's purpose and audience, and engaging in comparative reading. Students explore genre conventions, authorial craft, and thematic interpretations, encouraging independent reading around set texts. Differentiated questioning, reading circles, and project-based tasks are used to deepen analysis and interpretation.

## Language-Enriched Activities

Reading is supported and enhanced through speaking and listening activities that build comprehension and vocabulary. English language development is reinforced through:

- **Drama and Role Play:** Bringing texts to life through performance and character exploration
- **Presentations and Debates:** Encouraging learners to express understanding, interpretation, and opinion
- **Skill-Targeted Projects:** Research, reading, and presentation-based assignments linked to wider curriculum themes
- **ECAs and Reading Clubs:** Extra-curricular opportunities allow students to explore genres, author studies, and thematic reading beyond the classroom
- **Collaboration and Competition:** School will identify individuals and groups of students to participate in relevant activities in the local community and potentially across the wider UAE.

## Parental Involvement and Accountability

In KG and Primary, parents are encouraged to actively support reading at home through daily reading, phonics reinforcement (KG), and use of tracking reading. From Grade 2 onwards, parents are kept informed about progress in NGRT, PTE, and ReadingWise interventions. Parents are regularly informed of reading progress and encouraged to support home reading, ReadingWise, and FlashAcademy access. Regular communication ensures shared accountability and strengthens home-school partnerships to support consistent reading development.

Middle and secondary students are encouraged to maintain personal reading logs and digital portfolios. Parents are kept informed through progress updates, recommended reading lists, and direct communication regarding reading targets and interventions. This three-way partnership between learners, educators, and families supports accountability and motivates progress.

## Vocabulary and Comprehension Across the Curriculum

Subject-specific vocabulary instruction is embedded across English, science, humanities, and other disciplines. Teachers model strategies for unpacking complex language in texts and promote the application of new terms in writing and discussion. EAL learners benefit from dual-language resources, glossaries, visual aids, and scaffolded questioning. EAL learners are supported with strategies as shared in the multilingual policy.

## Learning Environment and Access to Texts

In KG and Primary, classrooms are designed to promote a language-rich environment where reading is visible, valued, and embedded in daily routines. In KG, cosy reading corners, labelled print-rich displays, and access to age-appropriate picture books foster early engagement with texts. Children are encouraged to explore books independently and during shared reading sessions.

In Primary, classrooms feature diverse and levelled reading materials that cater to a range of abilities and interests. Daily access to class libraries, guided reading resources, and cross-curricular texts supports the development of fluency and



comprehension. Regular visits to the school library and participation in reading challenges further promote a culture of reading for pleasure. All students, including EAL and SEND, are given equitable access to a wide variety of texts, ensuring inclusive and engaging reading experiences.

Classrooms and corridors in the middle and secondary phase remain text-rich, with curated displays featuring student book recommendations, author quotes, and tiered vocabulary banks. Libraries and classroom book corners provide a wide range of literature from classic and contemporary fiction to non-fiction texts related to global issues, identity, and innovation.