

DARUL ULOOM:

**Literacy Statement
November 2024**



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Introduction

The development of literacy and competency in language is fundamental to most, if not all, aspects of education in both Islamic and nationally prescribed areas of study. It is primary to the intended ambitions of the school and the natural rights of the pupils, with the ultimate goal revolving around the development of their leadership, integration as British Muslims, the accurate and just preaching of the religion, and academic and professional development.

Statement of Findings and Rationale

Additionally, demographic analysis and context suggest weaknesses in literacy and numeracy-related abilities among the generally attracted pupils of the DUIHS. This stems from a number of factors, including a deprivation of formal educational settings or a strong substitute, limited education in family history – thus a lesser support system at home, and a subordinated focus on ‘secular’ studies through admission to focused centres rather than mainstream primary schools.

The school endeavours to solidify literacy (and numeracy) as a holistic approach, appreciating its extent in all fields of academic, personal, and professional realms of society. It is fundamental to pupils’ personal and professional development and reinforces the curriculum’s approach to enforcing growth in speaking and listening, reading, and writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. We recognise the unfaltering necessity of literacy and thus the need to equip and empower staff with the vital skills required to impart this importance.

Our Aims

Darul Uloom Islamic High School acknowledges the great importance of literacy as a mechanism nurtured for life skills pertaining to the requirements of critical thought, speaking and listening, presentational attributes, and observations. The school, therefore, sustains a proactive system that cultivates the development of literacy and numeracy in addition to English and Maths lessons, including extra-curricular activities, cross-curricular links, obligatory reading, and comprehensive marking.

Literacy and Numeracy Intervention

There are a number of methods utilised to promote and influence the development of literacy and numeracy:

i. Cross-Curricular Integration: By regarding literacy and numeracy as the most crucial elements in terms of writing and critical thinking, all schemes of work have been adjusted and equipped to involve the implementation of these skills within the curriculum. Through, for example, the use of developing and learning new vocabulary and keywords relevant to individual subjects, pupils gain a better range of lexical choices as well as their definitions and spellings.

ii. Classroom Library: The school takes great satisfaction in the implementation of classroom libraries accessible to all pupils. Reading books, textbooks, dictionaries, and other resources supplementary to their education are available within each year group’s own classes at their appropriate levels. Furthermore, pupils have the option to independently, and with recommendation, utilise libraries of higher age group classes. For example, if a pupil in Year 8 is arguably a higher achiever than most of their year group, they have the option to utilise Year 9 books available to them. The library can also be used during lunch.

iii. Reading Guides: Pupils are required to read comprehensively, and the log of their readings is entered into their reading guides. The reading guides are exceptionally beneficial and are enforced by form tutors, who encourage pupils to write down any unfamiliar or new words that they come across in the back of their guides. Upon entering unfamiliar words,

pupils are required to utilise a dictionary to find and write down the meaning, and they will also create a sentence using the word.

iv. Marking: Teachers are required to take a proactive role in reviewing pupils' exercise books. Teachers will provide feedback according to the literacy abbreviation guide (see Feedback / Marking policy) to support pupils in developing their spelling, use of punctuation, grammar, use of standard English, and comprehension. For example, teachers are required to write 'SP' upon noticing a spelling mistake.

v. Fortnightly Literacy Focus: A bi-weekly literacy focus has been introduced in English lessons, ensuring consistent reinforcement of key literacy skills. Each fortnight, students engage with specific reading, writing, or language comprehension skills to develop the standards of literacy across all subject areas. The skills are progressively challenging, fostering continual development and application in various contexts.

vi. Fortnightly Topic-Specific Spelling Tests: Every fortnight, students undertake topic-specific spelling tests that focus on vocabulary pertinent to their subject areas. This approach not only reinforces literacy but also deepens subject-specific understanding by embedding key terminology into the students' working vocabulary. Over time, this will contribute to both improved spelling accuracy and content retention.

vii. SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar) MATs in Every Classroom: SPaG mats are a permanent feature in all classrooms, acting as visual aids to ensure students consistently apply correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling in their work. These resources serve as daily prompts to strengthen written communication and uphold high literacy standards across the curriculum.

viii. Extended Writing Moderation Across All Subject Areas: Extended writing is moderated regularly across all subjects to ensure uniformity in writing expectations. Teachers collaborate to assess student work, maintaining a cohesive standard for structure, coherence, and technical accuracy in writing. This initiative ensures that students' writing abilities are developed holistically across disciplines, promoting literacy as an integral part of their academic success.

ix. Afterschool Clubs: The school offers three dynamic afterschool clubs that contribute to the development of key literacy and communication skills:

- **Anime Club:** Through debates and discussions centred around anime, students are encouraged to enhance their oracy skills, critical thinking, and ability to articulate complex ideas. This setting promotes a relaxed yet intellectually stimulating environment.
- **Creative Writing Club:** Students with a passion for storytelling and creative expression hone their writing skills. The club focuses on narrative techniques, character development, and creative exploration, providing a platform for students to develop their writing in a supportive and inspiring environment.
- **Reading Club:** This club promotes a love for reading by allowing students to share their favourite books, engage in discussions, and explore new genres. The Reading Club fosters reading for pleasure and encourages thoughtful analysis of a wide range of texts.

x. SHAPE Communication Strategy: The SHAPE strategy is implemented across the school to enhance students' spoken communication skills, fostering confident and effective verbal expression. SHAPE stands for:

- **Speak** in full sentences
- **Hands** away from mouth
- **Articulate** – don't mumble

- **Project** your voice
- **Eye** contact

This approach is consistently reinforced across classes to build confidence in communication, promoting clarity and engagement in both formal and informal interactions.

xi. New Literacy-Focused Schemes of Work: Literacy-focused tasks are embedded into the curriculum through new schemes of work. These lessons are tailored to ensure that literacy development is emphasised in every subject, fostering the integration of reading, writing, and communication skills as essential to all academic progress.

xii. Compulsory KS3 Reading Sessions: Every day, KS3 students participate in a compulsory 15-minute reading session at the end of the school day. This initiative aims to instil a daily reading habit, cultivating a love for literature while also boosting reading fluency and comprehension. This regular engagement with texts further consolidates students' literacy skills and contributes to a broader reading culture within the school.

xiii. Literacy Booklets in Form Time: During form time, all students receive literacy booklets designed to further develop their reading, writing, and language skills. These booklets include exercises in vocabulary building, grammar, comprehension, and writing techniques. The structured approach allows students to practice literacy skills in a focused, repetitive manner, with form tutors overseeing progress.

xiv. Educational Trips and Literacy Enrichment: At Darul Uloom Islamic High School, we believe in enhancing literacy through immersive experiences that go beyond the classroom. The following annual trips and events provide pupils with rich literary and cultural exposure:

- **Year 7: Hay Festival**
Year 7 pupils attend the Hay Festival to engage with authors, participate in workshops, and explore contemporary literature. This experience encourages a love for reading and introduces students to a diverse range of literary genres.
- **Year 10: An Inspector Calls Theatre Trip**
Year 10 pupils attend a theatre performance of *An Inspector Calls* to complement their GCSE English Literature studies. This trip allows them to witness dramatic interpretations of the text, reinforcing their understanding of themes, characters, and historical context.
- **Whole School: Drama Performances (e.g., *Jekyll and Hyde*)**
Drama companies visit the school to perform literary classics such as *Jekyll and Hyde*. This experience introduces pupils to the theatrical adaptations of key texts, enriching their understanding and engagement with literature.
- **Guest Speakers and Virtual Book Readings:** We host regular visits from authors, poets, and performers, both in person and virtually, to provide pupils with interactive book readings and discussions. These opportunities connect pupils with creators and offer insights into the writing process, inspiring a deeper connection to literacy.

xv. Booster Sessions for Struggling Pupils: Targeted booster sessions are held for students who require additional support to achieve literacy benchmarks. These sessions focus on specific areas of difficulty, such as reading fluency, spelling, grammar, or comprehension, and provide a supportive environment for skill development. By offering personalised, structured guidance, these sessions aim to close literacy gaps and build confidence in struggling pupils.

Targeted Interventions for Students Requiring Additional Support

In recognition of the diverse literacy needs of students, the following targeted interventions are in place for those identified as requiring additional support:

- **Small Group Literacy Interventions**

These focused, small-group sessions provide targeted support for students who struggle with specific literacy skills, such as reading comprehension, grammar, or extended writing. The students receive personalised instruction aimed at bridging learning gaps.

- **One-to-One Literacy Tutoring**

Students with significant literacy challenges have access to one-to-one tutoring. This bespoke support directly addresses individual difficulties, whether in reading fluency, writing structure, or grammar.

- **Individualised Spelling Lists**

Students who struggle with spelling receive personalised spelling lists tailored to their literacy level. These lists emphasise high-frequency words and key vocabulary relevant to the students' current curriculum, providing additional reinforcement through tailored spelling booster sessions.

- **Extended Writing Workshops**

To develop proficiency in extended writing, afterschool workshops are offered. These sessions focus on improving writing structure, clarity, and technical accuracy, helping students build confidence and competence in extended writing tasks across all subjects.

- **SPaG Mastery Sessions**

Students struggling with spelling, punctuation, and grammar have access to lunchtime or afterschool SPaG mastery sessions. These sessions are intensive, focusing on addressing persistent SPaG errors, and are closely monitored for progress.

Baseline, Entrance, Admissions

Prior to registration, all applications must be supplemented with a report that demonstrates KS2 SAT scores, the most recent working levels (Year 8-11), and an admissions test administered by DUIHS. It will be further supplemented by an early-intervention baseline assessment. All aforementioned data will be used in moderated consolidation to determine the academic aptitudes of applicants and thus an understanding of those who require early intervention for literacy (and numeracy).

EAL

See the EAL policy for full elaboration. The school is dedicated to equal opportunities for all its pupils and thus a literacy drive is extended to EAL pupils should the available resources and limitations of the school be adequate—or referrals and recommendations to more tailored systems.

Curriculum

See DUIHS documents corresponding to the curriculum for full elaboration. Through a reinforced approach to developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing throughout all of its syllabuses, the school maximises its class-led contribution to the development of literacy.

Promise of the English Department

In relation to its literacy, the English department will empower the associated skills through a compulsory focus on SPaG, reading through direct study, and an introduction to texts of various formats, confidence, and development of the conventions and practices revolving around speaking and listening, as well as a progressive course to upskill written abilities.

Activities and Events

In addition to the curriculum approach, and in relation to the aspirational ethos to cultivate leaders, DUIHS primes its learners to become confident speakers through the practice of preaching and additionally increases written ability through literature events and competitions. At regular intervals throughout the academic year, pupils will partake in the following events:

- Weekly Friday Sermon (Khutbah)
- Hadith and Qur'an Competition
- Arabic Speaking Competition
- Poster drawing pertaining to calendared events
- Anti-Bullying campaigns
- Student Councillor-led speeches
- Student Councillor-led surveys
- Student Councillor-led weekly meetings
- Fundraisers and collections
- Spelling competition
- Maths competition

Assessment and Level Data

See the DUIHS Assessment Policy for full elaboration. Through a range of approaches to assessment of both formative and summative types, teachers evaluate pupils in their subject areas to determine academic abilities in order to establish targets and goals. Twice a year, pupils receive specific objectives through progress reports that will aid their academic growth. Where there is a need to address issues of literacy (and numeracy), the report will highlight such a need. Pertaining to assessments, during five occasions throughout the academic year (four internal and one external for Year 11), pupils will be assigned a grade based on current positions with knowledge, assessment, and effort. This data will be analysed to evaluate both subject delivery and corresponding assessments and to identify patterns of weakness in pupils, following which the school's leaders and responsible members will determine interventions as necessary.

Marking ties in significantly with the assessment process and will play a pivotal role in assigning direct opportunities to improve upon deficiencies in literacy (and numeracy).

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Listed in #2 of the 'corresponding documents' section, the particulars associated with the dissemination and intervention of language literacy are detailed in relevant policies. In direct reference to the aims and purpose of this policy, the following departments and individuals are labelled responsible for the direct intervention and alleviation of weaknesses in literacy and numeracy:

- English Department
- Maths Department
- SEN and EAL Support Officer: **Mohammed Qasim**
- Senior Leadership Team (Analysis)
- Literacy Lead: **Hammaad Azhar**

Training and CPD

DUIHS endeavours to equip and upskill all staff members with the required professional tools to adequately deliver an outstanding service in improving literacy across the school. Termly INSETs focus on various aspects of education that tie in with the supporting elements of literacy. Such training modules include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Assessment
- Marking Strategies and Organisation
- Differentiation
- Intent, Implementation, and Impact
- Ability-based Education
- Equality and Diversity
- Teaching according to Sunnah

Monitoring

The SLT is responsible for the effective implementation of the literacy policy and is tasked to review according to the following processes:

- Lesson observations
- Yearly curriculum audit

Note: The early or unprecedentedly repetitive recurrence of any of these listed processes is at the discretion of the SLT. Further recurrence will be subject to various factors, including complaints by parents, pupils, or other staff members; failure to demonstrate progress in subsequent observations; staff change; role change; timetable change; discrepancies in the curriculum and its chronology.

Corresponding Documents:

1. Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024
2. DU Policies: EAL, Equal Opportunities, Assessment, Curriculum, Admissions, Marking, Recruitment, Careers, Classroom Policy, Staff Code of Conduct
3. Teacher Standards
4. DUIHS Schemes/Overviews
5. DUIHS Level Descriptors/Marking Thresholds
6. Curriculum Research: Assessing Intent, Implementation, and Impact