



Media and Information  
Literacy Alliance



3 June 2025

## Joint statement on Curriculum and Assessment Review interim report

We, the undersigned, represent a range of organisations whose remit includes media and information literacy (MIL), particularly in school education. We are writing jointly following the publication of the Curriculum and Assessment Review interim report<sup>1</sup> to express our hope that MIL will be properly addressed in the revised school curriculum in England, and in the assessment framework that will consequently be put in place.

Most of our organisations have previously submitted evidence in response to the call for evidence last year and we understand that the Review still has much work to undertake before presenting its final recommendations in the autumn.

MIL, as defined by the Media and Information Literacy Alliance, is the ability to engage fully with media and information in people's connected daily lives. We use the hybrid concept of 'media and information literacy' as media literacy and information literacy are closely aligned, even though we realise that the latter term is infrequently used in UK policy and educational discourse currently, and is missing altogether from the report. We argue that, in considering the future shape of the curriculum, it is important and appropriate to foster both media **and** information literacy. Moreover, MIL itself overlaps with multiple, interrelated literacies, such as digital, AI, data and science literacies; it also dovetails with digital citizenship. These close

<sup>1</sup> Department for Education, Curriculum and Assessment Review: interim report, 18 March 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-interim-report>

relationships form a holistic environment of competencies that, in our view, should sit at the heart of a modern, relevant, fit-for-purpose education system.

We welcome the report's recognition of the need for heightened media literacy and critical thinking in response to social and technological change, including the increasing ubiquity of AI. We are therefore surprised that the Review's polling of Key Stage 4 learners and their parents did not include media literacy or critical thinking among the thematic areas deserving of more time - it is disappointing that, in seeking views from users, the Review has overlooked areas whose relevance it has itself clearly highlighted. We also welcome the report's ambition that a refreshed national curriculum should allow schools to support the full development of their students and prepare them for their future life and work. We see MIL very much in that context, as vitally important competencies and know-how that young people will need throughout their lives, in all areas of their lives - including health, employment, participation in society and a host of everyday situations.

Achieving such ambitions is no small task, particularly since, at present, MIL education takes place only in a minority of schools in England, with many of them doing little or no work in this area. MIL features to an extent in the national curriculum for Citizenship and subjects such as Media Studies, but it is addressed in a fragmented and uneven way, with only variable levels of assessment, oversight, and guidance for teachers and school leaders. According to a recent survey conducted by *First News*, 83% of teachers feel that MIL is important or very important, but 61% say MIL is not currently taught at their school; and only 5% would feel very confident teaching it. This is indicative of the scale of the problem. Whilst we are conscious of the demands already placed on schools to deliver a broad curriculum, as well as preparing young people to thrive in life beyond the classroom, it seems to us imperative that MIL should be a mandatory educational entitlement for every child – with the same status and attention paid to it as reading and writing.

We argue too that MIL should not be seen and taught solely in the context of protection against online harms, including mis- and dis-information, cyberbullying, and deliberately divisive online content. Whilst it is extremely important for school education to help students understand how to address such risks, a more fundamental purpose of MIL in schools should be - to paraphrase the view of the Carnegie Foundation<sup>2</sup> - to help young people routinely apply critical inquiry, reading, and reflection skills to all forms of information and media that they encounter, use, share and create. MIL education should also be about developing a critical understanding of modern media and information environments, including film and video content, i.e. where information comes from and how it is mediated. These abilities not only benefit learners directly but also empower individuals to navigate online environments safely, think critically, and communicate effectively. This provides a foundation for understanding how the world works, and contributes to civic engagement, social cohesion and democratic participation. The report touches briefly and implicitly on these issues, but we would like to see a much more explicit and thorough consideration of the place of MIL education in the next stages of the Review and in the final recommendations. The report mentions the acquisition of knowledge and knowledge-richness over 50 times; it would be good to see this sort of emphasis matched by an equally

---

<sup>2</sup> Faith Rogow, *Media Literacy for Students in a Digital Age*, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 10 April 2024, <https://www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/media-literacy-for-students-in-a-digital-age/>

clear commitment to developing young people's critical thinking and reasoning abilities, along with how this relates to MIL.

For MIL to be addressed effectively, teachers will need clear guidance and strong resources. MIL needs to be embedded consistently, coherently and prominently across the entire curriculum, not just within the subjects in which it has tended to feature to date. As well as English and citizenship, MIL should feature as an integral part of core curriculum subjects such as mathematics, science, computing, history and geography, as well as PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) education, including statutory RSHE elements of the subject. Similarly, it is not enough simply to add MIL to a list of non-assessed curriculum requirements, nor to create the perception that it is an add-on of middling importance compared to more established subjects. Again quoting Carnegie, MIL "can't be reduced to a single lesson or something that's separate from the rest of school. It can't be the job of one educator or librarian; it needs to be integrated into a student's entire education". One possible way of addressing this is to develop an approved framework, setting out what good MIL looks like at each key stage - both primary and secondary - and across different subject areas, along with a set of benchmarks by which a school could assess its delivery of MIL.

Likewise, MIL would benefit from being incorporated into the formal assessment of knowledge and skills, and included in school inspections as an essential day-to-day competency. This has become especially relevant in the light of the development of the new PISA 2029 Innovative Domain on Media & Artificial Intelligence Literacy<sup>3</sup>; this will be an instrument to support the assessment of school students' abilities to interact effectively, ethically and responsibly with digital content and platforms including AI tools. The first draft of the assessment and analytical framework for this should be available by the end of this year, so that in 2029, 15-year old students will be assessed on these competencies and their performance will be recorded comparatively across OECD countries. Given this timescale, it is urgent to take measures now to ensure that the UK does not fall behind other countries in this vital area and equips young people properly for the modern world.

The report does not mention teacher training, but this is an important issue too. MIL should form a part of training for all new teachers and existing teachers and should be delivered through compulsory professional development, all accredited by DfE. This is essential for the effective deployment of the revised curriculum and particularly so for subjects where MIL currently features little and therefore where teachers have had little exposure to it. For instance, Shout Out UK worked with Ofcom on a Train the Trainer pilot programme which trained more than 500 teachers across the UK to deliver media literacy education; programmes such as this should be expanded and scaled up nationally.

Teachers are not the only school professional group with a stake in MIL. We regret that the report utterly fails to consider the vital role of school librarians, who are already playing a significant role in teaching MIL across the curriculum. School librarians bring unique professional expertise to MIL education, being perfectly placed to integrate cross-curricula information literacy skills. The existing national network of school library professionals plays a vital role in teaching MIL, critical thinking and digital skills, with many librarians doing this without adequate funding, training or support from their school management. The Review

---

<sup>3</sup> OECD, *PISA 2029 Media & Artificial Intelligence Literacy*, <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/projects/pisa-2029-media-and-artificial-intelligence-literacy.html>

would benefit from acknowledging how data about school library provision, evidence of good practice, and proper support for school librarians' professional development could directly advance MIL education goals. The vital work of school libraries remains discretionary despite their proven educational, emotional and social impact on children and young people. We urge the Review to specifically highlight the essential role of an expertly staffed school library in fostering MIL, and to recommend sustained investment in library provision and the role of school librarians to support the curriculum.

We deliberately do not go into the detailed implications of teaching MIL for each subject area - this statement is intended as a high-level argument. Our respective organisations will each have their views regarding our own areas of interest in the curriculum, but we subscribe to the broad case set out here for ensuring that MIL is fully recognised as an indispensable part of the revised curriculum.

We look forward to the more detailed outputs of the Review, but in the meantime, please do not hesitate to get back to us if you have any thoughts or reactions to what we have set out. The Media and Information Literacy Alliance (MILA) has coordinated the drafting of this statement, so please reply to them at [media.infolit.alliance@gmail.com](mailto:media.infolit.alliance@gmail.com) . This statement is also posted online at [www.mila.org.uk/curriculum-joint-statement](http://www.mila.org.uk/curriculum-joint-statement).

Kind regards,

Julian McDougall - Chair, MILA, Media and Information Literacy Alliance

Liz Moore – Chief Executive, Association for Citizenship Teaching

Steve Connolly - Chair, Media Education Association

Jonathan Baggaley - Chief Executive, PSHE Association

Louis Coiffait-Gunn - CEO, CILIP, The Library and Information Association

Laura Woods - Co-chair, CILIP Information Literacy Group

Caroline Roche - Chair, CILIP School Libraries Group

Victoria Dilly - CEO, School Library Association

Kate Tilleke Irvin - CEO, First News

Fiona Evans - CEO, Into Film

Vicki Shotbolt - CEO, Parent Zone

Matteo Bergamini - Founder and CEO, Shout Out UK

Sarah Pavey - SP4IL

Lucy Crompton-Reid - CEO, Wikimedia UK