

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Newton International Academy
School address and postcode:	Doha PO Box 8449
School telephone:	+97466043350
School website:	https://newtonschoools.sch.qa/schools/nia-barwa-city/
Head teacher:	Nadia January
Head teacher's email:	nadia.january@nia-newtonschoools.com
WAS coordinator:	Liam Wilson / Ansonet Oberholzer
WAS coordinator's email:	ansonet.oberholzer@nia-newtonschoools.com
Award verifier:	Emma Symonds
Award adviser (if applicable):	Not applicable
Date of verification:	Sunday 26 th January 2025

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The school has submitted a robust and meticulously prepared portfolio of evidence that clearly demonstrates its commitment to emotional wellbeing and mental health for all members of its community. The submission includes a diverse range of documents and materials, each providing strong proof of the school's initiatives, practices, and impact in this area.

The Action Plan serves as a cornerstone, outlining the school's strategic objectives and detailing how wellbeing is integrated into its overarching vision. This is further supported by the Evidence Booklets, which comprehensively document key practices and activities across areas such as student support, staff wellbeing, and community engagement. For example, the Evidence Booklet for Wellbeing Workshops showcases impactful sessions like Flourishing Minds workshops, NED assemblies, and counsellor-led initiatives aimed at equipping students and parents with tools to support mental health.

The portfolio also includes detailed records of professional learning initiatives, such as mental health awareness training and access to platforms like the National College and EduCare. These documents provide evidence of the school's investment in equipping staff with the knowledge and skills to address the emotional and mental health needs of the community.

A variety of evidence enhances the school's submission, with photographs and displays included in the evidence booklets. These images vividly demonstrate the implementation of wellbeing activities, such as yoga sessions, sensory room use, and character education lessons, providing tangible proof of the school's commitment to fostering resilience and emotional growth among students.

Parent and student surveys, submitted alongside feedback summaries, highlight the school's dedication to listening and responding to its stakeholders. Survey results, combined with detailed action plans, ensure a targeted and responsive approach to wellbeing, supported by external collaborations with organisations. These partnerships are documented in the evidence to showcase the range of external support available to the school community.

The portfolio also captures community-building efforts, such as environmental projects, parent engagement events, and student-led wellbeing initiatives. The inclusion of diverse materials, from safeguarding policies to wellbeing lesson plans, reflects a holistic and well-rounded approach to creating a culture of care, trust, and inclusion.

This extensive collection of evidence highlights the school's unwavering dedication to wellbeing, with each document and visual element reinforcing the depth and breadth of its efforts. The portfolio not only validates the school's achievements but also showcases its proactive, collaborative, and inclusive ethos in supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of its entire community.

Newton International Academy demonstrates several key strengths in its approach to wellbeing, as highlighted in its SWOT analysis. The school has undertaken a thorough audit of its policies, ensuring that critical areas such as bullying, safeguarding, and counselling are aligned with its focus on emotional wellbeing and mental health. This proactive approach underpins the school's strategy to create a supportive environment and raise awareness about the impact of mental health on academic and personal development.

Strengths identified during verification:

Newton International Academy has a clear vision of "Thriving together: a community committed to the wellbeing of all," which fosters a supportive and inclusive environment for students, parents, and staff. This vision is reflected in their whole-school approach to wellbeing, where collaboration and mutual respect are key. The school integrates emotional, social, and academic wellbeing into its culture, creating a safe and nurturing space where everyone can flourish.

Through proactive initiatives, workshops, and open communication, Newton International Academy promotes emotional resilience and mental health awareness. The Wellbeing Committee, working alongside the Safeguarding Team, ensures targeted interventions and a culture of care across the community. Their wellbeing strategy is clearly communicated to stakeholders through assemblies, surveys, and workshops, ensuring involvement and understanding at all levels.

Newton International Academy demonstrates a strong commitment to professional learning and staff development in the areas of emotional wellbeing and mental health. The school has implemented a whole-school safeguarding and wellbeing Continuing Professional Development plan, ensuring that staff are well-equipped to support students and each other. This comprehensive approach includes a variety of training opportunities, such as stress management CPD sessions for all staff and certifications like the National College Mental Health and Wellbeing Accreditation and Level 3 Safeguarding training for designated officers.

The school uses resources like the Mantra app, which provides further support for both staff and parents through meditation and stress management tools. Training platforms such as BlueSky, EduCare, and The National College are utilised to deliver targeted well-being training, including modules on minimising workload, maximising well-being, and supporting staff who have experienced trauma. These initiatives highlight the school's proactive approach to addressing mental health challenges while fostering a supportive and informed community.

Additionally, staff are provided with access to resources such as the "Developing a Self-Care and Wellbeing Toolkit," which encourages reflection and personal wellbeing strategies. By embedding these professional learning opportunities into the school's ethos, Newton International Academy prioritises the emotional and mental health of its staff, creating a resilient and compassionate team that positively impacts the wider school community.

The school's systems for addressing emotional and mental health needs are comprehensive. They include tailored support for students and parents through counselling services, surveys, and a wide array of extra-curricular activities. Newton International Academy places a strong emphasis on community building through events like fairs and concerts, fostering inclusion and belonging. Collaboration with external agencies further enhances the school's wellbeing initiatives. Partnerships with organisations such as the AMAN Centre and Dialogue Works enrich the provision of mental health support and character education. The school's participation in forums and initiatives highlights its proactive role in sharing best practices and learning from others.

Newton International Academy places a significant emphasis on staff emotional wellbeing, recognising its vital role in fostering a positive and productive school environment. The school implements a variety of targeted initiatives to support and celebrate staff, creating a culture of care, respect, and collaboration. These efforts not only enhance staff morale but also contribute to the overall success of the school by ensuring that teachers feel valued and motivated.

The school employs programmes such as Mantra Care and wellbeing-focused training sessions to equip staff with the tools and strategies needed to address challenges effectively. Regular staff surveys and suggestion boxes provide avenues for open communication, ensuring that the leadership team remains attuned to staff needs. To foster a sense of community and appreciation, staff shout-outs, team-building activities, and events like "Thursday Drinks" and "Teacher's Day" are organised. Personalised gestures, such as recognising birthdays, offering airport pick-ups, and providing welcome packs for new staff members, demonstrate the school's commitment to individual wellbeing. Further initiatives, including the development of a dedicated wellbeing room and after-school wellbeing sessions, ensure that staff have the space and resources to recharge and focus on self-care.

The school demonstrates a robust understanding of its community's various emotional and mental health needs and has established systems to respond effectively. Student leaders actively engage younger peers, such as those in EYFS, fostering mentorship and supportive relationships that encourage inclusion and confidence. Weekly sessions in Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Character Education (CE) promote critical thinking and emotional development by discussing relevant topics in a safe and structured environment.

Wellbeing initiatives are creatively integrated into the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, with options providing both physical and mental health benefits. The "Wonder Wall" serves as an inspirational tool, celebrating achievements and positive affirmations, while collaborative efforts like parents and students sharing their accomplishments strengthen family-school partnerships. The school also builds a sense of community through events like fairs and concerts, which encourage collective participation and connection. These initiatives are supported by displays and environments that reinforce positive messages, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that all school

members feel valued and understood. Parents are engaged meaningfully, and their feedback is incorporated into practices, promoting a holistic approach to well-being across the school community.

Impact:

The evidence provided by Newton International Academy reflects the school's robust commitment to emotional wellbeing and mental health.

The school showcased the implementation of strategies such as Komodo for regular wellbeing check-ins, worry boxes, and character education lessons that create safe spaces and teach students coping strategies. Evidence of this includes classroom-based interventions like sensory and reflective rooms and zones of regulation. These efforts have demonstrated proactive support systems that students now utilise, which are also tailored to diverse needs.

Action plans derived from the stakeholder surveys have been impactful. Surveys and subsequent analyses reveal significant improvements in students' ability to articulate emotions and access support when needed, which have been substantiated by survey data comparisons. Moreover, staff wellbeing initiatives, such as suggestion boxes and a dedicated wellbeing room, illustrate a comprehensive effort to support and engage all stakeholders in creating a healthy school community that values relationships, care and nurture.

Newton International Academy has developed strong partnerships with a range of external agencies, which have significantly enhanced the school's wellbeing efforts and provision for students, staff, and parents. Collaborations with organisations such as AMAN provide specialised support through school counsellors, enabling targeted intervention for students in need. This has resulted in enhanced referral processes and additional support services. Initiatives like COBIS mental health awareness programmes and DEAP assemblies have introduced staff and students to broader concepts of mental health, fostering a deeper understanding and reducing stigma. Programmes like "Thinking Moves" by Dialogue Works and character education initiatives from the Jubilee Centre have supported the development of emotional intelligence and moral virtues, benefitting students' personal growth and resilience.

Key partnerships have provided staff with access to expert resources and additional training, equipping them with strategies to better support students and colleagues. Using TeachMateAI has also helped staff actively reduce their workload and planning time.

Parents have benefited from workshops and forums, such as the EYFS forum, which enhances their understanding of wellbeing practices and enables them to implement supportive strategies at home. The nature of and implementations of these external collaborations and resources has collectively created a comprehensive network of support for the school community, promoting a culture of shared responsibility and positive mental health outcomes.

Areas for development:

Newton International Academy aims to continue to enhance community engagement and collaboration by strengthening partnerships with parents, students, and any relevant external agencies. Plans include establishing a Parent Wellbeing Champion network, increasing participation in tailored wellbeing workshops, and involving student and parent representatives in the Wellbeing

Champion programme. The school aim to continue to expand feedback mechanisms by structuring follow-up processes to ensure stakeholder input informs decisions. Additionally, inter-school collaboration will continue to go from strength to strength in order to share best practices.

Verifier recommendation:

It is the verifier recommendation that Newton International Academy receive the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

Head teacher comments:

Thank you for your support and guidance to further develop and strengthen NIA's school wellbeing environment and practices.