Newton International Academy, Barwa

Phonics and Early Reading Policy (EYFS & Primary)

An International Community of Learners, Striving for Excellence and Celebrating Success

Approved by: Senoir Management Team
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Review Cycle: Annual

NEWTON INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY | BARWA

Our vision, mission and values:

Vision: An international community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success.

Mission: We aim to provide the highest quality of education possible for students of all abilities. In doing so, we aim to positively encourage each student to achieve academic excellence at their level, enjoy creative diversity, develop critical thinking skills, and become lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

Values

Rationale

At Newton International Academy Barwa, we believe that the ability to read fluently, accurately, and with enjoyment is a fundamental right and a crucial life skill. We are committed to ensuring that every child becomes a confident reader and is equipped with the tools needed for academic success and lifelong learning. Our phonics and early reading programme is designed to ensure equity, consistency, and measurable progress for all learners, regardless of background or ability.

Aims

Our phonics and early reading policy aims to:

- Ensure every child learns to read with confidence and enjoyment.
- Provide a clear, systematic, and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics.
- Build strong foundations in phonemic awareness, language development, and comprehension from the earliest stages.
- Enable all staff to deliver high-quality phonics instruction through professional development and shared practices.
- Identify and support children at risk of falling behind through effective assessment and timely intervention.
- Engage families and the wider community in supporting early reading.
- Integrate reading for pleasure as an essential element of school culture and lifelong learning.

APhonics Instruction

We follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme across Early Years and Key Stage 1. This structured synthetic phonics programme enables all children to master the alphabetic code and build the skills to decode words confidently.

- Foundation Stage 1 focuses on phonological awareness through rhymes, stories, oral blending, and high-quality talk.
- Foundation Stage 2 children begin daily phonics in Week 2 of the Autumn Term, progressing through Phases 2–4.
- Year 1 reviews Phases 3–4 and teaches Phase 5 for reading and spelling with fluency.
- Lessons are taught daily, using a consistent format, language, and routines across all classes.
- A weekly review lesson helps children secure the sounds and words learned.

Keep-Up and Catch-Up Support

Every child is assessed regularly to identify those who are not on track. These children receive daily Keep-Up sessions:

- Aligned with the main phonics programme
- Delivered in small steps with repetition and precision
- Taught by trained staff using the same resources and mantras

Older children in Years 2–6 who are not at age-related expectations access the Rapid Catch-Up programme. These short, focused daily lessons help them close the gap quickly and ensure that they don't fall further behind.

Reading Practice Sessions

Children take part in three small-group reading practice sessions each week, focusing on:

1. Decoding – applying phonics to read accurately
2. Prosody – reading with expression and understanding
3. Comprehension – using dialogue and questioning to understand the text

Books used in these sessions are carefully matched to each child's secure phonics knowledge. Every child reads the same book multiple times to build fluency and confidence. Teachers monitor groups closely to ensure progress and consistency.

Home Reading and Family Engagement

To ensure consistency between school and home:

- Children take home their decodable reading book to practise and build fluency.
- A second book is sent home for Reading for Pleasure, to be read with or to them by family members.
- Parents are provided with information, resources, and workshops on how phonics and reading are taught.
- We celebrate reading at home and encourage families to engage actively with their child's learning journey.

Reading for Pleasure

Creating a reading culture is central to our school ethos. We believe that fostering a love of books is just as important as technical reading skills.

- Teachers read aloud every day from a diverse range of texts.
- Class libraries and reading corners are welcoming and refreshed regularly.
- Children have access to books that reflect their identities, cultures, and interests.
- Library visits, author talks, reading events, and book fairs are planned throughout the year.

We use resources from the Little Wandle “Everybody read!” programme to support the development of our reading-for-pleasure pedagogy.

Assessment and Progress Tracking

Assessment is used to identify progress and target support early.

- Formative assessment is embedded in every phonics and reading session.
- Summative assessments are conducted every six weeks to track individual and cohort progress.
- Children not on track are reassessed every three weeks to ensure interventions are effective.
- Fluency assessments are used to measure reading speed and accuracy and determine readiness to move beyond decodable texts.

These assessments are reviewed by class teachers, the Reading Leader, and SLT to identify trends, adjust planning, and narrow gaps.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Reading Leader ensures high-quality phonics delivery, supports staff, and monitors fidelity to the programme.
- All class teachers and teaching assistants receive regular training and follow structured lesson templates.
- SLT ensures phonics and reading are given a high priority in curriculum planning and strategic decision-making.
- Parents and carers are encouraged and supported to be active partners in their child’s reading development.