MEDIA RELEASE

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STRENGTHENING THE PATHWAY TO IMPROVED READING OUTCOMES: THE PEDAGOGICAL BENEFITS OF THE 2026 FOUNDATION PHASE CATALOGUE

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has moved the 2026 Foundation Phase National Catalogue for Grades 1–3 from approval to implementation, following concurrence through the education sector's governance structures.

Procurement is underway, with November and December 2026 identified as the key delivery period ahead of the 2027 academic year.

The 2026 Catalogue renews the learning-materials framework for the Foundation Phase. While the previous catalogue served the sector for many years, learning materials must remain responsive to developments in curriculum, pedagogy and the learning needs of children.

BENEFITS OF THE 2026 CATALOGUE: A FOCUS ON READING

Three key benefits are highlighted below:

Pedagogical focus: lessons from years of research on building both the skill and habit of reading have been considered. Specifically, guidance on using the oral reading fluency benchmarks for all 11 official languages and the revised Annual Teaching plans has been incorporated.

Increased Readers: The catalogue provides for 40 readers per class and a Core Reader for every learner and an anthology of stories. Previously only 12 readers were provided with no anthology.

In addition, the catalogue is more comprehensive, expanding the range and types of materials provided. These include an integrated phonics programme, phoneme chart and a handwriting chart, all of which were not in the previous catalogue.

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Enhanced coherence: The reduction from eight listed titles to three creates a more focused resource environment, allowing teacher development and subject-advisory support to be more closely aligned with materials used in classrooms.

Overall., the new catalogue strengthens the resource base for the systematic development of decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. It creates a stronger link between curriculum, classroom practice and the materials available to teachers and learners.

OTHER BENEFITS

The catalogue also supports curriculum renewal, with updated, curriculum-aligned materials and provision for newer curriculum areas such as Coding and Robotics. For the first time, a teacher guide, learner books and coding cards are going to be available for this new subject.

FROM CATALOGUE TO CLASSROOM

The 2026 Catalogue should be understood not simply as a replacement for its predecessor, but as a strategic renewal of the learning-materials framework in response to evolving curriculum and pedagogical priorities. Its value lies in bringing together strengthened foundational literacy resources, updated curriculum content, greater system coherence, coordinated procurement and improved cost efficiency.

Its enduring value will be determined by its contribution to stronger classroom practice, more effective teaching and measurable improvements in foundational learning. Ultimately, the Catalogue must be judged by its capacity to translate improved learning materials into improved learning outcomes for every child.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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