

HANDWRITING POLICY



Latest review undertaken on 18th May 2015

By the Curriculum and Standards
Sub-Committee

Ratified by the Full Governing Body on
22nd June 2015

Next review: Summer term 2017

Overall Aims

A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. As such, we actively teach handwriting as part of the Literacy curriculum through discrete weekly lessons, quick reinforcing sessions and application every day.

Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practising speed and fluency and higher presentation skills. Children are also encouraged to write longer pieces and develop stamina.

To develop a clear, legible style of writing, children are taught to;

- hold a pencil comfortably; promoting a legible style that encourages writing from left to right, from top to bottom of the page and starting and finishing letters correctly
- develop a consistent size and shape of letters and a regularity of spacing between letters and words
- join letters correctly
- develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling in lessons of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We have purchased an IT programme called 'Letterjoin' which allows IWB and other resources to be printed in the cursive handwriting style with joins as taught to the children. This is useful for many lessons but we also want the children to become familiar with a variety of styles and fonts across their learning. This software is installed on all computers and used in any resources created in school.

The Penpals for Handwriting scheme (Cambridge University Press) will be introduced in Reception and used throughout the school. Children will have one discrete lesson weekly using this programme on the whiteboard and working progressively through the different joins until a fluent, joined and legible style is attained. The handwriting pattern for the week will also be practised on whiteboards at the start of every Literacy lesson and children will be reminded to use their best writing whenever appropriate throughout their work.

Considerations when teaching handwriting:

- (a) Pencil grip and tension;
- (b) Writing pressure;
- (c) Clarity of the stroke;
- (d) Orientation of the paper for left/right handed children;
- (e) Body posture.

Children need to be made aware of:

- (a) Where the letter starts;
- (b) Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline;
- (c) Ascenders and descenders - lined paper will assist;
- (d) Spacing and finger space between words;
- (e) Consistent writing size;
- (f) Capital letters and their appropriate use

There will be a focus on developing and sustaining consistent, fluent, joined handwriting throughout the school as it enhances work in almost all areas of the curriculum.

Some terms will also begin with a focus on handwriting and presentation across the school to start the term's work well.

Speed and Fluency

Legible, neat handwriting takes lots of practice and new research shows that handwriting speed is important to the quantity and quality of children's written work. Obviously, the quicker a child is able to form his or her words the more words the child is able to produce. The research shows that this lessens the burden on working memory and enables writers to use the memory to create good, reader friendly prose. In other words the child is able to concentrate on thinking through his or her ideas and arguments rather than on the effort to write. This pays dividends in terms of concentration and maintaining interest in learning. The final goal is for handwriting to become an automatic skill so that children can concentrate on what, and not how, they are writing.

Foundation Stage

Children will begin the Foundation Stage with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to finer motor skills using a variety of tactile methods. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and to gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters.

All Foundation Stage staff, including support staff, must be aware of directionality and when children are showing a firm interest in writing their name, they should be encouraged to use correct directionality.

To aid co-ordination, sand trays and sticks (or fingers), paper, paint and large brushes, modelling materials, blackboards and chalk may be used. They will be taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.

Year 1

In Year 1, children practise forming letters and are introduced to diagonal joins and latterly, horizontal joins both to letters with and without ascenders. An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed.

It is expected that by the end of this year, the majority will be writing unaided, using capitals where appropriate and presenting their written work legibly. Speed and fluency work will be introduced this year. Children will be asked to copy out pieces of work in their best writing several times during a week with the aim of getting faster and neater. These pieces of work will be short sentences at the beginning of the year and may even be single words to start with. They will progress onto paragraphs. All work written out will include lots of key words which the children use frequently and tricky spellings from Letters and Sounds.

Year 2

By Year 2 children should be moving towards a joined handwriting style and be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They practise and build on Year 1 joins and are introduced to break letters. Speed and fluency writing will continue twice weekly in year 2 to help consolidate the new joins as the children learn them.

Year 3

It is our aim that the majority of Year 3 have been taught the whole range of joins and will be developing a degree of accuracy and fluency by the end of the year. In the first two terms, children will consolidate joins from Years 1 and 2 and will be taught to join parallel descenders and ascenders. The third term will focus on consistency of spacing and layout. Speed and fluency writing exercises will continue weekly in year 3, twice weekly if necessary, to help consolidate the joins as the children learn them. The aim is for complete automaticity of

handwriting by the end of year 3. Children will continue to use pencil for their writing.

Year 4, 5 and 6

Formation of capitals, lower case letters and the two basic join types (horizontal and vertical) should now be familiar and secure and children should be writing completely fluently and automatically. The majority of children should be able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Any children not writing automatically and forming letters correctly and fluently will continue with fluency writing exercises and all children will have a weekly handwriting lesson to consolidate their skills and make sure that they do not fall into bad habits.

Left Handed Children

Left-handed children will not in any way be discouraged from favouring the left-hand in their work. They may need to position their paper at an angle on the table. The tripod grip (thumb and first finger grip the pencil, which then rests on the side of the second finger) should be encouraged. Practice on a vertical blackboard could help this position.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years. The next review will be summer 2017.