

HANDWRITING POLICY



Latest review undertaken on 19th January 2012

By the Curriculum Sub-Committee

Ratified by the Full Governing Body on 23rd February
2012

Next review: Spring term 2014

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.

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. Regular assemblies will focus on showing examples of the best handwriting from every class. Children

will be awarded certificates when their handwriting is shared. Some terms will also begin with a focus on handwriting and presentation across the school to start the term's work well.

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

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. 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.

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.

Year 3

The introduction of handwriting pens will begin in 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, layout, speed and fluency practice.

Year 4

Formation of capitals, lower case letters and the two basic join types (horizontal and vertical) should now be familiar and secure. The majority of children should be able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Whilst there is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns, they will also be given opportunities to develop speed and accuracy. Children in Year 4 with fluent joined handwriting will be awarded a certificate and a cartridge pen for their use.

Timings

Reception - The development of gross and fine motor writing skills are continuous and ongoing everyday. Letter formation will be taught as they are introduced in Letters and Sounds, using the *Penpals for Handwriting* materials.

Year 1 – 2 x 15 minute sessions per week and 3 minutes daily whiteboard sessions

Years 2, 3, 4 – 1 x 30 minute session per week and 3 minutes daily on whiteboards.

In years 2, 3, and 4 children will also have the opportunity to use the pupil handwriting practice books once a week for 20 minutes of their reading time.

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.

Resources

Penpals for Handwriting CD Rom Years 1 -4

Pupil practice books Years 1 - 4

Teacher book Years 1 – 4

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years. The next review will be spring 2014.