

Reviewed: March 2015

Next Review: March 2016

Handwriting Policy

Aims

Our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line
- understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly
- take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting
- be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- use their skills with confidence in real life situations

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding taught are:

To use a pencil or pen, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters [with 'kicks'/'flicks'], most of which are correctly formed.

Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil/pen grip.

Write with spaces between words accurately.

Use the spacebar and keyboard to type their name and simple texts.

Write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words.

Form and use the basic handwriting joins.

Word process short narrative and non-narrative texts.

Teaching and Learning

We teach handwriting as a specific skill rather than as an independent task (which can often reinforce poor formation having a reverse effect than the intended outcome). Little and often is the most successful way – at least 10 minutes every day is ideal with additional, independent practise.

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- relaxation, posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory

Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory: write letters in the air: sky writing.

Children whose writing is underdeveloped are encouraged to:

- develop gross motor control
- develop fine motor control
- use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment
- develop a recognition of pattern
- develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- use the main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; l, c, and r
- write their first name, using a Capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation

Across the school children continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding by learning letter formation alongside phonics and spelling using the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and additional writing resources, using 'shape families' in their handwriting book.

Where necessary children, particularly those children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) should be introduced to joins at the earliest opportunity.

The Joining Style

"Joins between letters are only worthwhile if they increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing *without* reducing legibility"

Which letters join?

Joins are made **both to and from** the following 17 letters:

a c d e f h i k l m n o r t u v w

Joins are made **to but not from** the following 8 letters:

b g j p q s x y

Joins are *never* made **to or from the letter z**

The 4 basic joins:

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, on, at
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. at
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. the 'eb' in z-eb-ra

Intervention

Where some pupils need more support, provision will be made for this and monitored through intervention plans. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should explore issues in Intervention Team meetings and Occupational Therapy to support and develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of **left-handed pupils** and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side

- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

The role of parents and carers

Parents and carers are introduced to the school's handwriting style through the school web site.

The contribution of handwriting to other aspects of the curriculum

ICT

The growth in the use of word processing and desktop publishing has increased pupils' awareness of the importance of presentation and the variety of handwriting styles/fonts available. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate a range of fonts and to select whatever is appropriate to suit particular purposes.

Teachers discuss handwriting and presentation in all subjects and aim to model good handwriting themselves. Teachers are **explicit** about different types of handwriting for example, personal note-taking or best handwriting for presentation, but not all the children will be able to achieve this.

Teachers give handwriting a high priority in classroom displays/sharing pupils' work.

Teachers aim to make handwriting lessons relevant to the curriculum, by providing a purpose to the work where possible, encouraging the children to view handwriting as part of an overall presentation policy.

Assessment and recording

Teachers assess handwriting on a regular basis (each half term) to note progress against stage criteria to determine future targets for improvement. A handwriting assessment of pupils who enter the school is made within two weeks. Teachers aim to ensure that when marking written work, comments about neatness are kept in proportion in relation to those about content and/or meaning.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the school's policy review programme. The Headteacher is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy & Direction Committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**