

Laurance Haines Handwriting Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the teaching of handwriting in our school. When communicating ideas in writing, it is important that children use a handwriting style which is neat and legible.

The importance of handwriting should not be under-estimated. If children have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns.

Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important. If children receive handwriting lessons frequently for a short period of time, it will become an automatic skill, allowing all their energy to be applied to the content of their writing and not the skill of handwriting itself. All members of staff (including teaching assistants, supply teachers and students) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

Handwriting will also be closely linked with spelling so that the teaching of common letter strings will be taught in the context of handwriting.

Aims

Teaching of handwriting aims to ensure that children:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Develop flow and speed.
- Understand the need to develop a good handwriting style
- Eventually produce the letters automatically in their independent writing.
- Children at Key Stage 2 are aware that they need to balance speed and neatness to achieve a writing style appropriate to a task

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

Teaching and Learning:

- Handwriting is taught as a discrete lessons in classes, groups or individually as appropriate.
- Lessons follow a 'demonstrate, practise, review' cycle. (See appendix 1)
- Patterns are used initially, by writing with a variety of tools and using multisensory methods, to help free flowing hand motions.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught in Reception and KS1 and in KS2 handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- While children are in Read Write Inc. Phonics groups A to E, letters are referred to by their sound, rather than letter names.
- Older children with poorer handwriting may need to be taught to form ascenders and descenders consistently and correctly, using the six basic handwriting joins. (See appendix 6)
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting.
- Display writing throughout the school includes cursive writing and computer generated writing.

Resources and Writing Materials

- Children sit on a chair at a table where they are able to see the teacher's example.
- Children will sit with their feet flat on the floor and their chair pulled up to the table. One hand should be holding the page, while the other is used to write. (see appendix 2)
- Children are taught handwriting initially in Reception in a plain exercise book for letter formation, moving onto spaced lines when able.
- In Year 1, children may use 'handwriting books' for discrete handwriting lessons.
- In the Foundation Stage, Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools.

- In Read, Write Inc. Phonics lessons and in KS1, children use a sharp pencil to write.
- Blue ink pens (not biros) are used in KS2.

How handwriting is taught throughout the school

Pupils learn to form individual letters appropriately and accurately first and then in Year 2 pupils are taught to join their handwriting. Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically. Children in the Foundation Stage, continuing into Year 1 term 1 are taught to print so that they can read what they write. Handwriting lessons focus on upper and lower case letters and the teaching of writing from left to right and from top to bottom.

When children can write legibly and quickly, they are taught a joined style. This usually starts in Year 2, term 1.

In Reception the majority of children will:

- Take part in 'Finger strong' activities to develop gross and fine motor skills and recognition of patterns.
- Learn letter formation alongside phonics using mnemonics. (See Appendix 3)
- Use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters *most* of which are correctly formed.
- Receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip or formation are seen.

At Year One the majority of children will:

1. Be taught letter formation in the following order (see appendix 4):
 - 'Around' letter checklists (c a o d g q)
 - 'Down' letter checklists (l t b p k h i j m n r u y)
 - 'Curly' letters (e f s)
 - 'Zig-zag' letters (v w z x)
 2. Be taught relative size of letters in the following order (see appendix 5):
 - Floating: (a c e l m n o r s u v w x z)
 - Tall floating: (b d h k l t f)
 - Or wet: (g y j p g)
- Write most upper and lower-case letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
 - Write the digits 0 - 9 correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
 - Write with 'finger' spaces between words accurately
 - Develop speed and stamina

At Year Two the majority of children will:

- Write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words
- Form ascenders and descenders consistently and correctly
- Practise writing at speed
- Form and use the six basic handwriting joins (see appendix 6):
 1. Arm joins to small letters e.g. am
 2. Arm join to tall letters e.g. al
 3. Arm joins to sister (belly) letters e.g. nd
 4. Washing line joins to small letters e.g. ow
 5. Washing line joins to tall letters e.g. wl
 6. Washing line joins to sister (belly) letters e.g. wa

At Year Three the majority of children will:

- Continue to develop joined handwriting
- Further develop writing speed and stamina
- Produce writing which sits on the line most of the time

At Year Four the majority of children will write with:

- Joined handwriting the majority of the time
- Ascenders and descenders in the correct place and on the lines
- Automaticity (i.e. not having to think about formation)

In Year Five and Six the majority of children will write with:

- Consistent size and letter spacing
- A cursive, legible, accurate style
- An awareness of the following three speeds of writing:
 1. Speed one: slower, neat writing for letters and presentation.
 2. Speed two: Fast and legible everyday writing that others can read. (This is the style that is used most regularly).
 3. Speed three: Very fast note writing - not very tidy but can be read by the writer.

Provision for left handed children

Children should always sit on the left side of right-handed children, so that they are not competing for space. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of centre of their body.

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

Special Educational Needs

Inclusion

Children with special needs in handwriting will be helped by appropriate teacher intervention. Additional support and advice is available from our Special Needs Co-ordinator and specialist support is available from the Laurance Haines SpLD Base and outreach teams.

Children at both key stages will have access to a range of writing tools (including pencil grips and specialist pens and pencils) and will be given guidance about which are best suited to their needs: Pupils with specific learning difficulties find cursive handwriting useful because the writing implement stays on the page for the majority of a word.

- 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;

Children with special educational needs will be given opportunities to present written work for display and they will be encouraged to see the need for developing a neat, legible style.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Structure of lessons

Appendix 2: Pencil hold, seating and paper position

Appendix 3: Ruth Miskin Read, Write Inc. Phonics mnemonics

Appendix 4: Get Writing Handwriting Stage 1 Relative size of letters

Appendix 5: Get Writing Handwriting Stage 1 Letter formation

Appendix 6: Get Writing Handwriting Stage 3 Joining letters

Appendix 7: Model formation of joint letters