



## **Handwriting Policy**

Handwriting is a movement skill, which like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Therefore, children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often. The first handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that children learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the very beginning (see appendix 1). Children who are allowed to invent their own ways of forming letters will find it harder to change the longer they are allowed to persist.

### **Handwriting in the Foundation Stage**

In order that children can eventually develop a legible fluent and fast handwriting style they need to develop:

- gross and fine motor control;
- recognition of pattern;
- language to talk about shapes and movements;

A variety of activities can help develop these skills:

- making patterns in the air and on each other's backs;
- letter shapes with paint and in the damp sand tray;
- developing the vocabulary of movement e.g. curly caterpillar, long ladder;
- use of clay, playdough and plasticine to strengthen fingers;

### **Initial teaching of letter formation**

The letters of the alphabet can be sorted into four main movement groups. This helps children remember the starting points and subsequent movements of these letters and particularly helps children discriminate between b and d.

The four groups are:

- down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter **l** (long ladder): letters i, j, l, t, u (v, w with rounded bases)
- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter **r** (one-armed robot): letters b, h, k, m, n, p, r; (numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction)
- anti-clockwise round, exemplified by the letter **c** (curly caterpillar) letters: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s; numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9
- zigzag letters: letters: v, w, x, z; numbers: 1, 4, 7.

Children in the Foundation Stage need to learn the letter shapes alongside the letter sounds. The order for teaching letters in the Foundation Stage is in accordance with Letters and Sounds Phonics Programme:

### **Phase 2**

s a t p i n m d g o c  
k ck e u r h b f,ff l,ll ss

### **Phase 3**

j v w x y z,zz qu

## **Key Stage One**

In Year One children continue to print their letters using flicks (see appendix 1). This ensures an easier transition to joined handwriting later. Children will also be taught how to form upper case letters correctly.

In Year Two children should be introduced to joined handwriting. Ideally this should be during the Summer Term when children are secure in the formation of their letters.

Throughout Key Stage One children will write with a pencil.

## **Key Stage Two**

During Key Stage Two, children should be taught to write legibly in a joined cursive style with increasing fluency and speed.

Pens are introduced in Year Three. When children have made sufficient effort and progress with their handwriting, the Year Three teacher will award a pen to individual children, as and when appropriate. Fountain pens will be awarded in Year 6/5 as and when (or if) appropriate.

Children should begin by practising single letters; a suggested order is as follows:

**c, o, a, d, g, q, s**

**e, f**

**n, m, l, h, b, p, r**

**i, j, k, t**

**u, y, v, w**

**x, y**

*(or linked to the relevant Letters & Sounds phase if appropriate)*

This particular order groups letters according to the pen's route from the line. When children have practised the first few groups, letter combinations can be taught to encourage children to begin building simple words for additional joining practice. Once children are competent with lower case letters, upper case letters can then be introduced. This is done to avoid confusion as upper case letters do not all start from the line.

## **Strategies for teaching**

In Key Stage One and Two, focused handwriting lessons should be taught for 20 minutes daily.

Considerations for teaching handwriting include:

- Ensuring a good seating position with chair tucked in, correct posture and page turned on the appropriate diagonal;
- Seating left-handed pupils to the left of right-handers;
- Ensuring the correct pencil grip
- Teachers acting as a good role model, modelling the appropriate script on the whiteboard, displays, labels, marking etc.

Handwriting should be included on the agreed Literacy weekly planning template. Teachers need to plan for the full range of attainment within their class and differentiate accordingly.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation activities is to raise the overall quality of teaching and levels of pupil attainment. Monitoring of handwriting will be carried out by the Literacy Co-ordinator and Senior Leadership Team. Monitoring will include:

- scrutiny of planning;
- quality of teaching through lesson observation and feedback;
- moderation of standards in children's work (work scrutiny).

## **Handwriting across the curriculum**

It is important to ensure that appropriate attention to handwriting and presentation takes place in other areas of the curriculum. In this way, other subjects can be used outside the explicit teaching of handwriting, allowing teachers to model and reinforce good handwriting and presentation.

In Key Stage Two, teachers should model the cursive handwriting style across the curriculum; during shared writing and when marking children's books. Similarly, in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, teachers should model the letter formation detailed in appendix one, when marking books; during shared writing and across the curriculum.

## **Display**

Displays in classrooms and around the school should include a mixture of cursive and standard print, a variety of fonts and a balance of printed and handwritten labels/headings to model good practice.