

St Ippolyts C.E. Primary School



**Handwriting
Policy**

Revised: March 2017



Handwriting Policy



Introduction

The importance of handwriting to the curriculum

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the

curriculum. Handwriting is concerned with individual expression and the conveying of meaning through fluent composition. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency, legibility, purposefulness and the opportunity for creative expression

Aims

As a School our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line;
- Learn the conventional ways of forming letter shapes, both lower case and capitals;
- Understand the importance of clear presentation in order to communicate meaning;
- Take pride in the presentation of work, developing 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 for a range of purposes;
- Use their skills and confidence in real life situations;
- Develop a fluent, comfortable, legible, joined handwriting style.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Teaching generally occurs outside the Literacy lesson, although shared and guided writing provides

many opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting

Line guides

In Handwriting sessions children will work in books ruled with handwriting lines. These will be introduced in Year 1. For presentation work line guides are in use as appropriate to handwriting ability. These are introduced from Reception, to ensure children have opportunities to practise this skill. The progression is from wide lines and wide triple lines, to narrow lines and wide triple lines to finally narrow lines and narrow triple lines (see presentation policy).

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme of work. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned. (Teaching points are outlined in Appendix A.)

The role of the teacher (Teaching Assistants):

- to follow the School policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting;
- to provide direct teaching and accurate modelling;
- to provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting;
- to observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development;
- to promote knowledge, skills and understanding as outlined in Appendix B.

Preventing confusion between the letters 'b' and 'd'

Introduce each letter of the alphabet in association with its key letter (l, c or r). The letter d is a 'curly caterpillar' letter: it starts exactly like a c, but then 'goes up to the top in a straight line and then down again'. The letter b is a 'one-armed robot' letter: it starts higher than the letter r, but when it touches the line it goes back again, over and round. In this way children learn letters as movement rather than as visual shapes, and so they have a mechanism for remembering letters that are visually confusing. In *Letters and Sounds*, the letter d is learned in Phase 2, Set 2 and the letter b in Phase 2, Set 5. If the letters are taught effectively, the motor memory of each letter will be paired with the phoneme and will not present a problem.

Continuity and Progression

Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Staff are vigilant to ensure that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met.

In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding that marks on paper convey meaning. In some cases, the teacher or staff member, may scribe the text in a highlighter pen, to encourage tracing and early formation skills with the child. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. Large 'easy grip' pencils, chalks etc may be used to develop motor skills.

Key Stage One

Building on the Foundation Stage, pupils at Key Stage One develop a legible style. This is achieved in

Year One by developing a comfortable and effective pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the School's agreed handwriting style. This continues in Year Two and the four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal join to letters with and without ascenders) are practised.

Years Three and Four

In Year Three the pupils consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size proportion and spacing of letters. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. By Year Four joined handwriting is used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes.

Years Five and Six

Years Five and Six are used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Experimentation with different styles and writing implements is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility.

The contribution of handwriting to other aspects of the curriculum

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. Teachers give handwriting a high priority in classroom displays. The use of rubbers is allowed. However longer errors are indicated by marking through with one neat horizontal line. Teachers in Key Stage Two aim to make handwriting lessons relevant to the curriculum, by providing a purpose to the work where possible, encouraging children to view handwriting as part of an overall presentation policy.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and specific individual targets are drawn up in consultation with the I.N.C.O.

All teachers should be made 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 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.

The role of parents / guardians

Parents/Guardians are introduced to the School's handwriting style through written information. The Nursery/Reception teacher plays an important role in communicating this at an early stage, for example, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their pupils by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names, practising drawing patterns together, playing joining up games which encourage left to right directionality.

Assessment and recording

Children will be assessed on a regular basis including at the end of handwriting lessons, through teacher's marking. Assessments will be made relating to children's abilities to write legibly and neatly using correct letter formation. During upper Key Stage Two using a fluent consistent joined style, assessment will also be made on pupils' ability to write at speed.

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Appendix A

Key Skills:

- Letters are usually clearly shaped, correctly formed and orientated
- Capital letters are recognised, correctly formed and orientated
- Numerals are correctly formed and orientated
- Upper and lower case letters are accurately produced in one style and used consistently
- Handwriting is joined, fluent, legible and evident in independent writing
- Children start to use a pen
- Hand writing is adapted to a range of tasks

Teaching Points:

- Teach the correct grip
- Ensure correct formation at all times, close monitoring of individuals is important while engaged in this formal writing process
- Ensure correct posture with children sitting comfortable and upright, with feet flat on the floor
- Ensure there is good lighting
- Ensure each child has a suitable implement before they begin, pencils are adequately sharpened and pens are ball point and suitable for fluent writing
- Capital letters do not join to lower case letters
- Link handwriting practice to spelling patterns
- The teacher will act as a model

Suggestions for teaching left-handed children:

Seating – Consideration should always be given to the amount of space a left handed child needs to

write, without interfering with others. This may mean sitting the child on the left side of a table.

Grip – The children should grip the pencil at least an inch from the point so that he/she is able to see

what they are writing. The grip should not be too tight. A 'pencil grip aid' may be used to help position

the fingers correctly. The pencil should be held with the handle pointing back up the arm towards the shoulder.

Position the paper – Position the paper to the left of the body, at an angle, with the right hand top corner of the paper nearer the body than the left. This develops a freer movement and makes possible the development of vertical writing or even a forward slant.

Writing implements – It is easiest to use a pencil at first as the push and pull movements are equal.

Children should be encouraged to use a ball point pen later on.

Appendix B

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

In Foundation Stage the children are encouraged to:

- Develop gross motor control;
- Develop fine motor control;
- Use large equipment to make marks e.g. chalks, large paint brushes, shaving foam, finger painting etc.;
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, etc. with confidence and enjoyment;
- Develop a recognition of pattern;
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements;
- The main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; c, l and r;

When the children have developed appropriate gross and fine motor control, they be gradually introduced to letter formation and encouraged to learn how to write their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation.

During Foundation the majority of children will:

- Learn letter formation alongside phonics using 'letter speak';
- Use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters (with 'kicks'/'flicks'), most of which are correctly formed;
- Receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip or formation are seen.

When digraphs are introduced during phonics sessions, children will be introduced to the joins.

Formation practice will also occur without the restriction of lines, including the use of whiteboards, sand trays etc.

In Class One the majority of children will:

- Be taught letter formation in the following order:
- c, o, a, d, g, q (anti-clockwise round);
- r, n, m, h, b, p (down and retrace upwards);
- i, l, u, t, y, j (down and off in another direction);
- v, w, x, z (zig zag letters);
- e, f, s, k, (odd letters);
- Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip;
- Write with spaces between words accurately;
- Develop speed.

At Class 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;
- Practice writing at speed;
- Form and use the four basic handwriting joins (see below).

At Class Three the majority of children will:

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

At Class 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).

At Class 5 the majority of children will write with:

- Consistent size and letter spacing;
- A cursive, legible, accurate style;
- Competency at a steady dictation speed.

Activities and exercises to develop Motor Control C

Appendix

Gross Motor Control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Cycling
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as: *going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements*
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music
- Rolling hoops
- Running with hoops
- Chalking
- Painting on a large scale
- Interactive Whiteboard

Fine Motor Control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes).

Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
- Drawing in sand and sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving
- Peeling fruit
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on small, large boards and easels and on small and large paper

- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of lines
- Tracing
- Colouring within guidelines and pictures
- Pattern work
- Using glue spreaders in small pots
- Painting with the tips of fingers
- Threading
- Separating beads into colours.