

WALDRINGFIELD
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Handwriting Policy

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REVIEWED:

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:

The Importance of Handwriting to the Curriculum

Handwriting is a movement skill, which like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. It is a skill that is best taught directly by demonstration, explanation and practice. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and may require a lot of practice. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency and legibility.

Entitlement and Curriculum Provision

Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the week, this may be within the literacy lessons and as short discrete lessons. It is important that handwriting is modelled correctly by the teacher during shared and guided writing sessions. The skills taught are practised across the wider curriculum, with an expectation that all lessons are seen as an opportunity for applying handwriting skills.

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. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning.

The Role of the Teacher:

- 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 model appropriate handwriting to the children when using white boards, flip charts or when marking the children's work.

Continuity and Progression

The letter formation taught is a cursive style. This ensures an early transition to joined writing. Continuity of style is ensured through use of the Penpals handwriting scheme. Once children are able to form letters correctly, line guides should be provided when children are writing on plain paper to help develop uniformity of size and the correct position of the letters. Wide or narrow lines are used according to the child's needs and at the teacher's discretion. Teaching includes presentational features such as margins, dates, underlined headings and how to cross out with one straight line (the use of rubbers is discouraged).

Posture

Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Correct posture is taught in line with the guidelines in the handwriting scheme. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably.

- Ensure that they have a good pencil grip
- Ensure feet are flat on the floor
- Children should be sitting up with their bottoms pushed into the back of their chairs
- The lighting should be good, so that the children can see what they have written
- Children should have a direct view of the teacher and the board
- Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper and bear some body-weight
- Children who experience some motor control difficulties often benefit from writing on a slight slope.

Handwriting in the Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement. 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 organisation of the writing space and the positioning of the paper. Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written. Whereas, right handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the right of centre of their body). At this stage the correct formation of letters is stressed. Children who have been allowed to invent their own ways of forming letters will find it harder to change the longer they are allowed to persist and unless these habits are 'unlearned' it will be very difficult for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. To encourage correct letter formation a 'patter' is used to aid memory e.g. 'a' - all the way round, down and flick. 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. Gross motor skills are developed through sky writing letters, making patterns in the air and making different body shapes and actions. Fine motor skills are developed through bead threading, playdough modelling, finger painting etc. Pencil control is developed through tracing, pattern copying etc.

Suggested Activities to Develop Gross and Fine Motor Skills

- Tracing in wet sand
- Painting using thick brushes (water on playground/wall)
- Pegboard patterns
- Sewing and weaving activities
- Cutting out
- Whiteboard work
- Draw letters on backs/different textures e.g. carpet, sandpaper
- Jelly letters

Letter formation is practised and the link to the phonic sound is made. Shape families are used to introduce the letters of the alphabet and are sorted into 4 main movement groups. The four groups are:

- Long ladder letters - down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l: letters y, i, j, l, t, u;

- One armed robot- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r: letters b,h,k, m,n,p,r;(numbers 2,3,5 follow a clockwise direction);
- Curly caterpillar letters - 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.

The teacher will model the joins when digraphs are taught - it makes sense to write the two letters one unit. Basic joins are introduced as soon as children are secure in the movements of each letter.

Handwriting in Key Stage 1

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved in Year 1 by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Children move on to thin pencils when appropriate.

Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion is taught in line with the Penpals handwriting scheme. Basic joins are introduced as soon as children are secure in the movements of each letter. In Year 1 these joins are introduced with the phonic teaching e.g. ch this is taught as two letters one sound (a digraph) so it makes sense to write it as one unit. This continues in Year 2 and the four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders – see below*) are practised and letters that do not join are identified.

Handwriting in Years 3 and 4

In Year 3 the children consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins*, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. By the end of Year 3 joined handwriting should be used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes. In Year 4 handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. It is anticipated that all children will be writing in pen by the end of Year 4.

Handwriting in Years 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those children 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.

- * The four basic handwriting joins:
 - ◆ joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai, ar, un (diagonal join)
 - ◆ joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi (horizontal join)
 - ◆ joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ab, ul, it (diagonal join)
 - ◆ joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol, wh, ot. (horizontal join)

Inclusion

The vast majority of children are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in Individual Education Plans. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENCO to 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, writing.

Where appropriate access to ICT will be encouraged to display writing in different forms. When ICT is used (by children or by teachers in worksheets etc) Sassoon Primary Font is used.

Left Handed Pupils

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

- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.
- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- 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 letter formation to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

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 Communication Curriculum Team, SENCo and Head Teacher. Monitoring will include:

- Scrutiny of planning
- Quality of teaching through lesson observation and feedback
- Moderation of standards in children's work
- Evaluation of children's attainment against targets

Teaching Handwriting

the curly caterpillar

C

Start at the caterpillar's head,
Come back round,
under his tummy...
and curl up for his tail.

the long ladder

l

Start at the top,
go DOWN the long ladder,
and flick up at the end.

the one-armed robot

r

Start at the robot's head,
go down his body,
back up his body,
and over for his robot
arm.

c group: c a d g o q u sl group: l t i u y jr group: r n m h k p bothers: e f v w x ztall letters: d h b l k (t)short letters: a c e o m n i r s u v w x zletters with tails: f g y j p q uletters that join from the top: o v wconsonant digraphs: th ch shbasic long vowels: ay ee ie oa ooother long vowel joins: ai ea igh ow ue ew or ar erir ur oy oi aw au ear air

high frequency words for joining:

he the my or come one wasshe they you for some gone wentme them your are said done wantthe there our