



Withycombe Raleigh Primary School Handwriting Policy



There are four main purposes to this policy:

To establish an entitlement for all pupils;

To establish expectations for teachers of this subject;

To promote continuity and coherence across the school;

To state the school's approaches to this subject in order to promote public, and particularly parents' and carers', understanding of the curriculum.

Introduction - The importance of handwriting to 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.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Handwriting is taught regularly through lessons following the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teaching generally occurs outside the teaching sequences, although shared and guided writing provides many opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting. There are times at both key stages when this aspect of writing is a focus for attention and more time is devoted to the objectives relating to handwriting and presentation.

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 and all staff is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning.

Expectations at Withycombe Raleigh Primary School

Handwriting needs to be taught as a whole class discreetly and regularly (2-3 times each week) through a variety of resources, eg: whiteboards, fiddly finger activities, handwriting sheets (from Oxford Owl), handwriting books, lined paper, etc.

Intervention is planned when need arises to give children the opportunity to work in smaller groups and individually as planned. The need identified may be to support pupils falling behind or to target children working at greater depth.

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 including intervention.

Continuity and Progression

Across the whole school the Nelson PreCursivefk font is followed and the Oxford Owl handwriting scheme is used to support this:

Early Years 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 resources and the organisation of the writing space. Teachers 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. 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.

Key Stage 1

Building on the Early Years Foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is aimed to be achieved by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's agreed handwriting style. This continues onto the four basic handwriting joins which are practised (beginning in Year 1), as the children become developmentally ready for this.

Years 3 and 4

In Year 3 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. Slanting is introduced to aid speed. 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 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 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.

Handwriting Stages

Stage One – Early Years Foundation Stage

- Pattern making – developed through careful training and supervision to develop good pencil control and grip. It should be stroke related and develop the language of writing (curved, straight, up, down, over, across).
- Letters of the alphabet – children should learn to write using the correct sequence of movements – that will be easy to join later.
- Pencil Control
- Numerals

Stage Two – Year 1

- Printing Lower Case

Order to teach letter groups

Set One (curly letter family) – c a o d q s f e

Set Two (long ladder family) – l t u j y

Set Three (one armed robot family) – r n m h k b p

Set Four (zig-zag monster family) – v w x z

Practising Capitals

Practising Numerals

Stage Two – Year 1 - 3

- Introducing basic joins – children practise and begin to use the four basic joins

Joining group One - Diagonal joins from group 1 joining letters (a c d e h l k l m n s t u); e.g. ed ig ar aw il ck tch to a group 2 letter (a c d e g l j m n o p q r s u v w x y)

Joining group Two - Diagonal joins from group 1 joining letters (a c d e h l k l m n s t u) to group 3 letters (b f h k l t)

Joining group Three - Horizontal joins from group 4 (f o r v w) e.g. wa oo or ore to a group 2 letter (a c d e g l j m n o p q r s u v w x y)

Joining group Four - joins from group 4 (f o r v w) to group 3 letters (b f h k l t)

Break Letters (b g j p q x y z)

(Handwriting can also be practised in conjunction with phonics & spellings)

Stage Three – Years 3- 4

- Slanting of letters to promote speed when joining

Stage Four – Years 5-6 (handwriting pens introduced when pupils have a consistent, joined and legible style – at teacher's discretion).

- Presentation including handwriting for different purposes – appropriate style and implement
- Individual style including difficult joins (eg: looping)

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently following the Year Group recommendations above. However, some pupils need more support and a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator.

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 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 learning environment

A dedicated writing area is established, whenever possible, in all classrooms. In all classes, writing boxes with suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Writing areas/boxes are equipped with a range of writing implements, line guides, book making materials and instructions. Examples of the school's style of handwriting are provided and displayed in every classroom. As much as possible, the school font is used for worksheets, letters, displays, etc.

The role of staff, parents and carers

Parents and carers are introduced to the school's handwriting style through written information given out at home-visits and information packs. The Early Years Foundation Stage 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 and playing joining up games which encourage left to right directionality.

All members of staff (including teaching assistants, supply teachers, students) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher, in partnership with the English subject leader, is expected to communicate with pre-school agencies to encourage good practice.

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. The school's chosen font

should be installed on all staff laptops and is used for labelling, captions, instructions, letters to parents, etc, but pupils are encouraged to evaluate a range of fonts and to select whatever is appropriate to suit particular purposes.

Assessment and recording

Teachers use the school's writing assessment grids (at least each half term) to note progress against the criteria listed and to determine future targets for improvement. An assessment of pupils who arrive later than Reception Year is made within two weeks.

Teachers pay particular attention to pupils with IEPs which relate to handwriting.

Handwriting is reviewed during regular book scoops by SLT.

Reviewed by J Hooper and S Wheeler

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Owner of policy: English Subject Lead

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