



## **Handwriting policy**

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We aim for our children to leave in Year 2 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practiced in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

## **Aims**

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Our school uses a progressive approach to handwriting to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, making a 'best copy' for presentation

## **Progression of skills**

Our approach to handwriting *enables* us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (F1 and F2).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (F1 - Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2).

The small steps of progression of skills in handwriting:

- Will tolerate hand manipulation
- Will attempt to mark make independently
- Can use and enjoy mark making materials
- Can show some control in mark making
- Can use a pencil and hold it effectively
- Can form most letters correctly
- Can show some control over size, shape, orientation in writing
- Can usually give letters a clear shape and orientation
- Can control the use of ascenders/descenders, upper/lower case letters, although shape and size may not always be consistent
- Can use accurate and consistent handwriting, with consistent upper/lower case; ascenders/descenders, size and form
- Begins to show evidence of joining handwriting
- Can use cursive script accurately and neatly, although may be slow

We ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum'

### **Handwriting tools**

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school
- Fingers when writing on the interactive whiteboard
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays and artwork
- Sharp pencils for most writing until a pen licence is awarded
- A handwriting pen for when they sustain a good level of presentation

Handwriting is practised on specific practice sheets or on lined paper so that children quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases. Handwriting and letter formation is also embedded into our daily phonic sessions on wipe boards that are lined. We acknowledge that handwriting is occurring in a variety of ways that isn't necessarily paper based but does develop a child's handwriting skills.

### **Teaching of handwriting sessions**

- In our Foundation 1 classrooms children begin to mark make using a variety of mark making tools available on a daily basis in continuous provision, as well as opportunities for physical development using the outdoor equipment which supports in their journey towards developing their letter formation.
- In our Foundation 2 classrooms children will be taught formation specifically as part of the daily phonics session as well as an extra writing practice once a week.
- In Key Stage 1, children will be taught up to 30 minutes weekly following the little and often approach (5 minutes daily practice, three 10 minute sessions or two 15 minute sessions.)

### **Paper:**

Children are taught how to position their writing paper correctly and to stabilise it with the non-writing hand. The paper should be positioned at the child's midline (or just beyond) with the bottom angle placed about 2-3cm from the lower edge of the desk. Left-handed writers: the paper should be slanted to the right at about a 30-45-degree angle. Right handed writers: the paper should be slanted at about a 20-35-degree angle to the left.

### **Equality of opportunity**

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.

# Appendix 1

## The place of Handwriting in the Writing Process

The National Curriculum for English (2014) defines the two dimensions of the writing process as:

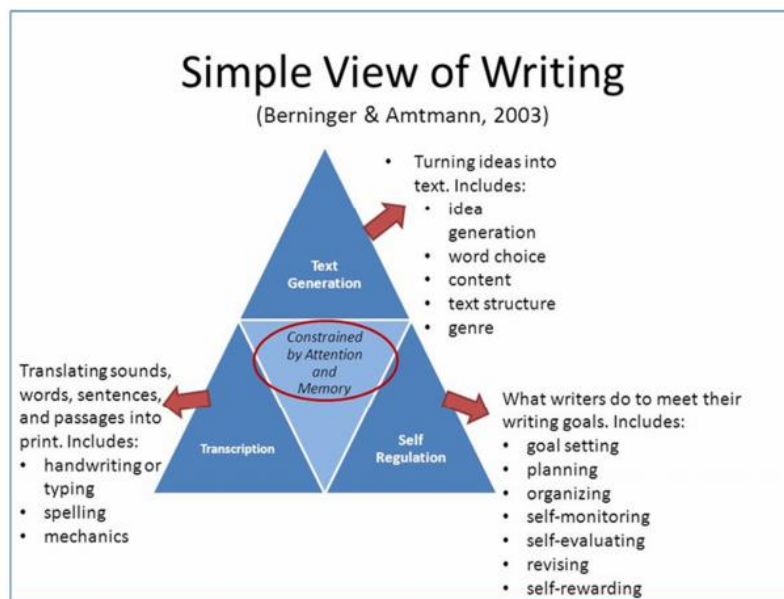
- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing) It requires that teaching develops pupils' competence in both dimensions. 'Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.'

## Development of Handwriting skills: Rationale

Handwriting is complex perceptual-motor skill that is dependent upon the maturation and integration of a number of cognitive, perceptual, and motor skills including:

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Visual-motor control
- Eye hand co-ordination
- Cognitive and perceptual skills
- Tactile and kinaesthetic sensitivities
- Behaviour, concentration and motivation

Awareness of this complexity informs the curriculum and teaching progression across the school. It also underpins any intervention programme when children experience difficulties. From Early Years onwards, staff and children understand that handwriting is a 'whole body' activity.



This model reflects the implications of current research that:

- both dimensions of writing draw upon limited resources of working memory and attention
- any increase in the amount demanded by one component, such as handwriting, will mean fewer cognitive resources are available for the others, so children need to develop 'automaticity' in handwriting
- there is a strong link between developing fluency in handwriting and the ability to produce high quality written texts.

## Appendix 2

### **Year 1 Statutory Requirements**

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table
- holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### **Year 2 Programme of Study: Statutory Requirements**

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.