



Gaddesden Row JMI

Handwriting Procedure

October, 2021

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Aims:

- To have a consistent cursive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Children to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.

Why is a handwriting policy important for a primary school?

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Given effective teaching, handwriting can be mastered by most pupils by the time they are seven or eight years old enabling them, with practice, to go on to develop a faster and more mature hand ready for secondary school and adult life. The surest way to ensure consistent teaching and the development of legible, fluent joined handwriting throughout the school is to have a written policy agreed and put into practice by all staff.

Handwriting is a movement skill. Most people are able to write with their eyes closed quite easily, this is because the movements of the hand when writing are firmly established in the movement memory because they have been made them so often. This is why children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often.

The first handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that the children learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning. 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, but unless these habits are 'unlearned' (often at great effort since the movement memory is very retentive and will tend to revert to old habits) it will be impossible for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. The correct formation of all letters needs to become quite automatic and may require a lot of practice.

There are still newly qualified teachers who emerge from their initial training having heard little or nothing about how to teach handwriting and who will need support. Supply teachers and teachers who are new to the school may not always be experienced in the teaching of handwriting. A written policy will be of help to them all and will ensure that the competent teaching of early skills will be consistent across the school.

Teaching and Learning:

- As recommended by the British Dyslexia Association, we adopt a continuous cursive style of writing.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants model the agreed cursive style when modelling writing both in class, on displays and in feedback in books.
- Our agreed cursive style is as below:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr

Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

To set clear objectives at the learning stage, letters will be taught in an upright position, vertical to the line. As writers become more fluent, some children will naturally slope their writing particularly as speed develops and this is quite acceptable as it gives individual character to the writing. However, any sloping must be consistent throughout, and not so exaggerated that legibility is affected.

Left-handers should have no greater difficulty in learning to write well than right handers. They will automatically move the paper slightly to be a more comfortable angle so that their writing is visible. They should be reminded to start on the left of the page.

We aim to provide opportunities for using a variety of paper and a range of writing tools. Children will have the opportunity to use paper with guide lines while correct size relationships are being taught. In EYFS a ruled base line for the 'sitting' of letters' is sufficient. Children should also be given opportunities for using plain paper with and without guide sheets. It is not necessary that the paper should always be white.

What implement(s) do pupils use?

In Key Stage 2, from Year 3, blue handwriting pens will be used when the class teachers considers individual children have developed sufficient control to use a pen in line with presentation expectations; this will then be used in most written work, except mathematics. These are available to purchase from the school office. Ball point pens should be avoided completely as they slip on the paper and leave smudges.

In Key Stage 1, pencil only is used for all work. Special triangular pencil huggers will be provided for children who have difficulty holding the pencil correctly.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Communication, language and literacy

- Handwriting will be taught daily as part of daily Phonics lessons.
- Children to be introduced to the print script at the earliest stages of writing, however a variety of printed fonts will be used throughout the curriculum to support reading skills.
- Displays in R/1/2 should include models of print and cursive script, modelled writing will be in print for EYFS and later cursive script.
- Implements such as chunky triangular pencils, large chinks and chunky pens etc are used by pupils to rehearse skills on paper, chalk boards, pavement etc.

Pre-Handwriting

- Finger printing inside a shape.

- Using a pencil, ensuring that it is held correctly and children will colour in shapes trying to keep inside the lines.
- Using a pencil, ensuring that it is held correctly, tracing over the outline of a picture.
- Playdough – moulding this will help develop fine motor skills.
- Threading beads – this will help develop their hand eye co-ordination.
- Exercises to develop gross motor arm actions, use dowling with a ribbon attached to twirl.
- Chalk writing on a larger scale- play grounds, during outdoor play etc.

Pattern Writing

- Paint the table and then using large brushes make patterns.
- Make patterns in the sand- letter cutters to be available to support letter shapes/formation.
- Use water bottles and make patterns outside on the floor.
- Use water pots and paint brushes and draw patterns on the floor outside.
- Use felt tip pens, chunky and fine, and strips of paper and draw patterns on the line.
- Mark making in flour, shaving foam, gloop.
- Use whiteboard and marker pens to create patterns and simple shapes. Teach this initially as a whole class activity.
- Drawing patterns could fit with other curricular areas e.g. Numeracy, Geography and PE.

Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2

- Handwriting will be taught daily as part of daily Phonics lessons, programmes such as 'writing repeater' will be used to modelled correct formation.
- Within KS2, every class will have a specific handwriting session for 15 minutes per week.
- In handwriting sessions, spellings, relevant key vocabulary or sentences/paragraphs related to core texts will be modelled by an adult then practised by children.
- Handwriting paper is used for handwriting specific exercises. Lines should be well spaced to start with – e.g. 10mm apart – gradually reducing to single lines about 5mm apart.
- In Lower KS2, joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.
- To show progression in Lower KS2, handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.
- In Upper KS2, pupils will be taught to: write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters; choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.
- Children will be taught a fully cursive script in which ALL letters apart from capital letters will be joined.

Posture

- Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to children's age and height.
- Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right.
- Always make sure that the hand which is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper.

Further resources and information can be found at:

<http://www.nha-handwriting.org.uk>

Letter Formation

Letters are introduced individually in the following groups:

Straight Letters:

This is the recommended order of introduction, but is open to individual interpretation. For example, 'e' can be taught earlier to give a wider variety of words for practice.

Letters are introduced using the following sequence:

2 o'clocks:

Look at the teacher who demonstrates the correct letter formation.

Trace over the examples, repeating the sound/name.

Copy underneath the examples, repeating the sound/name.

Tunnel Letters:

Write from memory.

Letters are practised using the following sequence:

Top Joiners:

Trace over examples.

Write underneath examples.

Copy complete a row of examples.

Square Letters:

Write from memory.

Odd Letters:

Lead ins are taught as part of the introduction of letters. It is important to show letters without a lead in to younger pupils in order for them to recognise letters when reading.

