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Introduction

***“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”
(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)***

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child’s handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, rather than upon the act. We adhere to The British Dyslexia Association’s recommendation that children learn the continuous cursive style.

The key advantages are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children’s hands develop a ‘physical memory’ of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations



Teaching and Learning

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using 'letter speak'; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.
- Handwriting, is taught as a specific skill, daily with additional, individual or group practise where necessary for all children.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.
- The cursive font should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style.
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

Handwriting Progression

Reception	Children are to take part in activities that develop fine and gross motor skills. The children are introduced to the cursive script if judged to be ready by their teacher.
Year 1	Children are introduced to the cursive script. Children should be taught to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (see appendix 3). <p>N.B. The cursive script has a lead in and exit line that naturally encourages the children to join their handwriting. The children are to begin to join when they are ready. (see appendix 1)</p>



Year 2	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another • 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 <p>N.B. If they have not already done so, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.</p>
Year 3 and Year 4	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.
Year 5 and Year 6	<p>Children should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters • choosing the right implement that is best suited for a task

Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins

- Always model good handwriting
- Demonstrate formations
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or a stick

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Gross and fine movement warm up
- Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory

The daily phonics session in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

Provision for left handed children



Left handed children always sit on the left side of right handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5cm from the point of their pencil. Pens appropriate for left handed writers will be provided, to avoid smudging.

Resources and writing materials

Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools. Pens (handwriting pens not biros) should be used by those who have achieved a consistent, cursive style. All children should write in black ink. Children will be allowed to bring in a pen of their own choosing as long as it encourages neat, black handwriting and is not a biro. The children are to practise their handwriting in a handwriting book chosen for this specific purpose. Guidelines should be used when writing on plain paper.

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

The SENCO will provide resources for those who have difficulty with fine motor skills – pencil grips, fine motor control programmes and referrals where necessary.

Presentation

Pupils will learn that different levels of presentation are appropriate for different pieces of work and different circumstances. However, pupils are expected to:

- Look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them
- Increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented
- Not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or not fit for purpose
- Use rulers to draw straight lines
- Set out, number and annotate work appropriately
- At appropriate times, pupils may be encouraged to experiment with alternative means of presenting their work for specific reasons.
- Cross through mistakes or editing alterations with a single line.

(see appendix 2 – Presentation Protocols)

Teachers are expected to:

- Ensure that classrooms are well equipped with the essential tools that will assist pupils to create work with a high presentational standard
- Organise the classroom in such a way that materials and resources are easily accessible and systems for their return and maintenance are robust (self- service classroom)
- Ensure that children look after resources and materials so that they learn to respect equipment and good value for money is assured.

Monitoring and Review



This policy is monitored by the Head teacher within the processes of school self-evaluation. The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner should National Policy change.

Appendix 1) Agreed Handwriting Script and joins

Appendix 2) Presentation Protocols

- Books will be stored horizontally to retain their shape
- Book covers will be used – saved in the shared area
- Fronts of books must remain tidy
- Book covers should be used to maintain the condition of books
- All work should be dated and the learning objective used as a title. (An additional title for the work may be added afterwards.)
 - The DUMTUMS acronym may be used to support presentation:
 - Date
 - Underline
 - Miss a line
 - Title
 - Underline
 - Miss a line
 - Start
 - Additional paper must be stuck in neatly so that it does not protrude from the edges of the books. (Teachers should determine who should be responsible for this dependent on the ability of the child.)