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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.

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:

By the end of KS1

- Use a tripod grip to hold a pencil
- Use the correct formation for print
- Form letters with the correct size and orientation

By the end of KS2

- 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
- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting



Teaching and Learning

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

- Children begin with developing their fine motor skills through play activities
- 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.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff demonstrate handwriting reflecting key stage expectations.
- Teachers model the expected script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear expected handwriting as well as other fonts.
- The expected script should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style. See appendices
- 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 daily activities that develop fine and gross motor skills. The children are introduced to and taught correct letter formation.
Year 1	Print is taught. Children should be taught to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Year 2	Children should be taught to: <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



	N.B. From February half-term, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
Year 3 and Year 4	Children should be taught to: <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. 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.
Year 5 and Year 6	Children should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: <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 (writing will be done in pen)

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

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 will be used for writing in years 5 and 6. 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 if necessary.



Appendix 1) Agreed Handwriting Scripts and joins

Print

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890



Cursive Script

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



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.)