



Ferham Primary

Handwriting Policy

April 2016

Date agreed by Governors: Delegated to the
Headteacher

Review date: April 2019

Ferham Primary School Handwriting Policy

Aims and Objectives

“Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. It needs to be systematically taught.”

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it is usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through school the requirement to write legibly and fluently, at speed, increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases.

The difficulty with writing stems from the complexity of the task which involves a combination of different skills, including the physical co-ordination required for handwriting. There is a need for automaticity, and how the component skills, such as joining up letters and spelling, need to be in place by 11 years. Creativity will suffer if the child has to focus on the mechanics of writing. As a group, reluctant writers lacking practice will trail behind their more able classmates whose skills improve rapidly just because they write more.

Whole School Approach

1. Changing handwriting takes a lot of time and effort.
2. Encouragement is essential.
3. Short, regular, frequent periods of practice are much more effective than long sessions.
4. Make sure that any teaching at home does not set up conflict for the child between home and school.

(National Handwriting Association)

Objectives

1. To develop within all pupils a legible style of handwriting
2. The size, shape of letters is consistent.
3. Flow and movement are fluent and smooth
4. A consistent personal style can be established by Year 6
5. To raise children's self-motivation and esteem through the establishment of best handwriting practice.
6. To establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills by displaying and rewarding work that meets the standard.

Guidelines for Handwriting Policy and Scheme Style and Scheme

To achieve these objectives we have adopted the Nelson Thorne's handwriting script. Cursive script is a script in which all the same letters in a word are joined. It aims to teach a script where letters which end on the base line have an exit stroke. This enables a child to progress naturally and quickly from learning to form a single letter correctly to using the mastered letters in a joined script. To join a letter after forming one letter correctly, the pencil is kept on the paper and a trace is made to where the next letter starts. The joining stroke should be a light movement and the trace should be at approximately 45 degrees.

Tools

Pencil and Pens

- Use a good quality HB handwriting pencil
- Ensure it is always sharp and is not too short

- A handwriting pen will be awarded once a child can write with letters of the correct size relative to one another and shows some evidence of joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes where appropriate (Year 2 objectives). This style will be recognised at any age.
- As the writer continues to develop their personal style and the writing meets the criteria of the given Year group, a gel pen will be awarded for use on final presentational pieces of writing (e.g. for writing the title). This style will be recognised at any age.
- Once a handwriting pen has been awarded, the competent writers can use pens for presentational writing tasks on paper. Draft work and all work in books should still be carried out in pencil.
- Once a handwriting pen is awarded, the child will also get a pen licence with their photograph on it. A second copy will be displayed in the classroom as recognition of their achievement.

Paper

- Taught handwriting sessions are to be completed in lined exercise books.
- Line guides (tramlines) are to be used for any work on paper.
- Every child will have a laminated copy of their best piece of handwriting to keep as a model for future work. As their handwriting improves, this model will be replaced.

Modelling

- The teacher should use modelling of both right and left handed movements and vocalise the size, shape and movement of the pencil
- Tramlines are used for the modelling of correct letter formation and joins. (Smart Board gallery or The Nelson Thornes CD)
- Children should be encouraged in self and peer assessment.
- The teacher should tour the classroom during exercises to 'see' and comment on everyone's work assisting individuals as needed.

Recommendations

- Handwriting must be regarded as valuable and time must be found to teach it effectively and successfully. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, letter formation is practised daily as part of the phonics teaching. In Key Stages 1 and 2, handwriting is taught discretely at least twice each week (15 minute lessons). One lesson is to follow the Nelson handwriting scheme and the second lesson should allow children to practice writing words following the spelling pattern for that week.
- All taught sessions must be recorded in the handwriting exercise books and include the date.
- All teachers and support staff should become familiar with the expected handwriting style and demonstrate this style in their writing wherever possible.

Handwriting tips for teachers

- Insist on a correct, balanced seating position.
- Two hands to be used at all times.
- When children are writing with pencil, make sure it is always sharp and of an appropriate size.
- Ensure that paper or book is correctly positioned.
- Teacher to class demonstrations should be followed by practices lasting no more than two minutes.
- While children are writing, constantly re-enforce teaching points and good practice.
- Be constantly on the move while the children are writing, praising and assessing where individual help is needed.

Assessment

- Is the writing generally legible and pleasant?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly
- Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the handwriting descriptors from the writing strand of the STAT Sheffield tracking and assessment tool:

Foundation Stage: Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Year 1: Lower case letters are correctly formed. Capital letters and digits are correctly formed.

Year 2: Lower case letters are of the correct size relative to one another. Capital letters and digits are of the correct size relative to one another and to lower case letters. Words are correctly spaced. Some evidence of joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes where appropriate.

Years 3 and 4: Letters are consistent in size and proportion with both letters and words evenly spaced. Letters are joined using diagonal and horizontal strokes only where appropriate. Writing is showing increasing legibility and fluency.

Years 5 and 6: Writing is legible and fluent.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of a three year review cycle.