

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School



Handwriting Policy

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Signed

J. Mousley



Handwriting Policy

Introduction

Aim of the Policy

It is our aim that all pupils should develop a fluent and legible style of handwriting.

The importance of handwriting to the curriculum

Handwriting is a movement skill and one which is best taught directly by demonstration, explanation and practice. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and may require a lot of practice. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency and legibility.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the week. Explicit teaching and practise of handwriting skills should occur inside and outside the literacy lesson. Shared and guided writing during the literacy hour provides many opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting.

The expectation is that handwriting will be explicitly taught and every week in 3 or 4 short sessions. Children should be allowed a few minutes each day to practise; simply

concentrating on developing accuracy, fluency and speed without the distraction of spelling and composing text. As for all motor skills, long practice sessions spaced apart are much less productive than short and frequent sessions.

Handwriting practice should be 'little and often', a few minutes at a time to practise a particular set of letters.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill, which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a

published scheme or worksheet. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning.

The role of the teacher:

- to follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting;
- to provide direct teaching and accurate modelling;
- to provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting;
- to observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.
- to model appropriate handwriting to the children when using white boards, flip charts or marking books.

Continuity and Progression

The letter formation taught is a cursive style. This ensures an early transition to joined writing. Continuity of style is ensured through use of the Collins Primary Focus handwriting scheme. Once children are able to form letters correctly, line guides should be provided when children are writing on plain paper to help develop uniformity of size and the correct position of the letters. Wide or narrow lines are used according to the child's needs and at the teacher's discretion. Teaching includes presentational features such as margins, dates, underlined headings and how to cross out with one straight line (the use of rubbers is discouraged).

Posture

Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Correct posture is taught in line with the guidelines in the handwriting scheme. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably.

- Ensure that they have a good pencil grip
- Ensure feet are flat on the floor
- Children should be sitting up with their bottoms pushed into the back of their chairs
- The lighting should be good, so that the children can see what they have written
- Children should have a direct view of the teacher/board
- Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper and bear some body-weight
- The paper should be tilted slightly

Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility.

To aid movement,

close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. At this stage the correct formation of letters is stressed. 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 and unless these

habits are 'unlearned' it will be very difficult for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. To encourage correct letter formation a 'talk patter' is used to aid memory eg. 'a' - all the

way round, down and flick. Letter formation is practised and the link to the phonic sound is made. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. Gross motor skills are developed through sky writing letters, making patterns in the air and making different body shapes and actions. Fine motor skills are developed through bead threading, playdough modelling, finger painting etc. Pencil control is developed through tracing, pattern copying etc.

Suggested activities to develop gross and fine motor skills

- Tracing in wet sand
- Painting using thick brushes (water on playground/wall)
- Pegboard patterns
- Sewing and weaving activities
- Cutting out
- Whiteboard work
- Draw letters on backs/different textures eg. carpet, sandpaper
- Jelly letters

Letter formation is practised and the link to the phonic sound is made. Shape families are used to introduce the letters of the alphabet and are sorted into 4 main movement groups.

Key Stage 1

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved in Year 1 by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Children move on to thin pencils when appropriate. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion is taught in line with the Collins Primary Focus handwriting scheme. Basic joins are introduced as soon as children are secure in the movements of each letter. In Year 1 these joins are introduced with the phonic teaching eg. ch this is taught as two letters one sound (a digraph) so it makes sense to write it as one unit. This continues in Year 2 and the four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders) are practised and letters that do not join are identified.

Years 3 and 4

In Year 3 the children consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. By the end of Year 3 joined handwriting should be used at all times unless other specific forms are required printing

on a map, a fast script for notes. In Year 4 handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. It is anticipated that all children will be writing in pen by the end of Year 4.

Years 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those children who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years.

Inclusion

The vast majority of children are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in Individual Education Plans. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc.

Left handed pupils

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.
- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate letter formation to left-handers on an individual or group basis.