



'What we learn with pleasure we never forget'

HANDWRITING POLICY

Date Written: October 2016

Date of Review: October 2018

Headteacher.....

Date.....

Chair of Governors.....

Date.....

Carlton Colville Primary School

Handwriting Policy

- Aims
 - To achieve correct pencil grip and letter formation by the end of Year 1.
 - To achieve joined up, neat legible handwriting by the end of Year 4.
 - To achieve good presentation across the school.

Shape families for teaching letter formation - a common handwriting language to be used across the school.

- Long ladder [l]- down and off in another direction i, j, l, t, u.
- One-armed robots [r] - down and retrace upwards b, h, k, m, n, p, r; numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction.
- Curly caterpillar [c] - c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s; numbers 0, 6, 8, 9
- Zigzag letters - v, w, x, y, z; numbers 1, 4, 7.
- Ascenders and descenders - the bodies [tummies] of letters sit on the lines and are the same size as letter x.
- Capital letters - sit on the lines and are the same size as lower case letters with ascenders [d].
- Exceptions - t is shorter than the other ascenders; f is an ascender and descender.

When do we teach handwriting?

Handwriting can be taught discretely, linked to phonics, so that we reinforce the movement of the letters while we work on the sounds and do activities as recommended in 'Letters and Sounds'. However, the teaching of letters should occur at other times as well, allowing opportunities to practise fluency, accuracy and speed without the distraction of having to compose text or think about spelling.

How do we teach handwriting?

Teachers must model correct letter formation and joining at all times! Examples of correctly formed letters should be prominently displayed in every classroom and referred to constantly.

Early Years Foundation stage

- Encourage children to show a preference for the dominant hand.
- Correct pencil grip will be taught from Nursery - pencil held between thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The grip should be relaxed so that the fine movements required for writing are possible. This will be shared with parents.
- From phase 2 in 'Letters and Sounds' children will need to learn the letter shapes alongside letter sounds using kinaesthetic methods and beginning to introduce the language associated with letter families e.g. 'curly caterpillar'. [Use anti-clockwise movement and retrace vertical lines].
- Encourage good posture for writing activities- chair pulled under table; paper tilted slightly; not being jostled by someone else's arm; non-writing hand steadies paper and bears some body weight.
- Teach activities designed to develop gross motor control :- long slow/ quick, jumpy body movements; ribbons on sticks; body shapes/ actions to music; sky writing; patterns in the air or on each other's backs; letter shapes in damp sand, out of string etc
- Teach activities designed to develop fine motor control:- patterns on pegboards; sewing and weaving; finger rhymes playing with numbers and sounds; making patterns based on curly caterpillar, long ladder and one-arm robot groups etc
- Teach pattern making which encourages left to right direction and spaces between words [pattern then gap].

Children must be supervised when practising handwriting until pencil grip and letter formation is secure, and any difficulties identified and addressed quickly before bad habits creep in. These things are very difficult to put right after age 6!

Key Stage 1 [see statutory requirements from National Curriculum in Appendix 3]

- As above where appropriate
- Encourage good posture for writing.
- Introduce lines to write on as children become secure in letter orientation, formation and proportion.[Year 1]

- When children are secure in their letter formation, teach them to join up their handwriting using the four joins as exemplified in the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.
- Practise on white boards under teacher supervision and follow up with worksheets when secure and where appropriate.
- Give opportunities to make a 'best copy' so that handwriting can be practised without concerns over composition - line guides can be clipped to 'special' paper.
- Begin to experiment and practise using ink pens as children achieve a fluent joined up style.[Year 2]

Years 3 and 4 [Milestone 2]

- As above where appropriate
- Increase legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting
- Downstrokes are parallel and equidistant
- Spacing ensures that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch
- Choosing writing implements suited to a task
- Increasing speed and accuracy

Years 5 and 6 [Milestone 3]

When children in Key Stage 2 achieve a fluent, legible, joined up style they will be awarded their 'Pen Licence' and encouraged to write in ink [free flowing -no ballpoints]

7 'Quick Wins' for improving presentation

[embedded in Milestone 2]

1. Start writing next to the margin
2. Don't run out of line space - judge if you can fit a word in before you reach the end of the page
3. Clear gaps between paragraphs -leave a line [don't need to teach indenting]
4. Underline with a ruler
5. Leave space around any feature -text box, picture, caption etc
6. Cross out mistakes with a single line drawn with a ruler.
7. Never write in the space at the bottom of the page -writing should always sit on a line.

Most effective way of dealing with handwriting issues in KS2

This was found to be self-improvement following feedback [not group interventions].

- Review handwriting with the child
- Start with a simple but high impact challenge -finger spaces, letter f, capitals, words on the lines, ascenders/descenders etc etc
- JUST ONE CHALLENGE -ONE WEEK TO IMPROVE IN EVERYDAY WORK
- Review, reward and set next challenge or give another week

Research shows this is the most effective and least disruptive option!!

Left-handed children

- Be aware of who they are!
- Model letter formation etc specifically for them.
- Sit them to the left of right handed children or on the ends of tables so writing arms don't clash.
- Remind them to have paper to the left of centre and tilted to the right.
- Position fingers about 1.5 cm from the end of the pencil to avoid smudging.

Special Educational Needs

- Children who experience difficulties in developing the necessary skills will be supported in small groups or individually, with targets as specified on their IEPs.
- Interventions such as Hand Gym are used to support children with poor fine motor skills.
- Left handed resources are available e.g. pencil grips and scissors.

Parental involvement

Parents will be informed of the school's policy on handwriting at New Intake meetings and it will be available on the website. Photographs showing the correct way to hold a pencil and sheets demonstrating correct letter formations will be distributed as necessary and to all parents as part of induction.

And finally....

We have worked hard to improve standards of writing and presentation across the school and to encourage our children to be confident, effective writers who enjoy the writing process. Handwriting is just one element of this and should not in any way impede our children from expressing themselves on paper and loving writing.

Appendix 1

The letter 'groups'. These should be photocopied and displayed in classrooms (lower school).

Appendix 2

The Nelson reference guide.

Appendix 3

Handwriting requirements from the new National Curriculum.