

## **Handwriting Policy**

### **St Peter's CofE Primary Academy Mansfield**

#### **Aims**

It is our aim to encourage the progression and development of each child's handwriting throughout the school into a fluent, legible and individual style that can be adapted for a range of purposes and will support their spelling and composition.

#### **Methodology**

St Peter's CofE Primary Academy Mansfield use cursive handwriting as our agreed writing style from Foundation into Key Stage One. Handwriting is taught using letter families. We use Martin Harvey and Debbie Watson's 'Achieving Excellence in Handwriting' as a structure for delivering handwriting sessions. This is developed in Key stage 2 and the children use continuous cursive. It enables them to develop a neat style with the added benefit of encouraging accurate spelling. For dyslexic children, it promotes making links to words as whole units, and in our experience it has been fully beneficial to children with dyspraxic and dyslexic difficulties.

Fully joined cursive handwriting encourages:

- Natural movement
- Correct letter formation
- Less load on memory, aiding movement from left to right
- Clearer spacing
- Increased speed
- The development of a personal style
- Less focus on the mechanics and more on the product of writing
- Improved spelling

#### **Disabilities & Equalities Statement**

All children are given full access to the National Curriculum. Staff will endeavour to ensure that all children reach their potential, irrespective of race, gender, age, home-background or ability.

St Peter's CofE Primary Academy Mansfield is committed to promoting equality. When planning and teaching handwriting, staff will make reasonable adjustments to promote equality of opportunity.

#### **Organisation**

Handwriting objectives are taken from the National Curriculum English Programme of Study (see Appendix 1) and form part of the class teachers' and children's continuous work. Handwriting is taught in explicit, regular sessions focussing on letter formation, consistent size and shape of letters, as well as accurate joining. The teaching of handwriting follows the expectations set out in the Programmes of Study and includes cursive handwriting from Foundation. Learning is differentiated based on the needs of the child. Handwriting is applied in all writing and modelling, as well as in displays, where appropriate, and is a consistent marking focus.

#### **Planning and Delivery**

Cursive handwriting is taught and modelled in marking and teaching from Foundation and throughout Key Stage 1 (KS1) and then continuous cursive in Key Stage 2 (KS2). All teachers give specific attention to pencil and pen control, grip and posture in helping pupils to develop a legible cursive style. Teachers identify all left-handed pupils in their class. Left-handers should always sit on the right of a right-handed child to avoid collision. In Foundation, children are encouraged to write and make marks using a wide variety of media. In Key Stage 1 the use of a pencil for all writing is expected (pencil grips or larger pencils will be used where need is identified). In Key Stage 2, children with excellent handwriting are awarded pen licenses. They are used in all subjects except Maths. At the beginning of each year, children write in pencil and earn their pen license again.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are involved in a variety of activities to develop their physical development. Both gross and fine motor skills develop in a 'top down' approach. Gross motor skills emerge from the shoulder joint, then to elbow and lastly to wrist and finger joints. In the Early Years we support and progress this development in the following ways:

- Mark making activities, where the children have the opportunity to practise new movements on a range of tactile surfaces, such as shaving foam or bubbles. This promotes gross and fine motor skills, as well as explicit movements.
- Dough Disco, using play dough to develop fine motor skills and strengthen fingers ready for holding pencils and writing.
- Finger Gym: A station in classrooms where fun challenges are set out to develop various fine motor skills such as eye hand coordination, or pincer grip.
- Fine Motor Skills groups: This aims to provide children with lower motor skills chances to learn and develop in this area, leading to better balance, coordination and mark making.
- Handwriting sessions: These are done with the adults in the classroom to support and develop children's letter formation and handwriting skills. These tie into Phonics sessions and letter formation is taught alongside the letter sounds. We also have a 'Writer of the Day'.

Opportunities for mark making are planned in both the inside and outside environment. Children are offered a range of materials and experiences for mark making developed across all six areas of learning. When teachers are modelling activities, they demonstrate and encourage correct pencil grip.

In Reception, Children are taught how to form individual letters accurately in line with the agreed letter formation (See Appendix 2) alongside phonic teaching using a variety of strategies. Patterns to support letter shapes are used for children that need them.

### **Key Stage 1**

In KS1, there are four discrete 15-minute handwriting sessions each week. Children in year one will not be expected to join. Children in year 2 will be taught to join from the beginning of the year with an expectation that all writing will be joined by the end of the key stage.

### **Key Stage 2**

Across KS2, children are expected to use the continuous cursive script. Discrete handwriting sessions are supported through independent handwriting activities linked to phonics and spelling. In Year 3 and 4, handwriting is taught in conjunction with spelling.

## **Letter Formation**

Teachers will provide opportunities to demonstrate and reinforce correct letter formation, allowing a natural lead-in to the correct starting point for each letter.

Letters are initially taught in the order they are introduced in the RWI lessons. (see appendix 2) This begins with individual letters from set 1 and progress onto phonemes made up of 2 or more letters as they are introduced to the child. Children learning set 1 sounds will be taught a mnemonic phrase to accompany every letter.

Capital letters are not joined because they do not start from the line.

## **Individual and Group Support**

At all stages, teachers are aware of the specific requirements of individuals and will adapt lessons to meet individual needs. Individuals and groups pinpointed as needing further support are given extra time to practise handwriting. Opportunities to continue to develop fine motor skills are planned and provided as appropriate. Teachers also give further support to children who still have not established correct letter formation and may need to include this in an IEP. When marking, teachers offer opportunities to practise specific letters that children are struggling with. Pencil grips and ergonomic pens are provided for children where required.

## **Terminology**

Continuous Cursive: Joined-up handwriting style – teaching the entry and exit strokes

Cursive: Teaching the exit strokes. First individually and then in a joined-up style.

Capital and lowercase: The names of capital and lowercase letters (rather than 'big and small').

Ascenders and Descenders: Letters that go above the usual letter line and below the base line.

Letter bodies: The main body of letters, which are neither ascenders or descenders (e.g. the rounded parts of 'b', 'd' and 'a' and the arches of 'm' and 'n').

Entry and exit strokes: Entry stroke starts on the line and exit strokes generally end on the line (with the exception of 'o', 'v', 'w', 'r' and 'x').

## **Assessment of handwriting**

Writing is assessed as part of the English Curriculum. Teachers observe posture, pen grip, paper position, pressure and fluency and speed within handwriting sessions and English sessions. The quality of handwriting is expected across the curriculum.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Development Matters and National Curriculum Handwriting Programme of Study**

### EYFS Physical Development 40-60 months

- Negotiates space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children, adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles.
- Shows increasing control over an object in pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking it.
- Uses simple tools to effect changes to materials.
- Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.
- Shows a preference for a dominant hand.
- Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines.
- Begins to form recognisable letters.
- Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

### Physical Development Early Learning Goal

Children show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

### Year 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- 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.

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### Year 2

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined e.g. x?
- write capital letters of the correct size and orientation in relationship to one another, and to lower case letters.

- write digits of the correct size and orientation in relationship to one another.
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

#### Year 3 & 4

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

#### Year 5 & 6

Pupils should be taught to:

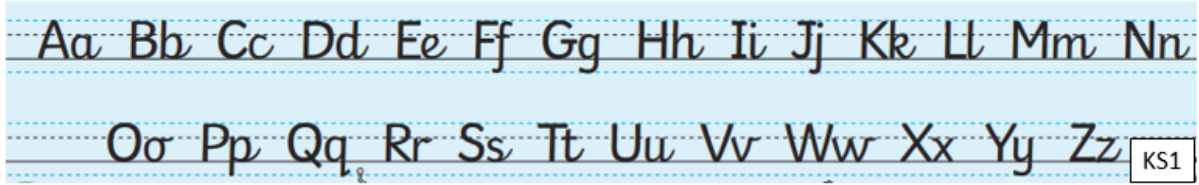
- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

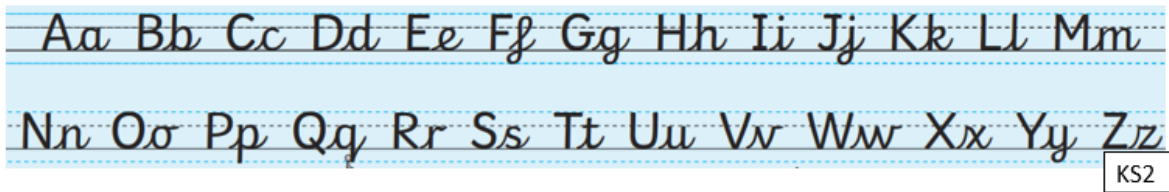
Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

## **Appendix 2 – Handwriting example**

Foundation and Key Stage One Handwriting – Cursive



Key Stage Two – Continuous Cursive



**Appendix 3 – Teaching order of letters and letter combinations**

Key Stage One:

**Set 1** – m, a, s, d, t, l, n, p, g, o, c, k, u, b, f, e, l, h, sh, ck, r, j, v, w, th, z, ch, qu, x, ng, nk

**Set 2** – ay, ee, igh, ow, oo, ar, or, air, ir, ou, oy

**Set 3** – ea, oi, i-e, o-e, u-e, aw, are, ur, er, ow, ai, oa, ew, ire, ear