

AYCLIFFE DRIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Handwriting Policy

**Updated September 2016
To be reviewed 2017**

Staff Responsible

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Curriculum Governors**

Overall Aims

A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. As such, we actively teach handwriting as part of the Literacy curriculum through discrete weekly lessons, quick reinforcing sessions and application every day. Weekly spellings will be handed out on hand-written sheets that model the school handwriting policy. Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practising speed and fluency and higher presentation skills.

To develop a clear, legible style of writing, children are taught to;

- hold a pencil comfortably; promoting a legible style that encourages writing from left to right, from top to bottom of the page and starting and finishing letters correctly
- develop a consistent size and shape of letters and a regularity of spacing between letters and words
- join letters correctly
- develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We will never simply ask children to copy models from a sheet or practice book.

Considerations when teaching handwriting:

- (a) Pencil grip and tension
- (b) Writing pressure
- (c) Clarity of the stroke
- (d) Orientation of the paper for left/right handed children
- (e) Body posture

The teaching sequence is:

c, a, d, f, g, q, e, s, l, i, t, j, u, y, b, h, k, m, n, p, r, v, w, x, z

Guidelines for good practise

- Prior to the beginning of the session the room needs to be organised accordingly. It is suggested that all children face the blackboard/whiteboard/SMART boards.
- Correct posture with the child sitting comfortably with feet flat on the floor with body upright.
- The paper should be positioned to a comfortable angle and moved up as the page is filled.
- Adequate space is needed so that the children are able to write without their elbows touching.
- Correct light in order to see without eyestrain.
- Pencil grip should be firm but relaxed. The children need to be aware that they should not grip so that their hand aches but need to be able to apply some pressure.
- Handwriting sessions should be short and regular.

Progression in Handwriting

Nursery

Children will practise the skills required for handwriting in a variety of contexts, including gross and fine motor movements. The children will practise letter formation/ movement by air writing, writing in sand, writing on walls with water and paintbrushes and making letter shapes out of modelling media.

Reception

Key learning objectives:

- To use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- To write letters using the correct sequence of movements

Children will continue to develop the fine and gross motor skills needed for handwriting as part of the Early Years curriculum.

In addition to practising letter formation in a range of contexts they will begin to work in group and individual sessions on handwriting. Children will be taught the movement of each of the four letter groups. They will practice handwriting during every literacy/writing session and are given individual handwriting practice daily.

- Curly group (anti-clockwise round)– c, a, d, f, g, q, e, s
- Long group (down and off in another direction) – l, i, t, j, u, y
- One armed group (down and retrace upwards) – b, h, k, m, n, p, r
- Zig Zag group – v, w, x, z

Children will begin the Foundation Stage with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to finer motor skills using a variety of tactile methods. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and to gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters. All Foundation Stage staff, including support staff, must be aware of directionality and when children are showing a firm interest in writing their name, they should be encouraged to use correct directionality. To aid co-ordination, sand trays and sticks (or fingers), paper, paint and large brushes, modelling materials, white boards and pens, blackboards and chalk may be used. They will be taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.

- **Suggested materials to develop gross and fine motor skills:**
 - (a) Sand trays/seeds and other tactile materials
 - (b) Letter shapes/feely letter shapes
 - (c) Large paper and brushes to make writing patterns
 - (d) Blackboards and chalk
 - (e) Whiteboards and pens
 - (f) Plasticine, play dough, clay.

*** Fine motor skill ideas:**

- Picking up pasta and rice using chopsticks

- Pegs (round a paper plate)
- Picking up pen lids with tweezers
- Bandage (rolling, scrunching etc)
- Finger football (rolling up scarp paper (small pieces) and using each finger and kicking into a goal)
- Lego, K'Nex, Duplo, hemmer beads, multi-link
- Threading
- Cutting skills
- Pattern drawing
- Bottle writing (squirty bottle with water-outside)
- Big writing (shaving foam, chalk, finger painting , felt tips, sand trays)

Key Stage One

Year 1

Key learning objectives:

- To develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- To form lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join later.
- To practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct orientation, formation and proportion, in a style that will be easy to join.

Children will revisit all letters, in their appropriate groups to reinforce and practise formation. Children will be encouraged to use the terms ground, grass and sky letters. When this is secure, children will begin to work on baselines joins:

un, ed, ig, an, ng, ch, th, ill, sl, ck, st, nk

It is expected that by the end of this year, the majority will be writing unaided, using capitals where appropriate and presenting their written work legibly. In Year 1, children practise forming letters and are introduced to diagonal joins and latterly, horizontal joins both to letters with and without ascenders. An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed.

og, re, oo, wl, of, fl, y

Year 2

Key learning objectives:

- To practise handwriting patterns from Year 1.
- To use and practise the four basic handwriting joins
- To practise handwriting in conjunction with phonics and spelling patterns.
- To use the four basic handwriting joins with confidence and use them in independent writing.

Children will continue and practise the joins started in Year 1. Once the children are confident with this, they will be encouraged to apply these skills to their independent writing.

As appropriate the children will be introduced to horizontal joins (top joins).

ol, ok, oh, sh, as, es, ri, ru, ry, oo, oa, ad, as, ee, ea, ed, ov, ow, ox, li, ky, hy, ly, ie, ha, ta, fa, ad, og, oo, er, ir, ur, ai, al, ay, oy, ou. oi, re, oe, fe

By Year 2 children should be moving towards a joined handwriting style and be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They practise and build on Year 1 joins and are introduced to break letters.

Children need to be made aware of:

- (a) Where the letter starts;
- (b) Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline;
- (c) Ascenders and descenders - lined paper will assist;
- (d) Spacing and finger space between words;
- (e) Consistent writing size;
- (f) Capital letters and their appropriate use

Key Stage 2

Year 3

Key learning objectives:

- To practise correct formation of basic joins from Year 2.
- To ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and the spacing between letters and words.
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practise.

Children will practise and consolidate the joins introduced in Year 2. They will also be taught about the way to present their work in books, refer to the presentation policy. They will be encouraged to use a joined script in their independent writing to enable them to build a fluent and clear style.

It is our aim that the majority of Year 3 have been taught the whole range of joins and will be developing a degree of accuracy and fluency by the end of the year. In the first 2 terms, children will consolidate joins from Years 1 and 2. The third term will focus on consistency of spacing, layout, speed and fluency practice.

Year 4

Key learning objectives:

- To use joined handwriting for all writing, except where other forms are required.
- To know when to use:
- A clear neat hand for finished, presentation work
- Informal writing for everyday informal work

- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words.
- To build up speed.
- To use a range of presentation skills

Children will build upon their work from Year 3 and be taught more about a variety of presentation methods through literacy lessons. In addition to using and practising the known joins, children will also be taught more complicated anti-clockwise joins in handwriting sessions: ac, ca, da, ha, ad, ag, ea, ed, va, wa, oa, oo, od, fa, fo

Formation of capitals, lower case letters and the two basic join types (horizontal and vertical) should now be familiar and secure. The majority of children should be able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Whilst there is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns, they will also be given opportunities to develop speed and accuracy.

Year 5 and 6

In handwriting children will learn and practise patterns involving 3 joins.

They will reinforce previous work, especially considering the spacing of letters, consistent spacing and size, distinguishing ascenders and descenders, reinforcing that the capital letter is not joined and analysis of writing style and presentation.

By Years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be writing fluently and are joining their writing across the curriculum. In these year groups the emphasis is on increasing speed, developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes.

Left Handed Children

Left-handed children will not in any way be discouraged from favouring the left-hand in their work. They may need to position their paper at an angle on the table. The tripod grip (thumb and first finger grip the pencil, which then rests on the side of the second finger) should be encouraged. Practise on a vertical blackboard could help this position. Left handed pupils may bring their own pens from home although the school will purchase suitable pens for their use.

Care should be taken when seating left handed pupils when they are working to ensure that they have adequate room. Pupils should be seated either at the end of a table/desk or together with another left hand child.

Pen Licence

Children will be granted a pen licence once they consistently form their letters and have developed a fluent handwriting style. They need to maintain this fluent, joined style or the licence will be rescinded.