



English – Handwriting Policy

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Philosophy

The National Curriculum states that 'Writing (also) depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.' (DfE, 2013). Good handwriting is an essential skill for life that also helps to build confidence and assists in the 'over-learning' involved in teaching spelling. Proper attention needs to be paid to the development of correct letter formation from the onset of teaching handwriting, as bad habits acquired in the early years are difficult to rectify.

Objectives

- Children will know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- Children will be able to write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency by;
- Having the correct pencil grip
- Knowing that all lower case letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
- Forming all letters correctly
- Knowing the size and orientation of letters.

Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers and support staff must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating .It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly. Handwriting should be taught alongside the teaching of phonics and spelling. It should be taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. Handwriting should be modelled by the teacher then supervised. High expectations of writing are needed.

Early Years

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Early Years should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters

- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching handwriting:

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
- Make links with phonics and spelling

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 not joined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Key Stage 2 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 not joined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. 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.

Teaching Time

Busy Bees: Daily mark making activities

Foundation: Daily mark making activities, twice weekly discrete handwriting sessions

KS1: Handwriting taught as a discrete lesson at least once a week and consistently reinforced in all other subject areas.

KS2: Handwriting taught as a discrete lesson at least once a week and consistently reinforced in all other subject areas.

Model Used

At Swallowfield we follow the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme with the following letter formation:

The lower-case alphabet for Early Years:

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

The lower-case alphabet for KS1 and KS2:

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

The capital letters and numerals:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The joined style

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Letter families

Nelson Handwriting groups the letters into sets based on handwriting families. These are letters that are formed in similar ways.

Set 1

c a o d g q s f e

Set 2

i l t u j y

Set 3

r n m h k b p

Set 4

v w x z

Joining groups

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

Group 1

a c d e h i k l m n s t u

Thirteen letters with exit flicks plus **s**.

Group 2

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y

Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height

Group 3

b f h k l t

Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.

Group 4

f o r v w

Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height.

The break letters

b g j p q x y z

Eight letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter **z**.

We also use the Ruth Miskin Handwriting Phrases, which link to our phonics scheme. The phrases are listed below:

m	Maisie, mountain, mountain
a	round the apple, down the leaf
s	slither down the snake
d	round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet
t	down the tower, across the tower
i	down the body, dot for the head
n	down Nobby, over his net
p	down the plait and over the pirate's face
g	round her face, down her hair and give her a curl
o	all around the orange
c	curl around the caterpillar
k	down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg
u	down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle
b	down the laces to the heel, round the toe
f	down the stem and draw the leaves
e	lift off the top and scoop out the egg
l	down the long leg
h	down the head to the hooves and over his back
r	down his back and then curl over his arm
j	down his body, curl and dot
v	down a wing, up a wing
y	down a horn, up a horn and under his head
w	down, up, down, up
z	zig-zag-zig
q	round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair
x	down the arm and leg and repeat the other side

Pencil Grip

Children should write with a pencil (or a pen when appropriate) with a rounded nib.

Pencils should be reasonably sharp. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil. Pencil grip should be of high priority in the Early Years and KS1, to enable children to develop stamina in writing later in life.

For right handers

Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger 2-3 cm away from the point. The paper should be placed to the right slightly tilted to the left. Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left handers

Hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger; hold about 3 cm from the tip. The hand should be kept below the writing line. The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20/30 degrees. Use the right hand to steady the paper.

NB It is often helpful if a right handed child is not seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide.

Assessment

Continuous formative assessment should take place on a daily basis to assess the children's handwriting ability. This can then be used to inform subsequent planning and teaching.

Self and peer assessment can be used for children to assess their handwriting.

Hot marking is a useful strategy during handwriting lessons.

More Able

- Fluent and neat writers should be given the opportunity to write in pen (usually during year 4).
- More able writers should be given the opportunities to write at length to develop stamina.

SEND

- Pencil grips can often be useful for children who find mastering a correct pencil grip challenging.
- Some children may need additional practice with gross and fine motor skills before they are able to focus on the control needed for correct letter formation.
- Intervention sessions should be provided where children are not meeting the required standards for handwriting.