

ST PAUL'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL (CROMPTON STREET) WALKDEN

Handwriting Policy

At St Paul's Primary school cursive handwriting is taught explicitly from foundation stage, progressively to Year 6. Children are introduced to the cursive style from Nursery as it is considered to be the most natural development of children's earliest attempts at writing. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are expected to model the handwriting style in their handwriting. The cursive style we use is set out in alphabetical order below:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Handwriting is a complex skill involving fine motor control, visual observation and muscle memory. Children need to have good hand/eye coordination as well as gross and fine motor control. It is a skill that needs consistent practice and supports the development of spelling; children reinforce spelling patterns through the rehearsal of correct letter formation.

The use of a consistent cursive style throughout the school ensures that no changeover of writing style has to occur as the children move through the different key stages. The principal aim of our policy is that handwriting becomes an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing; a priority area for school improvement. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that ensure correct letter formation that progressively develops into a fluent, cursive style. We also provide opportunities for creative expression. Children are systematically taught how to:

- a) Correct pencil grip
- b) How to write from left to right, top to bottom of a page
- c) To start and finish letters correctly
- d) To form letters of regular size and shape
- e) To put regular spaces between letters and words
- f) How to form lower and upper
- g) How to join and develop their handwriting style

To achieve a consistent and fluent style for all children, we take the following action:

Modelling:

- Excellent examples of handwriting are displayed in every classroom and around the school
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants model the appropriate orientation, joins and style at every opportunity

Curriculum and Assessment:

- Teaching of handwriting begins in Nursery with the development of correct letter formation using the entry stroke, drop stroke and exit stroke

- Parents are actively involved in supporting the teaching of handwriting from Foundation Stage
- The teaching of spelling is linked with correct handwriting formation and presentation
- Most writing activities make reference to presentational quality
- Handwriting is assessed through marking and teachers establish high expectations for the development of a legible and fluent handwriting style.

Posture and Pencil grip:

We actively promote a comfortable grip and posture when writing.

Nursery and Reception

In Reception the teaching of letter formation begins with the introduction of initial letter sounds in Phase 2 of Letters and Sounds. Children are introduced to letter sounds in the Nursery and correct letter formation as part of the teaching of phonics and to assist self registration.

Letters are taught in the following order to support the teaching of reading:

s a t p i n m d g o c k ck
e u r h b f ff l ll ss j v
w x y z zz qu th sh ch
ng ay ve oi oy wh ou
au aw ea oe igh ir ew
ie ei ey ear eu ai ee
igh oa oo ar or ur aw
ear air ure er

Key Stage 1

Handwriting is taught regularly in 10 minute focused sessions at the beginning of the day. Word lists and sentences for practice can be found in the appendices. Handwriting books with line guides are used for recording work and practice of letter formation.

Key Stage 2

Handwriting is taught daily in short practice sessions to embed the appropriate formation of letters and joins. In addition, a 15-20 minute handwriting lesson reinforces letter joins and writing fluency. Letters and Sounds and the teaching of Spelling provide further opportunities for reinforcement of explicitly taught handwriting skills.

All children will have opportunities to watch adults writing and attempt writing for various purposes using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions. Erasers are used within Foundation. In Key Stage 1 and 2 errors within written work are crossed through with a single line (using a ruler).

How we teach the cursive script

Children are introduced to the letters in an order that supports the teaching of reading. They are taught that capital letters are not joined and that lower case letters will be half the size of upper case letters. Cursive script and letter formation is taught from Nursery to ensure that we are not confusing children with two writing systems. It is good practice for all children to have a multi sensory approach; using all possible ways of learning simultaneously. These include visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile strategies to allow maximum support for learning.

The Foundation Stage provides valuable opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills during focused tasks and self initiated play; use of small manipulative toys, finger paints, plasticine modelling, tracing and drawing, in addition to climbing blocks and other large outdoor equipment.

When introducing children to individual letters, the teacher should always model the formation of a cursive letter with a group of children on a flip chart or whiteboard, talking about how a letter is formed. It is important to refer to 'entry' and exit strokes if appropriate. The name of the letter should be given and the children should be encouraged to talk through the formation and say the sound as well. The formation of the letter should be made in the air with the teacher's back to the children. This should be repeated frequently during the week.

Left handed children

Left handed children need to be monitored and require specific teaching to ensure they develop the cursive style appropriately. Practical suggestions are listed within the Appendix to support teaching and learning.

Learning and Teaching

Most people are able to write their name and address with their eyes closed and can do it quite easily, this is because the movements of your hand when writing are firmly established in your movement memory because you have made them so often. This is why children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often.

The first handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that the children we teach learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning. 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, but unless their own ways of forming letters will find it harder to change the longer they are allowed to persist, but unless these habits are 'unlearned' (often at great effort since the movement memory is very retentive and will tend to revert to old habits) it will be impossible for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. The correct formation of all letters needs to become quite automatic and may require a lot of practice.

September 2016