

Duckmanton Primary School
Handwriting Policy

Intent

We aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practiced in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Implementation

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Penpals is taught in a weekly discreet session for 20 minutes and subsequently embedded across the curriculum. Our school uses *Penpals for Handwriting* to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

Progression of skills

Penpals enables us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS F1 and F2).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS F1/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

In using *Penpals*, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum' and that 'problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say'.

Writing tools

Children will be encouraged to experiment with a range of implements producing thick and thin lines. The size of the nib, lead or tip is important and should be appropriate to the size of the writing. Generally all classes will use a range of writing implements but Key Stage 1 will use thick and thin pencils mostly, Lower Key Stage 2 will use a mixture of pencil and roller ball pen, Upper Key Stage 2 will all use roller ball. Biro's will not be used.

Equality of opportunity

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.

Handwriting Style and Parents

Parents will be given a copy of the school handwriting style before their child joins the school and made available at Parents Meetings. Any information given to parents will not undermined confidence by implying that what they have done so far is wrong.

Individual Writing Styles

Children are only encouraged to develop a more individual style once they are able to correctly form every letter and join it correctly to any other letter.

Left-handed Children

Left-handedness is not a problem and most left-handers (approx 10%) learn to write perfectly well. However, we give additional consideration to the following in the context of left-handed learners (LNL).

Letter formation

Most LHL naturally draw a circle in a clockwise direction, which has implications for letter formation. Extra time and attention is given to ensure they are able to form letters as right-handed people do.

Paper

LHL need to have the paper to the left side of the mid-line of the body and tilted at an angle of 30 degrees clockwise so the pupil can see what is being written.

Writing Tool

It is important to have a free-flowing implement as the implement is being pushed rather than pulled across the paper.

Grip

Pupils are encouraged to hold the pen further from the point than right handers (approx 1.5 cm from end of writing implement) so that the writing is not obscured. The wrist should be straight and any hook grip should be corrected with paper angle and formation guidance.

Seating

LHL sit on the left of right handed children to avoid arms clashing. Some children will benefit from a higher seating position to see their work more clearly.

Modelling

Modelling must be done with the left hand specifically for the LHL.

Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs

Difficulties in handwriting may be specific to bad habit formation or may indicate an alternative difficulty. Teachers will refer to the Solving Problems appendix before suggesting extensive assessment.

It is recognised that some pupils will have so much difficulty with handwriting that they will need to use some other method of recording. For others this may only be a temporary need whilst they master the skill of handwriting but with the pressure of recording removed. i.e. typed work, Dictaphone or scribe. It is further recognised that an alternative recording method would only be used if considered beneficial to that pupil.

If a pupil grips the pencil very tightly and reverses letters/words when writing there may also be a problem with erratic eye movements (poor visual motor integration) this will inhibit their progress in writing and reading. Most pupils do not develop well co-ordinated eyes until 6+, but if erratic eye movements are suspected, children will not be expected to copy from the whiteboard and will use a tracker for close copying.

Pens, pencil grips, tracing, different coloured paper, ball bearings in plastic letters, slopes, hand exercises, hand-eye co-ordination games, eurhythmy exercises are all used when deemed appropriate to the pupil.

Impact

All children will develop a legible, fluent handwriting style that uses to correct formations and joins but also encompasses their own handwriting style. All children will take pride in their handwriting and in turn their overall presentation.