



Handwriting Policy

Policy: Handwriting Policy	Issue Date: April 2019	Page: 1 of 6
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For further information please contact: Head Teacher		
Name	Position	Contact Number
Mrs Val Britnell	Head Teacher	01582 865466

This is a Church of England School and in common with all church schools, aims to provide the best possible education for each of its pupils within the context of a caring, Christian community; helping all of our pupils to flourish in God's love, grace and wisdom so that they will become wise, hopeful, aspirational and live well together with dignity and respect.

As a Values school, we are committed to reflecting the essence of Christian Values within this policy.

At Thomas Whitehead CE Academy we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and the presentation of written work helps to raise standards. For children and teachers this aims to foster a sense of pride and respect in their work. Self-esteem is raised when children are able to communicate meaning accurately.

Justification of this Policy

The focus on handwriting in the 2014 National Curriculum, and with the introduction of new National Standard expectations (see appendix), is much greater, highlighting its importance and making the connection between a child's handwriting and their composition and spelling ability. This, we believe, is a positive step forward.

An effective handwriting policy is based on a style that is quick and easy to learn. It should be neat, legible and fast. Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, syntax, grammar, style and content.

Initially, handwriting will need to be taught as a discreet subject as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, with emphasis not only on letter formation, but pencil grip and sitting position. As it links with spelling and phonological development, it can be brought more into the general English teaching in Key Stage 1.

Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters in words as a series of continuous flowing movements or patterns. Words can be written without taking the pencil off the page. Continuous style provides a directional left, right movement. This flowing, rhythmical movement aids speed and fluency particularly when practised from Foundation level with the final product being neat and fast.

This cursive style also lessens the chance of reversing letters by eliminating the need to lift the pencil between letters. The spaces between words become distinct and distinction between upper and lower case is clearer.

Many pupils with specific learning disabilities find continuous cursive useful because the pencil stays on the page throughout every word, thus simplifying the movement. Many pupils with motor difficulties learn a series of easy, rhythmical movements, which help to improve fine motor co-ordination.

In addition, the motor memory of the pupil's hand and fingers helps them to spell, as each word becomes one movement rather than many. Ideas, images and descriptions can flow more swiftly if fewer decisions need to be made about where each letter starts and how letters are formed.

Aims of this Policy

-  To raise standards in writing across the academy.
-  To have a consistent approach across Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage One (KS1) and Key Stage Two (KS2) when teaching handwriting and presentation of work throughout the academy, leading to fully cursive writing, for most pupils by Y2.
-  Pupils to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
-  Pupils to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the pupils are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation in their independent writing.

Implementation of this Policy

Continuous Cursive handwriting is taught regularly through short, focused sessions and may be linked with other areas, e.g. spelling, grammar and phonics.

Implementation in EYFS

In the early stages of handwriting development, pupils are introduced to activities to establish fine motor skills. Patterning, drawing and colouring helps establish the feeling of continuous flow and teaches the hands the most frequently used movements. Multi-sensory experiences ensure that the techniques are not only fun to learn, but that the skill is learnt effectively by pupils with a variety of learning styles.

In Nursery, close attention is given to pencil grip when children are holding a pencil/writing instrument. Pupils will be taught the beginnings of correct letter formation and apply these through name writing activities and learning the sounds of letters via Jolly Phonics.

Suggestions

- Create patterns using a variety of tools e.g. felt tips, paint, chalk, glitter pens.
- Go outside and use playground chalks or water from squeeze bottles to create patterns on the ground.

- Introduce finger painting, painting over pre-drawn spirals and wavy lines.
- Develop fine motor control by embellishing the finished patterns with felt tip pens.
- Use a variety of surfaces e.g. white boards, black boards, different coloured paper on a horizontal or vertical surface,
- Stimulate touch by using different materials such as textured boards made of velour, carpet, sandpaper.
- Use trays containing sand, salt, shaving foam to practise patterns.
- Encourage motor memory by using blindfolds, tracing in the air or on other children's backs.
- Verbalise the movements with the children to encourage auditory and kinaesthetic links in memory.
- Encourage the children to produce big patterns. Large movements relax the hand and arm muscles and release a tense, tight grip. With practise movements can reduce in size.
- Trace large patterns on the floor in P.E. using hands and feet.
- Develop physical strength and co-ordination by teaching finger rhymes and games. Introduce play-dough activities involving pulling, shaping and squeezing. A more detailed list of ideas for developing co-ordination, motor control and physical strength can be found under 'everyone', Occupational Therapy Resources.
- Strengthen pencil grip by tearing paper to create collages
- Develop confident pencil control through fun activities such as dot to dot, tracing, driving through mazes, drawing and colouring.

Implementation in KS1

To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Teachers are vigilant in ensuring that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met. Building on the foundation stage, pupils in KS1 develop a legible style. Y1 focus on pre-cursive letter formation. Opportunities to develop fine motor skills are continued using a range of practical resources. Y2 begin to develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter formation and relevant letter sizes are taught.



Implementation in KS2

The target for pupils in KS2 is to produce a fluent, consistently formed style of full cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words.

- ✚ Pupils will have regular handwriting sessions using appropriate resources. Handwriting practise is to be carried out in handwriting practise books and other writing books.
- ✚ Within Y3 most pupils will start to use cursive handwriting and be issued with a handwriting pen to use.
- ✚ In Y4, Y5 and Y6 pupils will use a handwriting pen to complete the majority of class work, where appropriate, and use a fully cursive style.
- ✚ Pencils will be used in mathematics or for drawing and completion of diagrams.

Left-handed pupils

Teachers should be aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- ✚ Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- ✚ Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- ✚ Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side

- ✚ Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- ✚ Extra practise with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to right automatically.

Teachers should be alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers may demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

Posture

Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to pupils' age and height.

- ✚ Pupils' backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right.
- ✚ Always make sure that the hand which is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This will be undertaken by the class teacher on an on-going basis. The English coordinators will carry out regular work scrutinies. When undertaking scrutinies, coordinators and senior leaders will monitor all subjects for neat presentation and the use of cursive script.

Policy written by Senior Leadership Team (April 2019)

Policy review date July 2020

Appendix

These are the National Standard handwriting descriptors for each year group:

Year 1:

- ✚ 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 and form capital letters and 0-9
- ✚ understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Year 2:

- ✚ hold a pencil comfortably and correctly
- ✚ handwriting is legible with almost all lower case letters, capital letters and digits accurately and consistently formed and of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another
- ✚ words are almost always appropriately and consistently spaced in relation to the size of the letters and some diagonal and horizontal strokes are used to join letters

Year 3:

- ✚ handwriting is increasingly legible and consistent, including diagonal and horizontal strokes used to join letters, when appropriate

Year 4:

- ✚ Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another are best left un-joined. Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting; it is not always maintained when writing at efficient speed

Year 5/6:

- ✚ legible, fluent handwriting is mostly maintained when writing at sustained, efficient speed