

STANNINGTON INFANT SCHOOL

Policy for Handwriting

Agreed by Governors 15.5.18





Stannington Infant School Policy for Handwriting

Stannington Infant School Vision:

- ➊ To encourage a caring and positive attitude amongst the children towards all others and their environment.
- ➋ To provide a challenging, creative and rich curriculum which will develop curiosity, confidence and independence.
- ➌ To provide an inclusive, safe, secure, healthy and happy environment.

Philosophy

Handwriting develops as children develop increased control over their bodies and a desire to communicate through mark making.

The aim of teaching handwriting at Stannington Infant School is that by the end of KS1 all children will have developed a handwriting style that is fluent, clear, joined and legible. *A child's ability to write comfortably and legibly affects performance in many other areas of the curriculum and can have an effect on an individual's self-esteem. Children should therefore be helped to develop an appropriate handwriting style with which they are comfortable.*

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. It is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity, a motor stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting. It is in our hands the kinaesthetic memory lies.

When taught effectively handwriting is where children will see the biggest and fastest changes improvements in their work; progress they are able to see, feel and enjoy. It also plays a part in their personal development because care, pride, concentration and perseverance are required qualities.

School Aims

The **Early Years Foundation Stage documentation and National Curriculum English Programme of Study** provides guidance on teaching handwriting and expectations for each year group
Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination.

Children in the **Foundation Stage** 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

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder. In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils.

Where children arrive at school able to write their names they may associate the wrong movement with certain letters (the common error is forming **o** and **a** using a clockwise movement) this should be sensitively corrected.

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

Joined handwriting should be introduced as soon as possible once children are secure in the movements of each letter. This can be at any point once all letters have been taught.

Stannington Infant School uses the **Achieving Excellence in Handwriting** approach from Foundation Stage through to Year 2. The agreed letter formations are attached to the policy in appendix 1, both individual letter formation and how the letters are to be joined.

Teaching Approach

Foundation Stage

When learning letters introduce which handwriting family it belongs too. Language of handwriting will be key in Foundation Stage as it is the start of their handwriting journey and must be the same as the language used by the rest of school. *(And will also make it easier for staff who work across school)*

Whole school

All handwriting sessions begin by warming the children's fingers and hand muscles through the use of Dough Disco and playdough.

Children are taught in whole class and/or small groups led by either a teacher or Teaching Assistant at least twice a week.

Each year group will teach children letter formation from the Achieving Excellence in Handwriting training and documentation. *(electronic copy of document available on T Drive under Handwriting)*

We will all use the same language to teach children how to form the letters:

- tall letters
- short letters
- tail letters
- top broken line
- top solid line
- bottom solid line
- bottom broken line
- f is a greedy letter
- t is a teenager ($\frac{3}{4}$ letter)
-

BBC – bottom to back of chair

TNT – tummy near table

6 feet on the floor

2 hands on the table

All staff will refer to pencil grip as **Pinchy Parrot** – 3 fingers gripping the pencil, one thumb, two fingers, pencil ‘sits back in his pillow’/ back in his bed’.

Monitor ‘lazy thumbs’ and explain what we mean by a ‘lazy thumb’

Encourage children to pick up and place pencils down correctly.

Children can tilt paper if they need too.

There should be 1cm of pencil below the fingers, 2-3cm if left handed

Teach a family of letters at a time using handwriting document as guidance

Sessions to contain a warm up before starting letter formation.

Children to evaluate their own handwriting and then that of others, using the language of handwriting.

Give expectations at the end of each session about seeing these letters in their writing.

Zig zag letters – when making patterns always go down up \/\

Break letters

j g y - we do not join or loop anymore

Letters we have decided not to join to the next letter are: (these letters finish against the flow, z is just tricky)

b p s

z

We will join qu as it is always seen and written together and will be easier for children learning which letters make the /q/ sound

o f v w finish with the joining stroke on the top solid line. **‘The joining stroke takes me to the starting point of the next letter’**

Resources

Line guides/ books

FS to use large handwriting guides so children can see and practice the size of the letters.

KS1 to use handwriting guides and decrease size when children are ready.

Once they can write on the same size lines as books move to books.

Use line guides in K&U books

Pencil grips can be used when needed.

Worksheets

When preparing worksheets which require children to write on them please copy and paste the handwriting guide on to it. I have done this using Active Inspire and the camera tool.

Marking

Stars:

We do not have to try to make our handwriting fit the handwriting guides. We explain to the children that we do not need lines as we know how to write our letters correctly.

Wishes:

If the wish is related to handwriting or spelling model using the lines correctly.

Staff handwriting:

Model the school handwriting style when writing comments or on a whiteboard.

Inclusion

Children should use pencils fitted with correct pencil grips.

Children who struggle with 3 tripod grip can hold a small cube in their bottom two fingers.

Children who need additional support receive 1:1 handwriting support additional to whole class handwriting sessions

Slanting boards are provided for children who need them.

Provision for children who join the school after Reception

Those children who arrive at school with a different, but equally acceptable style of writing will be encouraged to choose or develop a preferred style from their own established style or the new style taught in lessons.

Posture

Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip.

- Ensure children use a good pencil grip.
- Check that children have enough space to write in.
- Check that the height of tables and chairs allows children to write comfortably with their feet flat on the floor.
- Non writing hand should be used to steady the paper and bear some body weight.
- Paper should be slightly tilted.

Assessment

Assessment of handwriting at Key Stage 1 is done through the use of the Stannington Infant School Writing grids and as part of the Success Criteria in English sessions. Assessment for learning opportunities should be used frequently to help children identify the next steps in developing their handwriting style. In Year 2 there is a formal assessment of handwriting through End of Key Stage 1 assessments.

Left-Handed Children

At least 10% of the population is left handed - a slightly higher proportion of these are males. There is no need for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing. The following strategies are useful in supporting them:

- model letter formation, sky writing, etc with your left hand
- make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children
- left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- experiment with seat or table height where possible - some left handed children may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their sides as they work across the paper
- to avoid smudging their work
 - left handed children should position their fingers about 2-3cm away from the end of their writing implement
 - the pencil should sit in the 'V' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb
 - the wrist should be straight

Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. They should, therefore, be given more attention in the classroom to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter a fast, fluent and legible hand.

Parental Involvement

The school's preferred handwriting style will be shared with parents through the Welcome Pack given to new Foundation Stage children and a handwriting booklet. The literacy led will also hold an annual Handwriting workshop for parents in the Autumn Term.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Literacy coordinator in consultation with staff on an annual basis.

L. Harris – March 2018

Approved by Governors: 15.5.18