

FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aiming for Happiness and High Standards



Handwriting and Presentation Policy

Mission Statement

*At Fairfield Community Primary School, we aim to provide a safe, secure environment which will promote **happiness and high standards**.*

We aim to meet the needs and celebrate the achievements of all pupils, who, through high expectations and high standards of teaching will reach their own potential regardless of ability.

We offer equal opportunities to all in the belief that Fairfield children will take their places as productive, valued and tolerant members of society.

Aims

- for children to develop a fluent, neat cursive style of handwriting
- for the whole staff to use the style in their own writing and hence to model good practice and standards
- for all children to develop a “correct” and efficient pencil grip
- for pride in work to improve standards of content and to spread to all aspects of performance
- for fluency to enable greater work stamina and therefore improved content
- to provide an aid to the spelling and fine motor skill difficulties issues experienced by some children.

Rationale

This policy is a response to issues identified through school self- evaluation. These are:

- Lack of a joined handwriting by a majority of children at, and beyond, the nationally expected stage for such a development;
- Lack of a comfortable, efficient pencil grip in use by a significant number of children;
- Some erratic letter (and number) formation throughout the school;
- Identified lack of work stamina evident in the written work of a significant group of children;
- Poor standards of presentation exhibited by a significant group of some children;

A review of the existing scheme of work “Pen Pals for Handwriting” (closely linked to the Nelson scheme) revealed that its use was not consistent throughout the school and that very few members of staff had been at the school when the policy for teaching it had been introduced. Monitoring also revealed that the stages for the introduction and teaching of

new skills were not clear. As a result, whilst handwriting was being practised, there had developed a need for more structure and intense teaching of the skills required.

School self evaluation and particularly whole staff moderation of writing and scrutiny of work in books also identified a further connected issue:

- A lack of pride in work exhibited by some children which is judged to lead to careless errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling (and in mathematical recording).

The issue of careless and poor grammar, punctuation and spelling was to be addressed by the school preparing early for the introduction of a new national curriculum (September 14) by introducing “non-negotiables” of all three for each year group. It therefore seemed opportune for the whole school to embark on the introduction of a new cursive handwriting style which would go back to basics but would involve the whole school community in a joint venture as new skills were learnt and taught by all. The link between pride in handwriting and hence presentation as a whole would be obvious. There would also hopefully be a knock on effect into pride in work as a whole.

NB. In the same review of Literacy at the school, CPD on the assessment of writing has taken place. This training re-emphasised the heavy weighting towards *Composition and Effect* (i.e. content) in valuing children’s writing. A new policy for handwriting and presentation by no means alters the prominence of content. However, there are many aspects of the policy that through providing the tools for writing, will make it easier for children to produce content at an enhanced level.

The Cursive Style

The sheets attached show the individual letters but the principle is as follows:

- Capital Letters are never joined.
- Every Letter starts and finishes with a flick.
- All lower case letters are joined. Unlike previous schemes, this includes letters with descenders which loop up into the flick. It also includes previous non joiners “b”, “p”, “s” and “x” which join from the bottom.
- The pencil never leaves the page until the word is complete. Then the writer goes back to dot and cross.
- The “t” is slightly shorter than the other “tall” letters. Capital letters should be the same height as the “t”.

Guidance

As with all learning the early years are vital. Early mark making and emersion in print will allow the children to develop the required “tripod” pencil grip. New parents will be educated about our style and will see the children attempting the “flick ons” and “flick offs” of the cursive style as they “sign in”. All staff will model the style and in both formal and informal situations the tripod grip will be modelled and encouraged in mark making and fine motor skill development as part of the continuous provision within the unit.

Continuous Provision will also provide opportunities for letter formation practice through the many activities already in use e.g. shaving foam, sand, marble runs, tracing activities etc.

The strong link between spelling and handwriting will be an ideal vehicle to develop both as the children practise phonemes using the cursive style and develop an awareness of sound symbol relationships.