



Handwriting Policy

Our Mission Statement – ‘Keys to Faith and Knowledge’

At Simonstone St Peter's School we want every child to:

Be confident and happy about who they are;

Have knowledge and skills for life and to work together and make friends;

Learn to have faith and understand differences;

Learn through Jesus that we are loved and can love; that we can talk to others; find guidance to be a better and stronger person, to know right from wrong and find forgiveness;

Show care, kindness and appreciation in the world.

Aims of the Policy

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils
- To promote continuity and progression throughout the whole school
- To establish expectations for teachers and the governing body
- To promote the school's approach to handwriting to parents, carers and the wider community

Introduction

Handwriting is important as it is concerned with individual expression and conveying of meaning through fluent composition. Our aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. In order to achieve this, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency, legibility, purposefulness and the opportunity for creative expression.

Entitlement and Curriculum Provision

Handwriting is taught in all classes through a daily, 10 minute sessions – with a discrete taught session once a week. EYFS will encourage mark making – using a mark making area and encouraging mark making in other activities. Teaching generally occurs outside literacy sessions, although shared and guided writing provides many opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting. Teaching handwriting during spelling/phonic sessions is also encouraged. There are times when at both key stages when this aspect of writing is a focus for attention and more time is devoted to the objectives relating to handwriting and presentation. Children will be given a handwriting purpose and will be given opportunities to write for publication, write for display purposes and to experiment with different equipment and styles.

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed school style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require children to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned.

The role of the class teacher

- To have high expectations of presentation of all the children; including correct grip, agreed joins and consistent 'patter.'
- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting;
- To provide resources and an environment that promotes good handwriting;
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.

Continuity and Progression

Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is on movement rather than neatness; mark making should start big and creative. Letter formation learned at this early age becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of paper/whiteboards and the organisation of writing space. Staff must be vigilant to ensure that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils and those with special educational needs are met. By age 5, most children will have a dominant hand, will have established an anti-clockwise movement, will be able to retrace vertical lines and form recognisable letters. The teacher will look for evidence of clear ascenders and descenders and the start/end/direction of each letter should be correct. The teaching of letter formation should be incorporated with the teaching of phonics and the 'Letters and Sounds' strategy, using a consistent 'patter.' It should be taught in daily short bursts, with one focused task per week.

In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with mark making/writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding - that marks on paper convey meaning. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in their hand. Post it notes, laminated tracings and the outdoor area should be used to teach handwriting – creating a 'fun and creative' vibe.

Key Stage 1

Building on the Foundation Stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Teachers will plan a discrete, taught session per week, followed by short bursts 3/4 times a week. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught inline with the agreed handwriting style. Four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders) are practised. Children are introduced to 'handwriting' books (using the normal class line examples) and use these for discrete tasks. In year 2 some children are ready to begin using a joined cursive style and this is modelled and taught as appropriate. Children will be encouraged to join as soon as movements are secure – noting that not all letters need to join at this stage.

Lower Key Stage (years 3 and 4)

The pupils consolidate their use of the four basis joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. Consistent joins of 'k' 'f' and 's' will be monitored. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practise. By year 4, joined handwriting is used at all times unless other specific forms are required e.g. making notes, writing labels etc. Children continue to use handwriting books (normal line width) to practise key skills and joins – 10 min daily sessions, with one discrete session per week. High teacher expectations are encouraged – any child not joining at this stage should receive extra support and time to consolidate / repeat the basic joins.

Upper Key Stage 2 (years 5 and 6)

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a comfortable, fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. There is also an emphasis on increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility. Children continue to use handwriting books (normal line width) to practise key skills and joins. Children will practise handwriting daily, with one planned/discrete session per week. Children will be encouraged to vary the purpose and style of handwriting – posters, note taking, calligraphy etc.

Resources

The staff have agreed to adopt the Cambridge ‘Penpal’ scheme/style. Each year group has sufficient copies of teacher’s books and text books to use as a reference. School has a plentiful supply of handwriting books. Teachers will be encouraged to use IWB – smart board gallery, magic pen and recording tool.

Inclusion

The majority of children are able to write legibly, neatly and fluently. However, some children need more support and a specific individual or group programme maybe drawn up in consultation with the SENCO. Other children may need targets linked to handwriting to enable to make progress. Children who have very well developed fine motor skills will be taught and encouraged to progress to the next stages as appropriate.

All the teachers are aware of the needs of left-handed pupils and should 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
- 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 are aware to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right handed teacher. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis (even if the resulting writing is not neat).

The role of parents and carers

The Foundation Stage teacher has a key role in communicating this at a very early stage (usually induction evenings) to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer correct models to their children.

All members of staff (including teaching assistants and trainee teachers) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style.

School will supply parents with information about letter formation and handwriting at appropriate intervals. The school’s handwriting policy will be published on the school website.

Assessment

Teachers make ongoing teacher assessments about the progress of each child and targets are set as necessary. The Foundation stage children are assessed for handwriting at the start and end of the reception class year as part of the ‘PIPs’ assessment and throughout the year as part of the Early

Years Foundation Stage profile. Handwriting is assessed in Year 2 and Year 6 as part of the end of Key Stage statutory assessments and pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as part of the optional SATs.

Date: June 2017

Date of review: Summer 2020