

## Holme Upon Spalding Moor

### Handwriting Policy

#### Introduction

This policy document has been written after consultation with the Head Teacher, teaching staff and literacy leaders. It is a working document which outlines the current practice within school in relation to developing a consistent handwriting style.

#### Aims

Holme upon Spalding Moor Primary school's teaching of handwriting aims to ensure that all children will be able to develop a style which enables letters to be easily joined and write in a way that is legible, with increasing fluency and speed as they progress through the school. We aim to encourage children to take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore approach handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

#### Organisation for each year

##### Foundation Stage

During FS1, provision and resources develop muscles in fingers, hands and arms in order to facilitate writing and its movements. Children are encouraged to understand what a pencil is and how it differs from crayons and other forms of mark-making tools. (A variety of medium are provided to write with, and on, to promote interest in mark making indoors and out)

Into FS2, handwriting takes place during daily, teacher-led phonic sessions based on the resource 'Letters and Sounds' in addition to on-going child- initiated activities in all curriculum areas. At the end of Foundation Stage, in order to reach the Early Learning Goal (ELG), children need to show that they can use their phonic knowledge to write words and simple sentences which can be understood by themselves and others. Varying sizes of whiteboards are available for indoor and outdoor provision in order for children to experiment and enhance their skills.

(NB: Whiteboards should be made available to children across all Key Stages. These give the children opportunities to practise their handwriting without leaving an indelible mark, helping to build confidence of the reluctant writer).

Throughout Foundation Stage mark-making occurs not only in the Literacy strand of EYFS but also in Physical Development and ELG.

Whilst in Foundation Stage, children will be exposed to a cursive handwriting style within their environment. However, our school realises the importance of correct letter formation and orientation prior to any progression to a developing cursive style.

##### Key Stage 1

In Year 1, children complete handwriting tasks within designated books. It is expected that letters are consistently formed and writing is on the line. By the end of Y1, children should correctly grip their pencil and

have become fluent in writing all letters. Once this has been achieved, children will be expected to begin to join some letters.

In Year 2 the focus remains on the consistency of the size of letters and it is expected that a minimum number of children demonstrate an idiosyncratic handwriting grip. Groups of children regularly practise their handwriting, supervised by the class T.A, progressing to a cursive handwriting style when appropriate.

Any children who fall below the expected standard of handwriting will receive further support, occasional homework practise, and intervention such as a return to triangular grips.

### Key Stage 2

During the first term of Year 3, a dedicated session per week focuses upon developing handwriting skills. When children have shown an ability to maintain a good handwriting standard they are rewarded with a handwriting pen. By the end of Year 4 children are expected to have a fluent, joined handwriting style which should continue into Year 5. If any child is falling below the expected standard during Yr3/4 they will receive extra support.

Children regularly practise their handwriting in Y5 in order to ensure they maintain a good standard of fluent, joined handwriting. Although intervention occurs if necessary, during Y5 it is expected that children will begin to adopt an independent style. If during Year 5 a child shows that they have developed a consistent handwriting style, they shall become a 'Master Hand-Writer'. They will be rewarded with a fountain pen, presented to them in Merit Assembly, in recognition of their achievement.

In the first Half Term of Autumn, Year 6, a session a week is dedicated to remind children of joins and gives them an opportunity to practise their handwriting. After this handwriting practise is not expected and children continue to be encouraged to develop their own independent fluent style of handwriting. Similarly to Year 5, Children can be awarded 'Master Hand-writer' throughout Year 6.

### Special Considerations

#### Developing an effective pencil grip

It is essential that children learn how to hold a pencil that is relaxed but allows for efficient control of the pencil. The children will be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger.

Developing a good posture when writing is also very important and teachers should consider the following, not only during handwriting sessions, but during any other lesson where children are required to write for lengthy periods of time.

- Has each child enough space at the table?
- Is the table appropriately sized so that the child can sit comfortably with their feet flat on the floor?
- Are the children directly facing the teacher/board?

#### Left-Handed children

Left-handed children find writing from left to right more difficult, therefore teachers must ensure that they do not learn bad habits with regard to position, posture and pencil grip. Left-handed children must be sat on the left of a right-handed child in order to avoid jostling each other's arms.

## Assessment

Teachers are expected to continually monitor the handwriting and presentation in all books. They must do this by circulating and intervening, not only during handwriting sessions but at other times when children are writing independently. Teachers should consider whether the child is sitting correctly and holding the pencil correctly when observing the children at work. When marking, teachers aim to ensure that comments about handwriting are appropriate to the task and that specific targets are set when necessary. The following should be considered when assessing an individual child's handwriting:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?

Teachers will assess children's handwriting against the objectives set out in the National Curriculum. (See Appendix 1 for statutory requirements)

## Links to spelling

Linking handwriting to spelling is one of the most productive ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised. Remember to use **Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check**.

## Resources

Many resources are available to teachers from Educational Sites and publications. As a school we allow teachers to use their professional judgement regarding the material they source as long as it is in accordance with school policy and develops the pupils' handwriting in their class. Many year groups link their handwriting practice sessions with the learning of spellings which is a proven effective method. Year groups 1-6 have access to the 'Scholastic English Skills Handwriting' publication which develops a cursive handwriting style through the teaching and revision of spelling patterns.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Key Stage 1 (5-7 years old)**

#### **Statutory Requirements - Handwriting**

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.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### **Year 2**

#### **Statutory Requirements – Handwriting**

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 unjoined
- 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.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

### **Lower KS2 (Year 3 & 4)**

#### **Statutory Requirements – Handwriting**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should be joining handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

### **Upper KS2 (Year 5 & 6)**

#### **Statutory Requirements – Handwriting and Presentation**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.