

Handwriting & Presentation Policy

Date:	February 2024	
Last reviewed on:	February 2023	
Next review due by:	February 2025 (Annually)	
Version:	Date:	Notes:
V 1:0		
V 2:0	February 2024	Minor updates to highlight Y5/6 use of black pen for self-editing; and the new expectation that children should practise using a pen in handwriting sessions before using a pen in regular lessons

Handwriting & Presentation Policy - Sandcross Primary School

Lead - Sian McConnell

Handwriting is a means of recording language on paper, using a generally understood system of symbols. It is an important life skill as a functional tool for expressing language and as part of self-image and expression of personality. Despite the increased use of computers for writing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life.

Intent

We intend for children to:

Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting as soon as they have learnt how to print and form the letters accurately.

Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes

To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing

To have a consistent approach to handwriting and presentation across both Key Stage One and Two.

To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard, on displays and resources.

Strategy for Implementation

In order to achieve our intent, the following principles are followed:

Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi-sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using 'letter speak'; using a variety of writing materials including

whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.

The cursive font, with lead-ins, is taught as a specific skill, at least once a week for about 20 minutes, with additional, individual or group practise where necessary.

Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.

Children will write with pencils until the class teacher assesses that they are joining competently and consistently. When children reach Year Three they will be able to earn a pen licence. They will then be given a handwriting pen to use.

When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.

Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.

Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.

The cursive font should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style.

Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

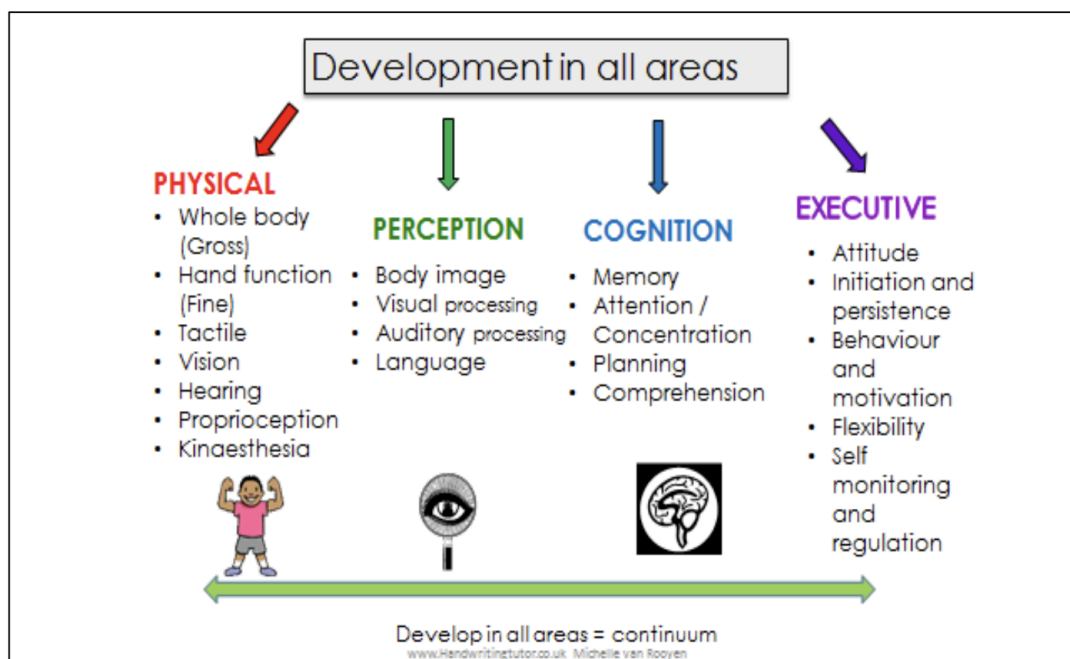
Impact:

At Sandcross, children can write with ease, speed and legibility. This enables their work to be fluent and enhances the quality and quantity of their work. Their handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, rather than upon the act.

Progression of handwriting at Sandcross

Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement and fine motor skill development. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) is the main focus and having the core skills required to form letters.



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 to ensure 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.

Year 1

Children should be taught to:

- develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip 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 (see appendix 3).

N.B. The cursive script has a lead in and exit line that naturally encourages the children to join their handwriting. The children are taught to join when they are ready.

Year 2

Children should be taught to:

- form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another

- 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

N.B. If they have not already done so, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.

Year 3 and Year 4

Children should be taught to:

- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch

N.B. When the children are producing consistently formed, sized and joined handwriting, they will be granted a 'pen licence' and encouraged to write in pen where appropriate.

Children will be given a blue pen to write with (not biro) **Prior to achieving the pen licence, practice must be done in handwriting sessions using a pen for those children who have reached handwriting expectations using a pencil before using a pen in core and non-core curriculum books to help with the transition to using a pen for writing.**

Year 5 and Year 6

Children 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 right implement that is best suited for a task.

N.B. If they have not already done so, children will use a pen to complete the majority of class work, where appropriate using a fully cursive style.

Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins

Always model good handwriting

Demonstrate formations

Talk through the process

Encourage children to verbalise the process

Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body

Finger trace over tactile letters

Write in sand with finger or a stick

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

Gross and fine movement warm up

Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair

Teacher modelling

Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory

The daily phonics session in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

Posture

Children require a stable and comfortable posture in order to have effective control of their hands for handwriting. To support this, all staff ensure that children are shown how to sit well:

Back is supported by the chair
Body leaning slightly forward
Hips, knees and ankles at 90°, feet flat on the floor
Arms resting comfortably on the table
Sitting a 'fist distance' from the table
Non-dominant hand used to stabilise paper

Pencil

A dynamic tripod grasp, with the pencil held between thumb, index and middle finger is modelled and encouraged as soon as children are developmentally ready to begin writing.

This grip must be supported by a stable wrist resting on the writing surface and positioned below the writing line. Poor or inefficient grips are often compensation for postural instability elsewhere. Where a child's grip is causing pain, fatigue or affecting fluency, staff will seek advice from the Inclusion team. See also Tips sheet: Handwriting Grip (appendix)

Staff are aware of potential handwriting difficulties when children have hypermobile joints.

Ergonomic pencils and those with triangular shaped barrels are used to support an effective grip in the beginning stages and later if needed. Pencils should be held about 2cm from the tip or slightly higher for left handed writers. Pencils are kept sharpened and well maintained at all times

Paper

Children are taught how to position their writing paper correctly and to stabilise it with the non-writing hand. The paper should be positioned at the child's midline (or just beyond) with the bottom angle placed about 2-3cm from the lower edge of the desk.

Left-handed writers: the paper should be slanted to the right at about a 30-45 degree angle.

Right handed writers: the paper should be slanted at about a 20-35-degree angle to the left.

Provision for left handed children

Left handed children always sit on the left side of right handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5cm from the point of their pencil. Pens appropriate for left handed writers will be provided, to avoid smudging.

Inclusion

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including children with special educational needs, will be given additional support. These difficulties will be addressed through appropriate interventions or specific equipment.

Presentation across the school:

Teachers should encourage a good and high standard of presentation in all work across all subjects.

Book covers should indicate: Child's name, class and subject.

Children should not write on the covers of their books

All work has a Learning Question, Steps to Success and is dated.

All Learning Questions should be stuck into the children's books neatly.

Children use guidelines if they are writing on plain paper (from Y2 onwards).

All drawings and diagrams are in pencil.

Children use a blue pen for writing when they have been awarded a Pen Licence.

Prior to achieving the pen licence, practice must be done in handwriting sessions using a pen before using a pen in core and non-core curriculum books to help with the transition to using a pen for writing.

All work in Mathematics should be completed in pencil.

Children may use rubbers at the teachers' discretion in Mathematics. However, no ink erasers may be used.

Pencil crayons, not felt pens, are used in exercise books.

Pink pens are used for specific reasons by children e.g. pink polishing, self –evaluating, editing or peer assessment.

Children in Years 5 and 6 will use black pen to differentiate between self-editing (pre teacher feedback) and pink pen (post-teacher feedback) in order to show independent writing ahead of end of key stage moderation expectations

Errors should be crossed out with a single tidy pencil line.

Books are well kept with no writing or doodling on the outside or inside of covers.

Children are taught where to start a new piece of work.

All support material is stuck neatly into children's books.

Poor presentation is challenged through verbal feedback and marking.

Tippex and correction pens are not to be used by children.

Monitoring:

Presentation is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis through work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews. Feedback will be shared with the class teacher and at Leadership meetings. This will ensure that the policy leads to good practice.

Conclusion

This policy remains our practice until such a time as it is reviewed, as such all staff have a responsibility to comply with the policy as agreed.