

Monken Hadley CE Primary School

Seek what is good, treasure what is true, do what is right.

HANDWRITING POLICY

Ratified by	Senior Leadership Team
Date	7 th February 2017
Date for Review	Spring Term 2020

Introduction

At Monken Hadley CE School, we are committed to enabling pupils to achieve a high standard of handwriting and presentation of written work, through the use of effective and efficient pen control and good levels of concentration.

It has been recognised that a cursive script has a beneficial impact on children's reading and writing abilities. While recognising this, adults need to be aware of the perceptual development of each individual child. There will be occasions when children in the Foundation Stage reach this level of perceptual maturity enabling them to link curves and straight lines successfully, but it should never be assumed that all children are at the same stage of development or can approach the task with the same ease.

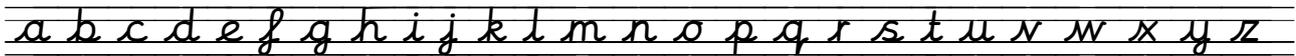
Handwriting and Reading

In school, children are exposed to both cursive and print styles as well as commercial print. They develop an awareness of reading in print and cursive styles through a range of short and long texts, for example, labels on displays, worksheets, whiteboard activities and through teachers modelling writing.

Handwriting Rules

- Each lower case letter starts on the line with an entry stroke.
- Letters which finish at the top join horizontally.
- Letters which finish at the bottom join diagonally.
- All down strokes are straight and parallel.
- All rounded letters are closed.
- The horizontal cross line of the letter 't' should be the same height as the lower case letters.
- All similar letters are the same height.
- Each letter should be written in one flowing movement.
- Each word should be written in one flowing movement.
- Letters within a word should be evenly spaced.
- The body of the letter sits on the line.

Letter Formations

A row of cursive lowercase letters from 'a' to 'z' written on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom). The letters are connected and flow from left to right.A row of print uppercase letters from 'A' to 'Z' written on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom). The letters are spaced out and sit on the bottom line.

Handwriting Activities

Specific handwriting activities take place at short regular intervals throughout the week. The purpose of them is to:

- Develop effective and efficient pen hold;
- Foster the habit of concentration which is crucial to good handwriting;
- Place a strong emphasis on the importance of presentation;
- Provide the class teacher with the opportunity to help assess individuals' progress and monitor areas requiring reinforcement.

Development

Children have opportunities to make marks using as wide a range of materials as possible, both indoors and out. It is vitally important that they have the opportunity to use gross motor skills first so that they can develop the fine motor skills they need to write.

It is important that we observe each child individually and ensure that they have the prerequisite skills they need before we move them onto formal writing. Young children need to be exposed to activities using ribbons, dance and large paint brushes, involving big movements to develop gross motor control. When that is secure then we can develop the fine motor skills which will eventually develop into writing.

The Developing Stages of Pre-writing:

- Lines and dots. Often at this stage the child has no predetermined hand.
- Ability to imitate directional marks made by others.
- Curves and enclosures.
- Ability to copy straights and curves made by others.
- Ability to link straights and curves to form a symbol.

Pencil Grip Development

Pencil grip follows a predictable pattern. This develops from:

1. The basic palmar grasp, where the child wraps all his fingers round the pencil and moves his whole arm to make marks -
2. To the digital finger grasp, where the hand is above the pencil and the child uses the whole arm to manipulate it -
3. To the tripod grasp, with fingers placed near the tip of the pencil with the thumb opposing the fingers, and movement controlled by the fingers.

Activities to Encourage Pencil Grip

These activities are fun, play activities but have a direct effect upon developing perception, control and sensory experiences, and should regularly occur in any EYFS setting:

- Playdough – pinching, squeezing with thumb and forefinger.
- Threading – beads, pasta, straws.
- Picking up small objects – use tweezers and pipettes/eye droppers.
- Finger rhymes – stretching, curling fingers.
- Water play – using spray toys and spray bottles.
- Craft activities – glue sticks and paint brushes.
- Icing cakes – using a plastic dispenser to push and squeeze out the icing.
- Strengthening activities – swinging from the climbing frame or grasping to climb and crawl.

Activities to Develop Correct Rotation

- Stirring cake mixture – encourage a two-handed operation, one to hold the bowl and one to stir whilst encouraging an anti-clockwise rotation
- Mixing powder paint and blending colours – similar to above.
- Mark-making and sensory play which should go beyond a pencil and paper and include a range of textures and media.
 - Paint using an easel and large brushes.
 - Paint the playground with water.
 - Draw shapes in the air with a wand.
 - Dance with a ribbon in your writing hand.
 - Chalk on boards or dark coloured sugar paper.
 - Draw in the sand.
 - Finger paint on the table with cold water paste and powder colour.
 - Make rubbings on rough surfaces
 - Draw in cornflour, slime etc.
 - Make tactile displays that allow the child to change or move the objects.
 - Use tactile, natural materials e.g. wood, suede, hessian and fur.

Programme of Work

Early Years Foundation Stage

During Reception, all children will be introduced to all letters of the alphabet with the entry stroke and capital letters.

Foundation Stage teachers, through assessment, will differentiate the children that are developmentally ready to be introduced to the cursive script.

Sounds are closely linked in handwriting patterns (through discrete handwriting and phonic sessions) and the children's visual awareness of words is harnessed e.g. cat, hat etc.

Practise of particular high frequency words helps to develop good visual and writing habits e.g. *the, and* etc. Again spellings are closely linked with handwriting activities assisting the children with phonic skills required for successful reading.

Rhyming patterns within words are developed and integrated into handwriting sessions thereby developing a child's visual awareness of phonics. High frequency words are also reinforced to help develop correct spelling habits and also aid a child's confidence in developing unaided writing.

Key Stage 1

As the children move to Year 1 the skills acquired in the Foundation Stage are continued, consolidating correct formation and concentration beginning via the teaching sequence set out in Collins Handwriting Scheme.

Capital letters are consolidated throughout Year 1 and more complex phonics are integrated eg. blends, digraphs, word endings etc.

The expectation is that most children will be forming and joining letters correctly by the time they are in Year 1. During spellings practice children will also practise their handwriting linked to the sound or spelling rule they are learning. Teachers should model the fully cursive handwriting style when writing on the smart board in children's books.

Children will use a pencil to write with throughout Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 2

In Year 3 the majority of children will:

- Consistently use and develop efficient joined handwriting, consolidating their knowledge of key joins and excellent presentation;
- Further develop writing speed and stamina;
- Join all handwriting.

In Year 4 the majority of children will:

- Complete all work to a very high standard of presentation;
- Have ascenders and descenders in the correct place and on the lines;
- Write automatically not having to think about formation, consistent size and spacing;
- Join handwriting all of the time with a simple, cursive, legible, accurate style;
- Write with competency at a steady dictation speed.

In Years 5 and 6 the majority of children will:

- Be writing fluently and in a neat style across the curriculum;
- Be writing at speed;
- Developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes.

Handwriting Sessions

- The basic structure of a handwriting session will focus on:
- Relaxation - warm up of gross and fine motor skills.
- Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair.
- Teacher modelling.
- Children practise independently with teacher model, then from memory.

Pen Licence

In Key Stage 2 when handwriting is consistently fluent and accurate, children will be awarded a 'Pen Licence' in the form of levelled certificates at Bronze, Silver or Gold level depending on the standard of their presentation. A child will be given a handwriting pen with blue ink, labelled with their name, to be used in all curriculum exercise books apart from Maths. The certificates will promote consistently high standards of presentation. Errors will be crossed out in line with the policy. Children are only to use blue ink-based pens in their books.

Left Handed Children

Each left handed child is identified and closely monitored by the class teacher. The following guidelines are useful to help left-handed children. Ensure that:

- The writing surface and chair are suitable for the child's own height;
- The child sits towards the left of their partner leaving plenty of space for writing on the left side of his/her mid-line (this allows maximum space for arm movement);
- The writing paper is to the left of the child's body midline;
- The paper is tilted up to 32 degrees in a clockwise direction;
- A writing tool which moves smoothly across the paper is used;
- The paper is supported with the right hand;
- The writing forearm is parallel with the paper edge as the child writes;
- The writing tool is held sufficiently far from its point to ensure that the child can see what he/she is writing.

Children with Difficulties

Any children in Reception who are struggling to form and join letters correctly will have an assessment and an intervention programme will be introduced.

Some children may continue to experience difficulties after Reception and this is often due to a co-ordination problem or adapting a left-handed style. Teachers should be aware that children with Dyspraxia, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and any other motor functioning impairment may have ongoing difficulty with

handwriting due to the nature of their special need and therefore may need to be supported with alternative means of recording.

Activities to develop 'gross motor skills' can be promoted as these will assist fine motor skills, as will plenty of pre-writing activities to loosen up the wrist and upper arm.

Parents

Parents will be given information on the cursive script adopted at school. In addition, website addresses such as www.teachhandwriting.co.uk will be given to them as a way to help support their children's handwriting at home.

Materials, Tools and Books

- Emphasis throughout the school is placed on the use of good quality writing implements including: felt tip pens both fine and broad; sharp pencils and appropriate handwriting pens. Children are encouraged to take care of materials and tools. A variety of materials and tools are used to develop pre-handwriting skills.
- Use is made of handwriting schemes such as *Collins Primary Focus Handwriting*.
- Children use handwriting exercise books appropriate to their age range.
- Children in EYFS carry out a range of activities to support their development of handwriting awareness, for example, through tracing letters in sand, glitter, shaving foam.
- Multi-media in the form of Tablets and handheld devices also support the teaching of handwriting, for example, using a stylus to write on screens such as the *Use Your Handwriting* app. (Note: tracing letters on Tablets with fingers has limited learning advantages as the hand formation is different to that of holding a pen or a pencil. Also, some apps show different representations of graphemes, for example 'a/a' and 'k/k'; digital content should supplement handwriting rather than replacing it.

Monitoring

Monitoring of handwriting and presentation comes under the main subject of English and is the responsibility of the English subject leader. Monitoring can take the form of lesson observations, sampling and moderation of work, data analysis and looking at teachers' planning.