



Handwriting Policy North Stainley CE Primary School

At North Stainley CE Primary School we have adopted Continuous Cursive Handwriting throughout the school. This has been adopted in order to benefit children in the areas of both spelling and writing. Fine motor skills are also fine tuned. The cursive handwriting style presents a fluid style that is easy to learn, neat, legible and fast.

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. It is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity (a movement stored in the body, rather than a conscious memory).

What is Continuous Cursive Handwriting?

The main features of our style of handwriting are;

- Each letter starts on the line
- The child keeps the pencil on the paper for the whole word, giving a very fluent style
- Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking
- The automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content.

What are the benefits of Continuous Cursive Handwriting?

- The motor memory in the child's hands and fingers help him/her to spell as each word is made up of one movement.
- It is proven to be beneficial to children with dyslexia as the continuous motor movement means the child does not have to think about the order of the letters
- There are less letter reversals when writing.
- Improvement in spelling.
- No need to change or relearn shapes later - if cursive is taught from the start most children will have mastered the mechanics of writing by the time they want to express their ideas more freely on paper
- Gives natural spaces between words - they stop when they get to the end of the spoken word.
- Gives natural spaces between letters - automatically with the joining stroke.
- Consistent use of one style throughout the school in all areas of the curriculum.
- The fluency established by the early use of joined up letters helps the child to express ideas in written form more readily.

Helping left-handed children to write

Left-handed children have very different needs to right-handed children when learning to write and we must remember these needs, if we expect the same high standards from these children. It is necessary to consider the following points:

Sitting position – The left-handed child should sit on the left hand side of the table so that his/her writing hand does not interfere with the writing hand of the child next to him/her.

Book/paper position – The book/paper should be positioned a little to his/her left and tilted slightly to the right of vertical (the opposite for right-handers).

This should help the child to be able to see what he/she has written and prevent smudging.

If these guidelines are followed, they should help minimise the difficulties experienced by left-handed children when writing.

If we do not remember to differentiate between the needs of left and right handed children, the left-handers tend to 'invent' methods of writing to suit themselves, creating bad habits which are difficult to eradicate.

Remember;

Young children should start with lots of patterns using chalk, paint etc. A sharp pencil should be used at all times.

Some children find pencil control very difficult (try writing with your other hand to give yourself an idea of how hard it can be!)

All help at home must be done patiently, with a sense of shared work and fun.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Handwriting is taught regularly through weekly lessons (more frequently at Key Stage 1) Shared and guided writing also provides many opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting. There are times 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.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils 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 throughout the school.

The role of the teacher:

- _ to follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting;
- _ to provide direct teaching and accurate modelling;
- _ to provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting;
- _ to have high standards for presentation of work;
- _ to observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.

Continuity and Progression

Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage 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 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.

In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with 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 and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand.

Key Stage 1

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved in Year 1 by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's agreed handwriting style. This continues in Year 2 and the four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders) are practised.

Years 3 and 4

In Year 3 the pupils consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. By Year 4 joined handwriting is used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes.

Years 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Experimentation with different writing implements is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility.

Handwriting and Reading

In school, children are exposed to both cursive and print styles as well as commercial print. They develop an awareness for reading in print and writing in cursive side by side in their learning, such as prompts around classrooms/school – teachers lettering, labels on displays/teaching aids e.g. alphabet on tables and through teachers modelling of writing.

Children with difficulties

Sometimes some children may experience difficulties but this is often due to a coordination problem or adopting a left handed style.

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. Older children needing additional support are given short bursts of handwriting practice, one -to-one with a Teaching Assistant, as often as possible (daily preferably.)

Monitoring

The presentation of all work is monitored through annual work scrutinies.