

Newdale Primary School

Policy for Handwriting

Written July 2016 by J. Thomas

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Continuous Cursive Handwriting

Aims and rationale behind this style

- As recommended by the British Dyslexia Association, to have a consistent continuous cursive style across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation; a simpler approach to forming joins; and a clearer distinction between capital and lower case letters.
- Children currently learn to print letters, then have to learn a new style of writing when it is time to join. Beginning with cursive means the children learn once.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting. Each letter begins in the same place on the line and flows from left to right. This reduces the likelihood of reversal mix-ups such as b/d and p/q.
- A smooth flow improves speed and spelling; children develop fluency whilst writing, with a physical memory of how each letter is written. Eventually, the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.
- All adults to adopt correctly and neatly formed cursive handwriting when writing in children's books, on the interactive whiteboard or when shown on displays / other handwritten resources.
- We will provide regular opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect their skills and provide targeted support for any child experiencing difficulty.

Our agreed cursive style is as below:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

- All letters will join apart from the letter 'x'.
- Each lower case letter begins on the line and loops into the main body.
- The letters will be taught to work alongside and complement the phonics programme of study from Early Years.

In the Foundation stage handwriting will be implemented as follows:

- Children will develop hand eye co-ordination, gross and fine motor skills to support handwriting.
- Children will use a range of tools to develop drawing lines and circles using gross motor skills e.g. swirling ribbons, batting balls, painting.
- Children will use a range of materials to develop fine motor skills e.g. wax crayons, markers, pencils, sponges, chunky brushes, cotton wool balls, shaving foam, finger paints, etc.
- Children will practice manipulative skills e.g. cooking, playing with constructions, threading and playing instruments.
- Children will use variety of tools and paper, indoors and outdoors for purposeful writing. e.g. role play, labelling, making cards.
- Children will physically develop the movements of letter shapes using gross motor skills (linked to music and sounds) to gain confidence with the basic movements and flow of writing.
- Children will be introduced to letters in line with their Letters and Sounds Phonics programme. Teachers will further embed handwriting when they are carrying out the daily Phonics session.
- Children will be taught how to correctly hold a pencil: using a tripod grasp and ensuring the first finger is around 2 cm away from the point. They may use triangular shaped pencils to support this initially.
- Children will be taught to form letters using an un-joined cursive style, starting each letter in the same place, using a variety of strategies and materials.
- Children will be taught how to join letters correctly by the end of reception.
- Parents will be given opportunities to support their child to practise their letter formation at home. Teachers will send home materials to enable parents to do this.

Across the Primary Age Range (KS1 and KS2)

Teachers and Teaching Assistants should:

- Have high expectations; valuing work that is the child's best effort and supporting when it clearly is not.
- Identify left-handed children and make sure they have sufficient space in which to work and that they are tilting their paper by slanting to the right.

Ensure these children in particular maintain a good posture and straight hold of their pencil.

- Encourage children to assume a correct sitting position in order to write - both feet on the floor etc.
- Provide appropriate paper and pencils and/or pens (i.e. all pencils must be sharp and of a reasonable length).
- Model how to hold a pencil correctly.
- Ensure the hand that is not holding the pencil is holding the paper.
- Reinforce how to form letters, beginning each letter in the same place on the line, using a variety of strategies and materials.
- Reinforce how to join letters correctly adopting a fluid motion.
- Monitor children's progress through regular assessments and observations of how letters and numbers are formed in all subject areas.
- Implement intervention for those children not forming letters or numbers correctly.
- Where necessary, group children and provide differentiated tasks; engaging whole year teams in planning and support.
- Modelling good handwriting: on the board, in marking children's work, displays, use cursive handwriting font on teaching materials where possible etc.
- Allow children with very poor fine motor skills to print and not make joins.

Children should:

- Take pride in their work (All children).
- Learn to write clearly recognisable letters and form them correctly (EYFS).
- Know how to begin each letter from the line and join letters neatly (KS1).
- Enhance speed and fluency in order to develop a legible individual style (KS2).
- Demonstrate correct letter formation and joins learnt in all handwriting across the curriculum (KS1 and KS2).

Teaching and Learning

- Across the school there should be daily 15-minute handwriting sessions in EYFS and KS1 (or this could be fine motor skills in EYFS). KS2 to also have daily sessions initially for the first term, then 3 x weekly (unless intervention required).

- During handwriting sessions in all key stages, children will apply taught formations to letters, words or parts of text relevant to their current learning. For example, they may practise the letters from their current phonics focus, the letter strings used in their weekly spellings, key vocabulary related to core texts or use parts of text from guided reading or literacy.
- Children will use a standard HB pencil, well sharpened and when the teacher deems a child ready, usually by the start of KS2, they will get a pen licence. (A pencil will be used in mathematics at all times.)
- Every session will have a clear focus and work is to be initialled, so that over the course of a week, children have had their progress observed by an adult.
- There is no expectation that formal written plans are available on the staff drive. Books will be used as evidence for the progression of handwriting.
- Children are to be given a lined handwriting book from year 1, using the appropriate sized lines for their age, which continues throughout the school. In reception classes, children will use a book for both phonics and handwriting to record progress and link the two together.
- It should be made very clear to children that a handwriting style is very different to a printed style of writing, but that cursive writing allows speed and fluency.

Other points

The school has purchased the system 'joinit' to be able to create documents using the continuous cursive style; early years have access to 'magic pen' and a twinkl PowerPoint to support the teaching of handwriting. These provide models of forming letters, word samples and a way to produce text using the agreed school cursive system. Each class teacher has the ability to download the software onto their personal machine so they can produce text and worksheets to support teaching and learning.

We also have photocopiable practise sheets from Collins which will support teaching and learning and provide a model for teacher to determine how well children are progressing.

Not all display materials will be expected to appear in continuous cursive writing (children should be exposed to a wide range of fonts as in the real world). However, there must be a clear display to support handwriting in EYFS and KS1; it may be also appropriate to use table top mats as further support.

IWB and Printed fonts

An easily recognisable plain, evenly spaced sans serif font ought to be used where possible when typing on IWBs and in printed materials (such as slips in books) to ensure that all children can read the type clearly. A sans serif font (such as Comic Sans, Arial, Verdana, Century Gothic etc.) is recommended by the British Dyslexic Association to facilitate ease of reading and cut down on visual stress.

Best practice for dyslexic readers has the advantage of making documents easier on the eye for everyone.

Printed font should be no smaller than 12 point.

It is also recommended that a white background should not be used, as it can be too dazzling. A cream or soft pastel is easier on the eye. Use dark coloured text on light and avoid green and red/dark pink for colour-blind individuals.

Cursive writing should be limited to the actual handwritten word (either in books as previously mentioned, or on the IWB when in handwriting mode).

Equal opportunities and special needs

All children must have the opportunity and the encouragement to reach their full potential regardless of race, creed or sex. Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper. Children will also have the opportunity to use iPads and other tools deemed appropriate to rehearse specific skills on a more regular basis. Intervention is available for children who experience significant difficulties to practice pre writing skills and fine motor coordination.

Homework

Pencils should be used in homework books unless children have a pen licence and children are encouraged to use the cursive script in all written home learning.

Review:

Reviewed March 2018.

To be reviewed in March 2019 by subject coordinator, senior leadership team and governors.