

Woodlands Primary School



HANDWRITING POLICY

Status:	Current	
Date Adopted by Governing body:	20/10/21	
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Reviewed by Curriculum Committee	October 2021	2 years

Introduction

At Woodlands, we believe that handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Given effective teaching, handwriting can be mastered by most pupils by the time they are seven or eight years old enabling them, with practice, to go on to develop a faster and more mature hand ready for secondary school and adult life. We also believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by good quality presentation. Our aim in this policy is to teach children correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly by the end of KS2 and develop a distinctive style.

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”

(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child's 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.

We adhere to The British Dyslexia Association's recommendation that children learn the continuous cursive style. The key advantages are:

- 🌐 By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- 🌐 Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- 🌐 There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- 🌐 The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

Each aim is considered equally important:

- 🌐 To teach children to write with a flowing hand that is legible, fluent and pleasant to look at.
- 🌐 To enable children to develop their own style of handwriting as they progress through Key Stage 2.
- 🌐 To support the development of correct spelling and to aid in the elimination of letter reversals by the learning of word patterns and the correct joining of letters.
- 🌐 To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals.
- 🌐 To assist children in taking pride with the presentation of their work.
- 🌐 To teach correct letter formation
- 🌐 To appreciate handwriting as an art form.
- 🌐 To display excellent examples of handwriting in every classroom and around the school.
- 🌐 To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the IWB, or on displays/resources.

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

Teaching and Organisation

We seek to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 and EYFS Curriculum. Planning is based on objectives taken from these, which ensures a progressive structure. In their short term planning teachers outline specific objectives for groups of children and individuals in order to ensure progress. Handwriting is taught regularly and at least weekly through spelling and literacy lessons and explicitly in EYFS. During lessons we ensure that children sit, position their paper/book and hold their pen/pencil correctly using their other hand to hold their work firmly. Chair height is checked to ensure it is correct. It is important that in the Early Years and at Key Stage 1 children are observed closely during the lesson to ensure that letter formation is correct.

In addition to specific handwriting lessons children are expected to apply their learning in their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work. Regular opportunities for children to produce presentation work are also planned, for example in topic books or for display. Staff model the handwriting style and use the appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style. Children are expected to show care for their workbooks, present their work with care, date work, underline where necessary and not make any marks on the covers.

Handwriting Progression

EYFS Pupils should be taught to:

- 🏠 Develop manipulation and control
- 🏠 Explore different materials and tools
- 🏠 Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens
- 🏠 Show a preference for a dominant hand
- 🏠 Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient
- 🏠 Add some marks to their drawings which they give meaning to
- 🏠 Make marks on their picture to stand for their name
- 🏠 Write some letters accurately
- 🏠 Form lower case and capital letters correctly
- 🏠 Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases

Key Stage 1 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 practise to these

Key Stage 2 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
- 🏠 Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed
- 🏠 Choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- 🏠 Choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task

(If a child joins the school in KS2 and they already write in a fluent, legible and cursive style then they will not be expected to adopt the style taught at Woodlands)

Letter Formation

At Woodlands, we teach children to use a continuous cursive writing style with the following letter formation:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The following shows the suggested groups to teach letter formation, based on the common shapes formed:

<i>a</i>	lead up, curl back, join up, back down to the line, lead out
<i>c</i>	lead up, curl back, lead out
<i>d</i>	lead up, curl back, up tall, back down to the line, lead out
<i>o</i>	lead up, curl back, loop up to join, lead on
<i>g</i>	lead up, curl back, join up, drop down, loop round
<i>b</i>	lead up tall, back down, half up and round to the line, lead on
<i>h</i>	lead up, back down, half up and over the hill, lead on
<i>k</i>	lead up, back down, half up, loop round, lead out
<i>l</i>	lead up, back down, lead on
<i>t</i>	lead up. Back down, lead on, cross the middle

<i>e</i>	lead up and across, loop back to the line, lead out
<i>s</i>	lead up, 's' form to the line, lead out
<i>x</i>	lead up, backwards c, forwards c, lead on
<i>z</i>	lead up, zig zag to the line, lead on
<i>f</i>	lead up and across, loop up and back, down past the line, loop backwards, up to the line, lead on
<i>y</i>	lead up, smiley, down past the line, loop backwards and up to the line, lead on
<i>u</i>	lead up, smiley, down to the line, lead out
<i>i</i>	lead up, down to the line, dot
<i>m</i>	lead up, drop down, over the hill, over the hill, lead on
<i>n</i>	lead on, drop down, over the hill, lead on
<i>r</i>	lead up, drop down, back up, lead on with a hat
<i>v</i>	lead up, sharp down and sharp up, lead out
<i>w</i>	lead up, sharp down, sharp up, sharp down, up and lead out

<i>j</i>	lead up, drop down past the line, loop backwards to the line, lead out
<i>p</i>	lead up, drop down, back up the line, round to the line, lead out
<i>q</i>	lead up, curl back, join up, down past the line, trace up, lead out

All letters start on the line and any word can be written without taking a pen/pencil off the page. Particular attention needs to be given when joining letters to form words, especially when the lead in to the next letter starts from a different place eg: words such as **rope open**

Capital Letters

Capital letters stand alone and are not joined to the next letter. This should be modelled by the teacher during Literacy and Phonics and spelling sessions. Inclusion The majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in school support plans (SSP's) or Individual Education Plans [I.E.P.'s]. Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited, by problems with fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENDCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child.

Electronic Presentation

At Woodlands, we have agreed to use the Twinkl cursive font for typing and displaying handwriting. It is important that children are exposed to a range of style of fonts and can recognise joined and printed script. The Twinkl font can be downloaded and added to 'fonts' on Word and other software.

Early Years Foundation Stage

During their Reception years the children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop an understanding that writing conveys meaning, e.g. books, storytelling, signs, labels etc. Children experience a wide range of handwriting-related skills, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media. For those children that are ready for handwriting practice, large pencils can be used in conjunction with lined/unlined paper. Pencil grips for correction of pencil hold are also used where appropriate.

Children in Early Years will practice printing to obtain the correct shape and formation of letters. There will be no introduction to the continuous cursive style of handwriting, patterns are practised with wide-lined paper and thinner pencils being introduced where appropriate. Teachers model correct letter formation and children practise this alongside their phonics programme (RWI). Correction of letter formation takes place on an individual basis and is taught weekly as well as through phonics and literacy. Children will be introduced to entry and lead out strokes when they have moved up to Year 1 and are showing they are ready.

In Summer 2021, the DfE released updated guidance which stated:

“At first, children should not be taught to join letters or to start every letter ‘on the line’ with a ‘lead-in’, because these practices cause unnecessary difficulty for beginners. Children may be taught to join the letters in digraphs, but this is optional. (All resources designed for children to read should be in print).”

Presentation in Books

Children must ensure that all work is presented neatly. The full date must appear at the top of the page and must be neatly underlined. Any mistakes must be neatly crossed out. Any drawings in books must be done in pencil. Rulers should always be used to draw straight lines. Good examples of handwriting will be displayed in each classroom.

Provision for SEND pupils

For children who require additional support there are strategies and resources available. Recommendations from outside agencies are implemented and if required, resources such as writing slopes, pencil grips, coloured overlays will be made available to those children. Some children may require a focus on fine motor skills before they are ready to learn to write in a cursive style.

Provision for Left-Handed Children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed. All teachers are aware of the left-handed pupils in their class and make appropriate provision:

- 🏠 Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- 🏠 Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- 🏠 pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side
- 🏠 Left-handed pupils sit to the left of right-handed pupils so they are not competing for space
- 🏠 Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically
- 🏠 Teachers are aware of the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them
- 🏠 Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat

Resources

At Woodlands we have access to a range of resources to support the teaching and development of a cursive handwriting style.

These include:

- 🏠 Write from the Start
- 🏠 Writing Repeater (records screen to playback handwriting)
- 🏠 Smartboard record function (similar to Writing Repeater)
- 🏠 Visualiser in every class to support modelling from teacher
- 🏠 Twinkl handwriting PPT slides to support teaching of letters (available via Twinkl website through school subscription)
- 🏠 Pencil grips
- 🏠 Writing slopes
- 🏠 Tracing resources; sand trays; letter stencils;

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the role of the English subject leader to monitor the teaching and learning of handwriting throughout the school. This is done through regular work sampling, analysis of assessment pieces and lesson observations. Feedback from this monitoring is used to inform staff of necessary developments in order to raise standards. Monitoring will be shared at SLT meetings.