

WESTWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

HANDWRITING GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

Handwriting is required in every aspect of school life. Time taken to teach children to write fluently will improve their ability to access all areas of the curriculum. By Year 6, children should have mastered the basics of handwriting, enabling them to develop a faster, mature hand, which will benefit them later in life.

Best practice highlights the need for all pupils to meet the following criteria unless they have specific educational needs:

“By the time children reach secondary school, they should be able to write fluently and legibly in printed and in joined writing and present their work appropriately, clearly and attractively.”

The rules underpinning our writing system are complex and should be taught in a well-structured way from the beginning. Children cannot simply ‘pick these up’ by themselves.

AIMS

The key aims of this policy are:

- To have a consistent cursive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children’s books, on the whiteboard or on displays and resources
- Children to achieve a neat, legible cursive style with correctly formed letters
- Children to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.

The following guidelines were produced in consultation with and by agreement of all staff.

GROSS MOTOR CONTROL

Gross motor control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements with the whole body or limbs. Of particular importance, in relation to handwriting, is the development of good posture and balance. Children can develop gross motor control through much of the physical development curriculum.

It is important to consolidate the vocabulary of movement by talking about the movements children make, such as going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long slow movements or quick jumpy movements.

Children should be shown how to make large movements in the air with their arms, head and shoulders, e.g., using ribbons on sticks, and the use of both sides of the body should be encouraged. Gym trail is a good opportunity to refine gross motor skills.

FINE MOTOR CONTROL

Fine motor control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually with the hand and fingers. Fine motor control is best developed through activities which involve small-scale movements such as Hand Gym activities. Until children have gained reasonable fine motor control, formal handwriting is not appropriate.

WRITING READINESS

The first consideration is to decide if the child has the necessary fine motor skills to be able to write. A child is likely to be able to begin forming letters, if they are able to copy the following:

- Horizontal lines left to right, both straight and wavy
- Straight mark
- Round and round scribble
- A diagonal cross
- A horizontal/vertical cross
- A clockwise circle
- An anti-clockwise circle
- A vertical line in a downward direction
- A vertical line in an upward direction

Mark making, drawing and colouring enable the children to practice their fine motor control, building their confidence to write letters.

Having a writing workshop in the classroom ensures that the children have the valuable opportunities needed to practice and be creative with early writing skills.

WRITING POSTURE AND PENCIL GRIP

Developing writing posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably.

- Ensure children have good pencil grip and use resources as necessary to support this
- Check that the area is large enough so that the children are not jostling each other's arms and they are free from clutter
- If writing at tables, check that the height of the tables and chairs are correct so that children can sit with their feet flat on the floor and their back straight. Their legs should be free and not come into contact with the underside of the table
- The lighting should be good so that the children can see what they have written
- Children should have a direct view of the teacher's board
- Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper and bear some bodyweight
- The paper should be tilted slightly (no more than 45 degrees): to the left for a right handed child; to the right for a left handed child

ADVICE FOR LEFT-HANDED PUPILS

All staff should be aware of the difficulties left-handed pupils face. Not all left-handers find writing difficult although our writing system is the wrong way round for them. This may need consideration when demonstrating letter formations: if teachers need to guide the hand of a left-handed child, then this should be undertaken with the left hand.

Teachers should remind left-handers to rotate the writing paper slightly, so they can see what they write. Seating position is also important: left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

SCHOOL AGREEMENTS

- As recommended by the British Dyslexia Association, we adopt a continuous cursive style of writing
- Letter formation will be taught in the four handwriting groups: curly caterpillars, long ladders, zig-zag monsters and one-armed robots
- Children will be taught using letter formation 'XCCW Joined Solid'
a b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
- All classes will have resources to support writing activities
- Teaching letter formation will begin to modelled in the early years.
- All staff will use the same vocabulary for handwriting (Appendix A)
- Discrete teaching of handwriting will take place, as a whole class and/or in small groups - books will be used as evidence
- Teachers and TAs will use the agreed cursive style when modelling writing in class and in feedback in books
- Displays will include examples of cursive script
- Children will use exercise books containing handwriting line guides for Literacy and Topic. The width of the lines is differentiated for KS1 and KS2.
- The headteacher, in consultation with the class teacher, will present the child with the next exercise book and then a pen licence during Celebration assemblies. Once a child has their pen licence, they will use an exercise book with traditional lines.
- A pencil is always used for Maths regardless of whether the child has a pen licence

EXPECTATIONS OF THE AVERAGE CHILD IN EACH PHASE

End of EYFS

- Activities promote gross and fine motor skills inside and outside
- Write forename with letters formed accurately
- Begin to know the names of the four handwriting groups and some of the letters in each group
- Begin to write lower case letters using correct letter formation
- Children to be able to write simple sentences forming most letters correctly.

End of Key Stage 1

- To demonstrate effective pencil control to correctly form all letters.
- Understand which letters belong to each handwriting family
- Write all capital and lower case letters using correct letter formation (including entry strokes) and size
- Orientate letters correctly, using the vocabulary of writing
- Begin to join letters when writing words
- Use spacing between words that reflect the size of the letters

End of Lower Key Stage 2

- Understand which letters, when adjacent to each other, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility and quality of handwriting by ensuring the downwards strokes are parallel and equidistant
- Ensure lines of writing are spaced sufficiently and that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch

End of Upper Key Stage 2

- Write legibly, fluently and fit for purpose
- Write with increasing speed
- Choose the writing implement that is best suited to the task

APPENDIX A

The vocabulary of handwriting at Westwood Primary School is as follows:

1. Handwriting groups
 - Curly caterpillar letters: o c a s d q e f g
 - One armed robot letters: r n m h b p
 - Long ladder letters: i j l t u y
 - Zig-zag monster letters: v w x k z
2. The terms 'capital and lower case letters' to be used from the beginning
3. 'Sticks and tails' used to describe ascenders and descenders
4. 'Tall and short' used to describe orientation
5. 'Horizontal and diagonal joining lines' used to describe the development of cursive script