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Ringway Primary School Handwriting Policy



Intent

At Ringway Primary School, the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed is recognised. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond primary school. The development of neat, well-formed writing should be encouraged for all pupils. To promote legible, aesthetically pleasing and consistent style of handwriting throughout the school. To encourage pupils to gain satisfaction from a neatly presented piece of work.

Implementation

We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practising speed and fluency and higher presentation skills. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers pupils to write with confidence and creativity. To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows the Nelson handwriting scheme - a whole-school programme designed to help all children develop a confident, legible and personal handwriting style and meet higher curriculum expectations from Year 1 to Year 6. The programme includes resources for pattern practice and motor skills work. Children are explicitly taught the skill of handwriting daily, explicitly modelled by teachers and practitioners. In the early years (Nursery and Reception) we follow the Squiggle Early Learning programme, a developmental approach to early writing that uses neurological and physiological movements to create mark and to ensure a firm foundation for handwriting skills. Pupils are also given the opportunity to practise their letter formation in their daily RWI lessons. A high standard of presentation is encouraged and expected in all of children's written work across the wider curriculum and not just in the handwriting books.

The process begins in the early stages of writing with the correct formation of letters of the alphabet. At the beginning of Year 2, pupils will be taught and encouraged to begin to join their handwriting. Joined handwriting may also be introduced to some pupils in Year 1 if they can correctly, consistently and fluently write legibly (this will take place in the Summer term). Subsequently, all pupils will be expected to use a joined script by the end of KS2 with support given to pupils as and when required. In all handwriting lessons, pupils will be taught the following:

- To develop fine motor control
- The importance of correct posture and paper position
- To use a pen/pencil and to hold it effectively
- To write from left to right and top to bottom on a page

- To start and finish letters correctly
- To form letters of consistent size and shape
- To use the language of writing and how to use the correct terminology, (e.g. ascenders)
- To put regular spaces between words
- How to form upper and lower case letters
- How to join correctly
- To use different styles of writing for different purposes
- The importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate effectively

Pencil grip

Children should write with a pencil (or pen when children have earned a pen licence) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil. Pupils will be taught to slant their paper/book accordingly – anti-clockwise for right handers and clockwise for left-handers.



Posture

During the handwriting lesson, teachers encourage pupils to sit comfortably by:

- Explaining why good sitting will help them to write easily.
- Reminding pupils with child-friendly prompts: feet on the floor, bottom to the back of the chair, pencil in one hand and the other hand on the paper.
- Showing pupils what 'poor' sitting looks like (leaning forward close to the paper, resting their head on the table etc).

Across the school, handwriting is carefully modelled by the teacher and good handwriting and excellent presentation are expected in children's book at all times and in children's work across the wider curriculum. In Year 4, when writing has consistently followed the relevant criteria, pupils are awarded a pen licence and will be allowed to use pen in their books (except maths, where they continue to use pencil). The criteria for pupils receiving their pen license is as follows:

- All letters are correctly formed
- Letters are consistent in size
- All ascenders and descenders are correct height/ length
- All letters joined correctly
- Capital letters are larger than lower case letters
- Spaces between words are the right size (not too small or big)
- Date and title are underlined with a ruler
- Writing is neatly presented and pride is taken in all work.

Impact

The systematic approach of the scheme alongside the high-quality modelling and delivery from teaching staff ensures development in the skill of handwriting throughout each year group. Children take pride in their written work and achieve proficiency in their own use of the Nelson handwriting script. Outcomes in children's wider curriculum work, as well as in their English books and school displays, evidence the progress that children make in this area, as well as the consistency of the approach across the school. In regard to assessment, children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation; handwriting informs part of this. In both Key Stage 1 and 2, handwriting is formally assessed as part of children's attainment within writing, this also forms part of the moderation process within Year 2 and Year 6.

National Curriculum Guidance

Year 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Year 2

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.

- To continue to use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters.
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Year 3/4

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, (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Year 5/6

Pupils should be taught to:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra, and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.