

## **Sandhurst Primary School** **Policy for Handwriting**

### Our Aim:

A consistently high standard of handwriting is promoted across the whole school which all children and staff recognise, understand and follow. For children and teachers this aims to foster a sense of pride and respect in their work.

### Introduction

At Sandhurst Primary School, we recognise handwriting as a movement skill and one which is best taught directly by demonstration, explanation and practise. Our aim is to provide children with the physical skills that they need in order to be able to be successful writers. As such, we teach handwriting through a sequential and progressive approach. As a taught skill, it is important that teachers are seen to put a high value on teaching and sustaining good handwriting. We believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by good quality presentation. We teach children correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly.

### Handwriting across the School

- In Nursery and Reception, all children are encouraged to mark make in all areas of the curriculum. We recognise the importance of developing children's fine and gross motor skills for writing and so our provision reflect this and helps to develop children's pre-writing skills as well as letter formation. The formation of letters is taught daily in Reception.
- Children use a continuous cursive handwriting style once they are forming all their letters correctly and have a comfortable pencil grip.
- Children are encouraged to maintain a correct posture and pencil grip.
- In Key Stage 1, once children are forming letters correctly, they are taught to join. From Year 1 – Year 6, handwriting is taught in three short sessions a week.
- Teachers model cursive script in all writing across the curriculum from Year 3.
- Classrooms have a cursive alphabet on display which is accessible for all children from Year 2 and small copies of the cursive script for Year 1.
- Handwriting books are used from Y1 onwards. However, writing with a range of mediums is encouraged to help with formation.
- Additional handwriting sessions are given to those children whose letter formation, joining or speed requires extra support.

## Specific Progression

We seek to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum [2014] and the EYFS Curriculum, Development Matters. Our objectives are taken from these curriculums, which ensure a progressive structure.

## Early Years and Foundation Stage

We use the Write Dance programme in the Early Years to help to develop the necessary pre-writing physical skills which children need. The children learn and practise specific movements and skills in order to be able to hold a pencil comfortably and write more fluidly. In Nursery, the emphasis is with movement and control rather than neatness. Children play with writing and this mark making is recognized and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding and development. In our Nursery and Reception classes, children are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multisensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. We recognise the importance of children being able to develop both their fine and gross motor skills and so we provide a rich provision to meet these aims. 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 children (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met. Children follow the Nelson Handwriting programme in Reception which includes making patterns as well as letter formation in a pre-cursive style.

By the end of the Early Years, children will have been introduced to a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. They will be writing letters using the correct sequence of movements. Children will show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They will have been taught to handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

## Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, the children continue to follow the Nelson Handwriting scheme, learning to form letters correctly and with ease in a pre-cursive style. The children are taught which letters belong to which 'letter family' [ie: letters which are formed in a similar ways]. Alongside this formal teaching, children work on their handwriting skills daily and in a variety of activities, e.g. writing in books, multi-sensory approaches and fine and gross motor activities and through the teaching of phonics. At the start of Year1, we also continue to teach Write Dance as it is taught

alongside the more formal Nelson scheme. For some children, it may be necessary to continue with Write Dance for longer in order to develop their skills further. Teachers teach individual children to move to the next stage of joining in a continuous cursive script once they are effectively forming all letters with the correct flicks and formation. Once joins are mastered, they are taught to write short words that practise these joins. Children practise these shapes, letters and words in their handwriting books and are taught in groups/individually or as a whole class at least three times a week.

The correction of mistakes is dealt with on an individual basis. Children are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and are also encouraged to identify letters formed correctly themselves.

The Nelson Handwriting Scheme teaches letters in the following letter families:

- l i t j u y [ladder letters]
- m n r b p h k [one armed robot letters]
- c a d o q g e f s [curly caterpillar letters]
- v w x z [zig-zag monster letters]

Once children have mastered the basic shapes, they will be taught how to write continuous cursive letters in the following order:

- i l t x z [ Straight line letters]
- c a d g q o e s [Curves to start letters]
- r v w [Top exit letters]
- n m h b p u [Tunnel letters]
- j y f k [Hooks, loops and line letters]

The next step is continuous cursive letter joins. These will be taught in the following groups:

- ai ch ck er ff sh th but jug zip [continuous cursive bottom letter joins]
- as ea ed ss igh ing sat [continuous cursive, bottom to c shape join]
- be ie se xe ze her men [ continuous cursive, bottom e letter joins]
- oe re ve we ere ure [continuous cursive, top 'e' letter joins]
- oa oo oh oi on or ou ov ow wh [continuous cursive, Top letter joins]

### **Year 3/4**

- All children's pencil grip, letter formation, and posture should be checked at the start of year 3
- Assess which individual letters the children are confident writing in the continuous cursive style.
- For those who are secure with individual letters, assess their knowledge of the joins.
- These assessments should inform groupings for handwriting interventions
- Handwriting practice needs to be frequent and structured
- Whilst handwriting books may be used to consolidate some of the joins, every effort should be made to do handwriting in English books so that Consistent sizing is practised.
- Handwriting should be taught in 3 short sessions per week
- Give regular opportunities for 'Best Copy'

### **Year 5/6**

- As above for year3/4
- Children should be producing an increased number of best copies

## **Handwriting**

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard

- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in plastisine
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you
- Handwriting patterns

### Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
  - Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

### Links to spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory.

Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised

Two spelling strategies that link particularly well to handwriting are:

#### **1. Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check**

The child: Looks at the word carefully

Says the word

Covers the word so that it can't be seen

Writes the whole word from memory

Checks the word is written correctly If not, repeat.

#### **Spelling steps**

School

S

Sc

Sch

Scho

Schoo

School

### **Expectations of staff**

- Expectations need to be high, remember a lack of effort isn't acceptable
- Ensure that your own handwriting when marking or writing on the board reflects the expectations that you have of the children.
- Model handwriting on the board rather than type
- Formal practice 3 times a week

## **Appendix**

### Expectations at the end of Reception:

ELG: Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. Children move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

### Statutory Requirements in Year 1:

Children will be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. They will be taught how to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. Children will be taught to form capital letters and form digits 0-9. They will understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and be able to practise these.

### Statutory Requirements in Year2:

Children will be taught to form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. They will 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. Children will be taught how to write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters. They will use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

## **Key Stage 2**

### **Lower KS2 (Year 3 & 4)**

#### **Statutory Requirements – Handwriting**

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 un-joined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should be joining 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 what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

### **Upper KS2 (Year 5 & 6)**

#### **Statutory Requirements – Handwriting and Presentation**

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.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

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 un-joined 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.

#### **Equal Opportunities:**

Equality of opportunity is a high priority and reference to the School's Equal Opportunity will provide examples of how this is achieved.

#### **Inclusion:**

More able children and children with Special Educational Needs are supported in their handwriting work. Children, who have ILP's in relation to their handwriting, will have in place suitable interventions and resources such as slopes and grips are stored centrally in school. Handwriting and fine motor intervention groups are set up to support children on an individual basis.

#### **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 is supported by the Head-teacher and SLT.

Signed:

Date: September 2020

Next Review date September 2023