



HANDWRITING POLICY 2014

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This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of handwriting in our school.

1. AIMS

The aim of teaching handwriting at Oakthorpe Primary School is that by the end of KS2 all children will have developed a handwriting style that is fluent, clear, joined and legible. A child's ability to write comfortably and legibly affects performance in many other areas of the curriculum and can have an effect on an individual's self-esteem. Children should therefore be helped to develop an appropriate handwriting style with which they are comfortable. We aim to ensure that transcription skills become second nature, so the children can focus on the content of what they are writing. In order to help raise attainment for all pupils, we would like to have a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting throughout the school, so the following policy has been developed.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of handwriting skills are laid out in the National Curriculum Document (2013) and in the Communication and Language and Literacy sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

The National Curriculum identifies transcription as an imperative skill as part of the Writing programme of study. It states:

"Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription ... writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting."

Foundation Stage Handwriting

The 'Physical Development' Section of the 'Early Years Outcome (2013)' document states that by the end of foundation stage (40-60+ months), a child:

- Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control
- Shows a preference for a dominant hand
- Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begins to form recognisable letters



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- Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

At Oakthorpe, we believe that in the foundation stage children need to be offered activities that develop controlled movements both in fine and gross motor skills through all kinds of play and cross-curricular opportunities.

Children should be introduced to the movements involved in 3 basic letter shapes as exemplified by: l, c, r.

Where children arrive at school able to write their names they may associate the wrong movement with certain letters (the common error is forming **o** and **a** using a clockwise movement) this should be sensitively corrected.

Children should use pencils fitted with correct pencil grips and write on paper that has lines as so much about handwriting is to do with the letters' orientation to the line. Children will begin to learn the letter shapes alongside the letter sounds whilst progressing through the Read Write Inc scheme. Children should be supervised when they are practising handwriting until letter formation is secure as bad habits reinforced in the Foundation Stage are difficult to eradicate later on.

Handwriting practice should be 'little and often' a few minutes at a time to practice a particular set of letters simply concentrating on developing accuracy, fluency and speed without the distraction of spelling and composing text.

By the end of Reception children should have:

- a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- be able to produce a controlled line which supports letter formation
- be able to write letters using the correct sequence of movements with an exit stroke so they are easier to join later

Y1 Handwriting

Y1 develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing. At the beginning of year 1, not all pupils will have the spelling and handwriting skills they need to write down everything that they can compose out loud.

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

Year 1 Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Y2 Handwriting

In year two, children should be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.

Pupils should be taught to:

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

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.



Y3 and Y4 Handwriting

Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.

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; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.

Y5 and Y6 Handwriting

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 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.



Further guidance on the teaching of handwriting is developed in the DFEE document

‘Developing Early Writing, 2001.’

NELSON HANDWRITING SCHEME

In consultation with staff, The Nelson Handwriting Scheme has been chosen as the basis for teaching handwriting at Oakthorpe. The scheme aims to develop a fluent and legible handwriting style, with a clearly structured programme. Nelson supports full coverage of the technical aspects of handwriting (including letter formation, basic joins, printing and speed writing).

Each year group has the relevant ‘Resources and Assessment’ book, as well as the ‘Developing Skills’ book. The ‘Teacher’s Book’ is available in each phase. Each classroom also has the relevant interactive CD-Rom installed onto the desktop to enable modelling the correct formations and joins on the smartboard.

The books are distributed as follows:

Year 1 – Developing Skills – Red Level

Year 2 – Developing Skills – Yellow Level

Year 3 – Developing Skills – Book 1

Year 4 – Developing Skills – Book 2

Year 5 – Developing Skills – Book 3

Year 6 – Developing Skills – Book 4

Each year group also have access to the resources for the year groups above and below if necessary. The agreed letter formations and joins are attached to the policy in Appendix A. The individual joins can be found in the appropriate Developing Skills book. This has been approved in consultation with staff as a working party. It also complements the Read Write Inc phonics scheme which is taught at Oakthorpe.

PEN LICENCES

In Key Stage 2, pupils at Oakthorpe should be encouraged to write in black or blue ink once their handwriting is consistently joined and neat. As practise for this, children may be encouraged to use pen for display work.

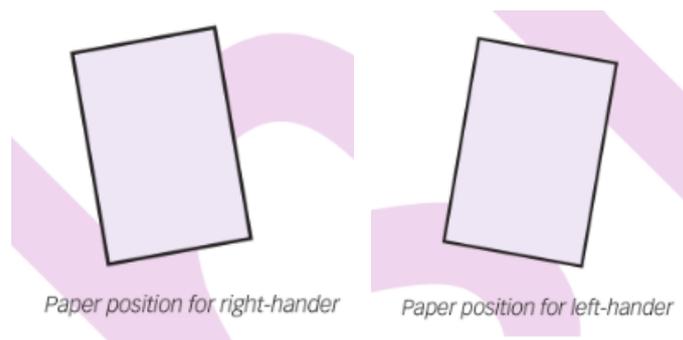


GRIP AND POSTURE

A comfortable pencil grip is taught in Reception and consistently applied throughout the school. This generally consists of thumb and forefinger gripping the pencil with the middle finger supporting it. Other writing grips may be applied for children who may struggle with this grip. Writing grip triangles may be attached to the pencil if children find this comfortable and an aid to their natural pencil grip. The focus is for a comfortable recognised grip which maintains legible handwriting. Correct writing posture is also encouraged to include both feet planted firmly on the ground and the chair tucked well under the table so as to support the body. Legs, body and arms should be at 90° angles to each other. The non-writing hand is encouraged to hold the paper still. Teachers will often start handwriting lessons with exercises to loosen muscles, improve coordination and prepare them for writing.

LEFT HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children should be seated to the left of a right-handed child so as to avoid clashing. Their paper needs to be to the left side of the midpoint of their body and tilted about 30° clockwise so they can see what they are writing. To avoid smudging their work, children are encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5 centimetres from the end of the writing implement. Right handed teachers could model letter formation, sky writing, etc with their left hand. Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. They should, therefore, be given attention in the classroom to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter a fast, fluent and legible hand. Some adaptations may be necessary for the letter formation of left handers, e.g. crossing ts and fs from right to left (see examples below).



(Taken from Developing Early Writing, DfEE, 2001)



(taken from www.rctednet.net)



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Progress is discussed twice a year at parents' evenings. If children have specific problems or targets associated with handwriting, then these will be addressed at the parents' meetings. The school's preferred handwriting style will be shared with parents via this policy, and may be mentioned at phase meetings where necessary.

SEN

Children with special needs in handwriting will be helped by appropriate teacher intervention. This may include the provision of specialist resources, pencil grips, wider spacing lines or a different handwriting style. It may involve more practice in fine and gross motor skills activities. Further advice can be sought from the SENCO or outside agencies such as Occupational Therapists.

Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is recommended that in Reception handwriting is taught through daily phonics. Multi-sensory approaches will help to develop fine motor skills, children may also practise letter formation one to one with an adult.

Handwriting should continue to be practised during daily phonics in year 1, it should also be directly taught at least weekly. This should continue in year 2 with the children taught joins as and when appropriate. Sessions may become more frequent to support this – up to 3 times a week.

Years 3, 4 and 5 should teach one half an hour lesson a week and in Year 6 lessons are taught where necessary.

Teachers will model the agreed handwriting style during shared and guided writing, as well as in marking and displays.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored by the Literacy Team in consultation with staff, the policy will be reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.



APPENDIX A

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee
Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk/k Ll Mm Nn Oo
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9