



Handwriting Policy

Introduction

At The Mayflower Federation we are committed to ensuring that all children achieve the highest standards in all areas of the curriculum, including handwriting. This policy outlines our aims for children's handwriting from Nursery to Year 6 in order to prepare them for the demands of secondary school and beyond. An effective handwriting policy allows us to ensure all children develop a confident and efficient handwriting style that fully supports them with their learning.

Background Information

Handwriting is a movement skill and needs to be developed throughout a child's schooling.

Regularly teaching children to consistently form letters with the correct sequence of strokes is vital to produce confident and fluent writers.

Fluent handwriting is key to children accessing higher level learning:

- Allows pupils to engage in quick note-taking.
- Confident and efficient handwriting is essential for essay writing and other demands.
- The more automatic the handwriting, the more children are able to focus on content.

"Pupils who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently are, in every sense, disenfranchised." ***National Curriculum English Programmes of Study***

National Curriculum Guidelines for Handwriting

Year 1

Pupils' writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

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 to practise these.

Year 2

In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 should be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning to support the move to joining is essential.

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 un-joined.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size and orientation in relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Year 3-4

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 un-joined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. 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 are clearly differentiated.

Year 5-6

Pupils should be able to write down their ideas quickly. By the end of year 6, pupils' reading and writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum in year 7.

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, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version).

Teaching Handwriting at The Mayflower Federation

Each year group has an outline of teaching expectations for all children and the letters/words to be covered each term. If there is a short school term, letters/words are to be carried forward into the next term.

When the year group outline is not appropriate for an individual child, teachers will refer to the year group above/below to support individual handwriting needs.

Handwriting Sessions

Handwriting is taught twice a week for 15-20 minutes from Reception to Year 6.

Sitting Posture

A good sitting posture is taught to all children – Teachers do this through the use of the 'posture poster' in the teachers resource pack.

Stabilising the Paper

Children are encouraged at all times to stabilise the paper with their non-writing hand.

This is done in imaginative ways. For example:

- Children name their other hand and to then teach it/talk to it if it strays.
- Children place a sticker on their hand to remind them.

Children are encouraged to use both hands when carrying out other activities in the classroom (e.g. holding the pot as you put the paintbrush in)

Formation Phrases

When teaching handwriting, the letter formation phrases (as outlined in the teacher resource pack) are followed in each year group. Letters are taught in the order specified.

Letter Formation

Letter formation is demonstrated by adults in class, ensuring that the children can see the correct direction of movement.

Left Handers – letter formation is demonstrated to left handed children using the left hand. This is very important for direct copying.

Self Evaluation in KS2

Children are encouraged to self evaluate their handwriting in their handwriting books as well as in their literacy books. Children are further encouraged to set themselves goals to improve their handwriting.

Speed Writing in Year 5 & 6

Children who have good, confident, fluent letter formation are more likely to be able to write at speed. Children in upper key stage 2 are set handwriting speed tasks. These include dictation and copying. Children are encouraged to increase their time, number of words per minute and legibility.

Handwriting Pens

Handwriting Pens can be given to children in KS2 when they are confident and consistent with letter formation and joining.

There will also be a second option of a 'Biro Pen' that children will be able to choose if they and the class teacher feel it would benefit their handwriting in Year 5 & 6.

SENCOs will have a larger range of pens and pencils to suit children needs if required – please talk to your SENCO if you have concerns about a child's pen grip.

Handwriting Books

Children record their handwriting practice into books from Years 1 – 6. The handwriting books have the same line spacing as literacy books, with a shaded area for initial practice of the letters. The second half of the page has plain lines, to allow children to generalise letter formation.

The marking policy applies. However, wherever possible, children will be given immediate feedback through teacher modelling and verbal feedback (VF).

Additional Support

Some children may need more support when developing their handwriting skills. Where this is the case, class teachers are encouraged to speak to the SENCO to discuss any concerns and to identify possible resources that could support.

Handwriting in the Early Years - Nursery and Reception

In Nursery and the beginning of Reception, handwriting will not be formally taught, unless the class teacher has identified pupils who are ready for the modelling of letter formation.

Pre-Writing / Motor skills activities should be taking place daily in Nursery.

Name Writing -Children to learn how to write their name, using laminated tracing cards (please see resource pack).

Phonics/letter formation

Pre-Writing Shapes - Children are taught and regularly practise pre-writing shapes

Multi-sensory

Children to work with adult to practise shape formation using multi-sensory activities. For example:

- Drawing large shapes on easels or on pieces of paper on the wall.
- Constructing shapes out of dough.
- Drawing in sand, shaving foam, on sand paper, finger painting, cornmeal, smelly markers, hold small wet sponge between thumb, index and middle finger and draw on blackboard (will facilitate pen grip).

Gross and Fine Motor Skills

Gross and fine motor skills are important when developing good prewriting skills. Children should be encouraged to take part in large movement activities as well as fine motor activities.

Pen Grip

Children are encouraged to develop the correct pen grip and to pick up the pen/pencil near the point with thumb and index finger and swing the pen back into pen grip position.

Tips to improve pen grip:

If children are struggling with pen grip class teachers will contact see the SENCO for further support.