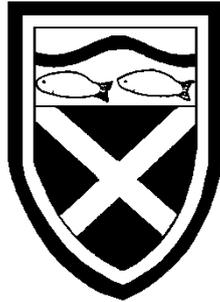


St Andrew's CE Primary School



Handwriting Policy

Summer 2021

Next Review: Summer 2022

St Andrew's CE Primary School

Every Child A Champion in Their Own Right. Matthew 5.16 - "Let Your Light Shine."

Handwriting Policy

Rationale

"Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. It needs to be systematically taught." (Handwriting Society)

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it is usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through school the requirement to write legibly and fluently, at speed, increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases.

For the child who has learned to form letters without apparent deliberation or effort, writing tasks are straightforward. In contrast, for the child who is still struggling with the basic elements of the skill then even copying down words may present a problem.

The difficulty with writing stems from the complexity of the task which involves a combination of different skills, including the physical co-ordination required for handwriting. There is a need for automaticity, and how the component skills, such as joining up letters and spelling, need to be in place by 11 years. Creativity will suffer if the child has to focus on the mechanics of writing. As a group, reluctant writers lacking practice will trail behind their more able classmates whose skills improve rapidly just because they write more.

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Given effective teaching, handwriting can be mastered by most pupils by the time they are seven or eight years old enabling them, with practice, to go on to develop a faster and more mature hand ready for secondary school and adult life. It is vital to ensure consistent teaching and the development of legible, fluent joined handwriting throughout the school.

Handwriting is a movement skill. It is possible to write one's name and address with eyes closed because the movements of the hand when writing are firmly established in the movement memory because they have been made so often. This is why children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often.

The first handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that the children we teach learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning.

Children who have been allowed to invent their own ways of forming letters will find it harder to change the longer they are allowed to persist, but unless these habits are 'unlearned' (often at great effort since the movement memory is very retentive and will tend to revert to old habits) it will be impossible for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. The correct formation of all letters needs to become quite automatic and may require a lot of practice.

Handwriting can only be taught effectively by practising a good style from which a mature hand can develop. It is how handwriting is taught in the very early stages that determines how well it is learned.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the competent teaching of early skills will be consistent across the school.

Aims

To enable our children to:

- write easily, speedily and legibly.
- produce writing in both print and joined styles which can be adapted for a wide range of purposes.

- present work in a form appropriate to the task, so that the finished product is suitably and attractively presented.
- move towards developing a 'personal hand'.

Objectives (To achieve these objectives we have adopted the PenPals for Writing version of a cursive script.)

- To have consistent teaching of handwriting through all Years.
- To have a style which is used by staff and children alike - children are unlikely to produce better writing than the example placed before them - consequently when writing for children, teachers' handwriting must be the best example of what the children are striving for. To this end we will use Penpals for Handwriting as our core handwriting scheme.
- To ensure that the correct shape is learned from the beginning, so that the correct movements become automatic.
- To give children the opportunity to write with a wide range of implements on paper of different types and sizes.
- To give children regular periods of consistent practice, in order for them to develop the necessary fine control needed for writing, in a reasonably short period of time.

A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. As such, we actively teach handwriting as part of the Literacy curriculum through discrete weekly lessons, reinforcing sessions and application every day. 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.

The *Penpals for handwriting* scheme (Cambridge University Press) will be introduced in The Foundation Stage and will help prepare children for handwriting, consolidate their motor control and introduce letter shapes. It is expected that most children will be forming each letter by the end of Reception.

Handwriting lessons will continue throughout the school following the scope and sequence document for *Penpals for Handwriting*, which explains when letters and joins are introduced (See Appendix).

To develop a clear, legible style of writing, children will be taught to:

- hold a pencil comfortably; promoting a legible style that encourages writing from left to right, from top to bottom of the page and starting and finishing letters correctly
- develop a consistent size and shape of letters and a regularity of spacing between letters and words join letters correctly
- develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We will never simply ask children to copy models from a sheet or practice book.

Please note the following important points:

- Changing handwriting takes a lot of time and effort.
- Encouragement is essential.
- Short, regular, frequent periods of practice are much more effective than long sessions.
- The teacher should use modelling of both right and left handed movements and vocalise the size, shape and movement of the pencil
- PenPals for Handwriting is available on all classroom computers
- Children should be encouraged in self and peer assessment.
- Particular children's work can be scanned or shown using a visualiser and examined as a model.
- The teacher should tour the classroom during handwriting sessions to 'see' and comment on everyone's work assisting individuals as needed.
- Handwriting must be regarded as valuable and time must be found to teach it effectively and successfully.
- All teachers and support staff should become familiar with the expected handwriting style.
- Move children from pencil to pen in Year 5/6.

Handwriting tips for teachers

- Insist on a correct, balanced seating position.
- Two hands to be used at all times.
- 6 feet on the floor, the chair's and yours!
- Warm-up exercises to prepare for sessions and to develop fine motor skills.

Questions to help with assessment

1. Is the writing generally legible and pleasant?
2. Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
3. Are the joins made correctly?
4. Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
5. Is the writing properly aligned?
6. Does the child adopt the correct posture?
7. Does the child hold the pen/pencil correctly?
8. Does the child use the correct movement when forming and joining letters?
9. Does the child reverse or invert any letters?
10. Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
11. Is the writing easily legible?
12. Is the writing appropriate?
13. Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with level descriptors:

- Level 1 Letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated
- Level 2 Letters are accurately formed and consistent in size.
- Level 3 Handwriting is joined and legible
- Level 4 Handwriting style is fluent, and legible.
- Level 5 Handwriting style is joined, clear and fluent, and where appropriate, is adapted to a range of tasks.

Left Handed Children

Left-handed children will not in any way be discouraged from favouring the left-hand in their work. They may need to position their paper at an angle on the table. The tripod grip (thumb and first finger grip the pencil, which then rests on the side of the second finger) should be encouraged. Practise on a vertical blackboard could help this position.

Resources

Penpals for Handwriting Big books Year 1 – 4

CD Rom Years 1 -6

Teacher book Years 1 – 6

Inclusion

We ensure that our objectives, materials, resources and organisation enables all children to fully participate in Handwriting activities and learning, taking into account their specific needs where possible.

Every Child Matters Policy Statement

At St Andrew's, an inclusive school, every child has an entitlement to fulfil his/her potential. This is achieved by ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils in relation to:

- ◆ Being healthy
- ◆ Staying safe
- ◆ Enjoying and achieving
- ◆ Making a positive contribution
- ◆ Achieving social and economic well being

Home School Learning

The Home Learning Policy supports the Teaching and Learning Policy. It is a positive enhancement to learning and should be seen as such by pupils, teachers and parents. In order to promote this: All Home Learning tasks are set on Insight so pupils can access the tasks easily and parents can monitor the completion of the tasks and support their children effectively. In the case of children not being present in school (such as during an epidemic resulting in school closures), the use of home learning through email and access to Google Classroom will be used to reduce gaps in learning and will focus on differentiated non-negotiable and basic skills tasks as well as other key areas and objectives essential to the English curriculum. In the case of a pupil being unable to access technology to view and complete work arrangements will be made for paper learning packs to be collected or posted to individuals. Marking and feedback must be completed as soon as possible.

Date: Summer Term 2021

This Policy will be reviewed annually in the Summer Term