

At Howard Park we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards as the pupils take pride in and have a sense of ownership of their work. As a school we are adopting the fully cursive method of handwriting.

There are three main purposes to this policy:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils;
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject;
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school;

### Background

Why is a handwriting policy important for a primary school?

We believe that Handwriting is an art

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. The surest way to ensure consistent teaching and the development of legible, fluent joined handwriting throughout the school is to have a written policy agreed and put into practice by all staff.

Handwriting is a movement skill, 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. The correct formation of all letters needs to become quite automatic and may require a lot of practice.

Suzanne Tiburtius of the National Handwriting Association

### Aims:

- To raise standards in writing across the school.
- To have a consistent approach across both Key Stage One and Two when teaching handwriting and presentation of work throughout the school.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.

For pupils to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Develop flow and speed, so that eventually they are able to produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing.

## Strategy for Implementation

### Entitlement and curriculum provision

Handwriting is taught regularly through short, focused sessions and may be linked with spelling, grammar or phonics objectives. Teaching generally occurs outside Literacy lessons, although shared and guided writing also provides additional opportunities for the teaching, intervention of, modelling of and monitoring of handwriting.

### Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet.

Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned.

### The role of the teacher:

- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling.
- To provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting.
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.

## Continuity and Progression

### Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. Pupils are to be taught to use lead-in strokes, following agreed policy, as soon as they are ready for letter formation. (For agreed letter formation please see Appendix 1).

To aid movement, 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 pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met. In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding that marks on paper convey meaning. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. As physical development is integral in the development of writing each classroom has a finger exercise area to develop fine motor control.

### Key Stage 1

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style and begin to use fully cursive handwriting in Year One by starting to join their letters. This is dependent on ability not age/ year of child.

This is achieved in Year 1 by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's agreed handwriting style. This continues in Year 2.

## Key Stage Two

The target for children in Key Stage Two is to produce a fluent, consistently formed style of fully cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words.

- Children will have regular handwriting sessions using appropriate prepared resources, in the agreed handwriting style, or specialist handwriting books.
- Children in Year Three, Year Four and Year Five will write with pencils until the class teacher assesses that they are joining competently and consistently. They will then be given a handwriting pen.
- In Year Six children most children will use a handwriting pen.
- Children will use a pen to complete the majority of class work, where appropriate and using a fully cursive style.
- Pencils will be used in Numeracy or for drawing and completion of diagrams.
- All children in Key Stage Two will practise their letter formation when copying their weekly spellings.

### Presentation guidance

It is essential that all children should have pride in their work and that it is set out well.

From Year 3 pupils must be encouraged to use a neat, cursive style in all written work, except Numeracy.

- All work must begin with the date. In Literacy this must be written in the following way: Tuesday 10th September 2011. In all other subjects the short date can be written in the following format: 10.9.11.
- The date should be written on the top line and underlined (not in the margin). The next line should be missed and an appropriate title should be written. This should be underlined in Key stage 2.
- Key Stage 1 underlined, as appropriate for ability.
- Underlining should be completed with a ruler.
- Children should write from the margin to the edge of the page.
- Work should be ruled off at the start of the following lesson, leaving the teacher room to comment on the work. Teacher's comments will indicate whether a correction needs to be addressed.
- At Key stage 1 children will generally begin new work on a new page as appropriate for ability.
- At Key stage 2 children will rule off after the last piece of work ready to begin new work. Work should be ruled off at the start of the following lesson, leaving the teacher room to comment on the work.
- Teacher's comments will indicate whether a correction needs to be addressed.
- Children will be encouraged to use brackets and a cross to show mistakes. ( X )
- Rubbers will be used within reason to correct pencil work.
- Criteria for presentation of work will be discussed prior to commencement of work.
- Pictures should be coloured in pencil crayons or plastic crayons. Felt pens should not be used in exercise books.
- When squared paper is used for Numeracy 1 digit is written in each box and a line is left between each sum.
- In Numeracy an eraser can be used at the teacher's discretion.

### Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator. Thicker triangular pencils, pencil grips and wider lines will be used by children experiencing problems writing alongside other activities to develop their fine motor skills.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child, so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right-handed teacher. Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

### The learning environment

A dedicated writing area is established in all classrooms at Foundation and Key Stage 1. Writing areas/boxes are equipped with a range of writing implements and materials. In KS2 suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Throughout all Key stages teachers display both handwritten and word processed work to give a high profile to developing a neat, legible cursive style. The role of parents and carers

The Foundation Stage teachers play an important role in communicating this at an early stage, for example, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their pupils by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names, practising drawing patterns together, playing joining up games which encourage left to right directionality. The Foundation Stage teachers, in partnership with the English subject leader, are expected to communicate with pre-school agencies to encourage good practice.

All members of staff (including teaching assistants, supply teachers, students) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

