

Lyminster Primary School



Handwriting Policy

Lyminster Primary School Wick Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 7JZ

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POLICY

HANDWRITING POLICY

Rationale: Why is handwriting important for Lyminster Primary School?

'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, enabling them, with practice, to go on to develop a faster and more mature hand ready for secondary school and adult life.'

Suzanne Tiburtius, National Handwriting Association

Handwriting is a movement skill. Regular handwriting practice ensures that writing is firmly established in a child's movement memory because they have made the movements so often. Therefore, children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and frequently.

Handwriting lessons are vital to ensure that we teach children to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning. All children, from Early Years to Year 6, should be taught directly by **demonstration, explanation and practice**.

Children not yet ready to write must be provided with a rich range of activities and resources with which to mark-make until they are ready to start writing (see EYFS Development Matters).

Aims

For children:

- To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed.
- To develop their confidence in themselves as writers.
- To use handwriting as an aid to spelling and reading.
- To derive pleasure from developing an aesthetically pleasing writing style of which they can be proud.

Why a Cursive Style?

A consistent, whole school approach to a cursive style of handwriting is to be adopted because research shows that:

- Children are less likely to reverse letters;
- There is a clearer distinction between capitals and lower case;
- It helps to improve writing and spelling skills for children with dyslexia;
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling;
- Children's attainment in spelling and sentence formation are improved when a cursive style has been introduced from early years;
- A cursive style eliminates early problems of spacing between letters and words;
- Increased speed and flow of movement in Key Stage 2 enables children to retain their ideas and record them quickly and automatically.

Teaching Handwriting

Handwriting will be taught and highlighted through a combination of focussed sessions, phonics lessons, English lessons and the wider curriculum. Teachers and support staff should model exemplary handwriting across the curriculum where appropriate, although children should continue to be exposed to a range of writing styles and fonts when reading texts and around the classroom and the school environment. We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

From Year 1, our teachers are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including marking work and, where practicable, providing written comments or feedback. Teachers will use a green pen when responding to work in children's books.

Discrete handwriting sessions must be taught four times per week from Year 1 to Year 6. These should last 10 minutes per session. Each class teacher will set out their expectations for high quality handwriting and presentation. Sessions in Years 5 and 6 should focus on speed as well as style. Misconceptions should be addressed immediately with opportunities for children to react to feedback straightaway. All work must be long dated and light-marked.

Children with specific learning difficulties will be taught in accordance with advice from the SENDCO and with reference to their individual support plans.

Children in reception will be taught the correct formation of the cursive style of letters (upper and lower case) and digits (0 – 9) as they become developmentally ready, but will not be asked to join. Letters will be taught alongside the introduction of Read Write Inc letter sounds and in the same order (m, a, s, d, t, etc.). Any children showing an inclination to join letters at this stage may be introduced to joining if able to do so in a neat, legible style. (This will ensure that no 'bad habits' are formed). Digraphs (a pair of letters representing a single speech sound) will be introduced in a cursive and pre-cursive style.

In Year 1, children will revise the correct formation of lower case, upper case and digits during the autumn term, using letter families (see Appendix 1). They will then be taught to join two letters following the scheme of baseline joins (see Appendix 1). Once the children are confident with this, they will be encouraged to apply these skills to their independent writing. Children will then begin to learn horizontal joins (see Appendix 1) as appropriate.

In Year 2, children will continue to join two letters as in Year 1, moving on to practising writing words and short sentences during handwriting sessions. Children will be encouraged to join letters in their independent work, provided that they are using a neat, legible style. Spacing between words must reflect the size of the letters. Pens will be provided for children writing independently in a neat, cursive style.

In Years 3 and 4, children should be using joined handwriting throughout all their independent work, where appropriate. All children will write in black pen from Year 3 (although there may be exceptionality for children with developmental or cognitive delay). Handwriting sessions should aim to increase the fluency with which children are able to write down what they want to say. Teaching focus should move away from copying teacher's work, towards composing or copying their own writing.

In Years 5 and 6, when practising handwriting, children must be encouraged to increase their speed and should be able to copy or write their own written work. Children must be clear about what standard and style of handwriting is used for a particular task and should use an unjoined style where appropriate (e.g. labelling a diagram, poster or data, for algebra or filling in a form). Children should develop stamina by having the strength and mobility to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.

All children must be reminded of correct posture and pencil grip, as explained in Appendix 2.

We use Letter-join as the basis of our handwriting policy and cover all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. As a catalyst to speedy handwriting, we encourage parents and carers to practise handwriting at home and provide free access to the Home Edition of Letter-join.

Consistency Throughout the School

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Examples of good practice and progress should be celebrated and displayed.

Left-Handed Provision

To ensure that left-handed children are not disadvantaged when writing, a range of strategies will be employed:

- Letter formation and skywriting will also be completed with left hand to provide these children with a model (Letterjoin does not have this facility).
- Left-handed children will sit on the left of right-handed children to ensure that their arms do not clash, and they will also be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- To avoid smudging their work, left-handed children will be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of their writing implement, and their wrist should be straight.
- As writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children, they should be supported to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter them meeting the aim of developing a fast, fluent and legible handwriting style.

Assessment

Both handwriting and writing books will be monitored as part of the school's ongoing book scrutiny process. Teachers will continually assess children's handwriting during discrete and cross-curricular sessions, providing immediate feedback and addressing any misconceptions. Handwriting is an element of the half-termly writing assessment for each child.