

Wood End First School



Handwriting Policy

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WOOD END FIRST SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

1. Introduction

The National Curriculum states:

Statutory requirements Handwriting 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.

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.

2. Aims

To help children achieve a neat and legible style of writing, leading to a fluent joined-up style and to develop awareness that general presentation should be of a high standard. Wood End First School teaches cursive handwriting from Foundation stage.

3. The Importance of Handwriting to the Curriculum

Handwriting is a movement skill and one which is best taught directly by demonstration, explanation and practice. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and may require a lot of practice. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency and legibility.

4. Strategy for Implementation

4.1. Entitlement and Curriculum Provision

Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the week. Explicit teaching and practise of handwriting skills generally occur outside the literacy lessons. Shared and guided writing during topic, literacy and Read Write Inc. lessons provide many other opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting.

Children should be allowed a designated time every week to practise, simply concentrating on developing accuracy, fluency and speed without the distraction of spelling and composing text. As for all motor skills, long practice sessions spaced apart are much less productive than short and frequent sessions. Handwriting practice should be 'little and often', a few minutes at a time to practise a particular set of letters.

4.2. 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; in all lessons it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet. Consistency across the whole school in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided through resources is the key to effective learning.

5. 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;
- to model appropriate handwriting to the children when using whiteboards, flip charts or when marking books.

6. Continuity, Progression and Presentation

The letter formation taught is a pre-cursive style (see Appendix 1). This ensures an early transition to joined writing. Continuity of style is ensured through use of the Read Write Inc. terminology and the school's agreed letter formation pattern (Appendix 2). Line guides should be provided when children are writing on plain paper to help develop uniformity of size and the correct position of the letters. Wide or narrow lines are used according to the child's needs and at the teacher's discretion. The use of rubbers is discouraged.

7. Posture

Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably. Correct posture is taught as outlined here:

- Ensure that they have a good pencil pincer grip (use pencil grips where appropriate)
- Ensure feet are flat on the floor
- Body faces desk squarely so non-dominant arm can support body weight
- Children should be sitting up with their bottoms pushed into the back of their chairs
- The lighting should be good, so that the children can see what they have written
- Children should have a direct view of the teacher/board
- Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper and bear some body-weight
- The paper should be tilted slightly and may vary for left-/right-handers
- Left-handed children to sit to the left side of right-handed children so that their arms do not clash.

8. Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point, on the line, and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. At this stage the

correct formation of letters is stressed. 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 and unless these habits are 'unlearned' it will be very difficult for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. To encourage correct letter formation a 'patter' is used to aid memory e.g. *a* – 'get ready, back around the apple and down the leaf' (see Appendix 2).

'Get ready' is the phrase used to start each letter.

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. Gross motor skills are developed through sky-writing letters, making patterns in the air and making different body shapes and actions. Fine motor skills are developed through bead threading, playdough modelling, finger painting etc. Pencil control is developed through tracing, pattern copying etc.

The programme 'Write Dance' is used to support the development of fine and gross motor skills.

9. Suggested Activities to Develop Gross and Fine Motor Skills

- Tracing in wet sand
- Painting using thick brushes (water on playground/wall)
- Pegboard patterns
- Sewing and weaving activities
- Cutting out
- Whiteboard work
- Draw letters on backs/different textures eg. carpet, sandpaper
- Jelly letters

A designated 'Funky Fingers' area to develop fine motor control is always available in continuous provision.

Letter formation is practised and the link to the phonic sound is made.

Patterns:



Easy letters:



Harder letters:



There is a booklet that can be sent home to help parents help their child (see Appendix 3).

10. Key Stage 1

Building on the Foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. 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. Children move on to thin pencils when appropriate. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion is taught in line with the Read Write Inc. programme and the school's agreed letter formation patter.

In Foundation stage and Key Stage 1, joins are also introduced with the phonic teaching e.g. *ch* is taught as two letters that make one sound (a digraph) so it makes sense to write it as one unit from the moment it is introduced. Similar for *igh* as a trigraph.

11. Inclusion

The vast majority of children are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc.

12. Left-Handed Pupils

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

- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.
- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins, as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.

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

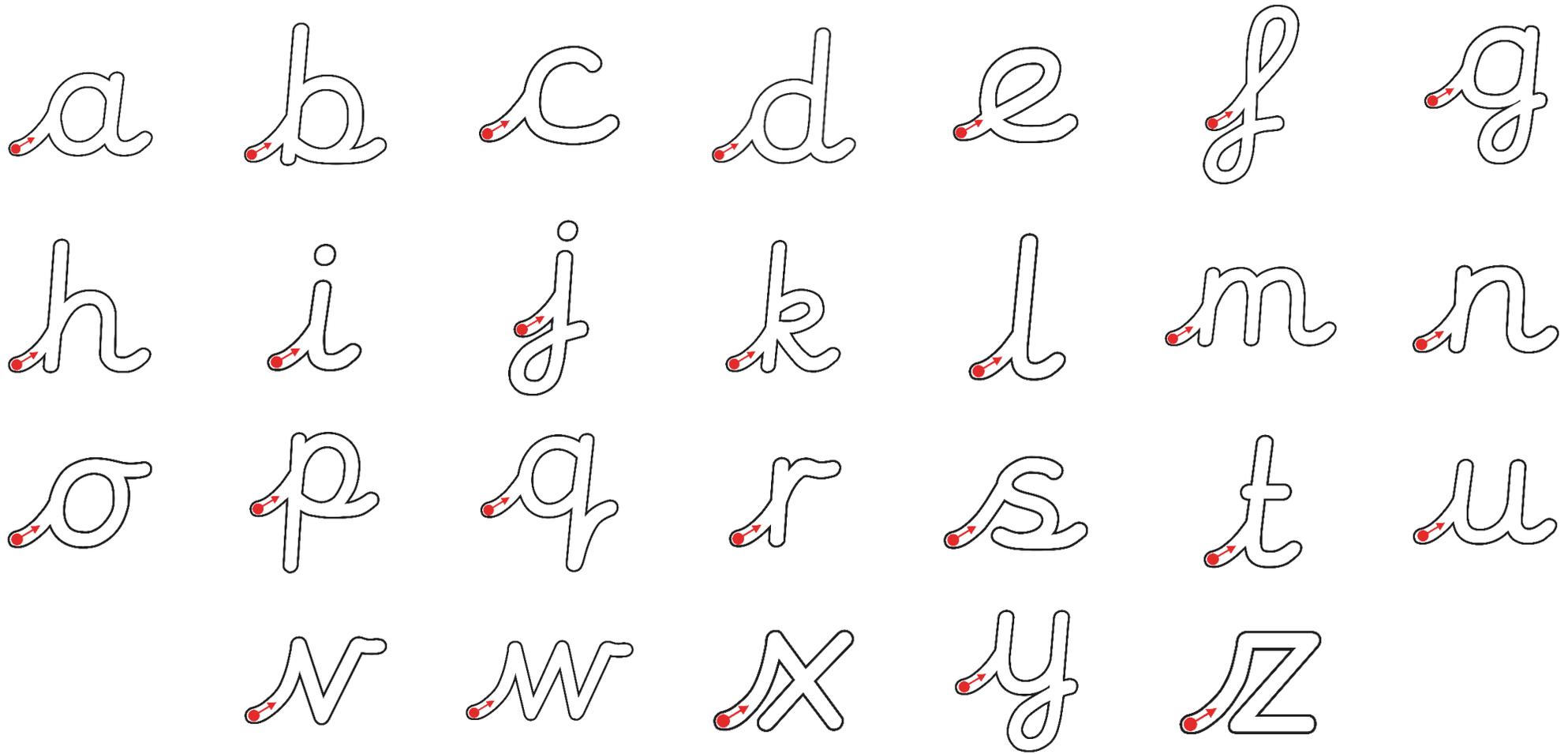
Where appropriate, left- and right-handed gripper pencils are used.

13. Resources

- Appendix 3 (Parent Guide: Handwriting)

Implemented: September 2016

Review date: July 2018



RWI Handwriting Phrases – What to Say

Letter	Phrase
<i>m</i>	Get ready, down Maisie, mountain, mountain
<i>a</i>	Get ready, back around the apple, down the leaf
<i>s</i>	Get ready, slither down the snake
<i>d</i>	Get ready, back down his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet
<i>t</i>	Get ready, down the tower, across the tower
<i>i</i>	Get ready, down the body, dot for the head
<i>n</i>	Get ready, down Nobby, over his net
<i>p</i>	Get ready, down the plait and over the pirate's face
<i>g</i>	Get ready, back around her face, down her hair and give her a curl
<i>o</i>	Get ready, back and all around the orange and go
<i>c</i>	Get ready, curl back around the caterpillar
<i>k</i>	Get ready, down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg
<i>u</i>	Get ready, down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle
<i>b</i>	Get ready, down the laces to the heel, round the toe
<i>f</i>	Get ready, down the stem and draw the leaves
<i>e</i>	Get ready, lift off the top and scoop out the egg
<i>l</i>	Get ready, down the long leg
<i>h</i>	Get ready, down the head to the hooves and over his back
<i>r</i>	Get ready, down his back and then curl over his arm
<i>j</i>	Get ready, down his body, curl and dot
<i>v</i>	Get ready, down a wing, up a wing
<i>y</i>	Get ready, down a horn, up a horn and under his head
<i>w</i>	Get ready, down, up, down, up
<i>z</i>	Get ready, zig-zag-zig
<i>q</i>	Get ready, back around her head, up past her earrings and down her hair and flick
<i>x</i>	Get ready, down the arm and leg and repeat the other side

Letter Formation

Letters grouped according to direction of writing.

Group 1: anti-clockwise curves ...

a c d g o q s

Group 2: down-up-and-over

b h n m p r

Group 3: basically vertical lines ...

f i j k l t

Group 4: down-up-down

u v w y

Group 5: oddments

e x z

Parent Guide

<http://www.woodend.org.uk/attachments/article/56/Parent%20Guide%20-%20Handwriting%20A5%20web.pdf>