



## Handwriting Policy

"We are all aware that handwriting is the neglected, one of the 3 R's. A major problem faced by handwriting teachers is to convince the children and sometimes their parents that handwriting is still a necessary skill and not an anachronism. The argument that much schoolwork is now written on computers is often quoted but observation of notebooks and exercise books of most school age children reveal that a great deal is still hand-written. The upper junior and secondary age pupil who is unable to pick up a pen and write quickly and legibly on paper is still at a considerable disadvantage. Time is wasted writing slowly; there is frustration when the text cannot be easily read and a loss of confidence is commonly the result."

Gwen Dornan - Specialist Handwriting Teacher

At Whaley Thorns Primary School we teach pupils to use "continuous cursive script". By doing this we aim to for pupils, as they progress through KS2, to be able to focus on the content of their writing and less on the mechanics of forming legible script.

### Why choose cursive writing?

"Every adult will consider the formation they use to be the most comfortable for them...this does not necessarily make it the most effective formation for children learning for the first time. Teachers must bear in mind the need to develop a handwriting style that is clear, fluent, legible and fast for first time learners."

Gwen Dornan - Specialist Handwriting Teacher

Once individual letter formation has been mastered continuous cursive script also presents an opportunity for the teacher to link the teaching of handwriting to spelling and phonics, training pupils in the formation of letter strings and encouraging pupils to learn these through short, but regular repetition until they can feel the shape of common strings without removing the pen from the paper.

For example letter strings such as *ely, ick, ight, dely, ought, able, ing* can be practised enabling the child to simply add suffix letters to confidently make words.

### The benefits of teaching cursive script

- It helps children's writing to be clear, fluent, legible and fast
- Having a lead in and out stroke avoids confusion about where to begin letter formation
- Beneficial for children with poor hand control and for dyslexic children

- The pen/pencil does not often need to be lifted from the page – this reinforces phonic and spelling patterns.

## Planning for teaching handwriting

**Context** – Handwriting should be an integral not isolated part of writing and spelling.

**Direct teaching** – It should be taught through a balance of whole class and small group work but it should be **taught!**

**Practise** – Children need specific opportunities in school and at home to practise and reinforce good handwriting habits. Handwriting should be taught using the lines in books that the children would normally use. Not handwriting books. This ensures that they are able to apply the skills they have learnt.

**Application** – The skills learned need to be put to use so that children see a point in their hard work.

## Teacher routines for handwriting

### When?

There needs to be at least three short but dedicated handwriting sessions per week (10 to 15 minutes max). New letters or later, letter-strings should be introduced in a teaching session at the beginning of the week. The two practise sessions later in the weeks can be undertaken during registration or as a “settle-down” activity after lunch.

### How?

By using pupils’ regular, lined books and extensive modelling by the teacher. Pencils are used until the pupils “earn” the responsibility of using a pen (a pen license).

### Homework

Home work on practise sheets can be set to consolidate new letter strings for pupils who need more practise. With older pupils, therefore, this need not be a whole class homework.

### Application

IT IS VITAL THAT PUPILS HAVE LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO APPLY NEW SKILLS

All pupils must be encouraged to use new writing skills in all writing tasks. In addition to the marking and feedback about content relating to learning intentions, they may also be feedback that aims to improve handwriting.

## Boring Boring and Boring Joined

These are the agreed fonts that are used in our school. It is almost identical to our agreed cursive style and great for doing classroom labels, whiteboard slides and presentations, learning intentions, displays etc

- Boring Boring shows the individual letters so it is possible to see the entry and exit strokes with all the letters starting on the line.
- Boring Boring is the joined version.

There are draw backs to it

- When doing labels for displays, both fonts are better in bold as they are cleared and easier to read
- The size of the font is small. It will need enlarging to at least size 18 to make it readable.
- The letters do not sit perfectly on the line - This will need pointing out to the children.

The lower-case letters are grouped into families that require pupils to practise a single skills. For example, the "over" family requires pupils to start each letter with an over and back formation. Some letters appear in two families. The five letters in the "tricky" family do not conform to any group and must be taught separately.

### Letter "Families"

#### Stick Family

b i h k l t

#### Over Family

a c d g o q

#### Hump Family

m n h

#### Loop Family

e f g j y

#### Valley Family

u v w

#### Tricky Family

p r s x z

### Writing Rules! OK!

- ✓ We do not join capital letters
- ✓ We start each letter on the line
- ✓ We do not take our pen from the paper until we get to the end of the word. We go back and cross t's and dot i's

### Training

When training younger pupils to make the initial letter shapes it needs to be made active and fun. Here are just a few ideas that can be used from FS to Y3.

- Copying the shape in the air (whole class) with a finger, elbow, nose etc. whilst saying out loud "Up and down and up halfway and over the top and down to line and flick!" (lower case h)
- Making letter shapes in paint, play-doh, sand, beads, buttons, pipe cleaners etc.
- Team games, running the shapes of letters drawn on the playground with chalk
- Making letter dances to music

Ideas are limited only by the imagination!!!!

### What we are aiming for

- We are aiming for pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 to be able to write sufficiently fluently and legibly to be able to focus on the content and not the mechanics of forming letters and words.
- We are aiming for most children by the time they leave year 2 to have begun to develop a consistently joined handwriting style.

### Pen Licenses

If you feel that a child in your class is ready for a pen license, you must bring their book to the HT or DHT to check before awarding a pen. Pen awards will be presented in Friday assembly.