

Randlay Primary School and Nursery Handwriting Policy

Our School Aims:

Handwriting requires both movement and precision, skills which are best taught directly through demonstration, explanation, experience and practice. It is our aim that every learner should be enabled to develop a fluent style of handwriting in order to present accurate letter formation allowing for increased speed and legibility. We believe a neat, consistent handwriting style is an extremely advantageous life skill, as it enables a greater fluency in writing contributions building confidence in the writer. At Randlay School we highly value the importance of handwriting and aim to provide every learner with a structured approach to help them succeed in developing and perfecting this skill.

In order to teach handwriting correctly we create rich opportunities for every learner to develop, practise and perfect the necessary skills to enable them to write to a consistently high standard, whilst providing targeted support to any child who experiences difficulty. In order to achieve this, all staff are clear and consistent in their approach from the outset ensuring that learners understand the expected standard and style of handwriting. To help us structure this we ensure that the necessary opportunities are provided for learners to understand the rules of writing. For e.g. It is important that from the outset learners recognise that within writing, capital and lower case letters serve specific

purposes and should not be used incorrectly. It is also important to establish that letter size is important and needs to remain consistent and accurate throughout a whole piece of writing.

The Continuous Cursive Style:

At Randlay Primary School we have adopted a **continuous cursive writing** approach to teach a clear, accurate style of handwriting to all of our pupils. This style is to be used from the very beginning of each learner's experience of letter formation and is to be consistently developed throughout their writing opportunities with us. Continuous cursive letters are formed accurately 'on the line every time,' by starting each letter from the same point and ultimately forming whole words without taking the pen off the paper, creating a pleasing continuous flowing style.

Advantages of the Continuous Cursive Writing Style:

□□ Letters and words are produced in a flowing movement, which helps the development of a physical memory of how each letter is written.

□□ Letters all start in the same place and flow from left to right, which reduces the likelihood of reversal mix-ups such as b/d and p/q.

□□ Because of the smooth flow, writing soon becomes quicker and easier.

□□ There is no messy transition stage when children move from print to a joined style.

ααA continuous cursive style of handwriting is recommended by the British Dyslexia Association.

Our Scheme of Work:

The scheme of work which is used to introduce children to joined writing is based on the handwriting objectives of the National Literacy Strategy and Developing Early Writing. We believe that the best way to teach handwriting is not through the use of worksheets but through the effective and consistent modelling by a member of staff of each letter formation and their appropriate joins. All classrooms are expected to display some examples of the continuous cursive script and members of staff are expected to model continuous cursive handwriting whenever their writing is to be seen by a child, to include their marking comments.

Teaching Continuous Cursive Handwriting Across the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage One:

When children first enter the Foundation Stage they are encouraged to mark make in as many different fun ways as possible. As soon as learners begin writing letter shapes they should be introduced to the correct letter formation and encouraged to use this at all times. It is crucial that good habits are developed early on as inappropriate letter formation can be extremely difficult to rectify later in the process.

From the outset learners are encouraged to use the correct sequence of movements, including the development of larger movements known as

gross motor skills. As an essential aspect of muscle development, gross motor skills are practiced in as many different ways as possible across the Foundation Stage. This may include the throwing and catching balls in PE, as well as larger scale mark making in sand, or creating letter shapes in paint, etc. The development of gross motor skill is crucial in supporting the development of the fine motor skill necessary for writing. Once practised these skills may need continued consolidation throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, beyond if required. It is also recommended that children develop as strong a tripod grip as possible from early in their development to support the correct formation of letters, aiding accuracy and fluency when handwriting. This can be achieved through a range of activities including, the picking up of coins from a table, using pegs to pincer small items and the refinement of hand eye coordination through cutting activities, all of which are extremely beneficial when developing the necessary control to form letters correctly.

Across the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One we teach the writing of letters using the correct sequence of movements. They are grouped according to the shape of the letter and its significant features:

1. Straight line continuous cursive letters- (i, l, t, h)
2. Curves to start continuous letters- (c, a, o, d, e, s, g)
3. Top exit continuous cursive letters- (r, v, w, x, z)

4. Tunnel continuous cursive letters- (n, m, b, p, u, h)

5. Hooks, loops and lines- (k, j, y, f, g)

(h and g are repeated as both groups may apply)

Across the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage One learners are taught to write using the lead-in line (children call this the 'swoosh') At this stage of handwriting development, it is taught in smaller groups in order that adults supporting the focus are able to ensure correct formation is used. This allows for any incorrect formations to be addressed quickly preventing inaccuracies becoming embedded. Focused handwriting sessions are delivered at least once weekly with many additional opportunities to see modelled examples and practise the skills learnt whenever possible. These are linked to phonic and spelling objectives across the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Incorrect letter formation is corrected if a child is working with an adult, even if this is not the focus of the session to prevent misconceptions from developing. Across Foundation and into KS1 there are consistent reminders establishing our high expectations and praise is given in recognition of the children's efforts.

Progressing into Key Stage One:

Once learners are secure in the correct formation of the cursive letters and are presenting them consistently they are then able to progress to joining. This should be a relatively smooth transition as children usually begin to join quite naturally, as correctly formed letters lead directly into the

next letter. It is expected that most children are able to make this transition by the beginning of Year 2.

The Joining Process:

Below are examples of each of the main groupings of 'families' used when joining letters. Ideally learners follow the suggested sequence when learning to join their letters for the first time. It is also suggested the letters are practised within these groupings to give learners additional opportunities to develop the necessary shapes fluently. Each letter is joined in a specific place depending on the letter that it leads into. There are many additional letter combinations to the ones suggested in the examples outlined however these will usually fit into one of the main groupings identified:

1. Bottom joins- il, ki, kn, th
2. Bottom to 'c' shape joins- as, ss, ng, ac
3. Two types of 'e' joins- 'ee' (diagonal stroke)/ 'oe' (downward diagonal stroke)
4. Top joins- 'oo' 'oa'
5. Long ascenders that meet halfway such as 'h' when linked to 'w'- 'wh'

Throughout Year 2 learners will practice different combinations of the letter joins, across handwriting and additional writing opportunities. This is to ensure they understand the process of joining and are able to present letters as accurately as possible. During this stage the learners will be monitored by all adults to check that letter

formation remains accurate and precise when joining, as it is essential that learners make the transition smoothly without developing misconceptions.

Capital Letters:

Each of the capital letters can be taught alongside each of their corresponding lower case letters however capital letters never join with other letters. It is important that learners understand that capital letters stand alone.

Digraphs and trigraphs:

These are modelled and demonstrated as joined (e.g. sh, th, ch etc.) so that children are aware that these letters are working together to make the sound.

Lower Key Stage 2:

Over the course of Lower Key Stage 2 handwriting sessions continue to be taught discreetly every week. These sessions are linked to phonic and spelling objectives. At this stage any learner experiencing difficulty will take part in a targeted intervention to develop the necessary skills. Across Lower Key Stage 2 learners who display a clear and continuous cursive style of joined writing will be awarded the 'Pen Licence,' enabling them to refine their joining skills further and developing a more mature style as they move from Year 3 to 4. The pen is awarded according to individual attainment of a fluent and consistent style, which can be met at any point during Lower Key Stage 2. As across all other areas of the school, any incorrect formations or joins will be addressed by the

adults working with the children. These will also be addressed through immediate verbal feedback, marking comments and reminders of our high expectations accompanied by praise when expectations are met.

Upper Key Stage 2:

Reminder handwriting sessions are taught on a weekly basis in order to reiterate correct letter formation and joining. Once again this is linked to spelling objectives to be met in Y5 and 6. Handwriting is monitored and learners are encouraged to use neat, correctly joined writing in order to achieve their 'Golden Pen.' The pen is an incentive used to reward learners who display an especially fluent and accurate continuous cursive handwriting style. As across LKS2, any incorrect formations or joins will be addressed by the adults working with children, through immediate verbal feedback, marking comments and the continual high expectation of handwriting, staff will praise learners when appropriate.

Celebrating Handwriting:

Excellent handwriting contributions are displayed across all classes and rewards are given to include certificates, stickers, special pencils and pens. Individual pieces of excellent handwriting are shown in the weekly awards assembly, whilst one outstanding piece is added to the celebratory handwriting book, which is then given high status in the entrance hall of the school for visitors to view.

End of Year Group Expectations:

It is expected that by the end of the academic year, the 'expected' child will have achieved the following outcomes/ objectives:

Foundation Stage	I can write most letters using the correct sequence of movements.
Year 1	I can form lower case letters in a way which will be easy to join later.
Year 2	I can use handwriting joins with confidence in independent writing.
Year 3	I can write legibly in joined writing, maintaining consistency in size and spacing.
Year 4	I can use fluent joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.
Year 5	I can adapt my handwriting for specific purposes, for example printing and the use of italics.
Year 6	I can use different styles of handwriting for different purposes, developing a consistent and personal legible style.

Useful link: www.teachhandwriting.co.uk

(continuous cursive style)

This policy was written by Miss K. Parkinson
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