

Wilkinson Primary School

Handwriting Policy

"...all our students should be equipped with a fast, efficient and flexible handwriting to enable them to deal with the various tasks that face them at different stages of their education."

Progression in Handwriting

Handwriting is incorporated into the **The Primary National Curriculum - English** where the expectation for most pupils is to 'develop a clear and fluent joined handwriting style'. The progression of handwriting skills from Foundation - Year 6 are given as follows:

FOUNDATION:

Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Children will begin the Foundation stage with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to fine motor skills using a variety of tactile methods e.g. use of shaving foam. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters.

All Foundation Stage staff, including support staff must be aware of directionality and when children are showing a firm interest in writing their name, they should be encouraged to use correct directionality.

They will be taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.

YEAR 1:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

YEAR 2:

- 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.

YEAR 3/4:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

YEAR 5/6:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Our Handwriting Model

Wilkinson Primary School follows 'The Flow Letter Technique' handwriting model. This programme aims to help all pupils develop a fast, legible, and joined hand from an early age. This method is one favoured by The Dyslexia Institute and other Special Needs specialists as it has also been proved to help children learn to spell.

Cursive writing from the start - pros

- Traditionally, children have learnt to print letters when they first start writing, then they have to learn a new style of handwriting when the time comes to move on to joined writing. If cursive writing is taught from the start, only one style is needed.
- Letters 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.

The School's Use of The Flow Letter Technique

Teachers and all support staff follow the Flow Letter Technique model.

It is used by the pupil for all writing, in all subjects, in displays and in exercise books.

The exception being when teaching 'styles of writing' for different purposes.

Teaching Handwriting

The use of the technique falls naturally during teacher modelling and children's written work. Time is allocated for specific handwriting practice **on a Monday and Tuesday registration time activity.** Some pupils may need to be given additional time to develop their handwriting.

Considerations for teaching handwriting

- a) Pencil grip and tension
- b) Writing pressure
- c) Clarity of the stroke
- d) Orientation of the paper for left/right handed children
- e) Body pressure
- f) Gross motor and fine motor skills

Children will be made aware of:

- a) Where the letter starts.
- b) Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline
- c) Ascenders and descenders
- d) Spacing and finger spacing between words
- e) Consistent writing size
- f) Capital letters and their appropriate use

Foundation Stage

Children will begin the Foundation stage with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to finer motor skills using a variety of tactile methods e.g. use of shaving foam. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters.

All Foundation Stage staff, including support staff must be aware of directionality and when children are showing a firm interest in writing their name, they should be encouraged to use correct directionality.

They will be taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.

Year 1 - Year 5

The children use a joined hand when doing written work.

Year 6

Year 6 pupils are allowed to begin to develop their own style of handwriting at the teacher's discretion. It is important that the children should learn to adapt and modify their handwriting to personalise their style and to suit different purposes for writing. E.g. note taking, labelling, etc.

Pupils with Additional Needs including those who are Gifted and Talented

The 'Flow Letter Technique' has been proved to enable a child to develop a legible, joined hand and also to aid spelling.

Teachers can set higher expectations for gifted pupils and respond to their needs by offering them opportunities to:

- Tackle a wider range of tasks
- Work through activities at a faster pace
- Advance at a **faster pace** through the curriculum, doing work that would normally be associated with the skills and content of later year groups/key stages.

Pupils with Additional Needs including weak hand-eye coordination and/or motor control dysfunction.

For pupils experiencing the above issues, handwriting practice may be inappropriate. In these circumstances, a learning environment that supports the pupil to obtain a preferred recording method will be assessed by the Inclusion Manager and the Occupational Therapy Service.

Resources for children with Additional needs.

Support for handwriting might include the following:-

- Pencil grips
- Sloping boards
- Specialised pencils/pens
- Use of laptops/ 'Joinit' software or specialist software
- Dycem mats
- Enlarged fonts
- Different coloured paper

The Use of Pen/Pencil

- The Foundation Stage: Pencil will be used for written work
- KS1: Pencil will be used for all written work
- Yr 3: At the teacher's discretion, minimal use of pen for a few display pieces only by those with a neat hand
- Yr 4: At the teacher's discretion, pen used for some presentation purposes only by those with a neat hand unless awarded a pen licence
- Yrs 5/6 All children, with very few exceptions, should use a pen
- A pen licence will be issued to children before they are allowed to use a pen. These will be awarded in assembly

N.B. All teachers reserve the right to deny, or withdraw, the use of a pen by certain children, when, in their opinion, they fail to demonstrate a consistently neat hand. It cannot be assumed that, on moving to a new class, a child who has previously used a pen in written work will automatically be allowed to use a pen.

Stationery

Children will practise their handwriting in their Handwriting book.

Pens

Suitable Handwriting pens e.g. Berol (blue/black) ink will be used. Blue will be used until Year 6 when black will be used.

Years 3 and 4: Staff to keep a supply of pens for pupils to use when required.

Years 5 and 6: Staff to keep a supply of pens for pupils to use when required.

Use of rubbers/erasers

Staff should ensure minimal use of rubbers/erasers. However the use of these will be at the teacher's discretion