

Handwriting

Policy Guidance

1. Overview

This document should be read in conjunction with the Handwriting Policy Statement.

- 1.1 This Handwriting Policy Guidance sets out the detail of how The Latham School will achieve its aim for all children to eventually acquire a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style.
- 1.2 Guidance on the precise continuous cursive style that the school uses is maintained on the teachers' Dropbox under Handwriting. The school also subscribes to a website, www.letterjoin.co.uk which provides clear guidance and practice on how to form continuous cursive letters. This site provides IWB and iPad access.
- 1.3 As children progress through the school they will:
 - Form all letters correctly, knowing the size and orientation of letters.
 - Develop a clear, fluent and legible cursive style of handwriting.
 - Adapt their writing to suit particular circumstances such as rapid jottings when taking notes, drafting and redrafting and presenting neatly finished work.
 - Take pride in their writing and present work for a variety of audiences to a high standard.

2. Organisation

- 2.1 Handwriting is timetabled in short, regular sessions and, where possible, is integrated across the curriculum. In all classes, handwriting is taught, at least, on a weekly basis. The session lasts for 15 minutes and is led by the teacher.
- 2.2 All handwriting activities are undertaken as a whole class teaching activity to enable the teacher to model writing patterns or phonemes and to instruct pupils on how to develop effective and efficient pen control.

- 2.3 Additionally, whole class instruction provides the class teacher with the opportunity to develop in pupils the habit of concentration, which is crucial to good handwriting, and to circulate around the class in order to assess pupil progress during the lesson and monitor areas requiring reinforcement.
- 2.4 In addition to discrete handwriting lessons, children are expected to apply their learning in their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work. Regular opportunities for children to produce presentation work should be also planned, for example for display. All work for public display should be done with the greatest care and to the highest standards.

3. Progression in Handwriting Development

- 3.1 **Foundation Stage:** During their Reception years, pupils are involved in a variety of activities to develop essential pre-writing skills, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, mark-making with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media. A variety of strategies should be used to support the development of fine motor control.
- 3.2 For those children that are ready for handwriting practice, individual letter formation is taught, modelled and practised using the basic handwriting patterns in the order on the Scope and Sequence document (cf. Appendix) Pupils are taught the following necessary basics:
 - Write from left to right and from top to bottom.
 - Start and finish letters correctly.
 - Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words.
 - Have the correct pen/pencil grip.
 - Have the correct posture and position.

By the end of Reception year children will have been introduced to:

- A comfortable and efficient pencil grip.
- Writing letters using the correct sequence of movements.
- Pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media.
- All letters of the alphabet.
- More independent writing.

3.3 **Key Stage 1:** During Key Stage 1 handwriting is taught alongside the development of pupils' fine and gross motor skills through a range of multi-sensory activities. Children are encouraged to form all letters from the correct start point and begin to exhibit greater control over size and orientation. Consolidation of both lower case and capital letter formation is a primary focus, as is awareness of ascender and descender letters. Children are also reminded to space their handwriting accurately in order that it can be easily read.

3.4 During **Year 1 and 2** children are introduced to joined writing techniques. This is started once children seem secure in the coordinated movements associated with each letter and who have a good control over letter orientation, formation and proportion.

Handwriting may be linked to the daily phonics session, or used in conjunction with spelling and independent writing.

3.5 **Key Stage 2:** During this stage pupils continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. The aim is for pupils to develop a clear and fluent style by the end of Year 6, be able to adapt their handwriting to a range of purposes, including:

- A neat legible hand for finished, presented work.
- A faster, more informal script for notes, rough drafts.
- Print for labelling maps or diagrams.
- Capital letters for posters, title pages, headings etc.

3.6 **Pen Licence:** As fluency and accuracy develops, pupils are awarded with a pen license, which enables them to write with ink across all subjects except maths. (This will usually begin in Year 4, although exceptions may be made for younger, more able pupils as appropriate.)

4. Supporting writing development

4.1 There are three integral elements in supporting good handwriting. They are posture, pencil grip and paper position (The Three P's).

4.2 **Posture:**

- The child's chair and table should be at a comfortable height.
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.
- Children should be encouraged to sit up straight and not slouch.
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and the feet are flat on the floor.
- Tables should be free of clutter and large enough so that children do not jostle each other as they write.
- Adequate light to allow children to see what they are doing.
- Children should have a clear view of the teacher/board.

4.3 **Pencil Grip:** If children are to develop a fluid and rapid writing style then they must learn how to hold a pencil with a grip which is relaxed but allows for efficient pencil control.

- Right-hander – a tripod grip is generally accepted as the most efficient way of holding a pencil. It should be lightly held between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support.
- Left-handers - The tripod grip should be the most favoured method of pencil holding but children should be aware that when making joining strokes the letters are pushed, not pulled. Encourage left-handed children to hold their pencil far enough away from the point to allow them to read what they are writing.

* Care should be taken that children do not grip the pencil too tightly as this produces tenseness in the arm and shoulder and also increases pressure on the paper.

4.4 **Paper position:** Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper/book and bear some body weight. The position of the paper/book should also vary according to the preferred writing hand.

5. **Resources and Writing Materials**

- 5.1 Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools, including whiteboard markers, pencils and 'fine-writers'. Specifically for handwriting practice, Verona Handwriter pens may be used. Writing in pen is less restrictive and aids fluency. Unlike a 'blunt' pencil, handwriting pens also improve overall 'precision' and quality of presentation.

- 5.2 Until a pen licence has been awarded, pupils will write in pencil across all subjects. In Year 1 broader 'jumbo' pencils or triangular pencils may be adopted provisionally. In other classes, standard pencils are adopted. Children should be encouraged to always write with a sharp pencil and to use rubbers to correct mistakes, or cross through with a single line. Pencil grips will be used to support pupils adopt the correct pencil grip if necessary.

Pencils should continue to be used throughout the school for notes, drafting, all maths work, diagrams, charts and maps.

For consistency, biro, gelpens or pupils' own pens are not used at any time. Correction fluid is also not allowed, although sticky white labels may be cut to an appropriate size in order to cover an error on a 'presentation' copy.

6. Expectations for Standards of Presentation

Pupils are expected to look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them.

- The full date (on the right) and title of all work (in the middle of the second line) must appear at the top of the page and must be neatly underlined in pencil.
- In Numeracy the short date may be used.
- From Y1 onwards pupils must use rulers to draw straight lines.
- Children should increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented.
- They should not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or fit for the purpose.
- Pupils should set out, number and annotate work appropriately.

- 6.1 To ensure consistency and progression - Teachers are expected to:

- Organise the classroom in such a way that materials and resources are easily accessible and systems for their return and maintenance are robust.
- Ensure that children look after resources and materials so that good value for money is assured including consumable items such as pens, pencils, crayons, erasers, rulers etc.
- Set a positive example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when marking children's books. Teachers strive to model the continuous cursive style and use appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style.

7. Provision for Left-handed Children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. Left-handed children should sit on the left side of right-handed children, so their elbows don't bump. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5 cm from the point of their pencil.

8. Differentiation

- 8.1 It is appreciated that some children, for a variety of reasons, have problems with legible, correctly formed and orientated handwriting. Children needing additional support are given short bursts of handwriting practice, one-to-one with the Class Teacher, as often as possible. Sometimes handwriting may form part of an IEP.
- 8.2 Exceptionally able pupils may progress at different rates at the discretion of the class teacher. For those children who have mastered a fluent, neat cursive style continual practise may not be necessary and alternative provision will be made for these pupils.

9. Assessment and Monitoring

- 9.1 Class teachers will use subjective broad assessment, based on a perusal of children's work or on observation of pupils when writing.

Criteria for broad assessment:

- The writing is legible when written at different speeds as appropriate to different purposes.
- The writing is pleasant to look at and leads to the development of individual styles.
- All letters appear to be started in the correct place and formed correctly.
- The writing instruments are held correctly.
- Letters are of consistent size with ascenders and descenders appropriately differentiated.
- Verticals down stroke are parallel, either slightly slanted, preferably to the right, or upright.
- Diagonal joins are parallel, either slightly slanted, preferably to the right, or upright.
- Spaces between words are appropriate and consistent.

Diagnostic assessment of individuals may be used when concern arises with a specific child or group of children.

- 9.2 Samples of children's independent writing as well as evidence from formal handwriting lessons will be assessed at a minimum of three times per academic



year. Team meetings will evaluate and moderate handwriting and presentation on a regular basis.