



# Somerville Primary School

## Handwriting Policy

*“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”*  
*Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association*

### **Aims**

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Develop legible, fluent, efficient handwriting
- Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the Nursery and School
- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly
- Take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- Be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations

### **Teaching and Learning**

Children develop at different rates with handwriting, therefore it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. Handwriting should be taught as a specific skill rather than as an independent task (which can often reinforce poor formation having a reverse effect than the intended outcome). Little and often is the most successful way – a daily handwriting line at the start of each English writing lesson as well as additional, independent practise during guided reading. Teachers need to ensure that handwriting is planned into their weekly timetable.

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Relaxation, see Appendix A
- Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory

Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory: write letters in the air (sky writing pg 156 **Developing Early Writing**), on backs or on hands, backs then palms if they can bare it! Orally

describe letter shapes and joins with children. Books can be used and whiteboards and pens are ideal as mistakes can be wiped away leaving no record of poor performance.

In **Nursery** the children are encouraged to:

- Develop gross motor control
- Develop fine motor control
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- Develop the main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; l, c and r
- Develop letter-like shapes e.g. 's' for snake
- Write their first name, using a Capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation

In **Reception** the children continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding from Nursery in addition to:

- Using a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters (with 'kicks'/'flicks'), **most** of which are correctly formed
- Using a tripod grip, and given constant reminders until it is established. Triangular section pencils and shaped pencil holders are available in school for children who find them helpful
- Learning letter formation alongside phonics using the Letters and Sounds
- Learning letter formation using 'shape' families (New Curriculum):
  - Long ladder** letters i j l t u (exemplified by letter l)
  - One-armed robot** letters b h k m n p r 2 3 5 (exemplified by letter r, clockwise direction)
  - Curly caterpillar** letters c a d e g o q f s 0 6 8 9 (exemplified by letter c, anticlockwise)
  - Zigzag** letters v w x y z 1 4 7

At the end of Reception or the beginning of Year One, the majority of the children should be introduced to joins. Lined paper or line guides are provided. Lines can be widely spaced (15 mm) or 8 mm if the children are ready. It may help children to leave a blank line between each line of writing initially to avoid ascenders and descenders overlapping.

Children who present their work to a high standard and have established a neat and cursive style in KS22 should be sent to the Head Teacher to receive their pen license.

## New Curriculum Programmes of Study:

	<b>Pupils should be taught to:</b>	<b>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortable and correctly</li> <li>• begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</li> <li>• form capital letters</li> <li>• form digits 0 – 9</li> <li>• understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these</li> </ul>	<p>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.</p> <p>Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</p>
<b>Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters</li> <li>• use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Year 3 &amp; 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch)</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>
<b>Year 5 &amp; 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters</li> <li>- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final written version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example for filling in a form.</p>

## The Joining Style

“Joins between letters are only worthwhile if they increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing *without* reducing legibility”

Children should be introduced to joined handwriting as they work through the Letters and Sounds document. In Early Years, some children may still be working on individual letters however, those who have mastered the shape of individual letters should be encouraged to join diagraphs, which will also facilitate the recall of spelling patterns. Later, the four basic handwriting joins will be taught systematically and then practised in regular short handwriting sessions, linked to spelling patterns.

## Which Letters Join

Joins are made **both to and from** the following 17 letters:

a c d e f h i k l m n o r t u v w

Joins are made **to but not from** the following 8 letters:

b g j p q s x y

Joins are *never* made **to or from the letter:**

z

The 4 basic joins:

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, on at
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. at
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. the ‘eb’ in z-eb-ra

## Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provisions will be made for this in E H C Plans. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENDCO 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. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

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

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils’ line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practise with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically;
- **Developing Early Writing** page 161 has further guidance

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.

### **The Learning Environment**

**A model of the agreed handwriting style should be displayed in all classrooms (see Appendix A).**

### **The Role of Parents, Carers and Staff**

Parents and carers are introduced to the school's handwriting style through a leaflet and through Transition Workshops. The Foundation Stage staff play an important role in communicating this at an early stage, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names.

All members of staff (including teaching assistants, supply teachers and students) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

### **The Contribution of Handwriting to other aspects of the Curriculum**

#### **Computing**

The growth in the use of word processing and desktop publishing has increased pupils' awareness of the importance of presentation and the variety of handwriting styles/fonts available. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate a range of fonts and to select whatever is appropriate to suit particular purposes.

Teachers discuss handwriting and presentation in all subjects and aim to model good handwriting themselves. Teachers are **explicit** about different types of handwriting for example, personal note-taking or best handwriting presentation, but remember not all the children will be able to achieve this in KS 1. Teachers give handwriting a high priority in classroom displays. ***The use of rubbers is discouraged. Mistakes are indicated by marking through with one neat horizontal line.***

Teachers aim to make handwriting relevant to the curriculum, by encouraging taught joins are applied in all writing.

### **And for teachers....writing on an interactive whiteboard**

Accurate handwriting using this technology takes practice and it needs to be neat and legible. Here are some tips:

- Make sure the board is calibrated and change the thickness of the pen or stylus
- Be aware of the legibility of different 'ink' colours. Red, for example, can be hard to read from a distance
- Press firmly and hold the pen or stylus at a 90° angle

- Stand to one side of the board when writing so all the children can see
- Explore the templates or gallery in your IWB software – they will include lined and squared paper that will guide your handwriting and offer a better model

Teachers must model appropriate handwriting for the children on the board and in the books. Writing must be in line with the expectations required for the children so neat cursive style is essential.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Teachers aim to ensure that when marking written work, comments about neatness are kept in proportion in relation to those about content and/or meaning.

When children have achieved legible joined handwriting in pencil, they will progress to a fibre tip 'school handwriting pen', which will then be used for all written work in school. Children who present their work to a high standard and have established a neat and cursive style in KS2 should be sent to the Head Teacher to receive their pen license.

### **Resources**

Pencils – triangular and ordinary

Paper and books

Letters and sounds

Bug Club Teacher Resource

Developing Early Writing (National Strategies Site)

The Phonics Handbook offers sound advice on developing correct pupil grip

BBC Words and Pictures Magic Pencil

Nelson Handwriting resource sheets accessible from **shared drive on the school network**

Nelson Workbooks (phonic related)

S Fazil/ S Cockbill/ S Sarwar  
September 2016

## **Appendix**

- A Methods of relaxation
- B Activities and exercises to develop Gross Motor Control
- C Alphabet of capital, lower case and joined letters
- D Pattern sheets for letter families
- E YR “patter” for correct letter formation
- F Outline of the four basic joins
- G Presentation Guidelines
- H Joins with Letters and Sounds
- I Handwriting Letter Formation