

Ash Green Community Primary School

C23

HANDWRITING AND SPELLING POLICY

1. ETHOS

This policy has been developed through training, staff discussion and professional judgements and is defined by current national guidance. Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language and to communicate their ideas effectively. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising and spelling key words correctly is empowering for children. Spelling plays a significant part of the standardised assessments at the end of both key stages and as a result is taught and misconceptions addressed throughout the school.

All staff have high expectations of pupils in terms of handwriting. Handwriting is taught through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, starting in Reception and by using the Primary Sassoon font as a model on displays, the interactive whiteboard and task sheets. Children will be taught the correct formation as letters are introduced, thus developing a fluent, joined handwriting style by the end of Key Stage 1. Continuous cursive handwriting has a positive effect on the learning of spelling patterns and can be particularly helpful to children with perceptual and short-term memory difficulties. Writing cursively also supports children when writing continuous prose and when note-taking, skills that will support them in their future education and careers.

2. AIMS

In order to develop fluent and legible handwriting, pupils will be taught to:

- become confident spellers and fluent writers through the teaching of phonics, spelling strategies, rules and conventions within the structured phonics programme of Letters and Sounds, as well as statutory requirements of the National Curriculum
- communicate effectively through the written form
- hold a pencil correctly by Year 1
- write from left to right and from the top to bottom of a page
- start and finish letters/numerals correctly to ensure writing is legible
- form letters of regular size and shape using cursive script
- put regular spaces between letters and words
- form lower and upper case letters correctly complete with entry and exit strokes where appropriate
- link the development of handwriting skills with learning spellings
- write legibly in joined styles with increasing fluency and speed.

3. POLICY

Teaching and learning methods – Handwriting

- Handwriting will be taught in a multi-sensory way, using a variety of surfaces and mediums
- Entry strokes and exit strokes will be taught from Year 2
- Handwriting will be taught in conjunction with phonics and spelling
- The correct pencil grip will be taught from EYFS
- Good models of handwriting will be displayed around the school, using the Primary Sassoon font
- The school will use a joined font when producing worksheets, labels and display.

The teaching of handwriting will take the form of mainly whole class activities on a daily basis, taught alongside phonic sessions where possible and will include activities such as formation using a finger movement in the air, demonstrations on the whiteboard and practising these skills on paper. Individual and group teaching methods will be used when necessary and the work will be differentiated to correct inaccuracies, often through bespoke intervention sessions. Children will be encouraged to transfer the skills they have learned in handwriting sessions to all areas of the curriculum.

1. All pupils will be taught handwriting until they are fluent handwriters. This may or may not be part of literacy lessons.
2. The following writing implements will be used:
Nursery All available markers
Reception Wide variety of markers leading to jumbo pencils
Year 1 / 2 Jumbo/HB pencils dependent upon individual pupil need
Year 3 / 4 HB Pencils
Year 5 / 6 Children will use either pen or pencil depending upon their personal preference. Pens will have black ink and pencils only to be used in Maths.
Pencil grips are purchased to assist those pupils with difficulties
3. Handwriting should be completed in literacy books as a model of presentation for other pieces of writing
4. Joined script will be introduced in Y2 (research evidences less letter reversal/consistent lower case letters and, therefore, correct formation). This takes the form of taught exit strokes to letters and entry strokes taught as pupils are ready to progress.
5. All handwriting practice will be modelled by the teacher.
6. The primary teaching resource will be the Nelson Handwriting programme
7. Marking of pupils books i.e. teacher comments will provide a model of good handwriting for the pupil to emulate
8. The importance of clear and neat presentation will be stressed and taught across all subjects to encompass recording diagrams, graphs, data collection etc.
9. Pupils at KS1 will be entered in the weekly good book for consistently neat presentation of work. A certificate for this is presented at KS2 assembly.

General Principles

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In the early years there is a big emphasis upon developing fine motor skills and we use a wide range of resources to practise these basic skills. There will be a daily class phonics input in addition to a Literacy session.

We aim to teach children to:

- Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- Write their name with all letters correctly formed and a capital letter at the beginning
- Use comfortable and efficient pencil grip;
- Produce a controlled line which supports letter formation
- Write lowercase letters consistently using the correct sequence of movements
- Use phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonically plausible attempts at more complex words.
- Write one grapheme for each of the 44 phonemes.
- The main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; l, c, and r

Children will experience a multi-sensory approach to learning letter shapes.

A range of mark making tools will be available for independent learning through continuous and enhanced provision.

Children will use chunky writing pencils/markers and write on wide lined paper and lined whiteboards.

Parents will be informed of progress during Parent's Evenings and as part of their child's report. Staff will teach handwriting and phonics together using Letters and Sounds and Nelson Handwriting scheme to facilitate emergent writing.

Key Stage 1

Pupils are encouraged to use their knowledge of phonics to support reading and writing and to use the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work. All pupils should use the skills learnt in Literacy across the curriculum. We aim to teach children:

- Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion;
- The four basic joins in Y2;
- Recognise and use alternative ways of spelling the phonemes already taught and which words contain which spelling alternatives;
- Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the prime approach to spelling new and unfamiliar words;
- To begin to spell common exception words and homophones
- To spell the days of the week.
- Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher, spelling correctly common exception words taught and using GPC's correctly.
- Use and apply the spelling rule for adding s and es for plurals.
- Spell using ing, er, ed and est where no change is needed in the spelling of the root word.

Handwriting will link to phonics teaching wherever possible. Daily phonics sessions will take place in addition to a literacy session and phonemes will be taught in accordance with key objectives in Letters and Sounds. During handwriting activities children will be taught to join the patterns introduced in phonics sessions.

At the beginning of the week, children will be given a list of words to learn and practise. The spelling list may be differentiated to meet the needs of individual children. More able children will be encouraged to check spelling with a dictionary or word bank. The use of guidelines and lined paper/books will increase throughout KS1 as they become more confident writers. Further teaching of handwriting for pupils who need this is undertaken through basic skills intervention groups.

It is expected that these skills will be transferred to writing and spelling activities throughout the curriculum.

Key Stage 2

We aim to teach children:

- To practise the four basic joins, emphasising consistency in size, proportion and spacing, whilst increasing speed, fluency and legibility;
- To use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required;
- To develop the use of a range of presentational skills including computer generated fonts.
- Use further prefixes and suffixes and understand how to add them to words.
- Spell further homophones.
- Spell common exception words and words from the Year 3/ 4 spelling list and Year 5/ 6 spelling list.
- Spell words correctly using apostrophes for omission and possession apostrophe, thus also demonstrating a knowledge of the difference between singular and plural nouns.

- Use a dictionary or personal spelling journal to check the spelling of words.
- To apply known strategies and spelling rules to attempt to spell words using a 'Have a Go' sheet.
- To check spellings when up-levelling and editing written work by placing a wiggly line under spellings that do not look correct, before checking them using a dictionary or spelling journal.
- Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher, spelling correctly common exception words and punctuation taught so far.

Cursive handwriting will continue to be modelled throughout the curriculum including daily SPAG lessons. Supported intervention will be put in place where necessary. By the end of Year 4 children will be expected to fluently join their handwriting.

Spelling sessions will take place as part of the phonic/SPAG teaching and children will be given a list of words to learn from the Year 3/ 4 or Year 5/ 6 spelling list as part of their homework tasks. These words to also be taught to pupils on a weekly basis by talking about patterns that can be identified within words, before allowing children to practise them through repetitive but fun activities, linked to cursive handwriting.

All children to have spelling journals, which will be used to exemplify spelling rules and patterns as well as to practise the spelling of new words from the word lists. These will also be used independently by the children as a means of practising or checking the spelling of words they are unsure of before writing the word in their book. Spelling Journals to also include a 'Have a Go' sheet, to encourage children to use their knowledge to attempt to spell a word, before checking it with a partner or adult. When editing their work, if children are still unsure of the spelling of a word they should underline this in their work books with a wiggly line, before independently checking it using a suitable resource.

Equal opportunities

Where pupils need more support, provision will be made for this through Additional Needs Plans [ANP's]. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENCo 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 practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

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. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

Professional development

It is the responsibility of all staff to learn the agreed handwriting style and to ensure that interactive and paper resources include the Primary Sassoon font to act as an effective model.

It is also the responsibility of all staff to ensure that appropriate spelling words are taught and applied across the curriculum, linked to common exception words or those from a word list.

Assessment

Assessment for learning is ongoing and must be used as an essential part of planning for progression for each child. In handwriting, it will take place as staff observe the letter formation skills of individuals and monitor the legibility and accuracy of handwriting in subjects across the curriculum. Staff note inconsistencies in presentation whilst marking written work and will give feedback and set targets linked to spelling, punctuation, grammar and hand writing across the curriculum. Attention should be drawn to high frequency words and other key words which are spelt wrongly through target setting, with children being encouraged to check their spellings using their spelling journals or dictionaries. In Key Stage 2 children will be expected to edit their own work through the use of a designated coloured pen to ensure that their work makes sense, is correctly punctuated and has words at the appropriate level spelt correctly. Children are expected to respond to marking and target setting through the use of their Purple Polishing Pens.

Monitoring

The class teachers and subject leaders for English will monitor children's skills in handwriting, standards of presentation and spelling across the curriculum. Work scrutiny will also monitor the effectiveness of cursive script throughout the school.

Success indicators

- Children are able to form letters and joins correctly within each key stage;
- Staff and children are encouraged by the overall standard of presentation in each key stage;
- Children are able to meet each year group target, enabling them to be working at age related expectation;
- The standards of presentation enable children to communicate effectively through their written work for a number of different purposes;
- The marking policy enables children to make progress with their presentation skills and provides children with opportunities to edit and check their spellings;
- The joined handwriting style is sufficiently mastered to encourage improved spelling skills;
- Data shows that standards in handwriting and spelling are improving;
- That Year 6 pupils are working at least at the expected level of writing according to the new Interim Framework
- The equal opportunities aspect of the policy is being followed to enable all pupils to develop their handwriting.
- Interventions to be carried out to support children who cannot spell words of age related expectation or produce handwriting at an appropriate stage of their development.

Review

The policy will be reviewed within the school's cycle of subject policy review or before if appropriate. Outside agencies may be called upon to give advice.

Reviewed and amended March 2016

Anna Crowther