

Approved: September 2015

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## ALBOURNE C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Handwriting and presentation policy

*On our learning journey together!*

**Article 28** All children have the right to a good quality education.

#### **Aims of the handwriting policy:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ❖ have a consistent approach throughout the school when teaching handwriting and for children to take pride in the presentation of their work
- ❖ help children to understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- ❖ write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed, through (i) having the correct pencil grip, (ii) forming all letters and numbers correctly and (iii) knowing the size and orientation of all letters.
- ❖ develop a joined, confident handwriting style that is clear, legible and fluent, which will free the writer to write and not worry about letter formation.
- ❖ instil a positive attitude towards handwriting.
- ❖ present work in a neat and orderly fashion, appropriate to the task.

#### **The role of the teacher:**

- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling.
- To provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting.
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development

Five stages in the development of handwriting skills are identified and these form the basic organisational structure of our scheme:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation
2. Beginning to join
3. Securing joins
4. Practicing speed and fluency
5. Presentation skills

Each of these stages will be reached according to the readiness of the individual child.

**The essential qualities of good handwriting are fluency, neatness and speed.**

## **Teaching of Handwriting**

Handwriting skills are taught and practiced through regular lessons and through opportunities across the curriculum. In addition to specific 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 presentational work are also planned, for example for display or when writing a final version. It is important that children are observed closely during the lesson to ensure that letter formation and pencil grip is correct.

All members of staff should set a good example to children by modelling good handwriting style when writing on the board, IWB or when marking children's books. Staff should model the adopted school style and use the appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style. Children are expected to show care for their exercise books, present their work with care, date work, underline where necessary and not make any marks on the covers

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

During their Reception year the children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop an understanding that writing conveys meaning, e.g. books, storytelling, signs, labels etc.

Children not ready to write need to be provided with a range of pre-writing activities.

Children experience a wide range of handwriting-related skills, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms and pattern making in various media.

Children should be introduced to the main handwriting movements involved in the four basic letter shapes - l (long ladder letters), c (curly caterpillar letters), r (one armed robot letters) and z (zippy zigzag letters).

Staff will model correct letter formation and children practise this alongside the letters and sounds phonics programme. Correction of letter formation takes place on an individual basis. Children practise name writing initially in non-joined style. (see Appendix 1 for support with Early Years writing skills)

### **Key Stage 1**

#### **Year 1**

Children work on handwriting skills in focussed sessions and through a variety of activities, e.g. writing in books, multi sensory approaches, through phonic work and writing in other contexts. Wide-lined exercise books, handwriting books and standard-size pencils are used. Handwriting practice should take place at least three times weekly, with focussed adult led groups taking place as necessary. In addition, handwriting is often practised through the teaching and learning of phonics and spelling (particularly when learning digraphs and trigraphs).

**Year 2** The majority of children should be ready to start the year in narrow lined books. For some children they will need to continue on wide lined books initially until ready.

All children should be given opportunities to use unlined paper (with guidelines) for a range of writing activities so that they can practise applying skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics. Children are encouraged to use joined-up handwriting in their daily work. Handwriting practice takes place at least twice weekly and the correction of mistakes is dealt with on an individual basis.

Children are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. In addition, handwriting is often practised through the teaching and learning of phonics and spelling.

## **Across Key Stage 2**

At some point during this key stage, when teachers consider it appropriate, according to the stage of each child's development, children will be allowed to work in handwriting pens; biros and gel pens are not permitted for general writing purposes. Children must show that they can write with consistent neatness in 5 pieces of work in order to qualify for a 'pen licence'.

Children use blue Handwriting pens which must be kept in good working order.

Handwriting practise takes place at least twice weekly and the correction of mistakes is dealt with on an individual basis. Handwriting practice can be combined with spelling/phonics. Children are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work.

## **Presentation in Books**

All work should be presented neatly (in relation to the child's age/ability). The short date and learning intention should be recorded at the top of the page and neatly underlined. Any mistakes should be neatly crossed out using a ruler. Rubbers should not be used except for drawings or diagrams. Rulers should be used for straight lines.

Pencils will continue to be used throughout the school for notes, drafting, all maths work, diagrams, charts and maps. Pencils should be of a reasonable length and sharpened regularly.

## **Equal opportunities and Special needs**

All children must have the opportunity and the encouragement to reach their full potential regardless of race, creed or gender. Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper. Children will also have the opportunity to rehearse specific skills in a small group, on a more regular basis. Intervention is available for children who experience significant difficulties to practice pre writing skills and fine motor coordination

## **Left handed pupils**

Teachers should be 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 - avoiding elbows knocking
- Left handed pupils should be encouraged to bring their hands down and round so a hooked, claw like style doesn't develop
- Extra practise with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- In handwriting books, write the letters/words to practise on the right hand-side of the page so the children can see them clearly.

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

### **Ideas for developing gross motor control**

Consolidate the vocabulary of movement by talking about the movements children make, such as going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements.

Show children how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders. For example, fix ribbons on to the end of sticks for the children to swirl in the air. Encourage the use of both sides of the body.

Let the children make different body shapes/actions in response to music to help them to remember the shapes.

### **Developing letter shapes using gross motor movements**

Encourage children to skywrite with both hands.

Ask another adult or a confident child to model the movement with her/his back to the rest of the children. Stand behind the children to check they are all following the movement correctly. Let children make patterns in the air or on each other's backs.

Make a letter shape in the damp sand tray. Invite each child in the group to trace over the shape, going a little deeper each time. The object is to get down to the base of the sand tray without the sides falling in.

Reinforce the vocabulary of movement, for example *the curly caterpillar*, *the long ladder*, *the one-armed robot* and *zippy zigzags*. Talk about the movements as you make them, using a 'patter', for example for the one-armed robot: '*Start at his head and go down to his feet. Bounce back up and go over for his arm.*' While this is helpful in the early stages, it is purely to help to establish the movement. Reinforce a letter movement by asking the children to write the letter with their eyes closed.

### **Using 'shape families' to teach letter formation**

For simplicity, the letters of the alphabet can be sorted into four main movement groups. Some letters have different forms - b, k, y, v, and so these fall into two groups.

Some letters e.g. f, s, have some affinity with a group but could be taught separately.

The advantage of aligning letters with a key letter is to help children to remember the starting point and subsequent movement of the letter. This is particularly effective in discriminating b from d.

The four groups are:

- down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l (**long ladder**): letters i, j, l, t, u
- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r (**one-armed robot**): letters b, h, k, m, n, p, r; (numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction)
- anti-clockwise round, exemplified by the letter c (**curly caterpillar**) letters: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s; numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9
- zippy zigzag letters: letters: v, w, x, z; numbers: 1, 4, 7.

## **Preventing confusion between the letters 'b' and 'd'**

Introduce each letter of the alphabet in association with its key letter (l, c or r). The letter d is a 'curly caterpillar' letter: it starts exactly like a c, but then 'goes up to the top in a straight line and then down again'. The letter b is a 'one-armed robot' letter: it starts higher than the letter r, but when it touches the line it goes back again, over and round. In this way children learn letters as movement rather than as visual shapes, and so they have a mechanism for remembering letters that are visually confusing. In *Letters and Sounds*, the letter d is learned in Phase 2, Set 2 and the letter b in Phase 2, Set 5. If the letters are taught effectively, the motor memory of each letter will be paired with the phoneme and will not present a problem.

Appendix 2 Requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 states that:

### **Handwriting**

In year 1 pupils should be taught to:

- 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

### **Handwriting**

In year 2 pupils should be taught to:

- 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

### **Handwriting**

In years 3 and 4 pupils should be taught to:

- 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, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

### **Handwriting and presentation**

In years 5 and 6 pupils should be taught to:

- 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 letter and number formation:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p  
q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P  
Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

How we form our letters:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L

M N O P Q R S T U V W

X Y Z