

Icknield Walk First School

Handwriting Policy

Purpose

Handwriting is a skill which aids communication. If meaning is to be communicated effectively it is essential that children develop a legible, fast flowing hand.

Aim

Our aim therefore is to provide appropriate teaching and a variety of purposeful situations and opportunities, so that children are able to develop high standards of handwriting at Icknield Walk:

- teachers observe and assess children writing in order to provide effective teaching.
- handwriting is taught regularly and systematically
- teaching is consistent throughout the school
- there are frequent opportunities to practice
- our children are encouraged to have confidence in their writing abilities from the very beginning of their time in school
- teachers are aware of the needs of left handed writers and make appropriate provision for them.
- children see adults writing.

Guidelines for the Teaching of Handwriting

Children should progress through the school accustomed to taking care in the way they present their work. This means that attention needs to be paid not only to the shape and formation of individual letters and their relative heights, but also to the spacing of words and lines of writing. The development of a natural, fluent, individual style is dependent upon certain conditions being fulfilled with all age groups and at all levels of achievement.

Handwriting is primarily a physical process and therefore each child's level of motor development is an important gauge against which to measure his or her handwriting need. Handwriting experiences must be thought of in terms of physical activities.

When writing, the child must be sitting in a relaxed, comfortable position.

- the chair must be the right height for the table.
- left handers, where possible, should sit to the left of right handers to avoid their arms colliding.
- the area must be well lit
- the paper should be of sufficient size and quality to make the activity rewarding
- the writing implement must be held comfortably in a way which does not restrict movement

Teaching can only be effective when the teacher or teaching assistant can see what each child is doing, either as an individual or as part of a group.

The Pen Pals for Handwriting scheme is used throughout the school to ensure a consistent and systematic approach.

Foundation Stage

The children engage in a variety of cross curricular activities which encourage the development of both gross and fine motor skills. This will include using a range of implements such as gardening tools, large and small paintbrushes, twigs, pencils, tweezers pegs, etc and malleable materials, sand and water play.

The children learn movements of the letters through writing patterns, “sky writing” and using various writing and painting implements.

The teachers closely observe children writing and encourage them to hold tools in a way that will promote a flowing hand. It is also at this stage that children are encouraged to write, not draw, letter shapes beginning and ending the letter in the right place. The style to which our children are introduced initially is a simple cursive script which later forms the basis of a joined hand.

Key Stage One

Teachers will continue to develop handwriting skills, extending the activities of the Early Years classes as appropriate, and use the Pen Pals Handwriting scheme, teaching children to:

- write from left to right, top to bottom of page
- make their letter shapes regular in size and shape
- space letters and words regularly
- use the conventional formation of lower and upper case letters
- use this knowledge of letter formation to join letters
- understand the importance of clear, neat presentation if the reader is to understand what is written

Children will be taught in class or small groups, from the whiteboard or practice sheets, according to need.

- writing patterns
- letter families
- letter strings with spelling
- common phonic patterns

They need to be aware that there is a sensible way to form each letter. If the letter is formed from the base up, the result will be a movement which makes the development of a flowing hand difficult.

A joined style of handwriting will be taught at a time considered appropriate by the class teacher. It is expected that most children will be using a joined style of handwriting by the end of Year 2.

Key Stage Two

Children continue to be taught in class or small groups according to need, using the Pen Pals Handwriting scheme. Individual help is also given based on the child’s own free writing. Handwriting is often linked to spelling and phonic patterns.

The aim of teachers at this stage is to develop in the children a style of handwriting which is confident, independent and which shows greater control and fluency. In addition, the use of different handwriting for different purposes is encouraged.

- print for labelling maps and diagrams
- a clear, neat hand for finished work
- writing for display
- a faster script for notes

Handwriting is taught either on plain paper using guide lines or on lined paper, according to what is thought to be necessary or appropriate at the time.

If children are to communicate their ideas in writing it is essential that they develop a legible, fast, flowing hand. There are some situations which call for a higher standard of presentation and this gives added purpose to the writer. It is also an opportunity for both adults and children to present their writing together.

The target is for children in KS2 to produce a fluent, consistently formed style of cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words.

Assessment

Children use their own work for assessment purposes, for example by:

- making a best copy from a draft
- copying a favourite piece of prose or poetry

Handwriting forms part of the formal assessment at the end of the Foundation Stage and KS1.

Resources

Pen Pals Handwriting Scheme
Pencils/Berol handwriting pens
Tactile Letters
Roll and Write Letters
Tracing Cards
Sand

Special Educational Needs

Children with persistent fine motor difficulties need an alternative way to produce writing. We work with the advisory support service in providing for their needs. Measures to be included in IEPs where relevant. Pencil grips, thicker pencils and wider lines, special handwriting paper and sloping boards can be used by children who experience problems writing.

Letter formation

LOWER CASE LETTERS (to be taught in families)

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 c d e g o q s

b h m n p r

f i j k l t u

v w x y z

CAPITALS

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

NUMERALS

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Joins

Diagonal join to ascender

Diagonal join, no ascender

Diagonal join to anti-clockwise letter

Horizontal join, no ascender

Horizontal and diagonal joins to ascender

Agreed by staff: September 2012

Agreed by Governors:

Review date: September 2016