

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

March 2015

Handwriting Policy

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

Aims

At Christ Church we aim to teach handwriting so that pupils will:

- Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across school.
- 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.
- Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.

It is expected that by Year 3 or 4 the majority of children will have developed a fluent, joined handwriting style that is legible and fluent which will free the writer to write and not worry about letter formation.

Rationale

When communicating ideas in writing it is important that children use a handwriting style which is neat and legible. The importance of handwriting should not be underestimated. It is vital that children can write quickly, comfortably and legibly as it is a skill needed in many curriculum areas. Children’s self-esteem is also heightened when they are able to take pride in their handwriting.

Provision

Handwriting and expected standards of presentation should be taught as a whole class activity. Intensive teaching is recommended at the start of each school year to clarify expectations, with further reinforcement in short, regular sessions throughout the week. Handwriting books should be used and teachers should walk around constantly monitoring and correcting while children are writing. Errors in formation should be corrected early before they become a habit.

Handwriting

Pupils will be taught an agreed style across the whole school. Teachers should teach this style using Literacy objectives where possible and addressing issues from assessment and observation. Attention to posture and seating arrangements is important. Children who write with their left hand face particular difficulties and teachers need to be aware of this. Left-handed children should either sit next to other left-handers or on the left side of a right-hander to avoid bumping arms or smudging work.

Children who display specific difficulties with handwriting will have these addressed through such interventions as rubber pencil grips, hand gym activities, using alternative writing media etc. 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.

The Learning Environment

A model of the agreed handwriting style should be displayed in all classrooms. Only this style should appear on signage, displays and letters to parents.

Teachers should discuss handwriting and presentation in all subjects and aim to model good handwriting themselves. They should give a high priority to handwriting in classroom displays.

All members of staff including teachers, teaching assistants, trainees and supply teachers will be provided with handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example. The teacher should act as a model when writing on the board or marking work, using a fluent joined style where appropriate.

Statutory and Non Statutory Guidance

National Curriculum Programme of Study – English (Handwriting)

From Early Years/Year One, children 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

By Year 2, Children should

- 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

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.

By Yr 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]

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.

By Yr 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

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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 handwritten 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.

Teaching handwriting

From Early Years, the vast majority of pupils are able to write using ‘shape families:

‘straight and long letters’ i l t u y

‘curved letters’ c o a d g q e h n m r b p

‘zigzag letters’ v, w, x, z, k

‘tricky letters’ f, s, j

At the end of Reception the majority of children should be writing on lines (10mm). It may help children to leave a blank line between each line of writing initially to avoid ascenders and descenders overlapping.

The Joining Style

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

Which letters join? See the agreed handwriting style model for further details.

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

Presentation

It is very important to ensure consistency towards presentation of work across the school. Staff should focus on the following guidelines to ensure this consistency, taking into account age and ability of children where necessary. Children should be expected to keep their books well presented. They should not 'doodle' on the front cover, or indeed on pages inside.

English – FS and KS1

During KS1, work should have a date and title, which should be underlined, using a ruler. Children should be encouraged to write the date and titles themselves, though where necessary teachers may do this or use other methods such as date stamps or sticky labels with titles printed on. Children should be encouraged to write from the left hand edge of the page, or margin, though FS does allow for more freedom when first exploring letter shapes and formation.

English – KS2

All work should have the date and a title, underlined using a ruler. Children should write from the left hand margin. In all Key Stages a line should be left between the date and title and then another line left between the title and the first line of work. A mistake should be crossed out with one line through it and not deleted with an eraser.

Other Subjects

The guidelines for English also take into account other subjects where written work is also produced. Diagrams should be drawn in pencil with labels in either pencil or pen depending on age. Pencil should always be used for Mathematics work. Guidelines for presentation of date, title etc. are as for English.

Display

Display of writing could take the form of a class book or work on a board. Children will be encouraged to redraft written work for display, understanding the purpose and audience for which they are writing. Any written work displayed will be of the highest standard for that individual child.

Homework

Parents will be encouraged to support their children to produce quality work following the handwriting and presentation policy guidelines. Children will be expected to take the same care with homework as they do in their class books and the same standards will be expected unless the teacher has specified differently.

Monitoring & Assessment

Teachers assess handwriting and presentation as part of their normal marking in line with the marking policy. They use this formative assessment to inform their further planning.

Monitoring of handwriting and presentation comes under the main subject of English. Monitoring can take the form of lesson observations, sampling and moderation of work, data analysis and looking at teachers' planning.