

Priestley Primary School

Handwriting at Priestley

September 2018



Philosophy

Aims

It is the aim of this school that every child should be enabled to develop a fluent legible style of handwriting. Capital and lowercase letters should be used appropriately and the letter size should be consistent. We will provide opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect skills and provide targeted support to any child experiencing difficulty.

Introduction

The Handwriting procedure is intended to enable all children in the school to develop a consistent and legible script that will assist their writing. It follows the guidance of the National Curriculum and is supported by the use of Twinkl scheme. Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly for children to practice by copying and repeating.

Principles

- ✓ Handwriting should be taught explicitly in short frequent sessions. It should be modelled by staff then supervised.
- ✓ Staff should be modelling correct handwriting at all times E.g. when writing on the board and marking children's books.
- ✓ Where possible, it should be linked to phonics and spelling patterns. This will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spelling patterns.
- ✓ When ready, children should practise their handwriting on lines the same as those in their writing books.
- ✓ High expectations of writing are needed; children should repeat handwriting if incorrect.
- ✓ A pen licence will be issued at the discretion of the class teacher; when the child can write with speed, fluency and legibility.

Using the Twinkl 'Journey to Cursive'

At Priestley Primary, teachers refer to the teaching guide specific to the year group they are teaching. This supports the teaching of handwriting progressively and at the appropriate stage for the pupils in their class. Supporting materials are also available to the children. This includes finger gym, warm-up activities for the children to follow to build up strength in their hands.

Handwriting Style

We use the Twinkl 'Journey to Cursive' - handwriting joins.

Some general points

- ✓ Twinkl '**Journey to Cursive**' Handwriting scheme provides photocopiable sheets, but nothing is more effective than a teacher modelling letter formation and joins.

When all the skills have been taught use teacher assessment to check:-

- ✓ Are all the letters the same size?
- ✓ Are all the down strokes parallel?
- ✓ Are the height and length of ascenders and descenders regular?
- ✓ Is the space between letters even? Is spacing between words even?
- ✓ Is the writing a reasonable size?
- ✓ Could presentation be improved?

Teachers and Teaching Assistants should:

- ✓ Have high expectations; valuing work that is the child's best effort and supporting when it clearly is not
- ✓ Identify left handed children and make sure they have sufficient space in which to work
- ✓ Provide appropriate paper and pencils and/or pens (i.e. all pencils must be sharp and of a reasonable length)
- ✓ Model how to hold a pencil/pen correctly
- ✓ Reinforce how to form letters, using a variety of strategies and materials
- ✓ Reinforce how to join letters correctly
- ✓ Monitor children's progress through regular assessments and observations of how letters and numbers are formed
- ✓ Implement intervention for those children not forming letters or numbers correctly
- ✓ Encourage children to assume a correct sitting position in order to write -both feet on the floor etc.
- ✓ Where necessary, group children and provide differentiated tasks; engaging whole year teams in planning and support
- ✓ Modelling good handwriting; on the board, in marking children's work, displays, use handwriting font on teaching materials where possible etc

Children should:

- ✓ Take pride in their work. (All children)
- ✓ Learn to write clearly recognisable letters and form them correctly. (EYFS)
- ✓ Know which letters join to others and which do not. (KS1)
- ✓ Be able to join letters appropriately. (KS1)
- ✓ Enhance speed and fluency in order to develop a legible individual style. (KS2)
- ✓ Demonstrate correct letter formation and joins learnt in all handwriting across the curriculum. (KS1 and KS2)

Getting Ready to Write**Seating and posture**

- ✓ Chair and table to be at a comfortable height
- ✓ The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- ✓ Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- ✓ The height of the chairs should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor.
- ✓ Tables should be free of clutter
- ✓ Rooms should be well lit
- ✓ Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

Pencil grip.

Children should write with a pencil (or a pen when appropriate) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.

For right handers

Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger 3 cm away from the point. The paper should be placed to the right slightly tilted to the left. Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left handers

Hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger; hold about 3 cm from the tip. The hand should be kept below the writing line. The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20/30 degrees. Use the right hand to steady the paper.

NB It is very important that a right-handed child is not seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide.

Links to Spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

The Twinkl 'Journey to Cursive' programme focuses on the two main basic joins included within the 2014 National Curriculum: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

Diagonal joins (the most common letter join – formed from the baseline)	used to join: a, b, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, u, z	to these letters: b, e, f, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	and to these tricky letters (where the letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement): a, c, d, g, o, q, s
Horizontal joins (formed from the top of the letter)	used to join: o, r, v, w	to these letters: b, e, f, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	and to these tricky letters (where the letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement): a, c, d, g, o, q, s
Unjoined letters (where no onward join is needed)	f, g, j, q, x, y		

Progression of skills & expectations

Handwriting in the EYFS:

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in EYFS should learn handwriting through movement, play and opportunities to use their fingers and hands.

Children will:

- ✓ Draw lines and shapes.
- ✓ Manipulate objects with control eg: play-dough.
- ✓ Re-trace lines with control.
- ✓ Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination.
- ✓ Use one handed tools and equipment.
- ✓ Develop their fine motor skills through activities such as cutting and Finger Gym.
- ✓ Develop their gross motor skills through large scale movements, including climbing etc.

Children should be taught:

- ✓ Pre-writing stage; mark making.
- ✓ Using a range of writing tools such as chalk, pencils, paint, crayons.
- ✓ Sit correctly at a table.
- ✓ To form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- ✓ Word formation based on word groups.
- ✓ Holding a pencil comfortably and correctly

Priestley Primary School Handwriting Progression through the school

EYFS

- ✓ Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- ✓ Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp.
- ✓ Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
- ✓ Can copy some letters, e.g. letters from their name.
- ✓ Shows a preference for a dominant hand.
- ✓ Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines.
- ✓ Begins to form recognisable letters.
- ✓ Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- ✓ Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- ✓ Begin to form capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place

Early Learning Goal

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

Year 1

Pupils' writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing

- ✓ **Continue to develop the right posture in order to write correctly.**
- ✓ **Continue to form lower case letters and capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.**
- ✓ **Form lower case letters to the correct size relative to one another**
- ✓ **Understand which letters belong to which handwriting groups eg: the letter 'a' belongs to the curly caterpillar group.**
- ✓ **Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' and to practise these.**
- ✓ **Understand which letters have an ascender and which letters have a descender**
- ✓ Make links with spelling and phonics.
- ✓ Start using horizontal and diagonal strokes to join letters.
- ✓ **Write capital letters of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case.**
- ✓ Use spacing between words that reflect the size of the letters.
- ✓ Understand the vocabulary related to handwriting E.g: entry, exit points, horizontal and diagonal strokes, ascenders, descenders, lower case and upper case.
- ✓ **Children to regularly practise their handwriting in a tracked book. All writing books will have the tracked lines.**
- ✓ **Form digits 0-9**

Year 2

In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 ... should be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning

- ✓ 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 un-joined
- ✓ Continue to 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.
- ✓ Children to continue to regularly practise their handwriting in a tracked book until ready to use a non-tracked book.
- ✓ Use horizontal and diagonal strokes to join letters and understand which letters are best left un-joined.
- ✓ Continue to understand which letters have an ascender and which letters have a descender.
- ✓ Write capital letters of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case.
- ✓ Use spacing between words that reflect the size of the letters.
- ✓ Continue to develop the right posture in order to write correctly.

Year 3

Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say

- ✓ Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- ✓ Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]. Use horizontal and diagonal strokes to join letters and understand which letters are best left un-joined.
- ✓ Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting.
- ✓ Lines of writing are spaced sufficiently.
- ✓ To develop the right posture in order to write correctly.
- ✓ Children progress to practising their handwriting in a book with lines that are in their writing books.

- ✓ Children aim to gain a pen licence for correct formation, fluidity and correct joins. (The giving of a pen licence will be at the class teacher's discretion and children will then be able to use these for their handwriting practice).

Year 4

Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say

- ✓ Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- ✓ Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]. Use horizontal and diagonal strokes to join letters and understand which letters are best left un-joined.
- ✓ Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting.
- ✓ Lines of writing are spaced sufficiently.
- ✓ To develop the right posture in order to write correctly.
- ✓ Children progress to practising their handwriting in a book with lines that are in their writing books.
- ✓ Children aim to gain a pen licence for correct formation, fluidity and correct joins. (The award of a pen licence will be at the class teacher's discretion and children will then be able to use these for their handwriting practice).

Year 5

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

Year 6

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

Supporting Individual Children

Left-handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their arms bumping each other. Left-handed children should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents children smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. Some children may also need to use different tools to support their handwriting development, for example; pencil grips, a sloping surface or a thick triangular pencil.

If children require intervention, KS1 children will receive a Fine Motor Skills intervention and KS2 will carry out their handwriting joins on more occasions in the week; supported with prompts.

SEN children will move through each stage at the time that is right for them but should still be exposed to their age appropriate phase. The overall idea of each new letter formation and relevant task is for **everyone** to learn.

Policy written- September 2018

Date to be reviewed- 2021

Appendix 1

Process

Warm-Up

Warm-up sessions should be completed before every handwriting lesson to build hand and wrist strength, upper body strength, and to improve co-ordination.

1. Let's Get Ready to Write!

Short sessions designed to develop gross and fine motor skills to build strength and stability, and visual perception skills.

2. Forming Letter Families

Sessions to teach children the sets of 'letter families' with the aim of securing the correct letter formation.

3. Positioning & Pre-Cursive

Sessions designed to teach the formation of letters as a pre-cursor to joining.

4. Joining Letters

Sessions which introduce different types of letter joins (and the letters best left unjoined) in an aim to increase legibility, quality and consistency.

5. Increasing Fluency, Speed & Style

Sessions to further practise fluency and speed as well as pupils' own individual personalised handwriting style.

Posture and paper position

The image shows two instructional posters for handwriting posture and paper position, both titled "Step 2 - Forming Letter Families".

Left Poster: "Let's Look Ready to Write"

- 1. Place both feet flat on the floor.
- 2. Move your elbows so they're resting off the edge of the desk.
- 3. Move your bottom to the back of the chair.
- 4. Lean your head and shoulders slightly forwards.
- 5. Keep your knees bent at a 90° angle.

How to Grip a Writing Tool

1. Choose the writing tool that suited to the task. 'Nip' it at the end.
2. 'Nip' the writing tool around the middle finger.
3. Make it sit between the ball of the thumb and the middle finger, with the middle finger tucked.

Check: Does your grip provide stability and freedom of movement?

Back

Right Poster: "If you write with your left hand..." and "If you write with your right hand..."

If you write with your left hand...

- Paper tilted to the right.
- Your hand should be placed on the right side of the paper.
- Try to keep your wrist straight and your hand below the writing line.

If you write with your right hand...

- Paper tilted to the left.
- Your helper hand should be placed on the left side of the paper.
- Try to keep your wrist straight and your hand below the writing line.

Back

Taken from the How to Position Your Paper Display Poster.