

**CUDDINGTON AND DINTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**HANDWRITING POLICY**



**Church of England School**

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. It is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity (a movement stored in the body, rather than a conscious memory).

We believe that neat and well formed handwriting and neat presentation of written work helps to raise standards. We feel a good standard of neat handwriting enhances presentation, enabling pupils to gain a greater sense of ownership and pride in their work.

### AIMS

We aim that all of our children will write fluent, joined and legible style by using:

- A good posture and correct pencil grip
- Correct letter formation
- Appropriate and consistent sized and spaced writing
- Letters joined correctly, using a continuous cursive handwriting style

Children are made aware that writing is produced for another to read and that they need to consider the purpose for their writing and the audience. We have high expectations for the presentation of written work, placing the emphasis on quality not quantity, and expect a consistent use of one style throughout the school in all areas of the curriculum.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

All pupils have equal access to handwriting teaching, support, activities and resources. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Children with SEN may have a provision for handwriting in their IEPs. The Teaching Assistants or the class teacher may work with individual or groups of children who have specific needs or difficulties with handwriting. This work will be targeted specifically to the child's needs using a variety of the activities.

Some children may be given extra handwriting practise for homework and parents may be actively involved in helping or encouraging their children in this.

### **Dyslexic children**

The continuous cursive script, which the school has adopted, benefits dyslexic children by reducing the number of times they have to lift their pen or pencil from the paper. This continuous motor movement means the child does not have to think about the order of the letters, often resulting in less letter reversals when writing and an improvement in spelling.

### **Left-handed children**

At least 10 percent of the population is left-handed. Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. All of the activities for developing letter formation are modelled specifically for left-handed children.

Left-handed children are placed so that they are next to each other or on a corner of a table to avoid knocking elbows with right-handed children. They are taught to slant their work appropriately and to hold the pencil with the correct grip. This avoids the danger of smudging their work. Spelling sheets using the look, cover, write, check method should be written from right to left for left-handed children.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### **School Handwriting Style**

The school uses the continuous cursive style of writing. This style is taught from the beginning in Foundation Stage although letters are not joined to begin with.

The main features of our style of handwriting are;

- Each letter starts on the line
- The child keeps the pencil on the paper for the whole word, giving a very fluent style
- Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking
- The automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content.

*(See Appendix 1: For an example of the School Handwriting Style)*

All staff are aware of the style and training is available to them. All adults will use the same style of handwriting in school for children to read and will act as role models. This will be evident when writing on whiteboards; marking children's work; handwriting for display; scribing for children. Adults will model how to begin writing on lines from the left-hand margin, writing from left to right.

Proficient writers in the Upper Key Stage 2 may begin to develop their own cursive style of writing at the discretion of their teachers.

Children who join the school in Key Stage 2, who are already proficient in a different style of writing may continue to write in the style they have been taught at their previous school.

### **Learning Continuous Cursive Writing**

As soon as children are secure with letter formation they will begin to join their writing, usually this will take place early in year 1. Children are taught the correct joins by teacher demonstration, explanation and practise. Children are supervised in all handwriting lessons so that misconceptions and poor style may be quickly corrected.

When children are able to write neatly in fluent, legible and even-sized joined writing in the school handwriting style consistently over a period of time they will be awarded a 'pen licence' at the discretion of their class teacher. The 'pen licence' will allow them to use a pen to record their work across the curriculum, with the exception of in their numeracy books, where a pencil will continue to be used.

A close link between cursive handwriting and spelling is maintained throughout the school, as children's visual awareness of whole words, not just as individual letters, is developed.

### Foundation Stage

Children's capacity to write letters at this phase depends on their physical maturity. Some children will be able to write all the letters in pencil, correctly formed. Most children should be able to form the letters correctly in the air, in sand or using a paint brush and should be able to control a pencil sufficiently well to write letters such as l, t, i well and h, n, m reasonably well at the end of phase two of 'Letters and Sounds'.

By the end of phase three, children should be able to write each letter correctly when following a model. By the start of phase four they should be able to represent each of 42 phonemes by a grapheme.

At the end of phase four (Foundation Stage/Year 1) they should be able to write each letter, usually correctly.

### Key Stage 1

Year 1:

By the end of phase 5 of 'Letters and Sounds', children should be able to form and orientate each letter correctly, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. They will also aim to write with spaces between words accurately, whilst developing speed and stamina.

Year 2:

Throughout phase 6, year 2 children should have a fluent writing style that allows them to concentrate on the content of their writing compositions and not formation of individual letters.

### Key Stage 2

As children progress through the school they are expected to produce longer pieces of writing across the curriculum and therefore need to improve speed and stamina. This is practised through a variety of activities, which may include dictation and timed writing activities.

### **Posture**

Staff ensure that children have a good sitting posture when writing. ("Feet Flat, bottoms back") Children are taught to hold the paper with their non-writing hand to steady the paper. Children are taught to slant their page appropriately.

### **Grip**

In order to develop a fast and fluent style, children need to learn to hold a pencil with the correct grip. This should be relaxed but allow good control over the pencil. If they grip too tightly they will tire quickly and will not achieve a free-flowing movement. The correct grip will be between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger ('Tripod' grip). Children are taught the correct grip and children who find

this difficult may be given a special pencil grip to attach to their pencil to help correct an incorrect grip and reinforce the correct grip.

*(See Appendix 2: How to hold a pencil: The correct pencil grip)*

## CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

### **Handwriting and Reading**

In school children are exposed to both cursive and print styles and well as commercial prints in many different fonts. The children develop awareness for reading in print and writing in cursive style side by side in their learning.

### **Linking Letter shapes with sounds and progression in handwriting.**

The school follows the 'Letters and Sounds' programme for the teaching of phonics. In this programme phonemes and graphemes are taught in a specified order. The teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting is closely linked. As digraphs are taught the correct basic joins are taught so that they practise joining digraphs as one unit. High frequency words can be demonstrated and practised as joined units.

## LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

We provide a range of playtime resources and activities within lessons, which encourage and develop fine motor control required for handwriting.

## ASSESSMENT

Teachers assess handwriting when assessing writing, using the APP criteria and determine future targets for improvement. Teachers aim to ensure that when marking written work, comments about neatness are only appropriate if it is a child's individual target or the learning objective.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This will be undertaken by the class teacher and will also be assessed as part of each term's literacy writing assessments.

When undertaking scrutiny, co-ordinators will monitor all subjects for neat presentation and the use of cursive writing.

## RESOURCES

Younger children may practise writing on a variety of paper, whiteboards, worksheets and using various media/activities e.g. writing in sand. Lined handwriting books are used for handwriting lessons from year 1. In Key Stage 2, standard lined paper is used and the lines become closer together. Teachers model handwriting on their interactive whiteboards with lines identical to those in the books used by the children.

HB pencils are used for writing. Younger children or those with difficulties with their grip may be provided with special grips attached to their pencils. Older children may

use black handwriting pens or other suitable ‘flowing’ black ink pens, once they have been awarded their ‘pen licence’.

A continuous cursive font will also be made available on all school computers and laptops, in order for it to be used for a variety of purposes such as wording on displays and on printed texts/activity sheets.

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APPENDIX 1: Handwriting Style

Cursive Lower Case 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

Capital 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

## APPENDIX 2: How to Hold a Pencil : The Correct Pencil Grip

The pencil should be positioned so that there is equal pressure between the thumb, the side of the middle finger and the tip of the index finger. All fingers are bent slightly. This is called a "tripod grip" or "tripod pencil grasp".



### Check for Tension in the Children's Fingers and Hands

- Is the first knuckle of the pointer finger hyper-extended? Is the index finger red and the knuckle white from too much pressure? There should be no sign of pressure in the knuckle or the finger tip. The index finger rests on top of the pencil.
  - Is the tripod grip too tight? The three fingers should gently grip the pencil and keep the pencil stable while writing. Have the entire class go through this simple exercise: Have the children pretend to tightly hold a small stone in their fingertips as you count to ten. Discuss how their hand feels.
- Next, have the children pretend to gently hold a feather in their fingertips, and count to ten. Discuss how their hands feel. Help the children understand that they can write more quickly and for a longer time when their hand is relaxed.
- Is the hand a tight fist? Have the child pretend they have a round ball inside their hand as they write, or have them hold a wadded paper towel as they write.
  - Tension indicates weak fine-motor skills. Work with manipulatives to improve these skills: cut with scissors, play with finger puppets, play with modeling clay, stretch Silly Putty, play games that require a pinching motion (Pick-Up-Sticks), and string beads.