

Bessacarr Primary School Handwriting Policy

Rationale

At Bessacarr Primary School we strive for a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school which is clear, fluent and neat. Staff understand that handwriting involves a progression of skills and that the different elements need to be taught and practised. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are difficult to correct.

Aims

- To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To encourage children to develop a sense of pride in the presentation of their work.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - Having a correct pencil grip.
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle.
 - Forming all letters correctly.
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters.

Teaching time

Handwriting sessions should be short and often. 3-4 sessions a week, fifteen minutes in length is ideal. Children who find handwriting difficult may be targeted for daily intervention. This could be done using the interactive Penpals scheme or practising letter formation on an Ipad app.

Model used

Bessacarr Primary School uses the Penpals Handwriting Scheme. Each teacher has the program relevant to their year group installed on their laptop. The letter formation for Penpals can be seen below:

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

The font

‘Sassoon

Primary’ should be used to reinforce our handwriting style and letter formation.

Children who join the school with established fluent joined handwriting will be allowed to continue with their current style of handwriting.

Joining

Joining begins in year 1. Children must know letters and correct letter formation before beginning to join. Children learn the following joins:

1. Diagonal join to ascender eg: *at*

This join is used to join letters in this box . . .

a c d e h i k l m n s t u

to letters in this box.

b f h k l t

2. Diagonal join, no ascender eg:

This join is used to join letters in this box . . .

a c d e h i k l m n q s t u

to letters in this box.

e i j m n p r u v w y
**a c d g o q s*

3. Horizontal join, no ascender eg:

This join is used to join letters in this box . . .

f o r v w

to letters in this box.

e i j m n p r u v w y
**a c d g o q s*

4. Horizontal join to ascender eg: *oh*

This join is used to join letters in this box . . .

f o r v w

to letters in this box.

b f h k l t

5. Break letters

These letters do not join.

g j x y z

These letters do not join yet.

b p

Paper and books

As motor skills increase, then the size of writing should decrease. At Bessacarr Primary School we value the presentation of our learning, and therefore children have opportunities to practise writing on plain paper using a line guide from nursery and this becomes embedded during KS1.

Nursery and Reception: Children use wide lined paper to encourage forming letters which sit on the line. In role play areas and adult led activities, children will have opportunities to use plain paper with a line guide.

KS1: Children should use plain writing books alongside a line guide. Children should use a bulldog clip to keep the line guide in place. Children will begin by using the wider lines of a line guide in year one and will be moved onto the narrow lines when they are ready.

KS2: Children should all use the narrow lines on the line guide inside plain books.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting at all times
- Demonstrate
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Handwriting apps on Ipad
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in platicine

Sequence of a lesson

1. Select a gross warm up and a fine warm up and remind children of the correct posture for writing.
2. Demonstrate the letter/join which will be the focus of the lesson. Show the children the join using the Penpals animation.
3. Children should then practise the join on whiteboards or in their handwriting books.
4. Next, choose a word from the Penpals word bank, read it aloud with the children and talk about the handwriting and spelling issues. Click the word to make it go grey and then trace around the letters to demonstrate. The children can then practise the word.
6. Handwriting patterns can also be used alongside Penpals. When you have demonstrated these, they can be printed off for the children to practise themselves.

Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced). Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil for right handers
- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point.
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left.

- Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm 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°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB: It is important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

Correcting mistakes:

Use of rubbers is to be discouraged except in the case of drawing or work for display. Otherwise, mistakes in pencil or ink should be crossed out using a single horizontal line, and the whole word rewritten.

Equal Opportunities / Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this. 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. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

Displays

Classroom displays and displays around school should try to balance word processed text with teacher's handwriting and good examples of children's handwriting (a range of abilities). Work on display should follow the schools handwriting policy and should be best presentation. Children in KS1 may want to use handwriting pen for presentation purposes. Sassoon Primary should be used for captions etc but other fonts may be used for titles to match the theme of the display.

Assessment

Teachers should give regular verbal feedback about handwriting in all lessons. Written feedback may be given regarding handwriting where appropriate (although feedback should always related to the learning objective). Any children struggling with letter formation should receive timely and regular intervention. Senior leaders and phase leaders will monitor children's writing and presentation in books during work scrutinies. The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Have the children been taught to use a line guide correctly?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with age related expectations?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with age related expectations?

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the subject coordinator.

Updated March 2016