



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

HANDWRITING POLICY



The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust
A Catholic Academy

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The importance of handwriting to the curriculum

Handwriting is concerned with individual expression and the conveying of meaning through fluent composition. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency, legibility, purposefulness and the opportunity for creative expression.

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Handwriting is taught regularly through basic skills lessons following the *Penpals Handwriting Scheme*. Shared and guided writing provide many opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting. There are times at both key stages when this aspect of writing is a focus for attention and more time is devoted to the objectives relating to handwriting and presentation.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned.

The role of the teacher/teaching assistant

- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting;
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling;
- To provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting;
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.

Continuity and Progression

Early Years Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. An importance emphasis is put on children's physical skills and preparing their bodies for early writing. Children's gross and fine motor skills are developed through regular busy finger sessions, use of malleable materials, manipulation of small materials (eg threading) and large scale movements like digging, sweeping, climbing, swinging etc.. When children are ready for early mark making, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Teachers and teaching Assistants are vigilant to ensure that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met. In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding that marks on paper convey meaning. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand.

Key Stage 1

Building on the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's handwriting style. In Year 1 the basic handwriting joins are introduced. In Year 2 joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically.

Key Stage 2

Years 3 and 4

In Year 3 the pupils consolidate their use of the basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. By Year 4 joined handwriting is used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes. During Year 4 Children are moved from writing in pencil to writing in pen.

Years 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Children are encouraged to increase speed whilst maintaining legibility.

Handwriting tools

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS.
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school.
- Fingers when writing on the interactive whiteboard.
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays and artwork.
- Sharp pencils for most writing until a pen licence is awarded.
- A handwriting pen for when they sustain a good level of presentation.

Handwriting is always introduced and practised in the *Penpals* Practice Books and on lined paper so that children quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SENCO and implemented by a Teaching Assistant.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision. Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case. Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision. Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side; left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space; extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to right automatically.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are introduced to the school's handwriting style through written information, the Reception Class workshops and other meetings.

The Reception teacher plays an important role in communicating this at an early stage, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their pupils by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names and practising drawing patterns and letters together

All members of staff (including teaching assistants, supply teachers, and students) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style.