



The Linden Centre

Primary Handwriting Policy

Signed by:		
	Headteacher	Date:
	Chair of Management Committee	Date

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Statement of intent

The Linden Centre believes that handwriting, similar to reading and spelling, can affect pupils' progress and achievement across the entire curriculum. When taught effectively, handwriting is mastered by the majority of pupils during the primary phase, allowing them to develop a more effective style of handwriting by the time they begin secondary school.

One of the most successful methods for ensuring consistent teaching and learning across the school is by having a clear policy in place. This policy has been developed in consultation with all the teaching staff and the special educational needs and disability coordinator (SENDCO), in order to ensure clear and consistent methods for teaching handwriting across the school.

1. National curriculum standards

- 1.1. In September 2014, the DfE published the 'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2' document which included a set of handwriting standards that pupils are expected to reach by the end of each year group.
- 1.2. All members of school staff have regard to the national curriculum standards for handwriting when delivering lessons.
- 1.3. During Year 1, pupils are 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, (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practice these.
- 1.4. During Year 2, pupils are taught to:
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 1.5. During Years 3 and 4, pupils are 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 un-joined.
 - Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g.by ensuring that the down-strokes 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).
- 1.6. During Years 5 and 6, pupils are 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.

2. Practising handwriting

- 2.1. Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting skills on a daily basis, with separate time allocated in the timetable to allow pupils to practise and develop their movement memory.
- 2.2. It is vital that pupils develop the correct handwriting techniques. With this in mind, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that any errors are immediately corrected, and pupils can practise their corrections.
- 2.3. At the beginning of every academic year, a letter is sent to parents/carers explaining the school's methods for teaching handwriting. This letter will also explain how parents/carers can encourage pupils to practise at home.
- 2.4. Parents/carers will be provided with a set of exercises which pupils can practise at home; these exercises will be designed by the pupil's teacher, and will be specific to their year group.
- 2.5. When setting homework, teachers will consider the individual progress of a pupil.
- 2.6. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those who are academically more able will have their work set separately from the rest of the class.
- 2.7. The following table sets out the amount of homework that is set to pupils:

Year group	Number of tasks
Reception	0
Year 1	1-2
Year 2	2-3
Year 3	2-3
Year 4	3-4
Year 5	3-4
Year 6	4-5

2.8. Pupils will be set weekly handwriting tests to ascertain their level of progression.

3. Teaching and learning

3.1. Teaching staff arrange monthly meetings to ensure that there is continuity in teaching methods across year groups and key stages.

3.2. Pupils are taught to recognise and appreciate patterns and lines.

3.3. Pupils are supported in finding a comfortable and effective grip for holding their writing implement.

3.4. Pupils are encouraged to hold their writing implements correctly, away from the point to ensure the line of vision is not interrupted.

3.5. The importance of neat and clear presentation is clearly communicated to pupils, successful teaching leads to pupils taking pride in the appearance of their work.

3.6. Pupils are encouraged to have the correct seating position when learning; the bottom of the back needs to be in contact with the back of their chair.

3.7. Pupils in key stage 2 are encouraged to write quickly, whilst maintaining clear and accurate presentation.

3.8. Pupils are taught to write on a range of textures such as whiteboards, blackboards, and different types of paper.

3.9. Teachers display examples of correct handwriting in the classroom, along with examples of the highest standard of work by pupils.

3.10. New members of staff who will be involved in teaching handwriting will receive a copy of this policy.

4. Pupils who are left-handed

4.1. Paper is always positioned to the far right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit their individual needs.

4.2. Left-handed pupils are always seated to the left of a right-handed pupil in order to avoid competition for space.

4.3. Left-handed pupils are given additional supervision and practise time to ensure they are making the same progress as other pupils.

5. Assessment

5.1. Teachers attend weekly meetings to discuss the progress of pupils. During these meetings they consider the following questions:

- Is the writing eligible?
- Are the letters in the correct shape?
- Are the letters correctly proportioned?
- Is the space between words, lines and letters appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing correct?
- Is the writing correctly aligned?
- How many pupils are achieving the standards set out in the national curriculum?

5.2. Teachers regularly monitor the progress of pupils during lessons. When observing pupils, teachers consider the following questions:

- Is the pupil's posture correct?
- Is the pupil holding the pencil properly?
- Is the pupil using the correct movement when forming and joining letters?
- Are the letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the pupil have a fluent writing style?
- Is the writing eligible?
- Is the pupil making the expected progress set out in the national curriculum?

6. Policy review

6.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the headteacher.

Appendix 1 - 10 ways cursive handwriting benefits pupils

Introduction

The benefits of teaching cursive handwriting have been widely studied for a number of years, but the popularity of schools teaching cursive handwriting is decreasing, especially with the increased use of technology.

For some schools, however, cursive handwriting is still taught – and is practised by pupils as young as Reception age. This guidance outlines the reasons why cursive handwriting is beneficial to pupils, as well as the studies that support these benefits.

What is cursive handwriting?

Cursive handwriting is a form of handwriting that involves joining letters to make writing faster. It is not statutory to teach, but the national curriculum encourages pupils to practise it.

Fully cursive handwriting joins all letters with strokes leading to and from each letter. The pen is not lifted from the paper until the end of the word.

Partially cursive handwriting is a combination of joins and pen lifts. Most letters are joined, but not all, e.g. letters following a 'b' or 's'.

Through cursive handwriting, pupils are not taught letters in alphabetical order, but are taught groups of letters according to how they are formed. For example, the letters 'a', 'c', 'e' and 'o' would be taught together as they are all based on an anti-clockwise formation.

What do studies say?

There have been numerous studies conducted which outline the benefits of teaching cursive handwriting, including teaching it from an early age.

Aix-Marseille University

This research compared writing and typing in children aged 3-5 to see if there was any difference in recognising letters. Their results suggested that writing by hand helped the elder children recall letters better.

The Carnegie Foundation

Research showed that bad handwriting leads to poorer results on tests. Where the same thoughts and ideas were expressed, but in a “less legible version of a paper”, they tended to be scored more harshly.

British Dyslexia Association

Research showed that teaching cursive handwriting techniques to children with dyslexia may help the treatment of their condition. It teaches children the left-to-right movement of words across the page, and develops motor skills that prevent the reversal or inversion of letters, such as ‘b’ and ‘d’ – common for children with dyslexia.

Indiana University

Researchers tested five-year-olds who were yet to learn to read and write – they tested writing, typing and tracing letters. The children were shown images of the same letters and shapes, and asked to reproduce it by either writing, typing or tracing it. Scans of the children’s brains showed that the act of writing stimulated the part of the brain used for reading, meaning it can help children when they begin to read, or advance with their reading at an earlier stage.

University of Washington

Researchers found that print handwriting, cursive handwriting and typing all use different parts of the brain. Writing by hand allows children to produce words more quickly and express more ideas than typing. A related study showed that handwriting activates more regions of the brain – areas associated with cognition, language and working memory.

UCLA

The study compared the use of note-taking – either written or typed – and found that those taking long-form notes using pen and paper tended to process information better and on a

deeper level. It concluded that writing by hand improves memory and the ability to recall information.

What are the benefits for pupils?

It's easy to teach and learn

Being easy to teach and learn means practising cursive handwriting in Reception is beneficial as it's easy to grasp. Pupils are required to master three movements: under curve, over curve and up and down. Print handwriting requires more complex movements.

It improves writing legibility and style

Pupils learn spatial discipline which improves the visual appearance of their writing, and errors are reduced because of the continuous flow of writing.

It prevents confusion of letters

Letters such as 'b' and 'd', 'f' and 't', 'g' and 'p' are often confusing for younger pupils. In cursive writing, the formation of similar groups of letters is hugely different. Instilling this from a young age can help prevent confusion in later years.

Pupils develop internal control systems

Learning how to write cursively improves hand-eye coordination skills – the actual physical movement of the pen when writing greatly strengthens connections in the brain and helps pupils master their fine motor skills.

It improves reading skills

When reading, pupils are encouraged to read words instead of letters. Cursive writing promotes the reading of words rather than individual letters, and stimulates the part of the brain used for reading – meaning they can develop reading skills faster and move on to reading full sentences quicker.

Pupils learn better

Writing things down, including in cursive handwriting, consolidates knowledge and allows pupils to write in their own words – a much better mechanism for memorising facts and development of skills necessary for later life, e.g. at university.

It helps pupils with learning difficulties

Cursive handwriting is a good method for practising kinaesthetic skills and activates the part of the brain that leads to increased language fluency. Those with dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyspraxia particularly benefit from the connected letters and fluid motion that cursive handwriting promotes.

Cursive handwriting also has positive effects for those with behavioural or sensory processing disorders, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as it reduces distractions and inspires creativity.

Pupils learn how to write

There is a direct link between the quality of handwriting and quality of written text. The cognitive demands of writing and physicality of doing so means pupils need to be able to write effortlessly, fluently and with speed – teaching cursive handwriting, and from an early age, helps pupils build these skills quicker.

It expands vocabulary

Through cursive handwriting, pupils are able to recognise words rather than individual letters, meaning that, from an early age, they will begin to understand the meaning of words and recognise them. Understanding meaning results in pupils being able to use these words in day-to-day life, and perhaps earlier than others.

It improves spelling

As above, the recognition of words rather than individual letters means pupils can understand how words are spelt and how individual sounds are formed, such as 'ae'. Once they understand this, they can apply this knowledge elsewhere – in all areas of the curriculum and day-to-day life.

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