

## **Mission statement**

At Nanpean Primary we will provide every child with a safe and healthy environment in which to learn and develop the skills they need to be positive members of the community.

## **Purpose**

- To promote a shared understanding and importance of good handwriting;
- To establish an entitlement for all pupils;
- To establish high expectations for teachers and pupils
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.

## **Aims of the school**

Aims in teaching handwriting are:

- For all children to develop a well-formed, legible style of handwriting in both joined and printed styles, with increasing fluency, confidence and speed.
- To raise attainment for all pupils in handwriting through a consistent approach, guided by: **The Penpals (Cambridge University Press) Handwriting scheme.**
- That all teachers and support staff must use and model the agreed style of handwriting when writing on the board or marking work.
- That teachers, support staff and pupils use all opportunities for writing as handwriting practice in all writing across the curriculum.
- To make provision for left handed children to develop free flowing writing.
- For all children's skills in handwriting to be reflected in the presentation of their work and their joy of writing.

## **In order to achieve this, children will be taught:**

- To develop fine motor control,
- The importance of correct posture and paper position whether right or left handed,
- To use a pen/pencil and to hold it effectively,
- To write from left to right and top to bottom on a page,
- To start and finish letters correctly,
- To form letters of consistent size and shape,
- The language of writing and how to use the correct terminology, (e.g. ascenders)
- To put regular spaces between words,
- How to form upper and lower case letters,
- How to join letters correctly,
- How to write legibly in both joined and printed style,
- To use different styles of writing for different purposes,
- The importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

## **Handwriting Scheme**

Formal handwriting skills will be taught regularly and systematically through the use of the PENPALS Handwriting scheme (Cambridge University Press).

Five stages are identified and these form the basic organisation of the scheme:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (Foundation)
2. Beginning to join (Lower KS1)
3. Securing joins (Upper KS1/Lower KS2)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Lower KS2)
5. Presentation skills (Upper KS2)

Opportunities for linking handwriting with early phonics and spelling work are fully exploited through the PENPALS scheme. Penpals provides clear progression for children aged 3 to 11 starting in nursery where children practice their gross and fine motor skills in readiness for handwriting and finishing in Years 5 & 6 where basic handwriting issues are revised and speed and fluency improved. This whole school approach ensures a consistency of style and approach which leads to an effective progression of experience and teaching. Some children who may need extra support with handwriting, may receive extra interventions to support them with their writing development.

### **Recommended Timings**

Penpals lessons consist of a 15 minute whole class session followed by a 15 minute independent activity session during an English starter or as an activity in the guided reading 'carousel'. Children will then apply their hand writing skills within Literacy lessons and other writing opportunities. In Reception, the development of gross and fine motor writing skills are continuous and ongoing every day. Letter formation will be taught using the Penpals for Handwriting materials.

### **Common Approaches:**

- To be consistent in the way in which we form individual letters by following the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance
- To follow the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance for 'Joining letter sets' which builds on letter formation in Foundation stage with no joining letter sets to the teaching of joins throughout each year group.
- That we are consistent in the way in which we join letters i.e. it must be remembered that some letters never join: All capital letters  
**g, j, x, y and z**
- Handwriting patterns should be taught in a handwriting lesson and are a pleasurable and creative way of practising handwriting movements. They can also be used as decorative borders round pictures or written work.
- Teaching the correct formation of the letters should be given highest priority and that this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining. We aim for all children to be using a pen when going into Year 5. Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We will never simply ask children to copy models from a sheet or practice book.

### **Pencil/Pen Grip**

The pen or pencil should be gripped comfortably between forefinger and thumb with the second finger below to steady it. If you pick up a pen which is lying on the table in front of

you with its nib towards you in line with your forearm, you instinctively pick it up in the correct grip.

## **Posture**

Children should be encouraged to sit up straight with their feet on the floor. The non-writing hand must be used to steady the book or paper.

## **Guidance for Left-handers**

Left-handed children will not in any way be discouraged from favouring the left-hand in their work. However, special rules apply for left-handers. They should sit on the left-hand side of double desks or tables. They must be able to rest their left forearms on the edge of the desk. The book or paper must slope in line with the left forearm. As writing is completed down the page, the paper must be moved away from the body in the same line. The aim is to keep the left arm in much the same position at all times to avoid the elbow being cramped by the chest. Moving the paper away from the body prevents writing becoming cramped at the foot of the page. Practise on a vertical board could help this position. The right hand must be used to control the movement of the page. The left hand should end up below the line of writing to avoid smudging and to give a clear view of what is being written. Children should be discouraged from hooking their left hand above the line of writing to avoid smudging. The tripod grip (thumb and first finger grip the pencil, which then rests on the side of the second finger) should be encouraged.

## **Handwriting Skills and Development**

### **Foundation Stage**

Children begin the Foundation Stage with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to finer motor skills using a variety of tactile methods. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and to gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters. The Penpals for handwriting scheme (Cambridge University Press) will be introduced in Reception and will help prepare children for handwriting, consolidate their motor control and introduce letter shapes. It is expected that most children will be forming each letter by the end of Reception. Handwriting should be taught alongside phonics making use of the kinaesthetic learning to help children to internalise the letter shapes that go with the sounds. Children should write on wide-lined paper when they have the hand control to do it confidently. Lined paper is important because so much about handwriting is to do with the letters' orientation to the line.

A range of pre-writing activities opportunities must be provided in the learning environment to encourage and support children develop gross and fine motor skills, develop co-ordination and to promote pencil control and awareness of letter shapes and orientation.

### **Possible activities:**

- Sky-writing.
- Writing with a stick or finger in sand.
- Letter shapes/feely letter shapes

- Tactile letter tracing using textured shapes
- Large paper and brushes to make writing patterns
- Whiteboards and pens
- Making letters with malleable materials e.g. Plasticine, play dough, clay.
- Using paints, chalks or large felt tips.
- Practise tracing over lines and shapes
- Practise copy writing own name
- Introduced joined script for writing child's name – practise writing name in
- Joined script using laminated name cards.

## **Year 1**

In Year 1, children practise forming letters and are introduced to diagonal joins, horizontal joins both to letters with and without ascenders. An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed.

- To form lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join
- To practise handwriting in conjunction with phonics, spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion, in a style that makes letters easy to join

### Year 1 – New National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

Pupils should be 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

## **Year 2**

By Year 2 children should be moving towards a joined handwriting style and be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They practise and build on Year 1 joins and are introduced to break letters.

Children need to be made aware of:

- (a) Where the letter starts;
- (b) Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline;
- (c) Ascenders and descenders - lined paper will assist;
- (d) Spacing and finger space between words;
- (e) Consistent writing size;
- (f) Capital letters and their appropriate use

To practise handwriting patterns from Yr 1.

To practise the four basic handwriting joins

1. diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ai, ar, un,
2. horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi
3. diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. - ab, ul, it.

4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. - ol, wh, ot.

## Year 2 – New National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

Pupils should be 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 unjoined
- 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

## **Year 3**

It is our aim that the majority of Year 3 have been taught the whole range of joins and will be developing a degree of accuracy and fluency by the end of the year. In the first 2 terms, children will consolidate joins from Years 1 and 2 and will be taught to join parallel descenders and ascenders. The third term will focus on consistency of spacing, layout, speed and fluency practice.

- To use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required
- To practise correct formation of basic joins from Yr 2
- To ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practise.

## **Year 4**

Formation of capitals, lower case letters and the two basic join types (horizontal and vertical) should now be familiar and secure. The majority of children should be able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Whilst there is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns, they will also be given opportunities to develop speed and accuracy.

- To use a clear neat hand for finished, presented work.
- To ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.
- To use a range of presentation skills e.g.:
  - print script for captions, sub-headings and labels
  - capital letters for posters, title pages, headings
  - a range of computer-generated fonts and point sizes.

## Year 3 and 4 – New National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

Pupils should be 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 unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes 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]

## **Years 5 and 6**

By Years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be writing fluently and are joining their writing across the curriculum. In these year groups the emphasis is on increasing speed, developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes. As well as this, children need to practise, reinforce and refine skills taught in previous years.

The Penpals Years 5&6 Teacher's Book aims to:

- Teach speed and fluency alongside presentation.
- Help children with their style and the presentation of different kinds of text. The CD-ROM is split between Basic and Presentation units. Basic units focus on basic handwriting skills and address common issues that may be inhibiting fast and fluent handwriting. They frequently support units in the Book, especially those that assess handwriting. Presentation units recognise that the purpose for writing has implications for handwriting style.

## Year 5 and 6 – New National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

Pupils should be 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

**Policy reviewed: February 2018**

**Policy reviewed by: Clare Morton**

**Policy review date: February 2019**

**Policy approved by governors: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018**