

## Princefield First School

### Handwriting Policy

At Princefield we aim to ensure that our children's handwriting is of a high quality and fluency. We believe that children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work.

Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically through the use of the Nelson handwriting scheme. We have chosen this scheme because the underlying principle and approach consists of carefully constructed stages rather than an inflexible 'one model fits all' approach to handwriting. The activities are differentiated according to the individual children's needs. This practise is therefore carefully planned and implemented so that all children can achieve a good standard of writing. We also recognise the need and aim to address the physical posture needed when writing. Teachers at Princefield are encouraged to remind their children of the acceptable posture regularly.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage start by developing their physical skills and practising their gross and fine motor movements. In the early stages, children are encouraged to make free-flowing movements to produce larger patterns in various ways, and then move to mark making activities, specific patterns leading to basic letter movements. The correct pencil grip is important for controlled and fluent movements. A more structured approach is taken in the Reception classes. We will focus on handwriting patterns and the initial letter forms. They apply the skills learnt and naturally progress to pencil control worksheets, writing pattern sheets and Nelson individual workbooks.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 will use Nelson individual workbooks, text books and supplementary worksheets as needed. Work is differentiated according to developmental stage. The KS1 classes will continue to focus on the letter forms, progressing on to the next stage of formation. Children should be taught joined up writing as prescribed in the Nelson Scheme, initially starting with joining pattern and moving on to key writing patterns (i.e. an, it, fl, etc).

Pupils in Key Stage 2 will practise their handwriting by using the Nelson 'Developing Skills' text books and photocopyable masters linked to the specific writing patterns. The classes work on a different writing pattern on a weekly/fortnightly basis and are expected to practise within guided activity time. KS2 classes will focus on the joining sets. This work is differentiated and extra intervention sessions/ homework are given to target specific children's needs.

## **Aims**

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters
- Develop flow and speed
- Eventually produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing

**In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:**

### **Teaching and Learning**

- Handwriting is taught regularly and systematically in classes, groups or individually as appropriate
- Patterns are used initially, by writing with a variety of tools and using multi-sensory methods, to help free flowing hand motions
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use the correct handwriting formation as directed in the scheme
- Display writing and worksheets throughout the school to use the 'Sassoon Primary Infant' computer font as much as possible

### **Left handed children**

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. It is recommended that left handed children sit on the left side of right-handed children, so their elbows don't bump. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of centre of their body. Left handed scissors should also be made available for these children.

### **Resources and Writing Materials**

- Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools, including both traditional and triangular shaped and handwriting pens are introduced in KS2
- Photocopiable masters (Nelson and Knights) are used in Key Stage 2
- Nelson textbooks and handwriting books are used throughout the school
- Guidelines are also used with plain paper

### **Special Educational Needs**

We address the individual needs of each child within our writing sessions. Extra intervention sessions/ homework may be given to target specific children's needs.

## **How handwriting is taught throughout the school**

### **Foundation Stage**

In the Foundation Stage children take part in activities to develop gross and fine motor skills and recognition of patterns (see appendix 1 for checklist). Individual letter formation is taught, modelled and practised alongside their letter and sounds programme. These are also applied in other contexts across the Early Years curriculum. The children are taught to:

- Write from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Start and finish letters correctly.
- Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words
- Have the correct pencil grip
- Find a convenient position for their page
- Have the correct posture and position. (as directed in the Nelson Scheme)
- Modelling letter formation within other literacy activities
- Use multi-sensory activities (e.g. Dough gym, Write Dance) and during continuous provision activities

### **Key Stage 1**

In accordance with the National Literacy Strategy the children are taught how to form lower case and capital letters and how to join them, whilst still developing fine and gross motor skills with a range of multi-sensory activities.

The children are taught to:

- Write from left to right and from top to bottom
- Start and finish letters correctly
- Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words
- Have the correct pencil grip
- Find a convenient position for their page
- Have the correct posture and position. (as directed in the Nelson Scheme)
- Modelling letter formation within other literacy activities

### **Key Stage 2**

During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. KS2 continue to follow the approaches as suggested in the previous key stages. We aim for them to develop a clear and fluent style and by the end of Key Stage 2, and to be able to adapt their handwriting for the following different purposes:

- A neat legible hand for finished, presented work.
- A faster script for notes.
- Handwriting will be taught on a weekly/fortnightly basis.

## **Assessment**

As part of the school's assessment policy, children's writing is moderated against National Curriculum criteria/ Writing Skills Grids each term and a level is recorded for each child. Teachers are expected to responsive mark written work and give feedback to ensure development in writing. At Princefield we use learning conversations to discuss with the children their writing targets and to ensure that the children are aware of their progress.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Ready to Write Checklist (used in Foundation Stage)

Appendix 2: Copy of letter formation as directed by the Nelson scheme.

Appendix 3: Staffordshire Writing Skills Grid

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