

## Handwriting Policy

### What does the National Curriculum require?

#### National Curriculum: teaching cursive and non-cursive styles

The English programmes of study from the National Curriculum outline statutory and non-statutory requirements for handwriting:

**In year 2**, if appropriate, pupils should be taught to:

- 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.
- Non-statutory guidance for handwriting in year 2 also explains that pupils should be taught to use a cursive, or joined, style "as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation".

**In years 5 and 6**, pupils should be taught to:

- decide whether or not to join specific letters in order to write legibly and fluently.
- Non-statutory guidance adds that pupils should be taught to use a non-cursive style for use in specific situations such as writing an email address or filling in a form.

Guidance on teaching handwriting published by The National Strategies does not promote any particular script.

The guidance advocates any script ... that promotes "legible, fluent and fast" handwriting. It emphasises the importance of a consistent, whole-school approach to handwriting. The guidance advocates any script that enables the letters to be joined easily and that promotes "legible, fluent and fast" handwriting.

### Aims

The Handwriting Policy for Royal Cross aims for pupils to develop legible, fluent, efficient handwriting. In handwriting, as in other skills, pupils will develop at different rates; for that reason, it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff have a clear understanding of the progression of skills.

### Objectives

All pupils should be given the opportunity to develop an effective, legible style of writing. In order to do this they should be taught:

- How to hold a pencil/ pen using the correct and comfortable grip.
- To form letters properly, identifying where to start and finish each letter.
- To form letters of regular shape and size.
- To form upper and lower case letters.
- To write from left to right and top to bottom of the page.
- To put regular spaces between letters and words.
- How to use cursive script, if appropriate to the developmental needs of the pupil.
- The importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.

- To write legibly with increasing fluency and speed.

## **Handwriting Principles**

- Handwriting should be taught in short frequent sessions, modelled and monitored by staff.
- Where possible it should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns.
- When ready, pupils should practice on lined paper.
- Pupils will progress onto cursive script if appropriate.

## **Early Stages of Handwriting**

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye co-ordination. Pupils should begin to learn handwriting through movement and sensory exploration.

Children should:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination
- Use one handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Develop gross motor control
- Develop fine motor control
- Use a range of mark making tools with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- Make marks with a purpose
- Develop letter-like shapes in emergent writings
- Produce letter-like shapes in Letters & Sounds work

Throughout this stage pupils need to have lots of opportunities to develop:

- physical control through large scale movement such as outdoor play; balancing; climbing; skipping and dancing.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand – eye co-ordination, through activities such as inset & interlocking jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating ‘small world’ equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large and systematic motor movements helping to establish a kinaesthetic memory. These movements should become progressively smaller, using chubby crayons, felts and pencils as handwriting skills develop.

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 & finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ and to practise these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- 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
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.
- Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed, using a cursive script if appropriate.

## **Inclusion Opportunities**

The majority of pupils will develop handwriting skills and write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils will need more support and provision will be made for this. Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor control will follow a more personalised approach to handwriting. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources, including communication aids.

Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. and outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

Cursive script will only be introduced to pupils once they have developed secure skills and correct letter formation.

## **Teaching and Learning**

At Royal Cross we have adopted the handwriting alphabet based on the Comic Sans style font for developing handwriting skills.

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

Once pupils have developed secure and accurate skills of letter formation, cursive skills will be taught using an agreed style.



## **Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation**

Pupils in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation and using the EYFS Developmental Matters.

Within Key Stages 1 and 2 handwriting is assessed as part of children's writing assessments. Pupil have an 'Exciting Writing Book' and this involves a weekly piece of independent writing to assess creative writing skills and development alongside handwriting/letter formation skills.

## **Conclusion**

This policy summarises our whole school approach to handwriting teaching and learning and should be read in conjunction with the English Policy.