



Rationale

We are agreed that the standard of handwriting at St Just Primary School is currently not high enough. In order to create rapid and effective improvement, we are putting in place a new policy, philosophy and strategy for handwriting across the whole school.

Aim

We are committed to implementing this new strategy because we believe that the skills practised and perfected in reaching a personal, high standard of handwriting go beyond what appears on the page. We aim to also achieve the following skills which we believe are fundamental to a good learning attitude: resilience, commitment, high expectation, pride, observation, concentration, application.

Philosophy

We are adopting a zero tolerance philosophy from EYFS to year 6, towards:

- incorrect orientation of letters and numbers
- not using a cursive script
- incorrect pencil grip
- incorrect posture
- a standard lower than that of which the child is capable

Resources

We will be purchasing and implementing a new handwriting scheme called 'Letterjoin'.

This scheme will be used across the whole school.

The scheme incorporates a variety of resources including online resources.

Posture

The matching size of chairs proportionate to tables is a hindrance to effective posture for good handwriting in some classrooms. We are purchasing size-matched furniture in years 5 and 6 and replacing damaged chairs in years 4, 3 and 2.

Children will be shown good posture to effect good handwriting and will be expected to demonstrate this at all times. The positioning of books / papers on the tables is of high importance and this will be demonstrated and expected of each child.

Resources such as 'writing slopes' will be used when considered appropriate and as experimental possibilities for improving standards for individuals.

Left-handed children often need to place their body higher above their work and might benefit from sitting on a cushion. They also need to be seated at the end of a table with no one to their left if possible. Teacher demonstration of writing should encompass guidance to left-handers; should show awareness that left-handers and pen users might inadvertently wipe out their writing as they write.

Pencil Grip

A triangular pencil grip will be expected and zero tolerance of other grips will be implemented from EYFS onwards. We are aware that currently, some grip styles might be irredeemable for children in upper key stage 2 but we will endeavour to implement, encourage and support a manner of writing which will not hinder progression in learning and attainment at key stage 3 and onwards. Fashionable pencil grips will be provided and used at all times for those who need them. They will be regarded as a functional fashion item and promoted as such by all staff who may use them too.

New children joining our school mid-year, will be expected to demonstrate handwriting which matches our school policy. We will provide extra tuition for them at lunchtime to 'bring them up to standard' and encourage support at home.

Pen Licences

All children may expect to be given a pen licence – this will happen when appropriate for individuals from year 2 upwards. This award will be at the class teacher's discretion and the licence will be awarded in Friday's Achievement Assembly. The licence will be revoked at the discretion of the class teacher if the standard of handwriting slips and may then be re-awarded within the class once the standard has been consistently regained.

An example of the standard gained by each child to achieve the pen licence should be displayed as a benchmark.

Writing tools and books

Pencils should be uniform across the school unless a particular shape/type suits an individual and helps them to attain a higher standard of handwriting.

Handwriting should be fun and not onerous. Writing with coloured inks, gel pens, markers, crayons etc.... should be planned into the learning experience.

Biro will not be used in any circumstance.

Handwriting should not be confined to handwriting books and good handwriting which conforms to the school agreed font is expected at all times. Specific handwriting books may be used at the discretion of the class teacher if they feel this is encouraging good awareness of what is expected.

When should handwriting be marked ?

Do we mark handwriting at every writing opportunity ? Yes, if the learning objective is regarding handwriting and presentation.

What if the learning objective is not about handwriting – in Science work for example – is poor handwriting acceptable then ? No.

We must strike a balance between maintaining/expecting high standards and quashing creativity.

Agreed maxims

Good handwriting is not just for Literacy.

Good handwriting is not just expected in handwriting sessions.

We are starting in EYFS and expect the standard of handwriting to rise steadily over the next year.

Good handwriting is a reflection of a good learning attitude in all subjects.

The impact of our new strategy will be measured regularly with work moderation and discussion at staff meetings beginning on April 20th 2016 and then termly thereafter.

