

Molescroft Primary School

Handwriting Policy

17th October 2003



1. INTRODUCTION

This policy document is written after consultation with the teaching staff and the Governor with responsibility for Literacy and is presented to the Local Education Authority and the Governing Body in the Autumn term 2003.

It is a working document, which reflects the ethos and practice within the school in relation to developing a consistent Handwriting style. It has been written with due regard to the requirements of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy and it will be monitored and evaluated according to changes within these documents as and when they arise.

The Literacy coordinator: Julie Hakner-KS1
Victoria Tippett-KS2

The role of the co-ordinator: *See Appendix 1 Literacy Coordinator Job Description*

2. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The whole ethos of Molescroft Primary School is to provide every child with a happy, caring, learning environment in which he or she can develop their full potential - whatever their needs and irrespective of ability race or gender.

Molescroft Primary school's teaching of handwriting aims to ensure that all children will be able to

- recall the required movement and "patter" for each letter
- develop a style which enables letters to be easily joined
- write in a way that is legible, fluent and fast

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body should, in cooperation with the head teacher, determine the school's general policy and approach to handwriting.

The Literacy Coordinador should, in cooperation with the head teacher, ensure that the school's policy for handwriting is being delivered throughout the school.

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The Teaching Staff should, in cooperation with the head teacher and Literacy coordinator plan and deliver effective handwriting lessons which reflect the school policy.

The SENCO should, in cooperation with the head teacher, Literacy Coordinator and teaching staff provide, as required in handwriting, support and additional resources for children with special educational needs.

4. PRACTICE

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 opportunities will be taken within the word work session of the Literacy Hour to reinforce handwriting skills; however the direct teaching of handwriting will be done outside of the hour with all children receiving a 15/20mins input 3-5 times a week to allow for direct teaching and independent practice.

Teachers will use the objectives from the National Literacy Strategy to plan handwriting sessions.

The Agreed "Patter" for teaching

From the Foundation stage onwards handwriting will be taught using the four main movement groups,

The four groups are:

- down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l -long ladder letters
- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r-one-armed robots
- anticlockwise round, exemplified by the letter c-curly caterpillar letters
- zig-zag-letters

(see appendix 2)

The children will be taught the upper case formation for each letter (see appendix3)

From the Foundation Stage onwards two letter blends, diagraphs and trigraphs will be taught as joined units.

Once the children are able to form all letters with the correct orientation and size they will be introduced to the joined script and the four basic handwriting joins,

The four basic joins are:

- diagonal joins to letters without ascenders
- horizontal joins to letters without ascenders
- diagonal joins to letters with ascenders
- horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

Letters not joined are, b, s, j, y, g, p, x

(see appendix4)

By the end of Year 1 most children will be expected to join letters using the four basic handwriting joins showing clear ascenders and descenders.

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In Year 3 and Year 4 the children will have a weekly handwriting session which will build upon the skills learnt from Key Stage 1. Sessions will be planned using the objectives from the National Literacy Strategy.

In Year 5 and Year 6 the children will be encouraged to develop their own handwriting styles in line with the school script and teachers will plan handwriting sessions as appropriate.

5. Resources

Choice of paper

For the direct teaching of handwriting and guided independent practise children will be expected to work on lines to ensure they understand the orientation of the letter to the line.

In the Foundation Stage and Year 1 handwriting practise may be done on lined white boards with white board pens or in a lined literacy book. When appropriate in Year 1 or Year 2 the children will be introduced to and use the school's handwriting book this will continue to be used through Key Stage 2.

In the Foundation Stage and Key stage 1 the children will use pencils, handwriting pens will be introduced in Year 3 and Year 4 when appropriate.

7. DOCUMENTATION

Year Group objectives for the teaching of handwriting can be found in the National Literacy Strategy Handbook.

Guidance on the teaching of handwriting in Key Stage 1 can be found in section 3 of The National Literacy Strategy Book-Developing Early Writing.

8. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Developing an effective pencil grip

Children need to learn to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for efficient control of the pencil. The children will be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and fore finger with the pencil resting on the third finger; the thumb and fore finger should also be able to move slightly-this is known as "froggy legs."

Triangular pencils are used in the Foundation Stage to encourage this pencil hold, and pencil grips can be used on pencils for children who experience difficulty with this hold.

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Posture

Developing a good posture when writing is important and teachers should consider the following during handwriting sessions:

- tables are large enough so that the children are not jostling each others arms
- tables and chairs should be the correct height so that children can sit comfortably with their feet flat on the floor
- lighting should be good
- children should have a direct view of the teacher/board
- children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper and bear some body weight
- the paper should be slightly tilted(see appendix 5)

Left-handed children

Left-handed children find writing from left to right more difficult. Teachers should therefore ensure they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter a fast, fluent and legible hand.

Strategies to consider with left-handed children during handwriting sessions:

- with young children model air writing, with your left hand
- make sure a left-handed child sits on the left of a right-handed child
- put a mark on the left side of the page to indicate where to start as some left-handed children mirror write from the right
- left-handed children may need to have the paper slightly to the left of the centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their paper clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- To avoid smudging their work
 - left-handed children should be encouraged to hold their fingers 1.5cm away from the end of the pencil/pen
 - the pencil/pen should sit in the "V" between thumb and forefinger sitting parallel to the thumb
 - the wrist should be straight

9. INSET

The Literacy coordinator will attend courses organised by the Literacy advisor and the Teaching and Learning consultants for Literacy in the Borough. The Literacy coordinator will deliver INSET on changes to National and East Riding policy.

10. TARGETS TO BE MET BY JANUARY2004

To develop a parents guide to Molescroft Primary School's Handwriting policy and style.

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11. LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Literacy Coordinator's job description
2. The four main movement groups
3. Uppercase letter formation
4. The four basic handwriting joins
5. Paper position

12. USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

The materials listed below may provide further support for teaching Handwriting

DfES/QCA, *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*, QCA, London, 2000

DfES/QCA, *The National Curriculum: Handbook for primary teachers in England*, HMSO, London, 1999

DfES *The National Literacy Strategy-Framework for Teaching*, DfES, London 1998

DfES *The National Literacy Strategy-Developing Early Writing*, DfES, London 2001