****

**St Maddern’s Church of England Primary School Handwriting Policy**

**September 2015**

Continuous Cursive Handwriting



**This policy should be read in conjunction with our behaviour for learning policy**

**Our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:**

* Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning clearly.
* Take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of achievement.
* Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively.
* Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.

**To develop a clear, legible style of writing, children are taught to:**

* Hold a pencil comfortably
* Develop a consistent size and shape of letters and a regularity of spacing between letters and words.
* Join letters correctly.
* Develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by **all** adults is very important.

At St Maddern’s, we use a Continuous Cursive style of handwriting.

**What is Continuous Cursive Handwriting?**

The main features of this style are:

* Each letter **starts** on the line.
* The child keeps the pencil on the paper for the whole word, giving a very fluid style.
* Each letter has an exit stroke.
* Descenders are connected to the next letter with a loop.

**What are the benefits of using the Continuous Cursive style of handwriting?**

* Aids left to right movements – through each word and across the page.
* Words treated as units – a continuous cursive style enables pupils to go from the beginning of a word to the end without a break. This style is proven to be beneficial to children with spelling difficulties as the continuous movement required to form different words means the child does not have to think about the order of letters.
* Eliminates reversals and inversions.
* Gives spaces between words – children stop only when they get to the end of the spoken word.
* Rules are simple, ensuring consistency and continuity on how handwriting is taught throughout the school.
* Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking – therefore increasing speed and fluency of written work.

**How Is Handwriting Taught at St Maddern’s?**

***From the earliest stages, the correct formation of letters should be given high priority to ensure correct writing habits are learned and to ensure continuity throughout the school.***

**Reception**

On entry, Reception children are involved in a variety of activities to develop essential pre-writing skills in line with the goals of the Foundation Stage. They participate in activities to develop gross motor control such as ribbon movement, chalking, painting on a large scale and writing on the interactive whiteboard. They also participate in activities which develop fine motor control such as tracing, plasticine modelling, and threading.

Children are introduced to the main handwriting patterns and actual letter formation in conjunction with the introduction of phonic skills. Letters are introduced with entrance and exit strokes. Children can practise their names in cursive script by tracing over in the first instance then underneath. They may also begin to join some letters to create simple words.

Parents are issued with a copy of the Continuous Cursive Handwriting alphabet (which is displayed in all classrooms as a reminder and aid to teaching and learning.) They are also invited to an induction workshop where they are introduced to our rationale and encouraged to support their children at home to practise using cursive script at opportune moments.

**Year 1**

As children move into year 1, children continue to master the handwriting patterns and correct letter formation. They develop their ability to join letters to form simple words, and to work with accuracy and precision. All children write in pencil. Children should be introduced to lined paper when ready.

The learning of spelling continues to be linked closely to handwriting.

**Years 2-6**

The Cursive style continues to develop through close links with the Literacy framework. Phonics and spellings are reinforced through handwriting practise and, as fluency and accuracy develops, pupils are encouraged to write with an ink pen. Handwriting practise can provide opportunities to integrate cross-curricular learning e.g. practising spelling of scientific vocabulary, words used in history and geography topics etc.

**Handwriting sessions**

Handwriting is taught on a daily basis in the Autumn Term as the new writing style is introduced and to reinforce expectations for presentation and correct use of handwriting in books. Handwriting sessions usually take place outside of the literacy hour.

***During the session -***

Children should be taught/ reminded of the correct posture required for handwriting :

* Feet should be flat on the floor.
* The paper should be positioned at a slight angle and children should be encouraged to hold the paper still with the opposite arm.
* Use of tripod grip - From foundation Stage, children should be encouraged to grip a pencil or pen in the correct way. Children struggling to achieve a comfortable tripod grip should be helped by provision of triangular-shaped pencils, or pencil grips.

Children should be provided with lined paper for handwriting practise, including a margin. Children should be reminded to align their writing with the margin.

Handwriting sessions should begin with practising one of the main handwriting patterns. The use of handwriting patterns is a pleasurable and creative way of practising handwriting movements. They can also be used as decorative borders around art and written work, such as in book making. The teacher should model correct formation of individual letters and joins between letters on the board first before children copy. Children who struggle to copy from the board may require the pattern/word to be written in their book for them to copy.

**Left-handed children**

Left-handed children have very different needs to right-handed children when learning to write. It is necessary to consider the following points:

***Sitting position*** – left-handed children should sit on the left hand side of the table so that his/her writing hand does not interfere with the writing hand of the child sat next to him/her.

***Book/paper-position*** – should be positioned a little to his/her left and tilted slightly right. This should help the child be able to see what he/she is writing and to prevent smudging.

**Assessment and monitoring**

Children are provided with oral or written feedback during handwriting lessons. Expectations about the quality of children’s handwriting and presentation in all areas of the curriculum should be reinforced regularly. Handwriting is also assessed as part of half-termly writing samples completed by each child.

**September 2015**

**Policy to be reviewed in: 2018**