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'Respect, Aspire, Achieve'

Handwriting at Burford Primary School – Sept 2017

Dear Parents

I am writing to update and inform you of changes and ongoing practice regarding handwriting, please read on for an overview of our aims and expectations.

In 2014 we adopted a 'Cursive' system which features a uniform approach to letter formation, leading to a more effective, fluent and legible joined style.

Cursive handwriting enables children to write with increased flow, allowing them to concentrate on the content of their work and correct spelling. Each letter starts on the line, so the pen flows and does not leave the page during a word.

We teach the children this system once they have a good handle on a non-cursive formation showing they have strength for writing, a good pencil grip and a good understanding of letter to sound correspondence. This usually happens towards the middle to end of Year One.

Teachers and support staff will consistently model cursive handwriting in lessons in order to establish good practice across the school.

Please read on to get an idea of how Cursive Handwriting will be taught throughout the school.

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Warwick Class (Nursery & Reception)

In the **Foundation Stage** we will continue to focus on activities that develop good foundations for writing and develop those all-important fine motor skills in preparation for more formalised writing as the children prepare for Year One. Letter formation will be taught in 'families' so children understand which letters are grouped by similarity. At this stage we will not expect children to write with cursive lead in flicks.

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Windrush Class (Year 1 & 2)

In **Year One** we focus on ensuring children are well prepared to write. We are careful to establish whether they have strength in their hands (many are still developing fine motor skills), an effective and correct pencil grip and a good level of confidence for writing.

Once we feel the children are ready, we introduce a non-joined cursive formation (pre-cursive) in order to prepare the children for joined cursive writing alongside their phonic development. The children need to have clear recognition of letters in order to make their phonic links for reading and independent writing.

We will be calling the entry stroke 'get ready' and then teaching the letter formation using the 'Read, Write Inc.' scheme that we have used for many years.

We believe the cursive system enhances normal practice, as the children will know to always start in the same place with their pencils whatever the letter!

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In **Year Two**, children will be introduced to joined cursive writing, which focuses on the exit strokes linking to the entry strokes. This process is carefully modeled by the teachers and teaching assistants. It should feel quite natural to the children, as they will have had a well-structured introduction.

Tolsey and Priory Class (Year 3,4,5 &6)

In **Key Stage Two** children benefit from knowing that each letter starts in the same place (on the line) and enjoy the flow of their pen, as it never leaves the paper mid word!

At this stage, presentation should be a priority for children; we encourage them to value their work at all stages and to be proud of their efforts. By putting an emphasis on handwriting, we hope to raise standards in literacy and celebrate the written word through awards and displays.

Children progress and develop at varying rates throughout their primary education, so the expectations from us are always tailored to the individual. If your child is not quite ready to be writing with cursive joins, then we will recognise this and put in place the necessary interventions to help them get there.

If you have any queries regarding our handwriting policy then please do feel free to catch me and quiz me!

Best wishes,

Mrs Zoë Duff- Literacy Coordinator

ZD 2017