

Handwriting Policy and Guidance



Inspire – Embrace – Succeed

“...I came so that they may have life and life to its
fullest” John 10:10

Aims

For Teachers:

1. To know the correct style, letter formations and joins in handwriting to ensure consistency across the school
2. To understand the progression in handwriting so that pupils are taught in every lesson and pupils' handwriting develops and improves
3. To ensure high expectations in handwriting lessons and that pupils are expected to apply the same standards in other independent writing

For Pupils:

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by having a correct pencil grip and forming all letters and digits correctly

Handwriting expectations in each year group:

Foundation Stage:

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters and numbers as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters and numbers
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters and numbers,
- most of which are correctly formed

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large scale movements, from the shoulder.

Reception:

- Pre-writing stage- patterning
- Individual letter and number formation
- Word formation based on letter groups – linked to letter and sounds, beginning to show joins in diagraphs

The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching handwriting

As part of their phonics sessions, Year 1 pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

As part of their phonics sessions, Year 2 pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand capital letters should not be joined

- 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

As part of their spelling sessions, Year 3-4 pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters
- Write capital letters, lowercase letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another
- 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.

As part of their spelling sessions, Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to:

Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:

- Using the correct strokes to join letters and ensure correct letter formation
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters)

Teaching time:

- EYFS little and often
- Years 1 and 2: at least 3 weekly sessions lasting no more than 10 minutes. This can be incorporated into their phonics sessions.
- Years 3 and 4: three 15 minute sessions a week. This can be incorporated into their spelling sessions.
- Year's 5 and 6: two to three 15 minute sessions a week. This can be incorporated into their spelling sessions.

Children are provided with time and opportunity to practise their handwriting, helping them progress from accuracy to fluency.

For example, as part of their writing lessons, teachers use 'handwriting slips', to provide children with an opportunity to practise forming particular words that they will use in the piece of writing.

Mastering Letter Formation – correct size and orientation*

Non-cursive examples of letters (a prerequisite before pre-cursive font):

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

Lower case letters (precursive):

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

Lower case letters (cursive):

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

Capital Letters:

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

Cursive Script:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Numbers:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Letters are taught in this order:

c o a d g e q s

r n m h p k b

l t i j f u

v x y z w

* Teachers do not rush the 'joining process'. We recognise that taking time during the early development stages will reap rewards when pupils are required to write at pace in all subjects.

Resources

- 'Handwriting Repeater' – an online resource with a 're-write' function that can be useful during handwriting sessions.
- Whiteboard resources (for example, writing guidelines can be added as a background to Notebook slides)

Books

- English books have line guides in them with consistent size from Year 2 – 6. Year 1 have bigger spaces between the line guides.
- Children who require them (Y1-6) can use writing books with guidelines to support their handwriting.
- Additional handwriting books are also used to practice letter and number formation during spelling/handwriting sessions.

Pencils and Pens

- Pupils will use pencils initially and move onto pens.
- Children at Key Stage 1 use sharp pencils with grips if they require them.
- From Year 3 onwards children are able to gain their 'Pen Licence' if their writing is neat and consistent and if they are able to use cursive writing in all their books with the exception of Maths.
- All children in Year 6 write in pen unless required to write in pencil.

Getting ready to write

Developing fine and gross motor skills

- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.
- Stretching, pulling and dragging movements
- Using ribbons and ropes to develop upper body and shoulder movements
- Develop core strength with activities that involve balancing and exploring a range of posture positions (e.g. lying on their stomachs to write/kneeling upright/sitting at a table)

Seating and posture

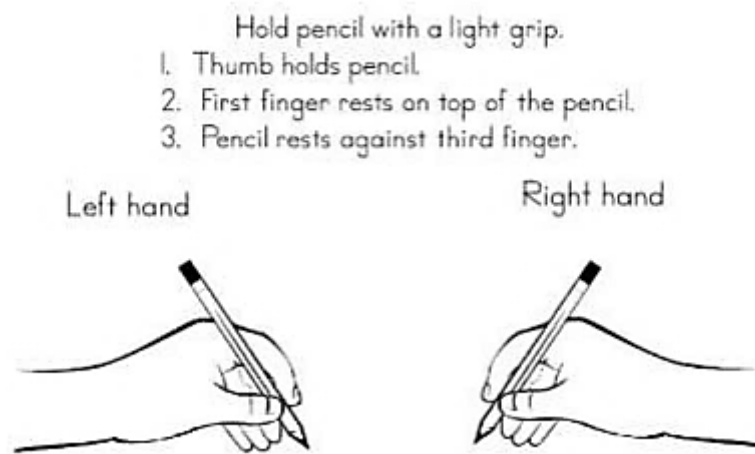
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

SITTING POSITION



Pencil grip

A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil



For right handers:

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers:

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip but some children may need to grip a little further away from the tip so that the writing is not obscured by the thumb knuckle.
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30° and pushed about 5cm away from the body to prevent 'hooking' of the hand which is caused by the left elbow 'locking' into the side of the body.
- Use the right hand to steady the paper
- Left-handed children can be taught to cross t's and possibly f's from right to left (pulling instead of pushing)

Assessment

Subject Leads, particularly the English Lead, should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (as part of the monitoring cycle).

The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the National Curriculum?

Teachers could also use these questions to assess their pupils' handwriting.

They should also consider:

- Is the child's posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the National Curriculum?

Teacher modelling

It is essential that teachers model neat and cursive writing in shared writing on display boards, whiteboards and in pupils' books. Teachers' writing must be consistent with the handwriting expectations for their year group.

Application

Pupils should be encouraged to apply the handwriting they are taught in all independent writing. Teachers must have high expectations of all pupils and expect to see examples of what they have been taught in all books.

If pupils are learning joined handwriting, they should be expected to use this in their written work. Pupils should only attempt joins if they have been taught them. Teachers must monitor this and use praise and next steps marking to bring this to pupils' attention where appropriate.