



# **Handwriting Policy**

**Person responsible: English Subject Leader**

**Date adopted: November 2023**

**Review Date: November 2026**

## Handwriting policy

'Handwriting is a means of expressing language just like speech. It is a physical way of expressing thoughts and ideas and a means of communicating with others.'

*National Handwriting Association, 2015*

### Aims

- To develop a comfortable and appropriate pencil grip.
- To be able to write with an efficient pace to aid expressing themselves across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- To understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- To take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- To develop a fluent, joined handwriting style.
- To be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting.

### Pupil Expectations

Early Years Foundation Stage: **(EYFS Statutory Framework Sept 2023)**

- *Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases'*
- *Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed*

Year 1: **(National Curriculum 2014)**

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to 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.

Year 2:

- 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 which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- 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.

Years 3 and 4:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].
- introduce opportunities for writing with a pen.

Years 5 and 6:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

### **Teaching and Learning**

In Reception and Year 1 the children are taught correct letter formation through our phonics scheme, Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS). The teachers use the language and visuals to teach letter formation alongside the phonics. From Year 1 (summer term) to Year 6 we use the Penpals handwriting scheme. It focuses on whole class teaching with a sequence of warm up (fine and gross motor skills), demonstration, practise and cool down. Formal handwriting sessions are completed in handwriting books.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Retrace vertical lines and letter patterns
- Printing letters (starting at the top of letters)
- Letter families ( following the ELS program for letter formation)
- See appendix A for activities used for child initiated play.

Year 1:

- Letter families ( following the ELS program for letter formation)
- Vowels
- Capital letters
- Diagonal joins - ng, ch, tr
- Horizontal joins – op, oa, ol, of

Year 2:

- Diagonal joins – eel, ice
- Horizontal joins – oy, ow
- Joining to and from r (where), s (cheese), f (leafy)
- Joins rr (hurried), ss (session), ff (different)
- Joining high frequency words

Year 3:

- Revising joins in a word – le, ing, un, de, qu

- Revising joins in high frequency words
- Revising joins to and from s (dis), r (pre), f (ff)
- Introduce joining p (pie, panda, phonics) and b (bike, band, bland)
- Relative size and consistency
- Speed and fluency practice
- Consistency in spacing
- Handwriting style

#### Year 4:

- Revising joins in a word – ness, ing, mm, ll, ff, dd
- Link spelling and handwriting using related words
- Introduce sloped writing
- Look at the size, proportion and spacing – ious, able, ful, ion, ist
- Speed and fluency when writing notes, drafting and lists
- Look at print (alphabet, capitals)
- Presentation skills (font styles)

#### Year 5/6:

- Revise joins and sloped writing
- Develop style for speed – joining from t, f, s and loops from g, j, y
- Develop style for speed – breaks in longer words
- Different styles for different purposes
- Project work: making notes, organising ideas, drafts, evaluating, letters, structuring an argument
- Self-assessment: handwriting, joins, consistent size, ascenders and descenders, capital letters and letters resting on baseline.
- Writing at speed: spacing within and between words, identifying closing and unclosed letters.
- Project work: collecting information, recording ideas, draft, playscript, evaluations, organising information, publish a notice.

The exercise books that children use are differentiated by line spaces of decreasing size as their handwriting develops.

### **Inclusion**

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently, however some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this through interventions, extra handwriting practice, gross and fine motor control sessions (see appendix A), pencil grip for support and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of paper etc.

All teachers are aware of specific needs of **left-handed pupils** and will make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned in the middle allowing pupils to choose their preferred writing position.
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right handed pupil so that they are not competing for space.
- When possible members of staff will demonstrate for left handed pupils.

## **The learning environment**

In all classes suitable writing materials are available for pupils to access independently supporting progression through each phase. All classes provide opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting skills during their free time e.g. role-play area, soft start, choosing time etc.

## **Presentation**

Teachers discuss handwriting and presentation in all subjects and model good handwriting themselves. Teachers are **explicit** about different types of handwriting for example, personal note-taking or best handwriting for presentation, but remember not all the children will be able to achieve this. Teachers give handwriting and presentation a high priority in appropriate classroom displays. The use of a rubber is used at the teacher's discretion otherwise pupils are encouraged to indicate mistakes with one neat horizontal line.

## **Use of pen and pencil**

Children write in pencil from Reception to Year 3. They begin to write in pen from Year 4 onwards when the teacher judges that they are ready to do so. 'Pen Licences' are not used in this school because we do not feel that they support an inclusive approach to learning.

## **Writing on the interactive white board/white boards**

Accurate handwriting while using technology needs to be as neat and legible as it would be written on paper. Tips to support this:

- Change the thickness of the pen and stylus.
- Be aware of different writing colours used, for example red can be difficult to read from a distance.
- Stand to the side of the board to ensure all pupils can see how to appropriately form letters/words.
- Use appropriate templates, i.e. lined and square paper, to help guide your handwriting and offer a better model.

## **Assessment**

Teachers will assess handwriting throughout the year against the expectations set out earlier in this policy. Teachers have access to handwriting interventions and fine motor activities for children who need further support to work towards meeting the expectations for their year group.

## **Review:**

Autumn Term 2026

## Appendix A

**Gross Motor Control** is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body or limbs such as arms. In relation to handwriting these activities will support good posture and balance:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. rolling, bouncing, kicking
- Cycling
- Gripping climbing frames
- Building with large construction kits
- Hammering
- Making large movements in the air with hands, arms and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music

**Fine Motor Control** is the term used to describe small movements usually of the hands and fingers. In relation to handwriting these activities will support their pencil grip and pencil movement:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with play-dough, plasticine and clay
- Drawing in sand and water including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods/tweezers
- Sewing and weaving
- Chopping and peeling when cooking
- Developing the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sparkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on small, large boards and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of lines