



Handwriting Policy

Reviewed June 2024

Next Review June 2025

### Rationale:

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”  
(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

A consistently high standard of presentation and handwriting is promoted across the whole school which all children and staff recognise, understand and follow. For children and teachers this aims to foster a sense of pride and respect in their work. Self-esteem is raised when children are able to communicate meaning accurately.

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child's handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, across the curriculum, rather than upon the act. We adhere to The British Dyslexia Association's recommendation that children learn the continuous cursive style.

The key advantages are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

### Handwriting across the school:

- Children use a continuous cursive handwriting style by the end of Year 6.
- They are encouraged to maintain a correct posture and pencil grip.
- Handwriting is discretely taught daily in the Foundation Stage and the beginning of Y1, at least twice a week in Y2 and once a week in KS2.
- Opportunities for linking phonics and spelling are used.
- Handwriting books are used from Y1 onwards.
- Additional handwriting sessions are given to those children whose letter formation, joining or speed require improvement.
- Children write in pencil until the end of year 4. From year 5 onwards pupils can choose to write in black pens (no biro) if they wish.
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations.

### Specific Progression:

#### **Foundation Stage**

- show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements.
- move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space.

- handle equipment and tools effectively
- safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques.

#### Year 1

- 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.
- 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 down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

#### 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.
- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.
- be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. \*
- use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

### Teaching and Learning:

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength.
- Letters are also introduced in varied, multi-sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using 'letter speak'; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.
- The cursive font, with lead-ins (see appendix 1), is taught as a specific skill, at least once a week for about 20 minutes, with additional, individual or group practise where necessary.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.
- The cursive font should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style.
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.
- Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins
- Always model good handwriting
- Demonstrate formations
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or a stick

### Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Gross and fine movement warm up
- Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory

The daily phonics session in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

### **Provision for left handed children**

Left handed children always sit on the left side of right handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5cm from the point of their pencil.

### **Inclusion:**

These expectations apply to the vast majority of children in our school. Occasionally a decision will be made to personalise expectations for a child who has such specific needs that these expectations could be a barrier to their progress (e.g. a child with physical difficulties writing). Difficulties are addressed through appropriate interventions or specific equipment. The SENCO will provide resources for those who have difficulty with fine motor skills – pencil grips, fine motor control programmes and referrals where necessary.

### **Celebration and Motivation:**

All staff ensure that presentation and handwriting is promoted by:

- Celebrating work of a high standard, including homework, in whole class situations.
- Ensuring good presentation and handwriting is rewarded in line with the whole school behaviour policy (Praise, Headteacher Awards).
- Sharing good work in whole school assemblies.
- Displaying written work with annotated comments recognising achievement.
- Using joined, legible and consistently formed handwriting on boards, in books, on flip charts and displays.
- Providing modelled examples and reviewing expectations with children.

### **Homework:**

Parents are encouraged to support their children to produce quality work following the policy guidelines. Children are expected to take the same care with homework as they do in their class books.

### **Monitoring:**

Presentation is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis through work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews. Feedback will be shared with the class teacher and at Leadership meetings. This will ensure that the policy leads to good practice.

## Appendix 1

Cursive font with lead-ins Fonts from Twinkl - Twinkl Cursive Loop

A a B b C c D d E e F f G g H h I i J j K k L l M m N n O o P p Q q  
R r S s T t U u V v W w X x Y y Z z

For guidance see Handwriting scheme in English Co-ordinator file.

## Appendix 2

RWI letter formations

Set 1

m a s d t i n

p g o c k

u b f e l

h r j v y

w z q x

## Appendix 3

Letter groups with similar patterns

i l t j u y - ladder letters "Walk down the ladder"

c o a d g q e f s - curly caterpillars "Follow the curly caterpillar" "Travel down to the toes, then up and arm out"

h n m r b p k - one armed robots "Travel down to the toes, then up and arm out"

v w x z - zig zag monsters "Watch out for the zig-zag monster!"