

**Policy/Procedure/Guideline**

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| **Policy/Procedure/Guideline:** | Handwriting |
| **Date of adoption / Local Governing Committee approval:** | February 2024 |
| **Lead staff member:** | Raz Taj |
| **Review date:** | February 2026 |

**Summary of values**

*Every child has the right to access a world-class education. We exist to empower, enable and inspire children to achieve their every potential through exceptional teaching, innovative approaches to learning, and a community-oriented approach to meeting learners’ needs*

**Aim:** to enable each child to develop a clear, comfortable and legible style of joined-up writing.

**Writing tools**

When children are ready to begin letter formation practice they use plain paper. They progress to 15mm lines by Year 1. By Year 3 the children use 8mm lines. Children are encouraged to use a variety of writing tools from the foundation stage onwards.

Chubby infant pencils are more commonly used in the Reception Year and Year 1. Year 2 and Year 3 use the school HB pencil for most writing. From Year

3 onwards, children are taught to use notewriters when their handwriting is considered to be neatly presented and correctly formed.

The most effective letter formation practice takes place in short sessions

It may be necessary to have longer sessions but regular short sessions (approx. 10-15mins) should be planned during the week.

Modelling and teaching of handwriting is incorporated in other curriculum subjects, not just in the English/ handwriting lessons.

**The early stage**

Children are taught the correct direction to form each letter. The teacher observes the child in order to ensure that the correct direction is used from the outset as it is hard to unlearn bad habits. The letters are introduced in the order they appear in Letters and Sounds phonics guidance. However practice should be done using the following groupings:

* Letters with curved action as in ‘c’ : c a d g o

q

* u v y w
* l i t f j
* e s x z
* n r m
* b h k p

Capital letters are introduced in Year 1. The following order may be used:

* Curves: C O S
* Straight lines: A E F H I K L M N T V W X Z
* Curves and straight lines: B D G J P Q R U Y

The rules of the use of capitals are taught alongside the formation.

In Year 1, the children are expected to produce legible upper and lower case letters used in the appropriate place i.e., not mixed within words. Attention is given to the production of clear ascenders and descenders and correct orientation of letters.

Letter shapes and directions are appended.

**Teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1**

**In Reception**

# Mark making and speech provide children with powerful tools for thinking, reasoning and problem solving. Time, space and attention is given to children’s mark making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing experiences. Throughout each day, children have opportunities for spontaneous mark making, drawing and writing in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Resources are carefully chosen, well organised and attractively presented, so that the children can decide independently how they want to represent their ideas and which medium would best suit their purpose. High value is placed upon imagination, ideas and self-expression demonstrated by the children, these are reflected by the adults and used as starting points for planning.

# Handwriting development in our EYFS includes a wide variety of activities planned to develop the fine motor skills required for the correct pencil grip. ‘Funky Finger’ activities may include threading, using tweezers, dough gym, spiders in jelly, cardboard weaving. The list is endless! From entering Reception, children are taught letter formation using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised letter formation phrase and pronunciation phrase for each grapheme.

**In Year 1**

At least 2 short whole-class sessions when you teach direction of letter formation (using agreed patter), shape and relative size with small group and individual monitoring. Blends should be taught as a single joined grapheme. Ensure children can form all letters in correct orientation with flicks by end of year.

**Teaching in Year 2 and 3**

In Year 2 and Year 3 the children learn to join the letters when their letters are correctly constructed and orientated.

Teach the whole class together for a short period each week (about 15 to 20 minutes), then allow 2 further practices (10 minutes each)

Teaching is different from practice. The teaching sessions are about movement. The teacher demonstrates the movements and ensures the children are making them correctly.

Use lined paper: the same size as those in their exercise books. Do not use “handwriting ruled paper”.

When demonstrating movements, name the movement using the agreed patter, and encourage the children to do so as they write

Allow the children to make large and small movements, in the air, on the desk as well as on the page with the pen or pencil. Make a game of it.

Use the back of their exercise book. Ensure the children miss a line between each line of writing until at the stage of copying short verses or proverbs (year 3)

Start each session with time for the children to respond to your marking or assess movement. Walk round to ensure that correct direction is used. You can’t always tell afterwards.

Make it fun. Use colours.

Ensure pencils/ coloured pencils are kept sharp. Use a separate special set for handwriting.

Teach the letters in this order:

* Letters with curved action as in ‘c’ : c a d g o

q

* u v y w
* l i t f j
* e s x z
* n r m
* b h k p

Initially, teach the children the lead-in stroke on each letter. Then show them how to join it with one other. Then they learn to join various groups of 2 or

3 letters, finally words.

Only group letters that commonly appear together in words (e.g. NOT CC but ca, dad, add, )

Use handwriting practice to reinforce spelling patterns.

Once the children have learnt all the joins, start to write the date on the board in joined writing.

Capitals do not join.

Common difficulties in joining script

* An effective way to address these is to be explicit. Show them the common mistakes and how to avoid them.
* Relative size: this needs a lot of emphasis – small letters of equal size, tall letters and descenders equal. Encourage the children to check size by levelling a ruler horizontally across the tops of a line of letters
* How tall? Using medium spaced lines, teach the children to bring tall letters and capitals up nearly to the line above at first.
* How long? Teach the children to drop descenders about half way down to next line
* Loops: children tend to curve these. They must drop in a straight line, bend and go back in a straight line.
* Letter r: children find the shape of the top and the way it joins hard. It needs a bit of practice.
* Letter x: the children will have to be taught how to form the letter in two parts.
* Dotted letters: teach the children to place the dot carefully just above the i or j.

**Handwriting practice**

Children practice the letter joins taught in previous sessions. The children only copy small groups of letters or individual words and repeat them. These are very short sessions (5 or 10 minutes) and can be during register time. Practice does not require teacher input, beyond a verbal reminder for a teaching point.

*Copying LARGE chunks of text/ whole poems is not*

*an effective way to practice handwriting.*

**In Year 2**

Some children are expected to be using joined writing in everyday work by the end of the year.

**In Year 3**

In Year 3, the letter joins should be taught again, systematically, during the Autumn Term. You should find that you can spend less time on teaching handwriting by the end of the Spring Term but should continue with the practice sessions.

As soon as all the joins have been taught, expect the children to write the date in joined script.

All children should be using joined script for everyday work in the Spring Term.

**Years 4-6**

Children continue to have short, regular handwriting practice ( 5-10 minutes only). Teach joins or direction if errors seem to be occurring. Do not give children large chunks of text to copy. Children learn to use notewriters for daily work. Most children are expected to use joined script from the end of Year 3 in daily work. Expect the same standard in all

subjects – not just English. Do not allow the children to revert to printing – even the title in math’s books must be fully joined in Year 4.

Children will write using blue ink and respond using green ink.

**In Year 6**

The very best writers may begin to develop their own style. Allow them to do this provided it meets criteria for year 6 standard. Letters must be correct relative size. Do not allow circles for dots, and insist on school style for loops. If writing slopes, it should be forward, slight and even.

Teachers**’ w**riting

Teachers use the school handwriting script in their writing in children’s books and on boards where appropriate.

**Children experiencing difficulties**

You might normally expect 4-6 children in a year to be still struggling with fine motor control and spatial awareness. They are often, but not always, children with other Special Needs. Provide a differentiated programme for these children. They can make good progress with additional adult time and practice to help them embed the directional element. It is much

better to slow the pace of development for these children than to push them to keep up because they then develop bad habits which are difficult to undo. Ensure that the next class teacher knows exactly where they are in the programme so that it can be continued. By Year 5, even these children should be joining all letters correctly.

**Left-handers**

Ensure you know who these are. They should be seated in a position so that their arm is not blocking the light source. Encourage them to tilt the paper so that they are comfortable. Some left handers find it helps to place the paper or book on a closed ringbinder so that it tilts downwards. Acknowledge, encourage and check them as you are teaching direction.

**Position**

Encourage children to sit reasonable straight, near the desk but not leaning too far in. Make sure that the paper is at a very slight tilt away from the writer.

**Letter formation**

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 |  |  |  |  |  |

# **Agreed ‘Pattern’**

Note that all letters start on the line.

Dot the ‘i’s and cross the ‘t’s at the end of the word.

1. – up and over, back round, up to join, then down to the line and flick
2. – straight up, back down to the line, up and all the way round and flick
3. – up and over, back round and flick
4. – up and over, back round, straight up, back down to the line and flick
5. –
6. - straight up and over, straight back down under the line and flick
7. - up and over, back round, up to join, straight down under the line and flick
8. – straight up, back down to the line and flick
9. – up, down and flick (dot the i at the end of the word)
10. – up, straight down under the line and flick (dot the j at the end of the word)
11. – straight up, back down to the line l – straight up, down and flick
12. – up, down, over and down, over and down and flick
13. – up, down, over and down and flick

o – up and over, back to the line, all the way round and across

1. – up and straight down under the line, back up and all the way round and flick
2. - up and over, back round, up, down under the line and flick
3. – up, straight down to the line, back up and divet across
4. –
5. – straight up, back down to the line and flick u – up down, under and up, down and flick

v – up, down, back up and across

1. –up, down, back up, down, up and across
2. – up and over to the line, then join with a ‘c’
3. – up, down, under and up, straight down under the line and flick
4. – up and across, diagonal down to the line and flick