



Handwriting Policy

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Version History

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Owners Name
0.1	14.05.2019	New Policy	Wendy Ainscough
1.1	01.09.2020	Annual Review	Wendy Ainscough
2.1	07.09.2021	Annual Review	Wendy Ainscough
3.1	06.09.2022	Annual Review	Rachael Sharpe
4.1	04.09.2023	Annual Review	Rachael Sharpe
4.2	21.04.2025	Annual Review - changes in Teaching and Learning and a few word changes	Gail Holmes

Rationale

Children need to be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit their fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that children's handwriting becomes a well-established skill that requires little effort or thought so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the composition of writing, rather than upon the act of transcription. Pupils are taught to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Pupils will initially learn to form individual letters appropriately and accurately in a style that has been decided upon across the school setting, and then when ready, begin to join letters. Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically throughout the school and are based on each individual school's handwriting programme and initially linked to their systematic phonics programme.

Objectives

In the Alumnis MAT we aim:

- to develop a whole school approach;
- to help children gain consistency of style and size to ensure children develop a clear and fluent joined handwriting style;
- to give the pupil confidence and esteem in their own writing presentation and encourage good writing habits and correct letter formation;
- to enable the child to feel confident in free writing and encourage children to take pride in and value high standards of handwriting and presentation;
- to give the children experience of different styles of handwriting;
- to be able to recognise letter and word patterns;
- to visualise whole words.

Teaching and Learning

Foundation Stage

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. So that children can eventually acquire a legible and fluent handwriting style, they need, at an early stage, to develop skills including:

- gross and fine motor control;
- a recognition of pattern;
- a language to talk about the shapes and movements that will lead into the main handwriting movements which create the three basic letter shapes (c, l, m).

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 Early Years 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. In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as:

- *sky writing with both hands;*
- *dough gym and write dance activities;*
- *making patterns on each other's backs;*
- *Use of big chalk on the playground;*
- *making letter shapes in a damp sand tray;*
- *To include large circular movements.*

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn the letter shape (grapheme) alongside the letter sound (phoneme), using each school's individual systematic phonics programme. They will begin to join two and three letters as they develop their phonic knowledge.

Children in this stage are provided with a variety of surfaces on which to make marks, including different types of paper and card, whiteboards, chalkboards and

interactive white boards. They are also given the opportunity to use a wide range of mark making tools, including pencils of varying thicknesses and colours, markers, chalk, wax crayons, pastels, paint, charcoal, etc.

They have experience of a wide range of activities to develop hand and finger strength which leads on to developing a good pencil grip. Pupils learn to draw continuous patterns and those incorporating down strokes. These can start on large pieces of paper gradually getting smaller with relevance to the ability and fine motor coordination of the child. (Write Dance activities support this)

When children are ready, they decide which hand they prefer to use, although hand dominance is often evident before this stage. They are taught to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that the very fine movements required for writing are possible, as the diagram below illustrates.



Triangular pencils are sometimes used to encourage a good grip, and children are monitored so that they do not hold the pencil too tightly as this can produce tension in the arm and shoulder. Children are taught the correct method of sitting at a table when writing. Children who are left-handed are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so that they can more easily see what they have written.

Children are provided with a designated 'writing area' to give status to their early independent writing and develop a positive attitude towards the act of writing. Opportunities for writing are also encouraged throughout the EY environment through the continuous provision.

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children are able to use a pencil, holding it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Key Stage 1

Children are taught handwriting skills daily and will have handwriting sessions for approximately 10-15 minutes.

Children are introduced to a handwriting book with the drawn out lines. Adults will explain how the letters fit into the middle line and introduce each of the letter families.

During handwriting sessions, children are taught all of the basic letter shapes and joins. They have the opportunity to practice letter formation in a variety of ways, starting with sky-writing to encourage good formation and reinforce previous learning.

The joining of letters to start within their family groups, this can also be linked to phonics and spelling patterns within the schools chosen systematic programme.

By the end of Year 1, children can write most letters using a comfortable and efficient pencil/pen grip. Letters are correctly formed and orientated and children put spaces between words. For those who are ready adults ensure that they use joined writing in their class work in pencil initially, and then in pen by the end of year 1.

By the end of Year 2, most children can write legibly, using upper and lower case letters appropriately within words, with ascenders and descenders clearly distinguished, and observing correct spacing within and between words.

There is an expectation that this handwriting style will be applied to all the writing that the children do.

Key Stage 2

Throughout Key Stage 2, handwriting skills are revised and practiced regularly. There is an emphasis on applying handwriting skills to all written work.

High standards of presentation are valued in each year group in order to encourage children to take pride in their work.

By the end of Year 3, most children write with consistency in the size and proportion of letters and spacing within and between words, using the correct formation of handwriting joins.

By the end of Year 4, children are expected to write consistently with neat, legible and joined handwriting in all pieces of work.

By the end of Year 5, many children can adapt handwriting for specific purposes, for example using printing as a presentation choice, or using italics occasionally as a matter of personal choice.

By the end of Year 6, most children have developed a consistent personal handwriting style and some can use different styles for different purposes.

Children are expected to use their 'best' handwriting at all times.

Inclusion

For those children who have a specific learning difficulty regarding handwriting, special provision will be made to cater for their specific needs.

Helping left-handed children

Children who are left-handed are taught to tilt their book or paper so that they can read their writing more easily. They are discouraged from holding a pen or pencil too close to the point as this can interrupt their line of vision. Wherever possible, a left-handed child is positioned away from a wall and to the left of a right-handed child to enable both to write comfortably without bumping into each other. Extra help may be needed, teachers may need to talk to parents and offer to give extra practice. Adults are made aware of left-handed children.

Problems to watch out for with left handed children

Some left handed children may experience difficulty with orientation of letter, with leaving spaces between words, deciding where to start on the page, returning to the margin, with smudging of work and physical problem e.g. hand aching because of extra pressure caused by unnatural pushing movements.

Monitoring

The application of handwriting skills

The handwriting skills discussed in this policy must be applied to all pieces of writing that children do.

Teachers ensure the application of handwriting skills by:

- Reminding children of standards of writing and presentation at the beginning of lessons -across the curriculum;
- sometimes having handwriting as a lesson objective across the curriculum;
- ensuring children improve the presentation of final draft written work if it falls below school expectations;

- the English Subject Leader and/or SLT to monitor handwriting and presentation in books across the curriculum regularly and provide feedback to teachers;
- teachers modelling good handwriting skills during shared and guided writing. Teachers must also follow the handwriting policy when writing comments in children's books.