

Lowerhouses CE Primary School



Handwriting Policy

Working and achieving together to enrich lives and nurture bright futures

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Person Responsible – English Lead

Handwriting Policy

Research shows that making handwriting automatic frees up the brain to work on the composition of what is actually being written. Additionally, there is evidence to show that the physical movements involved in writing by hand are part of the thinking process in writing. ('What's the use of handwriting?' J. Medwell & D. Wray 2017)

The school has adopted the letter formation as used in 'Little Wandle Phonics' and from Year 3, the 'Letter Join' scheme for handwriting and teaches the style laid out on the website and printable resources. The aim of using the 'Letter Join' Scheme is to acquire a cursive style which is simultaneously legible, fast-flowing and individual so the children can write clearly, fluently and quickly in line with the requirements set out in the New Curriculum 2014.

The children should learn to form letters, both lower case and capitals, and effect joins correctly rather than reproduce a perfect copy of the model. The correct hold for the pencil should be taught from the start and the use of large, soft black leaded pencils should be considered in the early stages to encourage the correct hold.

The teaching of handwriting will be supported by the use of www.letterjoin.co.uk ; an interactive whiteboard programme for all levels of handwriting which can be found on the school server and the use of the video smartboard tool. Letter join is also accessible on the iPads and laptops. All handwriting will be linked to the phonics or spelling strategies being covered at that particular time for each year group.

Progression

Research suggests that automatic letter writing is a very powerful predictor of length and quality of written composition in the primary years (Graham et al, 1997)

Foundation: For our youngest pupils in Nursery and Reception we aim for short daily sessions that will include the following;

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, chalkboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.
- Reception pupils will practise the formation of newly taught sounds daily during the phonics session and then in books at tables every day.
- Formation of numerals will also be taught and practised as part of handwriting lessons.

Years 1 to 2: Children will be taught which letters belong to which letter families (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) Tuition will continue with sessions totalling up to 20 minutes (daily for Year 1 and at least 4 sessions a week for Year 2) covering:

- Gross and fine motor skills exercises.
- Correct size and height of letters (including capital letters) and numerals.
- Correct positioning of all letters (including capital letters) and numerals when writing on a line.

Year 2: Cursive handwriting will be introduced for those pupils who can form letters correctly. Pupils will only be taught to join letters if their formation is correct.

Years 3 to 4: More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught (a minimum of three 15-minute sessions per week):

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement.
- Additional teaching and practise for pupils who need to focus on correct letter and numeral formation.
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters.

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Years 5 and 6: Pupils will continue to use the cursive form to ensure a fluent and legible style.

- Dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and speedy handwriting writing.
- Pupils will need to practise different presentation styles – varying heights, use of capitals etc.

Left- handed Pupils:

Left-handed pupils will be seated appropriately to ensure adequate space to their left. They will be taught the appropriate angle to position their paper or book (see 'Guidance' below).

Handwriting Implements:

Foundation Stage children are to be given access to a variety of suitable implements e.g. crayons, large felt pens, ribbons and sand.

KS1 & LKS2 children are to use pencils only. UKS2 children are to be encouraged to use handwriting pens for most class work at the discretion of the class teacher depending upon ability and need. Fine tip pens may be used when a child's work is consistently neat.

Triangular pencils or pencil grips may be used for children who are identified as needing them.

In Maths, no pens are to be used.

Handwriting Practice:

In Foundation, the children will practise regularly on a variety of materials appropriate to their needs. In Key Stage 1 and 2, it is at the discretion of the year groups and their teams to decide where the children will complete their handwriting practice. It is essential though, that handwriting practice takes place outside of a teaching sequence and does not interrupt the learning journey evident in English Books.

In Key Stage 2 children will complete a daily 'alphabet quick write' activity to practise writing clearly, fluently and quickly.

Each class will award a weekly 'Handwriting Hero' certificate to recognise effort and improvement in handwriting.

Teacher's Handwriting:

The teacher's handwriting is the model for the children. All teachers should aim to produce quality writing at all times. It is pointless to provide the children with handwriting lessons if the model does not match the required 'Little Wandle' or 'Letter Join' style – it should at all times. Teaching Assistants should also use the 'Little Wandle' or 'Letter Join' script when writing in the children's books so that the models offered to the children are consistent.

Displays, Worksheets and Whiteboard work:

Display labels should have a balance of printed and written text. This is to ensure that staff model good handwriting practice around the class room and school environment.

Equal Opportunities:

This policy recognises that all children have equal entitlement and equal access to handwriting, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religious belief or social background.

A.E.N:

Teachers will need to be sensitive to the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and to genuine developmental needs. This statement applies not only to the use of the correct style but occasionally to the appropriate use of a lined book for a few children. The children are introduced to the joined style of handwriting once their letter formation is correct. Any style must be carried forward to ensure that by Year 6 the children's handwriting is well established and fluent. Children with ANP, MSP or EHCP targets that relate to letter formation or handwriting will have additional support sessions included in their timetables.

Parental Involvement:

At the beginning of the year, parents will be reminded of the handwriting style we teach either by the sending home of an example sheet or by displaying it on the school website page. On occasion, handwriting (including handwriting patterns) may be given as a homework activity for the children.

Marking:

Comments should be made in the marking to reflect handwriting and presentation to encourage the children to produce their best.

Children will be asked to practise joins or rewrite elements of their work to ensure handwriting is clear and correct.

During dedicated handwriting lessons, marking and verbal feedback will happen during the lesson to enable children to respond immediately to feedback from adults.

Assessment:

Ongoing monitoring and assessment of handwriting will take place in all year groups.

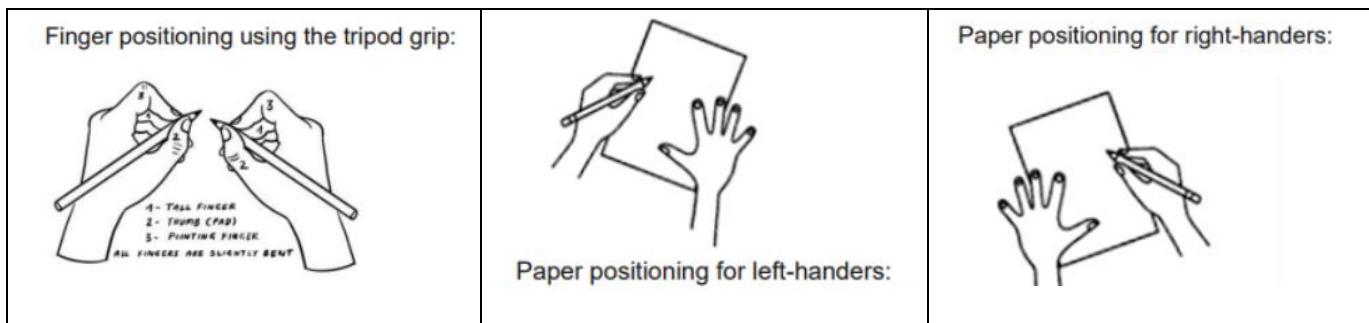
A dedicated piece of handwriting will be completed during each assessment week;

- Reception: Children's pencil grip and physical skills will be assessed from an unaided piece of writing each half term. This may consist of practising the letters they have been learning.
- Key Stage 1: children to write at least one sentence provided by the teacher (ensuring a wide range of letters (and for Year 2, possibly joins) are to be practised). This may consist of a simple dictation or copying exercise.
- Key Stage 2: children to write a short paragraph provided by the teacher (ensuring a wide range of letters and joins are to be practised).
- The formation of numerals should be carefully monitored and assessed in both handwriting and maths lesson.

Guidance:

Handwriting Guidance (The writing framework, pages 100-101)

Teachers should encourage pupils to maintain correct finger positioning. Most pupils find the tripod grip the easiest to learn and support grips can help. Teachers should show pupils how to pinch the pencil with the index ('pointing') finger and the thumb, about a finger space from the end (on the coloured part just above the sharpened point); and how to rest the middle finger underneath the pencil to support it. If necessary, a sticker can show pupils where to place their fingers. The way a child grips the pencil will affect the quality, speed and flow of the handwriting. The grip should be relaxed, not pressing too hard on the pencil or the paper.



Letter families and relative sizes

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed.

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The 'families' are grouped according to where each letter starts, although these families may differ slightly, depending on the handwriting programme used.

Typical families are:

- c o a g q d
- i l t k j
- v w u y f
- r n m h p b
- e s x z

Pupils should be taught to write each 'family' of lower-case letters correctly on the line, and then to write words that include letters from that family.

Diagonal and horizontal joins

Pupils should be taught two basic joins: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

The diagonal join connects:

- letters from the line to small letters
- letters from the line to tall letters
- letters from the line to a, d, g, c, o, q (These letters need an extra stroke backwards across the top of a, d, g, c, o.)

The horizontal join connects:

- v, w, x, f, r to small letters
- v, w, x, f, r to tall letters
- v, w, x, f, r to a, d, g, c, o, q

Research:

- *It is not simply a motor skill but a significant element of literacy in its own right. – and has been shown to be an effective predictor of achievement in mathematics as well as English.*
- *Fluency and automaticity in handwriting are key contributors to quality in composition.*
- *The physical movements involved in writing by hand are part of the thinking process in writing.*
- *Handwriting is in many ways more effective as a medium for learning than digital text entry.*

('What's the use of handwriting?' J. Medwell & D. Wray 2017)