



HANDWRITING POLICY

Introduction

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught; it is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity; a movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting and it is in our hands that the kinaesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter.

An effective handwriting style should be neat and legible and our pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas, i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Boyne Hill CE Infant & Nursery School, we begin by teaching the printed handwriting style. Application and refinement of this style continues throughout Year 1 and progresses, on entry in to Year 2, to the continuous cursive handwriting style where letters are joined. Handwriting will be taught explicitly in short, frequent sessions and always alongside phonic and spelling teaching at all stages, in line with our systematic synthetic phonics programme (SSPP).

We recognise that effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling so teachers regularly demonstrate letter formation and children then practise by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly. Teachers also need to model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the interactive board and when marking books.

Handwriting Principles – Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Learning Goals

- Physical development – Fine Motor Skills: *Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing-using a tripod grip in almost all cases.*
- Literacy – Writing: *Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.*

In the EYFS, good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination so our pupils will learn handwriting through movement, with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim.

Pupils 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

Throughout the EYFS, pupils 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 by using tools, cooking utensils and scissors
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting, playdough and manipulating ‘small world’ equipment

The key movements underpinning letter formation will be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder. In the earliest stages, pupils will make the movements symmetrically using both arms and once the

movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and pencils.

Pupils will then progress to patterning, individual letter formation in the printed style (Appendix A) and word formation in line with the SSPP.

Handwriting Principles – Key Stage 1

The National Curriculum English Programme of Study provides guidance on teaching handwriting.

Year 1 pupils should be taught to:

- 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 pupils should be taught to:

- 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 not joined;
- 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

At Boyne Hill CE Infant & Nursery School, and to compliment the teaching and learning in our SSP programme, Rocket Phonics, we have adopted the Debbie Hepplewhite way of teaching pre-cursive script.

We therefore introduce joined up, continuous cursive handwriting from Year 2 and pre-join letter formation in Year 1. These are the key advantages to this approach:

- 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, pupils 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 letters
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

Each letter pattern links to a family of letters – Appendix B

Teaching and supporting individual children

- Pupils will be encouraged to use the correct pencil grip and sit with a good posture.
- A sharp pencil is essential for all handwriting activities.
- Left-handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their writing arms from bumping each other.
- The angle of the paper depends on the handedness of the pupil. Left-handers should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents them smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. A left-hander may also benefit from holding the pencil higher up.
- Some children with specific difficulties may benefit from using a sloping surface and special equipment, e.g., triangular pencil grip for a short period of time.
- Key Stage 1 children will practice their handwriting skills as part of their phonics lessons and discretely in handwriting sessions throughout the year.

Monitoring

Handwriting is monitored regularly through oral feedback and marking of written work. Displays around the school also demonstrate handwriting progress.

This policy will be reviewed biennially

Last reviewed: September 2024

Appendix A - Printed handwriting alphabet

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

Appendix B - Continuous cursive handwriting families

The small or tunnel letters

e i m n r u v w x z

The 2 o'clock club letters

a c d g o q s

The tall letters with ascenders

b f h k l t

The letters with descenders

j p y

Capital letters for both handwriting styles

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