



Parkland Primary School

Learning together

Handwriting Policy and Whole School Approach

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Rationale

This policy outlines the intent, implementation and intended impact for the teaching, leadership and assessment of Handwriting at Parkland Primary School. The school's policy for Handwriting is guided by the statutory requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum Framework and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

Our Mission

At Parkland Primary School, we believe that every child in our school community should have *Limitless Learning* opportunities. We all have the ability to succeed and our school works hard to ensure that our pupils can *Discover their Potential*.

Our Values: Grow, Believe, Achieve, Succeed

Intent

At Parkland Primary School, we recognise the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. As part of a high-quality English curriculum, we believe that promoting high standards of written language are essential in giving children the confidence to communicate competently and always be prepared for the next stage of their education. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school.

In the EYFS, children are taught to write in print with a focus on correct letter formation; alongside this there are opportunities for applying their phonics knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds, as well as some common exception words with irregular spellings. In line with the most recent guidance, at first, children are not taught to join letters because these practices cause unnecessary difficulty for beginners. Planned opportunities are provided for the children to develop writing simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others and apply writing skills during continuous provision. Children develop the use of effective pencil grip throughout their time in reception.

In Key Stage One, handwriting continues to be taught discretely, and practice focuses on ensuring that children form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. In Year 1, children continue to write in print with the introduction of learning the explicit formation of capital letters. Children begin to be taught how to write in cursive script from Year 2, starting to develop their use of the diagonal and horizontal strokes. They also develop accuracy in writing capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters and use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Throughout Key Stage Two, emphasis is placed on children's development of a cursive script. Children are taught to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. There is a focus on writing legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.

Implementation

How handwriting is planned and taught:

To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows an agreed progression in skills and knowledge and teaching through (Appendix 1) a handwriting scheme and progression map. Teachers use the Little Wandle letter mnemonics when teaching print and the Teach Handwriting progression (www.teachhandwriting.co.uk), website and resources for further guidance and to support their planning and direct instruction. Children are explicitly taught handwriting from EYFS, through Key Stage 1 and into Lower Key Stage 2. In Upper Key Stage 2, handwriting continues to be modelled and taught through English lessons and where necessary small groups of children may access handwriting intervention to further support them in reaching age-related expectations. **Where needed in KS2, whole class handwriting lessons will take place.** Across the school, high expectations for handwriting are carefully modelled by the teacher and support staff; this can be seen in their day-to-day teaching, displays and marking.

Fine and gross motor skills - ensuring children are ready to begin writing:

Handwriting is a complex skill to learn and starts well before a child is ready to pick up a pencil and make marks on paper. There are a range of fine and gross motor skills and strengths which are learnt and developed in stages as a child grows. A weakness in any of these key areas can affect a child's handwriting.

Where appropriate if a child has any difficulty with their handwriting teachers can use the assessment below to assess children against the physical development objectives and put in place relevant support and interventions.

Assessment:

<https://discoveryschoolstrust.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/ParklandCurriculum/EeksBMIT92ZLqUxaCrijyx9cBxqhA4iBnDt-h42uwNuGoYg?e=yd1cLL>

Pencil Grip:



By the end of Year 2, we expect all children to be able to use the mature/dynamic tripod pencil grip to write. This is considered the most appropriate grip for handwriting, for both right and left-handed writers because it allows the fingers and wrist to move freely without putting strain on the hand, helping to improve correct letter formation ability and making handwriting a more comfortable experience. When children begin to write using a pen/pencil, they are taught how to correctly hold their writing implement. There are several developmental stages children may need to go through until they are able to confidently use the tripod grip to write with.

Useful resources:

Stages of pencil grip: <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/pencil-grip-development-foundation-stage.html>

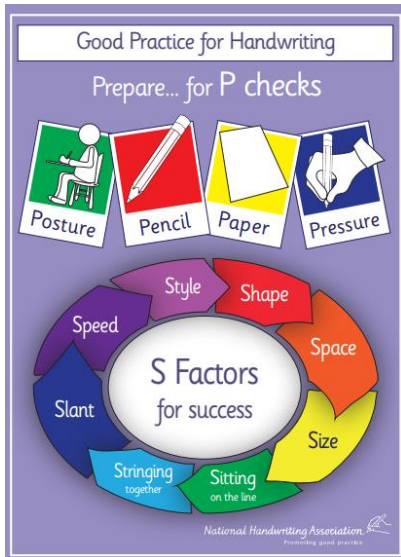
Approaches to teach the tripod pencil grip: <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/whole-class-tripod-pencil-grip-teaching-fs.html>

Supporting pencil grip development: <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/supporting-pencil-grip-development.html>

Resources to support:

To support children in developing the right grip teachers can provide them with special tripod grip pencils to support their pencil grip. Special pencil grips could also be ordered and trialled for children who still find it difficult to sustain this grip unaided further up the school.

Good Practice for Handwriting (P Checks and S factors – Appendix 3):



The P Checks

These are a visual reminder of how to prepare for the ‘process’ of handwriting: they are taught to all children as soon as they are ready to begin sitting to write (usually in EYFS). This ensures that good handwriting habits are established early and practised constantly.

Posture

Pencil

Paper

Pressure

The S Factors

These are the elements of the ‘product’ - successful handwriting and provide the sequence of teaching steps: **shape, space, size, sitting on the line, stringing (joining), slant, speed, style.**

P-Checks Key Information:

POSTURE:

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface
- Knees at a right angle with 2-fingers space behind the knee to avoid compression
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90° with the back supported
- Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table AND
- Table height adjusted so that forearms rest on the top without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders/arms (too high)
- Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered

PENCIL GRASP GUIDELINES:

- Check the child is developmentally ready before asking them to write.
- A dynamic tripod pencil grasp is the most efficient and is expected by end of Year 1.
- Address an inappropriate grasp in the early learning stages and later if it is causing discomfort or impacting speed.
- Consider corrective action using **adaptive grips or specialist writing tools**, but always trial several options to find the most appropriate.
- Encourage a 2 cm gap between fingertip and pencil point – and slightly greater for left-handers.

PAPER GUIDELINES:

- Tilt and offset the paper according to the writing hand.
- Move the paper up or down to facilitate a comfortable reach and keep it in place with the non-writing hand.
- Consider glare from paper and overhead lighting.
- Consider a specialist vision assessment if visual stress continues.

PRESSURE GUIDELINES:

- The just-right pressure eases writing across the page, which is important for fluency and reducing the risk of pain during handwriting.
- Use teaching tools such as carbon paper, mechanical pencils, 'lightup' and 'squiggle' pens to demonstrate appropriate pressure.
- Try some gross and fine motor warm ups before and during the handwriting task. Actions which include squeezing and deep pressure, resistance and/or vibration will increase body awareness.
- Check that posture/issues with postural control are not the causative factor here.

Lesson structure and frequency:

Year Group	Frequency (each week)
EYFS	Handwriting is taught explicitly once a week from the Spring Term (<i>before this, children develop the fine and gross motor skills required to be ready to start handwriting. Letter formation is introduced initially in phonics lessons.</i>)
Year 1	1 taught handwriting sessions + 1 practise sessions
Year 2	1 taught handwriting sessions + 1 practise sessions
Year 3/4	1 taught handwriting sessions + 1 practise sessions Taught once a week first thing on a Monday morning. Can I Still in English lessons linked to handwriting every day. Morning work practice and targeted children supported in these sessions (bespoke interventions groups may be run for children who require additional support)
Year 5/6	Taught once a week first thing on a Monday morning focus on joining. Can I Still in English lessons linked to handwriting every day. Handwriting is taught and expectations modelled through English lessons (bespoke interventions groups may be run for children who require additional support) Can I Still in English lessons linked to handwriting every day. Morning work practice and targeted children supported in these sessions

A typical explicit taught handwriting session follows the structure below:

Handwriting lessons will be completed in the back of English books using lines with guide lines.

Structure of lesson	Resource links
Warm-up Handwriting warm up activity/ Pre handwriting patterns	https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-warm-up-exercises.html
	https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/pre-handwriting-patterns.html
Recap and Teach Short recap of prior learning New letter(s) or join(s) introduced	Route C – Choice 3 Joins – Stage 3
Apply Practise new letter or joins in words (where appropriate)	The Writing repeater link can be used to continuously model the correct letter formation and orientation while children are practising: https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/writingRepeater/index.html

Scripts:

Whole school printed resources and interactive whiteboard resources (wherever possible):

EYFS/Y1: 'Twinkl school font' size (12-14)

Y2 – Y6: 'Twinkl handwriting cursive looped' (12-14) for teacher made resources (*children be exposed to a range of fonts around the classroom*)

Letter families:

Letters are created through joining lines and curve shapes in a particular way. They have a designated start point and set directional pushes and pulls of the pencil to reach the designated finish point. This is why we teach letter formation in groups/families rather than in alphabetical order. Certain groups use the same, or similar, shape and directional push and pulls of the pencil to form the letter, for instance the letter c has the same start point and anti-clockwise directional movement shape that is needed to create the letters a, d, g, o and, although a little more complicated, the letters s and e. Teaching letters in groups or families can also help to limit letter reversals such as b and d. Also, by teaching letter groups in certain orders enables children to write whole words, which have meaning to them, and this in turn encourages them to write more.

At Parkland Primary School we teach letter formation following the Little Wandle Phonics scheme letter mnemonics and the Teach Handwriting letter family groupings from Year 2.

EYFS/Year 1 Print:

- 'Around' letters: **c a o d g q**
- 'Down' letters: **l t b p k h i j m n r u y**
- 'Curly' letters: **e f s**
- 'Zigzag' letters: **v w z x.**

Little Wandle mnemonics:

https://discoveryschoolstrust.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/ParklandCurriculum/Evw5ZN4jvC9DtX3bsUrJqU8BOwFgsBmfV_5HXIRIXHK5aQ?e=mNzOoz

Capital Letters	Letters
Straight Line	L T I F E H
Straight and Slant line	V W X Y A N M K Z
Straight and Curly line	D P B R J G Q U
Curly Line	C O S

Little Wandle capital letter formation phrases:

https://discoveryschoolstrust.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/ParklandCurriculum/EeYgSUI8VSNBvOeyqKOUJEBNU5wZ0tdg_wuiWXVK5DbnA?e=kZpbPh

Letter join groups:

Letter joins	Letters
Bottom joins	ai ar au aw ay ch ck er ew ff ir kn ll qu sh th ur
Bottom to c-shaped joins	as ea ed ng ss igh ing squ

Bottom to e joins	ae be de ee fe ge ie pe se ue
Top e joins	oe re ve we ere
Top joins	oa oo oh oi on op or ou ov ow oy wh

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities (challenge for all):

In line with our mission statement, we believe every child will have equal opportunity to achieve their full potential and access an ambitious and coherent curriculum that leads to deep learning and an understanding of a sustainable world. Regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or Special Educational Needs or Disability.

If a child has a special educational need of disability, we will do our very best to ensure we meet that child’s individual needs when learning to write. This may mean that for some children the approach is adapted, or children are offered alternate ways to record their work through the use of technology. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice. If a teacher has concerns about the progress of a child, then they will liaise with the in school SENDCO to arrange appropriate assessment of need and set up personal provision through initially writing a Personalised Provision Plan. In some cases, where the demands of the curriculum may be too much, this may involve the use of PIVATS targets to track small step progress for this child or differentiation within the classroom environment to meet the needs of that child.

Impact

Assessing Progress

Formative Assessment:

Pupils’ progress will be assessed using regular formative assessment in English lessons and across the curriculum. This may include but is not limited to:

- Assessment of pupil work in books
- Observations of handwriting
- Pupil voice
- Independent assessments

Teachers will regularly use this assessment to plan and adapt further teaching, address gaps and provide feedback to ensure children make progress in their handwriting development.

Summative Assessment:

Handwriting progress will be assessed summatively at the end of each English learning journey after children have produced a published and independent final writing outcome. Teachers will assess handwriting against the teach assessment framework in the back of their books and use this to make teacher assessment judgements over the course of the year.