



# Handwriting Policy

**BLEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Reviewer: L Prior**

**Policy Review date: Autumn 2021**

**Headteacher: Mr I Rowden**

**Chairs of Governors: Mr H Samuelson**

**Date of Next Review: Autumn 2023**

## **1 Introduction**

Handwriting is part of English, a National Curriculum core subject, and is covered in the statutory requirements of writing. In the literate society in which we live, an ability to communicate effectively in writing is essential if children are to achieve their potential in school and on into adult life. A child's ability to write comfortably and legibly affects performance in many other areas of the curriculum and can therefore have an effect on an individual's self-esteem. At Blean School we view the acquisition of handwriting skills to be important and so the teaching of handwriting is given high priority and features regularly in planning, as appropriate, in order to raise attainment for all pupils across the curriculum.

## **2 Rationale**

Fluent, clear handwriting is the result of well-established movement habits. The process of writing should become an automatic skill so that the child's attention can be focused on the process of creative written expression.

It is our belief that children should be introduced to joined-up writing activities on school entry, thereby ensuring correct formation from the first writing experiences.

Legible speedwriting is an essential skill required in examinations and learning the skill of joining from the very beginning will ensure that the flow and speed are a natural progression.

## **3 Aims and objectives**

- to provide the children with a fluent, neat and legible handwriting style of which they can be proud;
- to develop the children's confidence in themselves as writers;
- for the children to derive pleasure from developing an aesthetically pleasing writing style;
- to provide all children regardless of their academic ability, with success in their handwriting;
- to use handwriting as an aid to spelling;
- to minimise typographical errors, e.g. reversals

## **4 How we develop handwriting**

### **4.1 We endeavour to fulfil our aims by:**

- Following the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage – Communication, Language and Literacy
- Following the 2014 English Curriculum
- All staff being aware of their own handwriting during the course of the school day and ensuring that they model the school handwriting script.

- Including handwriting in weekly planning where appropriate, especially in EYFS and KS1.
- Handwriting lessons using a wide range of teaching strategies including: direction, demonstration, modelling, scaffolding and explanation.
- Ensuring good seating and paper position and pencil/pen grip
- Feedback given to children as the lesson is in progress to encourage and give guidance.

**4.2** All handwriting activities are undertaken as class activities for the following reasons:

- to develop effective and efficient pen hold;
- to develop the habit of concentration which is crucial to good handwriting;
- to instil a sense of pride into the presentation of all written learning;
- to provide the class teacher with the opportunity to help assess individual's progress and monitor areas requiring reinforcement.
- See Appendix B and C for further guidance on the benefits of cursive handwriting, along with how to support children, especially left-handers.

### **4.3 Early Years Foundation Stage**

On entry, our reception children are involved in a variety of activities to develop the essential pre-writing skills in line with the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage.

A range of daily activities are incorporated into our provision to develop gross and fine motor control. Activities such as paper tearing, large pattern painting and drawing sessions, painting on easels, kneading plasticine and dough, white boards and felt pens, using steamers and ribbon spinning, rolling a ball and other ball skills are undertaken to loosen the wrist. Fine motor skills are developed by children tracing, colouring within guide lines and pictures, pattern work, using glue spreaders in small pots, painting with the tips of the fingers, threading, using small pegs, using tweezers and tongs, cutting with scissors, etc.

Handwriting activities are integrated into activities throughout the school day, and where this involves letter formation, the teacher will demonstrate the letter shape and orientation both in phonics and Literacy lessons and also during guided writing activities. A good hand writing grip will be encouraged alongside a writing posture where the majority of children can write comfortably in books by the end of the Reception year

Capital letters will be introduced as they occur, starting with the letter at the beginning of their name and then taught through sentence level work.

All letter formation in Year R will be as print although exit strokes for letters that end on the line (a, d, h, l, k, l, m, n, t, u) will be taught.

#### **4.4 Key Stage 1**

As the children move into Key Stage 1, the skills acquired in the Foundation Stage are continued, consolidating correct formation, concentration and accurate precision work. For small groups of children who may be experiencing difficulties with gross/fine motor control, targeted support with handwriting will be given, together with other kinaesthetic activities throughout the key stage.

Handwriting is taught in class groups for five or ten minutes daily. The session will begin with the teacher modelling an example of the pattern/letter(s) being taught and monitoring children's writing as it is undertaken. Sequences of lessons will be planned to confirm the correct orientation of letters, formation of letters, word and line spacing. In Year 2 these skills will be consolidated with practice undertaken of the positioning of ascenders and descenders.

Again, spellings are closely linked with handwriting activities assisting the children with the phonic skills required for successful reading.

Rhyming patterns within words are developed and integrated into handwriting sessions, thereby developing a child's visual awareness of phonics. High frequency words are also reinforced to help develop correct spellings habits and also aid a child's confidence in developing unaided writing. Capital letters continue to be consolidated throughout Year 1 and more complex phonics are integrated, e.g. digraphs, trigraphs, word endings etc.

Extension work on the use of capital letters, punctuation and phonemic development, as outlined in the 2014 English Curriculum, occurs in Year 2. All children in Key Stage 1 will write in pencil while mastering a fluent, joined handwriting style.

#### **4.5 Key Stage 2**

As the children move into Key Stage 2, the skills already acquired are continued, with regular lessons in Year 3 to consolidate correct formation, size, spacing, position of ascenders and descenders and the correct joins as shown in Appendix A. By the end of Year 3, it is envisaged that the majority of children will be ready to use a handwriting pen for undertaking English and handwriting lessons as they move into Year 4. Regular handwriting sessions will be planned as appropriate throughout the year.

Once the new script has been established throughout the school, it is envisaged that by Year 5 and 6, pupils will have achieved a high standard of penmanship and be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively using a suitable handwriting pen for the majority of lessons. Individual practise time needs to be timetabled as and when it is required.

## **5 Handwriting Rules** - *see Appendix A attached at the end*

- Lower case letters start on the line with an entry stroke
- Letters which finish at the top join horizontally
- Letters that join at the bottom join diagonally
- All down strokes are straight and parallel
- All rounded letters are closed
- The horizontal cross line of the letter 't' should be the same height as the lower case letters
- All similar letters are the same height
- Each letter should be written in one flowing movement.
- Each word should be written in one flowing movement.
- Letters within a word should be evenly spaced.
- The body of the letter sits on the line
- Capital letters do not join lower case letters

## **6 Children with difficulties**

Sometimes some children may experience difficulties with handwriting, but this is often due to a co-ordination problem or adapting a left handed style.

Activities to develop 'gross motor skills' can be promoted as these will assist fine motor skills, as will plenty of pre-writing activities to loosen up the wrist and upper arm.

Where a child has a specific difficulty with letter formation or legible handwriting, use of a laptop may be used as an alternative form of recording.

## **7 Handwriting and reading**

At Blean Primary School children are exposed to both cursive and print styles as well as commercial print. They develop awareness for reading in print and writing in cursive side by side in their learning, such as prompts around rooms/school – teacher lettering, labels on displays/teaching aids, e.g. alphabet on tables and through the teacher modelling writing.

## **8 Handwriting across the curriculum**

It is important to ensure that appropriate attention to handwriting and presentation takes place in other areas of the curriculum. For example, during Science, pupils may be labelling a diagram or writing a report and in Art and Design they may be designing packaging where a cursive script would not be appropriate. In this sense, other subjects can be used outside the explicit teaching of handwriting to give opportunities for reinforcing key knowledge, skills and understanding regarding handwriting and presentation.

## **9 Materials and tools**

Emphasis throughout the school is placed on the use of good quality handwriting pens. These assist with the flow of the writing. Children are encouraged to take care of materials and tools. A variety of materials and tools are used to develop pre-handwriting skills.

All children will have access to a range of writing tools and will be given guidance about the tool which best suits their individual needs. Staff will ensure that pencils are kept sharpened.

As appropriate, handwriting pens are provided by school, or pupils may bring a suitable blue pen from home. We discourage the use of biros, unless it fulfils a specific individual need.

## **10 Assessment**

Continuous assessment is maintained during handwriting lessons and writing tasks across all areas of the curriculum. Through Target Tracker, class teachers assess handwriting against specific statements which contribute towards the teacher assessment given for the whole subject of writing.

These assessments will be used to monitor progress by the Writing Lead and all class teachers as part of our school moderation procedures to agree writing steps for each individual child.

At the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, the Teacher Assessment Framework is used to assess all aspects of writing, including a specific statement about handwriting.

## **11 Monitoring and review**

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to raise the overall quality of teaching and levels of pupil attainment. The Writing Lead, Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher will monitor the quality of teaching and learning as part of the whole school's self-evaluation and may include scrutiny of planning, quality of teaching through lesson observation and feedback, moderation of standards of handwriting and evaluation of children's attainment against the Target Tracker Steps.

It is the responsibility of the Learning and Development Committee of the Governing Body to agree, review and monitor the handwriting policy for the school throughout their annual cycle of meetings.

Appendix A:

Letter formation of alphabet – showing starting point of each letter  
Formation of numbers

a A b B c C d D

e E f F g G h H

i I j J k K l L

m M n N o O p P

q Q r R s S t T

u U v V w W x X

y Y z Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## **Appendix B: Benefits of cursive style from point of entry into school**

Children develop:

- more intense skills of concentration
- correct formation and do not have to ‘unlearn’ incorrect formation habits
- cursive writing from their very earliest writing experience and do not have to adapt
- more self-confidence as they see themselves writing as adults do
- more pleasure in their writing activities because of their new found confidence and success
- less confusion with b/d reversal
- visual memory of word shapes is enhanced

The rules of the cursive style help with:

- less confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke
- the flow of cursive writing, as letters naturally flow into each other it is impossible to write separate letters without joining
- spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness
- a child’s visual memory
- all children’s writing skills regardless of academic ability developing skills of punctuation and grammar

## **Appendix C: Guidelines for writing left handed**

Ensure that:

- the writing surface and chair are suitable for the child’s own height
- the child sits towards the left of their partner leaving plenty of space for writing on the left side of his/her mid line (this allows maximum space for arm movement)
- the writing paper is to the left of the child’s body midline
- the paper is tilted up to 32 degrees in a clockwise direction
- a writing tool which moves smoothly across the paper is used
- the paper is supported with the right hand
- the writing forearm is parallel with the paper edge as the child writes
- the writing tool is held sufficiently far from its point to ensure that the child can see what he/she writing