

Birkby Infant and Nursery School

Handwriting Policy

Aims

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the Nursery and School
- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly
- Take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting
- Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.
- Develop a fluent, joined handwriting style by Year Two.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

During and at the end of the Foundation Stage:

- Use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, **most** of which are correctly formed.
- Be able to complete the finger checks successfully- touch their thumb to each of their fingers in turn, use a pincer grip to pick up small objects, hold a small ruler with a pincer grip whilst an adult pulls.
- Achieved the stages of pre-writing- make vertical and horizontal lines, make an enclosure using anti clockwise movements, trace lines and dots, copy straight/curved lines.
- Hand eye coordination- thread beads onto a string, put pegs into holes, cut on a straight line and curved line.

At Year One:

- Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.
- Write with spaces between words accurately.

At Year Two:

- Write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words.
- Form and use the four basic handwriting joins.
- Confidently be able to use the in-stroke to support the joins.

Teaching and Learning

We teach handwriting as a specific skill rather than as an independent task (which can often reinforce poor formation having a reverse effect than the intended outcome). Little and often is the most successful way.

Throughout the school, the Penpals handwriting scheme is used to support teaching.

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

-relaxation

-Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair

-Gross and fine motor warm up.

-Teacher modelling

-Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory

Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory: write letters in the air, on backs or on hands, orally describe letter shapes and joins with children.

In **Nursery** the children are encouraged to:

- Develop gross motor control
- Develop fine motor control
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- The main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; l, c, and r
- Their first name, using a Capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation

In **Reception** the children continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding from Nursery in addition to:

- Learning letter formation alongside phonics using the Penpals scheme
- Learn letter formation using 'shape families.

The Joining Style

Which letters join?

Joins are made **both to and from** the following 23 letters:

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

Joins are made **to but not from** the following 2 letters:

q x

Joins are *never* made **to or from the letter z**

The 4 basic joins:

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, on, at
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. at
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. the 'eb' in z-eb-ra

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made and identified for this in SEND Support Plans. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SEN/Dco to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of **left-handed pupils** and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

The role of parents and carers

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practise this with their children at home. Parents are also reminded of our agreed handwriting style at parents' evenings. The Foundation Stage staff play an important role in communicating handwriting expectations at an early stage, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names.

Reviewed Summer 2023 by SLT

Next Review September 2025

Activities and exercises to develop Gross and Fine Motor Control:

Gross Motor Control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Cycling
- Gripping climbing frames
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music

Fine Motor Control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes).

Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
- Drawing in sand and sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on small, large boards and easels and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets