
Harby C of E Primary School

Handwriting Policy



Rationale

Why Do We Teach Handwriting?

Teaching handwriting explicitly, systematically and progressively in line with the DfE Writing Framework, enables learners to acquire the automaticity in transcription necessary for effective written communication.

Teaching Handwriting from the beginning of Reception facilitates the successful development of handwriting and physical skills. This frees up pupils' working memory, allowing them to focus on the composition of their ideas.

Harby Church of England Primary School strives for all pupils to achieve a legible, consistent and fluent handwriting style, enabling them to express their knowledge and understanding confidently across the entire curriculum. This includes establishing consistent 'ready to write' routines and providing appropriate resources to support every learner's development.

Our Aims

- To establish a whole-school, systematic and progressive approach to teaching handwriting.
- To ensure learners develop the physical skills needed to achieve a comfortable, efficient and correct pencil grip.
- To ensure learners can form letters correctly and consistently, leading to clear legibility.
- To progress from discrete letter formation to a fluent, joined and automatic handwriting style.
- To enable learners to write at an appropriate speed for their age, freeing up their cognitive load for composition.
- To foster pride in the presentation of written work across all subjects.

What Is Handwriting?

Handwriting is a fundamental method of communication where learners control a writing instrument, typically a pen or pencil, to form letters, words and sentences. Being able to write clearly and legibly is a crucial skill that forms the foundation not only for a learner's education but also their journey through life.

Following a systematic and progressive handwriting approach from the beginning of Reception ensures the physical act of forming letters becomes increasingly automatic, a vital step in freeing up a learner's cognitive resources so they can focus on the composition of their ideas rather than the mechanics of writing.

Key aspects of handwriting include:



Core strength and motor control: The development of core strength and motor control, including pencil grip will be valued and supported.



Formation: How individual letters and characters are shaped.



Legibility: How clear and readable the writing is to others.



Consistency: The uniformity of letter size and spacing.



Fluency: The smoothness and ease with which one writes, often related to speed.



Style: This can vary from printed letters to joined handwriting. Within print and joined styles, each learner develops a unique personal hand.

While modern technology offers many alternatives for written communication, handwriting remains an important skill for cognitive development, note-taking and various daily tasks.

Implementation

How We Deliver Our Handwriting Teaching

Our school uses the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme in Reception, followed by the Twinkl Handwriting Scheme in Year 1 - 6. Both schemes have been developed by experts in handwriting, inclusion and English teaching and learning. They draw on key subject principles and enable us to deliver explicit handwriting instruction, using a range of teaching strategies to embed writing fluency skills.

Each lesson follows a 5-part teaching pattern:



Learners get ready to write by completing a gross and/or fine motor warm-up activity.



Letter formations are introduced through direct, explicit instruction.



Each lesson offers opportunities to model formations, strokes and joins. Learners are then encouraged to join in and practise these.



Learners apply their newly taught knowledge and understanding to complete a variety of independent writing tasks.



Each learner is closely observed and given high-quality feedback, with side-by-side modelling where appropriate.

Physical Skills

Harby Church of England Primary School understands the importance of physical skills in the successful handwriting journey.

Physical skills for writing, including core strength, gross and fine motor skills, will be taught explicitly within handwriting sessions. Correct pencil grip and correct posture will be taught and supported.

Posture, paper position and pencil grip

- Correct sitting position: feet flat, knees at 90 degrees, back supported by the chair.
- Correct paper tilt and placement for right-handers and left-handers.
- Encouragement of non-writing hand to hold and steady the paper.
- Correct grip (the tripod grip is recommended).

Letter Families

From Reception letters are taught in a specific sequence according to the directional stroke required to form them using progression documents and plans from Little Wandle and Twinkl Handwriting.

Embedding Letter Formation and Building Fluency

To establish strong foundations in print letter formations, learners are explicitly taught to form letters correctly and confidently. As learners progress, they are taught to use horizontal and diagonal joining strokes to join letters within words. They continue to develop this skill, increasing fluency, consistency and speed in their writing.

Building on this, learners will deepen their mastery of handwriting by applying their handwriting skills across a range of contexts and purposes. They will take ownership of their written presentation and be encouraged to reflect on their handwriting as part of their independent learning.

Progression

Step 1:

Little Wandle Handwriting lessons in Reception focus on:

- correct pencil grip
- correct starting point for each letter
- letter formation and orientation
- families of letters
- capital letters
- reinforcing the link between letters and sounds.

The correct formation of lower-case letters is the key priority in Reception handwriting.

Lower-case letter formation is taught in letter families first, capital letters are then introduced, followed by digraphs and trigraphs.

Little Wandle Handwriting programme expectations for Reception

By the end of Reception, children should be able to hold their pencil with correct pencil grip, form lower-case letters beginning at the correct starting point and follow the correct direction. They should be beginning to form capital letters correctly.

Step 2: Mastering Letter Formation and Spacing

Focus:

- to hold a pencil correctly and comfortably and place letters correctly on the line;
- to form lower-case letters, upper-case letters and digits 0–9 with the correct size and position;
- to ensure lower-case letters are sized correctly in relation to each other and to upper-case letters;
- to add spaces between words that match the size of the letters;
- to recall each letter family and understand how letters are formed in similar ways.

Step 3: Introduction to Joined Handwriting

Focus:

- to recognise letters that can be joined using lead-out strokes and how this can help them to write with increasing speed;

- to write letters and words in a clear and legible way, maintaining accurate letter formation as joining is introduced;

- to use diagonal strokes and horizontal strokes to join letters;

- to identify which letters should be joined together and which should be left unjoined;

- to think about the size and orientation of letters when writing.

Step 4: Developing Clarity and Consistency in Joined Writing

Focus:

- to write letters and words clearly and legibly, maintaining accurate letter formation as joining becomes more consistent;

- to use diagonal and horizontal strokes confidently to join letters in independent writing;

- to improve the clarity of their handwriting by ensuring the downstrokes of letters are parallel and evenly spaced;

- to space lines successfully so that ascending and descending letters do not touch;

- to suggest ways to improve their handwriting by recalling prior knowledge of letter formation, letter families and accurate ways to join.

Step 5: Applying Handwriting Skills in Context

Focus:

- to write legibly and fluently with increasing speed;

- to confidently identify which letters should be joined and unjoined;

- to choose suitable writing implements for handwriting tasks;

- to develop a clear understanding of which handwriting standard is appropriate for a particular task. For example, using quick notes or a final handwritten version;

- to use their handwriting skills across the curriculum and maintain consistent handwriting in longer written tasks.

Step 6: Mastering Handwriting for Confident Communication

They will learn:

- to write legibly, fluently and at an increased speed across a variety of genres and contexts;

- to develop the stamina to maintain handwriting quality over longer texts, using consistent joining strokes;

- to take ownership over their handwriting by selecting and recommending appropriate writing styles and presentation methods for different formats;

- to improve note-taking skills.

Inclusion and Intervention

Inclusion, adaptation and interventions

Harby Church of England Primary School recognises that every learner is unique and develops handwriting skills at different rates.

To ensure learners successfully access the handwriting scheme and learning, we will make adaptations where necessary. For example –

- support for left-handed children
- adaptations for children with additional needs, for example, difficulties with motor control, dyspraxia or dysgraphia
- assistive writing tools and resources, for example, pencil grips, slanted boards
- targeted intervention to address specific difficulties

How We Assess Handwriting

We provide learners with immediate, individualised feedback in handwriting sessions.