

Brown Clee C.E. Primary School

Handwriting Policy



Policy updated: Sep 2023
Policy to be reviewed: Sep 2025

Handwriting

Good handwriting is an essential skill in the quest to spell and write fluently, confidently and competently. A joined handwriting style links kinaesthetic 'muscle memory' with the relationship between the sounds of our speech and the letter shapes, letter groupings and whole written words. The ability to write neatly can raise self-esteem and provides a motivating factor in the production of written work.

A whole school approach to the teaching of handwriting is vital to ensure that the style and method of teaching is consistent throughout the school.

Aims

We will teach our pupils to:

- Correctly hold a pencil or pen.
- Write from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom of the page.
- Start and finish letters correctly
- Put regular spaces between words.
- Correctly form both upper and lower case letters in proportion to the height of the lined paper
- Write legibly and fluently in the cursive script
- Use different handwriting style for different purposes.
- After learning basics, upper KS 2 pupils are given scope to develop their own personal style.

Teaching Methods

This will vary according to individual preference however it is more beneficial for it to be a teacher demonstrated lesson. The children need to have the correct formation / join demonstrated to them carefully and the process of the writing needs to be talked through as it is being demonstrated. Children will need to be observed closely to ensure correct formation is occurring and no bad habits are being formed. Teachers should be ready to step in and correct any inaccuracies that occur. Common faults often include a faulty pencil grip, incorrect letter formation, reversals and inversions and poor posture and paper positioning. Every effort should be made to stop these faults from becoming bad habits.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, teaching may be linked to phonics sessions as well as being taught distinctly, and will consist of small teacher led group work and whole class sessions. In Key Stage Two, sessions may become more class based.

In the early stages of developing a cursive script the process is more important than the product and therefore irregular letter forms which start in the correct place and move in the correct direction are preferred to uniformly regular letters which have been achieved through the wrong movements.

Pencil Hold and Posture

We teach the traditional tripod pencil grip. For younger learners, this skill is made child-friendly by saying, "Put your froggy legs [thumb and forefinger] on the bottom of the painted part of the pencil [not on the cone-shaped end part] with the pencil across the frog's back [back of the hand], then put the log under the frog" [middle finger supporting the pencil to complete the tripod grip].

A good sitting posture is also needed - the writing hand should rest lightly on the paper below the words being written so that the words are not obscured. The paper may be tilted slightly to the right (for right-handers) or to the left (for left-handers) to increase comfort. The spare hand keeps the paper secure.

Before each session the children should be encouraged to check that they have remembered the three P's, (good) posture, (correct) pen hold and (correct) paper position.

Children who are left handed

Children who are left handed should be encouraged to keep the hand below the writing line so that they can see what they are writing. The grip of a child writing with their left hand is different from one using their right hand. A child who is left handed will push the pencil as they write instead of pull it. Therefore, it is important to make sure their pencil is not too sharp, allowing it to run smoothly across the page. A child who is left handed will also find it easier to write if their paper is slightly tilted to the right.

EYFS

Handwriting is a physical process and the fine motor development is considered when providing the various activities to develop the fine motor skills. In EYFS, activities will be provided to support the development of fine motor skills such as play dough and tweezers.

Very young learners can be taught to hold the pencil correctly from the earliest stages and it is better to use 'normal-sized' pencils than fatter pencils, as small hands are able to 'grip' the narrower pencils more effectively.

Children in EYFS are taught to print letters using a 'lead-out' alongside phonics teaching.

KS1

In Year 1 pupils will be introduced to the 'lead-in' to printed letters, before then introducing joins when ready.

Children will understand the importance of clear and neat presentation and continue to work in pencil.

Teachers should be very vigilant with children who have weaker pencil control to ensure all lower case letters start at the top.

KS2

Teachers continue to monitor closely every child's letter formation skills ensuring that all children are forming correctly. Children who still need monitoring at this stage will be those with specific difficulties with hand or pencil control. Most children will be able to continue to develop a fluent joined style and keep their letters uniform in terms of size and shape. In Y5 and 6 pupils are gaining their own self-belief on the increasing development of the individual style

The Handwriting Model.

In the Foundation Stage children will be taught a printed 'cursive' style with 'lead outs':

In Year One the children will be taught a printed cursive writing style as given below:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

In Year Two and beyond the children will be taught a printed cursive writing style as given below:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The capital letters and numerals will be taught the same throughout the school.

The capital letters:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

The numerals:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Joined Style

Why Join?

There are several benefits to adopting and teaching a continuous cursive script:-

- It aids children in the correct formation and spacing of letters, as the entry strokes lead to the correct starting point for the next letter. Joining each letter also ensures a natural space occurs between letters and words.
- A continuous cursive style of writing is recommended by the British Dyslexia Association to help children with dyslexia:

The most widely recommended handwriting style is called continuous cursive. Its most important feature is that each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper – and consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement.

The key advantages to this system are:

- *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, children 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;*
- *The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.*

As these errors appear in the early writing of many children, these advantages should be of benefit to all pupils.

When to join.

The Development of Early Writing Document states:

“Skills for handwriting can be introduced from a very early stage. When should I introduce joined up writing? As soon as possible once children are secure in the movements of each letter.”

Once the children have mastered the recognition and correct formation of letters (Foundation Stage) they can move onto being taught how to join their letters - this should be from the beginning of Year One.

How to join

In order for the children to adopt a joined handwriting style they will need to be taught the two different joins.

All letters begin with an entry stroke – a ‘lead-in’ - this includes the first letter of a new word.

They are taught the 2 simple joins:-

- a diagonal join which starts with the pencil point on the writing line
- a washing line join (or smile join).

The descenders of letters f, g, j and y “...go straight down through the writing line with a thin loop...” and continue to form the beginning of the diagonal join to the following letter. The diagonal join and washing line join (or smile join) need to be adjusted for writing the letter e.

Assessment:

Things to consider when assessing individuals handwriting are:

- Is the child holding the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and / or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inversed?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing legible?

Next Review: July 2020