

Growing deep roots. Producing good fruit



Offenham C of E First School Handwriting Policy

VISION

Our school vision, summed on the following words, “Love, transformation and growth” plays a significant role in our collective attitude to our curriculum. We offer all pupils equal access to, and a love of learning, so that all can be transformed, flourish and grow in every area of the curriculum including how they present their work.

As a school we recognise that handwriting is an important skill and children’s ability to write fluently for the rest of their lives depends on a good foundation of taught handwriting in the early years of their education.

We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practicing speed and fluency and higher presentation skills. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. This is an entitlement that needs skillful teaching if each individual is to reach their full potential.

AIMS

- To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
 - Having a correct pencil grip;
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle;
 - Forming all letters correctly;
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Children should:

- experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the School;
- develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line and be given support in forming a triangular grip;

- understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly;
- be encouraged to 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 in the Early Years and by joining graphemes in KS1;
- be shown how to be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.

Offenham CE First School uses the following handwriting style and letter formation;

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

1. to letters without ascenders
2. to letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The break letters (letters that aren't joined **from**) are:

b g j p q x y z s

Teaching sequence

To develop independence the following teaching technique would be seen across Key Stage One.

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words – write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time.
- Demonstrate.
- Talk through the process.
- Encourage children to verbalise the process.
- Children form letters in the air.
- Finger trace over tactile letters.
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters).
- Draw round templates.
- Write in sand with finger or stick.
- Write with chalk on chalkboard.
- Wax resist letters.
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard.
- Form letters with beads in plasticine.
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you.

Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height.
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch.
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor.
- Tables should be free of clutter.
- Rooms should be well lit.
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners
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Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point.
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left.
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger.
- Hold about 3cm from the tip.
- The hand should be kept below the writing line.
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°.
- Use the right hand to steady the paper.

Early Years

Children take part in activities to develop their fine and gross motor-skills and recognition of patterns, for example, to form letters using their index finger in sand or using paint. Children should begin to learn how to correctly hold a pencil. Then how to use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed. Children will learn to join in phonics from Reception onwards when learning digraphs (th, ch, oo, etc).

Key Stage 1

Year 1 children will continue to learn joins linked to new phonic sounds throughout the year in GPS sessions, develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multisensory activities. Handwriting should be taught discreetly and discussed within and linked to phonics sessions. Teachers and support staff continue to guide children on how to form letters correctly, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Children should now be leaving spaces between words and sitting correctly at tables. By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing between words. By the end of Year 2 children will be expected to join their handwriting by applying previous skills in all their written work.

Key Stage 2

During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular opportunities to practise handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent style and by the end of Year 5 be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes, such as: a neat, legible hand for finished, presented work, a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc. Years 3, 4 and 5 children will continue to join but with increasing precision. Children will gain a pen license when their writing is consistently joined, of an appropriate size, neat and legible. Pen licenses should only be given out in Key Stage 2 and only when the above criteria is met.

INCLUSION

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this through intervention using 1-1 support sessions. Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, should develop an individual programme designed to meet the specific needs of the individual child.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

- Assessment of handwriting is an on-going process and will take place formally and informally, during the regular, focused handwriting sessions and across other curricular areas. This will provide evidence of children's progress and attainment, will serve to inform the children's future learning targets and provide information when reporting to parents.
- Handwriting is assessed alongside the national curriculum English objectives.
- Samples of children's work will be moderated within school on a three weekly cycle and focus will be targeted on handwriting as well as composition.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The English coordinator is responsible for reviewing and improving the standards of teaching and learning of handwriting throughout the school by: pupil progress meetings, lesson observations, book trawls, pupil interviews, auditing and supporting professional development, purchasing and organising resources.

Policy updated in September 2025

Review in September 2026