



Farley Hill Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Responsibility of	Curriculum Committee
Date of Policy	November 2025
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Subject

Handwriting is an area taught within the National Curriculum. We teach a cursive style from Year 1 when the children are ready.

We want all children to think like readers and writers and use language as a process by which they can express feelings, opinions, and experiences. Despite the increased use of computers for writing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life.

As a school, we recognise that children's ability to write well for the rest of their lives depends on firm foundations of taught skills in their primary years.

1.1. The School follows the national framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage ("EYFS"), Key Stage 1 ("KS1") and Key Stage 2 ("KS2") and the handwriting requirements of that framework (see Appendix 4) apply in full to the School.

1.2. The outcomes that we will strive to ensure all our pupils achieve are:

- Having fluent, legible and speedy handwriting that can be performed automatically, so that the attention of the brain is on the content of the writing.
- Having the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Having competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition.
- Writing clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Having a comfortable and efficient pencil hold and working position.

- 1.3. Handwriting is of fundamental importance to educating our pupils because pupils who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently are, in every sense, disenfranchised. The mastery of automaticity in handwriting is therefore one of the key priorities of the School.

2. General Principles

- 2.1. Handwriting comprises physical and cognitive skills that need to be learnt and become part of the automatic cognitive skill set of the pupil. To achieve this, the School has chosen the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme, to train teachers and teach pupils.
- 2.2. The programme has four Threads.
- Making bodies stronger
 - Holding the pencil (for speed, comfort and legibility)
 - Learning the letters
 - Flow and fluency
- 2.3. The key principles of the programme are:
- Building physical strength underpins handwriting and concentration. This knowledge informs the working positions that children use for writing and the strengthening targets they work on.
 - Pupils are not expected to do anything before they are developmentally ready for it.
 - The different components of writing are mastered individually before being used in combination.
 - Letters are learnt as movements, not as visual shapes, and movement remains central to developing automaticity in letter formation, flow and fluency.
 - Posture is important in developing the correct position for handwriting and so children are taught how to organise their working position and paper position to enable comfortable and fluent writing from the start.
 - Correct pencil hold is taught from the start (ie as soon as a tripod grip is developmentally appropriate), and the strength is developed to maintain this, enabling comfort, speed and writing stamina.
- 2.4. Reading and writing are reciprocal processes; strengthening handwriting skills will support reading and writing development as a whole.

3. Year groups

- 3.1. The Kinetic Letters programme is commenced in EYFS and is used throughout the School. By the end of KS1, each pupil should be working at the national standard and most should be working at a greater depth (see Appendix 2). Children begin Joining in Yr2 or Yr3.
- 3.2. By the end of KS2, the vast majority of pupils should be working at, or a greater depth, than the Expected Standard, the exceptions being those pupils who started their primary education elsewhere, and statemented pupils. Pupils should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version).
- 3.3. Handwriting practice takes place in sessions that are outside English lessons, since handwriting underpins the majority of curriculum areas and is integral to self-esteem and engagement with learning. Handwriting is taught in discrete sessions, separate from Phonics, and achieves Fidelity with the Reading Framework (2023).

- 3.4. Pupils in EYFS and KS1 do handwriting sessions of at least 20 minutes. Thereafter time allocation to maintain handwriting development and increase speed and flow, will be regular but at the discretion of the class teacher so long as appropriate progression continues to be made. Handwriting practice takes place on the 6-lined (or 3-lined or 9-lined if appropriate) Kinetic Letters white boards, supported by visits to Sand Trays, with a transition to books via the 'Practice Patch' and the checking of weekly targets in other curriculum (subject) books.
- 3.5. The majority of the time, sessions are taught to the whole class with differentiation enabled Kinetic Letters strategies and resources. Reinforcement may take place in small groups and/or individually.
- 3.6. Strategies to build physical strength for handwriting are integrated into general school life and provision for EYFS.
- 3.7. The Digital Teaching Turtle (DTT), is used as a front of classroom teaching aide to animate letters and animate the strategies for Pencil Hold and Writing Positions.

4. Assessment and monitoring

- 4.1. The Teacher Assessment Framework in the National Curriculum will apply to each pupil when their progress is being assessed at the end of KS1 and KS2 (see Appendix 2). Prior to these two measurement points, teachers will use the Kinetic Letters assessment guides on a daily basis (Appendix 3). Marking of work by teachers will be positive and self-correction by pupils will be encouraged.
- 4.2. Formative and summative assessment is built into the structure of the S.T.A.R.T. handwriting session and teachers and pupils use the Kinetic Letters strategy of **Assess, Detect, Correct (ADC)** for all Threads of Kinetic Letters. This is both during specific handwriting sessions, and when monitoring the transfer of the physical and cognitive handwriting skills into daily classwork.

Other Kinetic Letters assessment opportunities are listed and linked to the National Curriculum on Appendix 3 of this document.

- 4.3 Handwriting is monitored regularly through class work and book looks.

5. Special Educational Needs and Disability (“SEND”)

- 5.1. The School's SEND policy applies. However, it should be noted that the Kinetic Letters programme is applicable to pupils with dyslexic and dyspraxia (developmental co-ordination disorder).

6. Home involvement

- 6.1. It is important that parents/guardians/carers are involved in supporting the learning of handwriting. Parents will be given details of the handwriting programme.

7. Presentation

- 7.1. The School will use the Kinetic Letters font for all class and display work produced in the School, ensuring consistent presentation that reinforces handwriting teaching. The general protocols for pupils' work is set out in Appendix 5.

7.2. Class teachers are responsible for displays on the walls of their classrooms which will include the Kinetic Letters Tree with moveable monkeys, Letter Family posters, the weekly target lists and examples of teachers' and pupils' handwriting. These will be relevant, up to date, in good condition and reviewed at least once a term.

8. Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. 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 aware of 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 as neat.

9. Equal Opportunities

All aspects of handwriting will be accessible to all children, irrespective of their ethnic background, gender, disability, religious or linguistic background.

We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those who are more able, those with special gifts and talents and the children who are learning English as an additional language. We take all reasonable steps to achieve this, for further details see separate policies: Inclusion, More Able, Gifted and Talented.

Appendix 1

Letter groups (in teaching order)

Jumper Family: **hnmrbp**

Abracadabra Family **coadgsq**

Special Squirter **e**

Window Cleaner Family: **ltiu**

Fisher Family: **jgfy**

Slider Family: **vwxzk**

Pushing numbers: **2357**

Pulling numbers: **068914**

Appendix 2: Expected Standards progression

The table below, from the teacher assessment framework, has the expected standards for pupils at the end of KS1 and KS2.

The expected standard	Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2		
	Working towards	Working at	Working at greater depth	Working towards	Working at	Working at greater depth
Forming lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place	All	All	All	All	All	All
Forming lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another	Some*	All	All	All	All	All
Forming capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters	Some* capitals All numbers	All	All	All	All	All
Using spacing between words	All	All	All	All	All	All
Using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.		All	All	All	All	All
Use of question marks and exclamation marks			All	All	All	All
Using the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters			Some*	Some*	All	All
Producing legible joined handwriting				All	All	All
Maintaining legibility, fluency and speed in handwriting through choosing whether or not to join specific letters.					All	All

*Some 'indicates that the knowledge or skill is starting to be acquired and is demonstrated correctly on occasion but not yet consistent or frequent.'

Source National curriculum assessments – KS1 & 2: Interim teacher assessment frameworks at the end of KS1 & 2

Updated September 2021

Appendix 3: Assessments for monitoring progress		Kinetic Letters assessment strategies											
<i>Expected standards in handwriting and National Curriculum Statutory Requirements 2017-2018</i>	Corresponding Kinetic Letters Strand- (colour coded)	Push up targets. Meerkat- BOGOFs	Pupils' writing questionnaire	Starter Marker Writing sample	3 Colour check	Fluency targets	Pencil hold diagnostic sheet	Assess, Detect, Correct (ADC)	Monkey Smile Pencil targets	Turtle tick targets Formation/spacing	Practice Patch	Letter Family challenges	3 More, better than before
Sit correctly at a table	Writing position Pelvic Girdle strength	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓		
Hold a pencil comfortably and correctly	Shoulder Girdle strength 3 Friends Pencil Hold	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place	Letter Formation/orientation The Tree symbol		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another	Writing characteristics: Heights of letters Grounding		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
Understand which letters belong to which families and to practise these	Letter Families Family Features			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Use spacing between words. Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.	Writing Characteristics: Spacing within/between words		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined	Letter Formation: letter finish Break letters (Breakers)		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
Increase legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting e.g. by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.	Flow and speed More sky above the Tree		✓	✓				✓			✓		✓

Kinetic Letters assessment opportunities

Push ups: Pupils record weekly progress e.g. on post-its. **Meerkat BOGOFs:** e.g. measure using counting/reciting tables/alphabet/register etc.

Pupil's Writing Questionnaire: Use if pupils begin the programme in KS2, to establish starting points (TB 6.18 and Resources pack).

Starter Marker Writing Sample: Use every half term. Pupils write for 5 mins on a simple subject e.g. "what I can see from where am sitting".

1. Whilst pupils write, the teacher photographs writing position/pencil hold. This provides a record of progress and helps set strength targets.
2. A word count can measure speed and Automaticity.
3. Pupils/teachers can carry out all/part of a 3 colour check (see below).

3 Colour check: To assess Formation: Start/Finish and orientation of a continuous Letter Trail = pencil circle of incorrect letters.

To assess Writing Characteristics: Spacing= yellow pen line, Grounding=green pen line. Heights=brown pen line. (TB 5.11).

Assess, Detect, Correct (ADC): Use throughout the day -for Writing position: (TB 2.14)

-for Pencil Hold: (TB 4.20-29).

-for Letter Formation:(TB 3.28/32/36/39/42/46)

Start/Finish (and continuous Trail)

Orientation

-for Writing Characteristics:

Spacing- within words/ between words/across the line

Grounding- on line/below line.

Heights- lower-case/upper-case/numbers.

Fluency targets: a checklist of features of fluent unjoined writing. Use to inform teaching and as a check of readiness for joining (TB 5.10).

Pencil Hold Diagnostic Sheet: record progress towards maintaining the 3 Friends Pencil Hold. Complete periodically until all pupils can maintain the 3 Friends pencil Hold and to inform strength provision. (TB 2.12 and Resources pack).

Monkey Smile targets: record Pencil Hold maintenance. Pupils self-mark, adding a smile to the stamp of the monkey on whiteboards and Paper (TB 3.21 & 4.12).

Turtle Tick targets: record achievement of the formation/spacing target. Pupils self-mark, ticking the turtle's tummy on their whiteboard (TB 3.21).

Practice Patch: a weekly transfer by pupils of mastered targets to books, at the end of START. It also measures Automaticity in the writing that follows (TB 3.23).

3 More, better than before: a peer-marking activity (TB 6.17).

1. Pupils work on own whiteboards and write the target letter/pair/word, by teach of the Trees-down the board.
2. They each 'choose with their eyes' which they are most proud of, but do not disclose this to their partner.
3. Pupils swap boards and guess/mark with a dot, the letter/pair/word they think their partner chose.
4. Pupils swap boards back and discuss each other's judgements. (e.g. 'you didn't flick' or 'it's not a Brave Monkey letter' etc.)
5. They both try '3 more, better than before', on the last three lines of the board, to correct what they learnt from the feedback above.
6. Pupils share/discuss the improvements each made and 'take a photo with their eyes' their best line, before rubbing off boards to play again.

Letter Family Challenges: complete regularly as part of START sessions. Use to work on specific targets (see details for each e.g. Letter starts) and to reinforce the Family Feature within the Letter Families, to gain Flow and Automaticity (TB 3.48 and Portal> Teaching Resources).

Appendix 4

Handwriting requirements – national framework - statutory

This page and the following one set out the National curriculum handwriting requirements for early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

References:

- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2021)
- Early years foundation stage profile handbook (2022)
- National curriculum - Framework documents (2014) and primary curriculum (2015)
- National curriculum assessments - Key stage 1 & 2: Teacher assessment frameworks at the end of KS1 & KS2 (2018/19 onwards)

The National framework document for Key stage 1 and Key stage 2 makes the following statements about the outcomes that must be achieved by teachers:

- Ensuring all pupils write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences (English: Aims p13)
- It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition. (English: Writing p15)
- Pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised. (English: Purpose of study p13)
- Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (Language and Literacy: 6.3 Reading and Writing p10)
- Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. (English: Writing p15)

The Statutory framework for EYFS specifies learning and development requirements.

The areas of learning relevant to handwriting, together with the early learning goals children should reach at the end of the academic year in which they are 5, are in the table below.

Early Years Foundation Stage: Statutory Framework	
Activities and experiences in areas of learning	Early Learning Goals (ELGs) 'Expected' level of development
Prime area: Physical development • gross and fine motor experiences to develop strength, coordination and positional awareness through tummy time crawling and play movement. • adults can support children to develop core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. • fine motor control and precision helps with hand eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Specific area: Literacy • writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting).	ELG • Gross motor skills Demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination when playing ELG • Fine motor skills Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing-using the tripod grip in almost all cases. ELG • Writing Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Statutory requirements		Guidance
Key stage 1 Year 1 Pupils' writing during Year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.		
Pupils should be taught to: • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly; • begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place; • form capital letters; • form digits 0-9; • understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these; • write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher		Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs
Year 2 In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 should be able to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down, and to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.		
Pupils should be taught to: • form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another; • start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined; • write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters; • use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.		Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.
Lower key stage 2 Years 3-4 Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.		
Pupils should be taught to: • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined; • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.		Pupils should be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation. Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.
Upper key stage 2 Years 5-6 Children should be able to write down their ideas quickly. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless to manage the general demands of the curriculum in Year 7.		
Pupils should be taught to: • write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: ○ choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters, ○ choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.		Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an un-joined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form).