



The Park Federation Trust
Hannah Ball Academy



Handwriting Policy

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Intent

Handwriting is a fundamental skill that, like reading and spelling, significantly impacts written communication across the curriculum. Our goal is for pupils to leave Year 6 with the ability to write in their own style—fast, fluent, legible, and sustainable handwriting—as well as adapt their writing for specific purposes. In addition to regular handwriting lessons, we maintain high expectations that the skills taught and practiced will be applied in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child’s personal development and that satisfaction and pride in quality presentation can enhance engagement and self-esteem.

Implementation

Handwriting is a skill that develops at different rates for each child. All teachers prioritise handwriting instruction and uphold high expectations across the curriculum. Our school uses **Penpals for Handwriting** to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and allocated appropriate instructional time.
- Progression in handwriting is consistent across all year groups.
- Handwriting is acknowledged as a whole-body activity, emphasising correct posture and pencil grip.
- Expectations for left-handed children are equal to those for right-handed children, with appropriate resources and advice provided to ensure comfortable writing.
- Handwriting instruction is integrated with grammar, punctuation, and spelling to contextualise transcriptional and stylistic skills.
- Children learn to self-assess their handwriting, fostering responsibility for improvement.
- Children are taught to write in various styles for different purposes, such as print for labelling diagrams, illustrated capital letters for posters, swift jottings for notes, and polished presentations for their best work.

Progression of Skills

Penpals facilitates the teaching and development of handwriting throughout the school:

- **Foundation Stage:** Children experience foundational handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS - Reception).
- **Letter Formation:** Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied, and consolidated (Reception/Year 1).
- **Joining Letters:** Joining is introduced only after children can automatically form letters correctly (Year 1/Year 2/Year 3).

- **Systematic Introduction of Joins:** Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Year 2 - Year 6).
- **Attention to Detail:** As children practice joining, they focus on the size, proportion, and spacing of letters and words (Year 3 - Year 6).
- **Slope Introduction:** Once joins are secure, a slope is introduced to support increased speed and fluency (Year 5).
- **Personal Style Development:** Children are encouraged to explore different ways of joining to develop their own preferred handwriting style (Year 6).

By using **Penpals**, we ensure that our handwriting instruction aligns with the National Curriculum requirements and recommendations. We share the aspiration that children's handwriting should be "sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum" and that "problems with forming letters do not impede their ability to express their thoughts."

Handwriting Tools

Throughout their time in school, children use various tools for different handwriting purposes and styles, including:

- A range of mark-making tools in the EYFS.
- Lined whiteboards and whiteboard pens throughout the school.
- Art supplies, including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays, and artwork.
- Sharp pencils for most writing until the Summer Term of Year 3.
- A handwriting pen from the Summer Term of Year 3 up to Year 6, or when they sustain a good level of presentation.

Handwriting is introduced and practised in **Penpals Practice Books** and on lined paper to help children learn about letter orientation, including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation and joining become more accurate, the line spacing gradually decreases.

Equality of Opportunity

All children have equal access to handwriting lessons and resources. We recognise that some children may take longer to develop necessary skills and provide additional opportunities for skill development. Children needing specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early, and the impact of these interventions is carefully monitored. We cater to children with physical disabilities, ensuring progress is monitored according to their individual action plans.

Provision for Left-Handed Children

Left-handed children are seated on the left side of right-handed children to prevent elbow collisions. They are encouraged to find a comfortable paper orientation, typically slightly to the left of centre,

with fingers positioned about 1.5 cm from the pencil tip. Pens designed for left-handed writers are provided to minimise smudging.

Assessment of Handwriting

Ongoing assessment is the most effective method for evaluating handwriting. This approach allows us to identify errors and inconsistencies that may impede fluency in the future. Early intervention is crucial to prevent pupils from developing incorrect letter formation habits.

The Role of the Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Following the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- Providing direct teaching and accurate modelling of handwriting.
- Creating an environment that promotes good handwriting practises.
- Observing pupils, monitoring progress, and setting development targets.
- Collaborating with the school SENDCo to support children with handwriting difficulties.

The Role of the Writing Lead

The Writing Lead coordinates handwriting instruction across all school phases to ensure a consistent approach and outstanding progression. Key duties include:

- Monitoring handwriting in **Penpals** workbooks.
- Assessing handwriting application across other subjects, such as English, Science, and Topic books.
- Identifying and facilitating staff professional development needs.
- Organising, maintaining, and cataloguing handwriting resources.
- Keeping abreast of new initiatives in handwriting instruction.

The Role of the Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team supports monitoring through regular work sampling, assessment analysis, and lesson observations. Feedback from this monitoring informs staff of necessary developments to raise standards.

Parental Involvement

We recognise the importance of the home-school link in fostering outstanding progress in all areas of learning, including handwriting. Our handwriting curriculum and age-related skill progression will be shared with parents. During Parents' Evenings, parents will be informed of their child's presentation standards and encouraged to support additional handwriting practice as needed. In Reception, children will receive letter formation homework as part of their Phonics homework (GPC).

Impact

The use of **Penpals** ensures the development of handwriting skills throughout each year group. Children take pride in their written work and achieve proficiency in cursive handwriting. Outcomes in wider curriculum work, as well as in exercise books and school displays, evidence the progress children make in this area and the consistency of our approach across the school.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Principal as part of the school self-evaluation process. The Governing Body will oversee the implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are changes to National Curriculum Policy.

Feel free to adjust any specific details as needed! This version aims to enhance clarity and professionalism while maintaining the original intent and content of your policy.



Developmental levels of pencil hold



1 Whole-hand grasp: using a fist hand.

- Around 1-2 years.
- Use of upper body muscles.
- Movement comes mainly from the shoulder with the arm moving as a unit.



2 Beginning to use the fingers: no longer using whole-hand grasp.

- Around 2-3 years.
- Use of forearm.
- Movement is still quite stiff but there may be some wrist movement.



a



b

3 Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers: no longer using whole-hand grasp.

- Around 3-4 years.
- Both of these grips are the crude beginnings of the tripod grip. The hand tends to move as a unit, with limited wrist movement.

Children at this stage need more experiences that will strengthen their muscles (cutting, working with dough etc.) to increase readiness for a precision pen hold.



4 Moving towards the tripod grip.

- Around 4-6 years.
- Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
- Finger movements and wrist now in play.
- Moving to a comfortable and efficient tripod grip: a precise three-way or tripod use of thumb, index and middle fingers.



Do the **PENPALS** 7 point check!



Are you ready for handwriting? Relax!

Are your elbows off the desk?

Sit up and lean slightly forward

Is your body a fist width away from the desk?

Are your feet flat on the floor?

Are all chair legs touching the ground?



Left Handers



Is there a circle gap between your thumb and finger?

Is your paper tilted at a slight angle?

Right Handers





The lower case alphabet



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



Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv

Ww Xx Yy Zz