

Handwriting Policy



Legible handwriting depends on the APPLICATION of this policy to every piece of writing the children engage in.

Introduction

At Bridgewater our policies are regularly reviewed. This reflects current practice within school and all related government guidance and statutory requirements.

Scheme

The handwriting scheme used was developed in school and follows the principles of the MSL (Multi-sensory) Handwriting Scheme.

Objectives

At Bridgewater we aim:

-  to develop a clear and fluent joined handwriting style;
-  to encourage good writing habits and correct letter formation;
-  to encourage our children to take pride in and value high standards of handwriting and presentation.

These aims are in accordance with the Early Learning Goals for handwriting from the Early Years foundation stage and Primary National Curriculum.

Rationale

The importance of handwriting in the curriculum

Handwriting is concerned with individual expression and the conveying of meaning through fluent composition. Handwriting should become an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of their writing. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency, legibility, purposefulness and the opportunity for creative expression. It is important that all adults model the correct formation at all times, when marking, teaching and for display.

Impact Assessment

Foundation Stage

So that children can eventually acquire a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style, they need, at an early stage, to develop skills including:

- ✎ good gross and fine motor control;
- ✎ a recognition of pattern;
- ✎ a language to talk about the shapes and movements that will lead into the main handwriting movements which create the three basic letter shapes.

The first stage of handwriting teaching involves gross motor skill development activities, which are closely linked to whole-body movements. Children are shown how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders, e.g. with ribbons fixed to the ends of sticks.

Emerging letter shapes are developed in a number of ways, including:

- ✎ sky writing with both hands;
- ✎ making patterns on each other's backs;
- ✎ making letter shapes in a damp sand tray.

In the early foundation stage children are developing basic handwriting movements using gross and fine motor control.

In the later foundation stage, they learn the letter shape alongside the sound-letter relationship, using Read, Write Inc. Children are introduced to letters with joins from Nursery. They will begin to join two and three letters as they develop their phonic knowledge. In Reception, children receive a 1:1 handwriting lesson every week and use the handwriting story from Read, Write Inc. e.g. Whoosh, around the apple and down the leaf.

Children in this stage are provided with a variety of surfaces to make marks on, including different types of paper and card, whiteboards, chalkboards, interactive white boards, 'magic boards' etc. and they are given the opportunity to use a wide range of mark-making tools, including pencils of varying thicknesses and colours, markers, chalk, wax crayons, pastels, paint, charcoal etc. Finger Gym activities are carefully planned in continuous provision.

They have experience of a wide range of activities to develop hand and finger strength which leads on to developing a good pencil grip. From Spring term, children in Nursery start Dough Disco which is a daily programme specifically designed to develop hand strength ready for writing. This continues throughout Reception. When children are ready, they pick up the writing implement themselves and decide which hand they prefer, although hand dominance is often evident before this stage. They are taught to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger in Reception. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements required for writing are possible (as in the illustration).



Pencil grips and triangular pencils are used to encourage a good grip, and children are monitored so that they do not hold the pencil too tightly, which produces tension in the arm and shoulder. Children who are left-handed are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so that they can more easily see what they have written.

Children are provided with a designated 'writing area' to give status to their early independent writing and develop a positive attitude to the act of writing, and left-right orientation is encouraged.

By the end of the foundation stage, most children are able to use a pencil, holding it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Key stage 1

Children have handwriting books and are taught handwriting skills in discrete handwriting lessons for 10 minutes each day. We will also have a handwriting focus week each term.

During handwriting sessions, children are taught all of the basic letter shapes, according to the MSL (Multi-sensory) Handwriting Scheme, and they have the opportunity to practise letter formation in a variety of ways, starting with sky-writing to encourage good formation and reinforce previous learning.

By the end of year 1, children can write most letters using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Letters are correctly formed starting on the line and orientated and children put spaces between words.

By the end of year 2, most children can write legibly, using upper- and lower-case letters appropriately within words, with ascenders and descenders clearly distinguished, and observing correct spacing within and between words. They can form and use the four basic handwriting joins. From Year 2, letters will be revisited and practised in formation groupings when learning the handwriting joins i.e. Group 1- a,c,d,g,q,s,o,f Group 2 – b,h,l,i,j,k,t,n,m Group 3 – r,o,w,v Group 4 – e,y,u,x,z

There is an expectation that this handwriting style will be applied to all writing that the children do.

Key stage 2

Throughout key stage 2, children have handwriting books, and handwriting skills are revised and practised in discrete handwriting lessons for 15 minutes twice a week. There is an emphasis on applying handwriting skills to all written work. They work at a personal pace, revisiting and refining skills.

High standards of presentation are valued in each year group in order to encourage children to take pride in their work.

By the end of year 3, most children write with consistency in the size and proportion of letters and spacing within and between words, using the correct formation of handwriting joins.

By the end of year 4, children are expected to write consistently with neat, legible and joined handwriting in all pieces of work.

From year 5 onwards, children are expected to write in pen. In order to use a pen, the teacher looks at their writing across all their books and when they judge it to be of a high enough standard they take it to show the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, who awards the child with a certificate and a handwriting pen in assembly.

By the end of year 5, many children can adapt handwriting for specific purposes, for example using printing as a presentation choice, or using italics occasionally as a matter of personal choice.

By the end of year 6, most children have developed a consistent personal handwriting style and some can use different styles for different purposes.

Children are expected to use their best handwriting at all times.

Inclusion

Children identified as having a specific learning difficulty with handwriting have an Individual Support Plan written in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, and special provisions are made to cater for their specific needs. Children who are left-handed are taught to slant their book or paper so that their writing can be read more easily. They are discouraged from holding a pen or pencil too close to the point as this can interrupt their line of vision. Wherever possible, a left-handed child is positioned to the left of a right-handed child to enable both to write comfortably without bumping into each other.

Children with specific difficulties may also have a handwriting intervention and we use the Teodorescu Write From Start programme.

Monitoring

The application of handwriting skills

The handwriting skills developed in this policy must be applied to all pieces of writing the children do.

Teachers ensure the application of handwriting skills by:

- reminding children of standards of writing and presentation at the beginning of lessons across the curriculum;
- sometimes having handwriting as a lesson objective across the curriculum;
- comparing handwriting in handwriting books with writing in other books across the curriculum;

- ensuring that children improve the presentation of final draft written work if it falls below school expectations.

In addition:

- The Writing Coordinator and/or Senior Leadership Team monitor handwriting and presentation in books from across the curriculum regularly and provide feedback to teachers.
- Teachers model good handwriting skills during shared and guided writing. They follow the handwriting policy when writing comments in children's books.
- Children in KS1 and lower KS2 are rewarded by their teacher with a sticker if handwriting is consistently good across a range of books.
- Children in UKS2 are rewarded by the head teacher with a handwriting pen and a certificate if handwriting is consistently good across a range of books.
- Teachers also teach focused handwriting lessons every term and target groups and/or individuals where necessary. The amount of lessons needed is decided upon by the teacher depending on size of class and the needs of the children.

Date Review: Summer 2026

Review Date: Spring 2029

Related policy: Assessment and Feedback policy