



Bridgewater Park Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Review: 2026-2027

Handwriting Policy and Guidance

Aim:

At Bridgewater Park Primary School we aim to teach each child to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. To achieve this we have developed a 'whole school approach' so the teaching of handwriting is consistent resulting in a high standard of presentation and handwriting.

This is promoted across the whole school which all children and staff recognise, understand and follow. Handwriting is a taught skill and it is important that teachers are seen to put a high value on teaching and sustaining neat handwriting. We believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by high quality presentation.

Principles of handwriting across the school:

- Handwriting should be taught explicitly, in short frequent sessions. Children should be self/peer assessing, looking for consistency.
- Pupils are streamed for handwriting based on current handwriting ability.
- Where possible it should be linked to phonics and spelling patterns. This will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings.
- When ready, children should be practising on the lines they are going to be using in their literacy books.
- High expectations of writing are needed. Children need to repeat work that is not satisfactory.
- When pupils are ready, they can begin to receive their pen licenses from year 3 upwards.
- All staff need to model good handwriting at all times.
- All pupils should be encouraged to attempt writing for various purposes using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions.

Teaching Sequence:

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Patterns
- Independence

Techniques for teaching letter formation:

- Model good handwriting with the correct joins all of the time
- Address misconceptions
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children to draw letters in the air, on each other's backs, in sand
- Use pencil grips if necessary

Model Used:

At Bridgewater Park Primary School we have chosen to use the Letter Join handwriting style. The following formations should be adhered to.

**The Four Joins**

1. to letters without ascenders e.g. in, am, on
2. to letters with ascenders e.g. ab, ch, il
3. horizontal joins e.g. o a, wo, og, wi
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. wh, ob, al

Seating and Posture:

- Chair and table to 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 chairs 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.

Pencil Grip:

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

For right handers

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

For left handers

Hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger; hold about 3 cm 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 degrees. Use the right hand to steady the paper. NB It is very important that a right handed child is not seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide.

Links to Spelling:

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Teaching Progression and skill development:

Progression	Pupils should be taught to:
Stage 1	• 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 letter • Form digits 0-9 • Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' and to practise these.
Stage 2	• 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 unjoined • 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

Stage 3	• Use the diagonal and horizontal stroke that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaces sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]
Stage 4	• Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by; • Choosing which shape of 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