


Whitby Heath Primary School



Handwriting Policy

Policy written	Month & Year
Agreed by Governors	November 2023
Next Review	November 2025
Head teacher	Mr S Wright 
Chair of Governors	Mr N Lacey

Whitby Heath Handwriting Policy 2023-24

Whitby Heath Handwriting Intent:

At Whitby Heath we follow the RWI programme for the early stages of taught handwriting and aim to make the physical process of writing – handwriting – enjoyable from the start, so that children can see themselves as 'writers'. Children are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and understand the importance of careful presentation to communicate meaning clearly and effectively. Research shows that printing letters by hand forms neural specialisation for letters and paves the way for creating the brain systems that are used for subsequent reading.ⁱ Children will view handwriting as a means to achieve this by developing a neat, legible style of handwriting with correctly formed letters. They will be able to hold a pencil comfortably and correctly and form lower case letters, capital letters and digits 0-9 starting and finishing in the right place. They will use spacing between the words that reflects the letters and from lower case and capital letters of the correct size relative to one another. As children progress, they will use diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters and understand capital letters are best left not joined. Through writing opportunities, children will develop flow, stamina and speed, forming letters accurately with automaticity to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.

Whitby Heath Handwriting implementation:

We teach print letter formationⁱⁱ as a first step before joins are introduced once fluency has been achieved. Handwriting will be taught using our phonics government approved programme in accordance with the policy agreed by the staff. These skills will be taught consistently and with continuity across the school in meaningful and curriculum-relevant contexts, particularly in the areas of phonics, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

Resources and equipment –

At Whitby Heath, initially an agreed print handwriting letter pattern is taught within our Read Write Inc Phonics Programme. Children in EYFS and KS1 will use a pencil to write. From Year 3 onwards, children should work towards achieving a 'pen licence'. Once they are able to demonstrate they are using neat and consistently joined handwriting then they are given a handwriting pen to use. From the outset in Year 5, all children will write with a pen. Handwriting will be practised in RWI sessions and in books in EYFS and KS1. Whitby Heath handwriting letter pattern will be displayed in every classroom. See appendix

Frequency and duration –

EYFS – Daily practise during RWI phonics which integrates letter formation and handwriting. Handwriting interventions for targeted pupils. Focus/emphasis on fine motor skills.ⁱⁱⁱ

KS1- Daily practise during RWI and during a focused five minute daily handwriting session using the RWI stages of handwriting development.

Read Write Inc stages of Handwriting development:

There are 3 stages of handwriting using the Read Write Inc programme.

Stage 1a:

During Stage 1 children learn correct letter formation using the same picture mnemonics they have already learnt in the Set 1 sound lessons.

These letters are taught in handwriting groups:

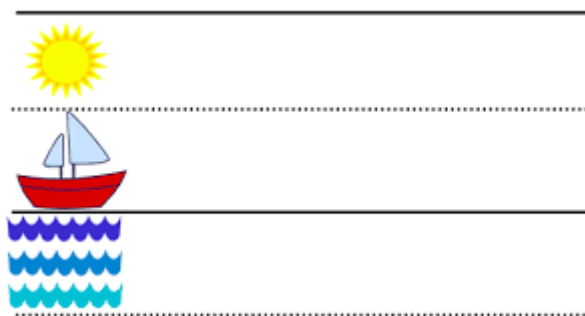
- 'Around' letters: c a o d g q
- 'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y
- 'Curly' letters: e f s
- 'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x.

During these early stages, children write on plain paper.

Stage 1b:

Once children can form the letters correctly, they learn how to place the letters on the line and of relative size. Children are encouraged to continue using the picture mnemonics help children to visualise the size and placement.

The Read Write Inc programme uses the boat and waterline as a guide for children to learn to form their letters within size and orientation. See below:



- Some small letters are called 'boat letters': a c e i m n o r s u v w x z
- Letters that are written below the line are called 'water letters': g j p q y
- Tall letters are called 'sun letters': b d h k l t f

At this stage, children are encouraged to write on wide-lined paper.

Stage 2:

During Stage 2, children are now taught that they are going to use new characters to help them develop a grown-up style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing. New pictures will help them to visualise the new shapes.

The children are introduced to the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.

The six sisters – Annie, Dina, Gabi, Olivia, Carina and Queenie – all look the same. Their mother tells them that they must all have a different haircut so people can tell them apart!

The uncles – Uncle Umberto and Uncle Yaseen – look just like the sisters, except they are bald on the top of their heads.

The family have a dog and a bunny whose faces are very similar too, but they have long ears.

(See Read Write Inc Stage 2 Handwriting document for further guidance and explanation – shared point handwriting folder)

Stage 3:

The final handwriting stage within Read Write Inc, introduces the children to two joins:

- The arm join (diagonal)
- The washing line join (horizontal)

Both joins have three variations.

(See Read Write Inc Stage 3 Handwriting document for further guidance and explanation - shared point handwriting folder)

The following routine is used for every lesson – demonstrate - led by the teacher, practice – children practice letter or join taught in that lesson followed by a 'review' to address misconceptions and errors.

Children in EYFS, Y1 and Y2 will progress through the stages In Y2 children will be taught joins.

KS2:

KS2 – In KS2 handwriting will be integrated regularly into spelling and punctuation activities. Specific intervention groups will target specific pupils who require support. As a school, we would expect and aim for most children to start joining their handwriting by the time they reach KS2. There is an expectation that children

develop their use cursive writing during Years 3 and Year 4, in line with the National Curriculum expectations. By Years 5 and Year 6, children are expected to be able to write legibly, with increasing speed and fluency.

At KS2 the expectation is for children to have cursive handwriting modelled to them by their teacher during any shared writing. It is an expectation that no matter what the subject area being taught, children maintain their handwriting style and presentation.

Writing-ready - we place emphasis on being 'writing ready' by teaching the children how to adopt an appropriate writing posture. We encourage writing to take place with:

- feet flat on the floor
- bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist from the table
- shoulders down and relaxed
- back leaning forward slightly
- left/right hand holding the page
- left/right hand ready in a tripod grip

Left-handed Children -

Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners and at the end of the desk. Left-handed children are encouraged to position their fingers about 2.5cm from the end of the writing implement to avoid smudging their work. Tilt the paper so that their arm is at right-angle to bottom edge of paper and write with a straight wrist and their hand below the writing line. ^{iv}

Additional Support -

Some children experience difficulties making good progress in their handwriting development. They may need additional support with their fine motor development, pencil grip or letter formation. The class teacher will liaise with the English subject leader and SENDCO to put into place the most appropriate form of support.

This could include:

- Pencil grip or jumbo triangular pencil
- Fine motor skills intervention
- Additional handwriting group

Equal Opportunities –

All children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential in handwriting, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, and ability, or of any physical or sensory disability.

Monitoring –

The English Team and SLT will:

- Monitor standards of handwriting across the school through book scrutiny, learning walks and English team will provide support and training as appropriate.
- Liaise with school SENDCO to best support children with handwriting difficulties.
- Organise, maintain and catalogue handwriting resources.
- Keep up to date with current research and initiatives in the teaching of handwriting.

Whitby Heath Handwriting Impact:

Measure impact of teaching and learning and handwriting through looking at:

- *Are letters being shaped correctly?*
- *Are joins being made correctly?*
- *Are spaces between letters, words and lines even and correct?*
- *Is the writing size consistent and appropriate?*
- *Are the writing standards demonstrated by the majority of the children in line with the statutory requirements?*

Supporting Evidence for Policy:

ⁱ James & Atwood 2009, Longchamp et al 2008, and Li & James 2016 'The role of sensorimotor learning in the perception of letter-like forms: Tracking the causes of neural specialization for letters.'

ⁱⁱ Evidence for early letter formation to be 'print' only - taken from 'DfE Validation of systematic synthetic phonics programmes: supporting documentation' 2023



























ⁱⁱⁱ Dinehart et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between fine motor skills and academic achievement in preschool children. They found that fine motor skills, especially those related to handwriting, predicted later math and reading skills, as well as general cognitive ability.

^{iv} Gardner, Warren H. 1945. *Left handed writing instruction manual*. Clark, Margaret M. 1959. *Teaching left-handed children*.

APPENDIX:

Read Write Inc. letter formation patter:

Rhymes for letter formation - taken from Read Write Inc.

<p>a</p>  <p>Around the apple and down the leaf.</p>	<p>b</p>  <p>Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.</p>	<p>c</p>  <p>Curl around the caterpillar.</p>	<p>d</p>  <p>Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.</p>	<p>e</p>  <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.</p>	<p>f</p>  <p>Down the stem and draw the leaves.</p>
<p>g</p>  <p>Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.</p>	<p>h</p>  <p>Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.</p>	<p>i</p>  <p>Down the body and dot for the head.</p>	<p>j</p>  <p>Down his body, curl, dot for his head.</p>	<p>k</p>  <p>Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.</p>	<p>l</p>  <p>Down the long leg.</p>
<p>m</p>  <p>Down Maisie, mountain, mountain, mountain.</p>	<p>n</p>  <p>Down Nobby and over his net.</p>	<p>o</p>  <p>All around the orange.</p>	<p>p</p>  <p>Down the pirates plait and around his face.</p>	<p>qu</p>  <p>Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.</p>	<p>r</p>  <p>Down the robots back and curl over his arm.</p>
<p>s</p>  <p>Slither down the snake.</p>	<p>t</p>  <p>Down the tower, across the tower.</p>	<p>u</p>  <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.</p>	<p>v</p>  <p>Down a wing, up a wing.</p>	<p>w</p>  <p>Down, up, down, up.</p>	<p>x</p>  <p>Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.</p>
<p>y</p>  <p>Down a horn, up a horn and under head.</p>	<p>z</p>  <p>Zig-zag-zig.</p>				

Handwriting

Stage 1a:

Letter formation

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 1* and use the checklists below to teach handwriting for the following letters:

- 'Around' letters: **c a o d g q**
- 'Down' letters: **l t b p k h i j m n r u y**
- 'Curly' letters: **e f s**
- 'Zigzag' letters: **v w z x.**



Handwriting

Stage 1b:

Relative size of letters

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 1* to practise writing the words listed in this document.

- 'Sun letters': **b d h k l** (f and t are just a little bit smaller)
- 'Boat letters': **a c e i m n o r s u v w x z**
- 'Water letters': **g j p q y**.



Read Write Inc.
Phonics

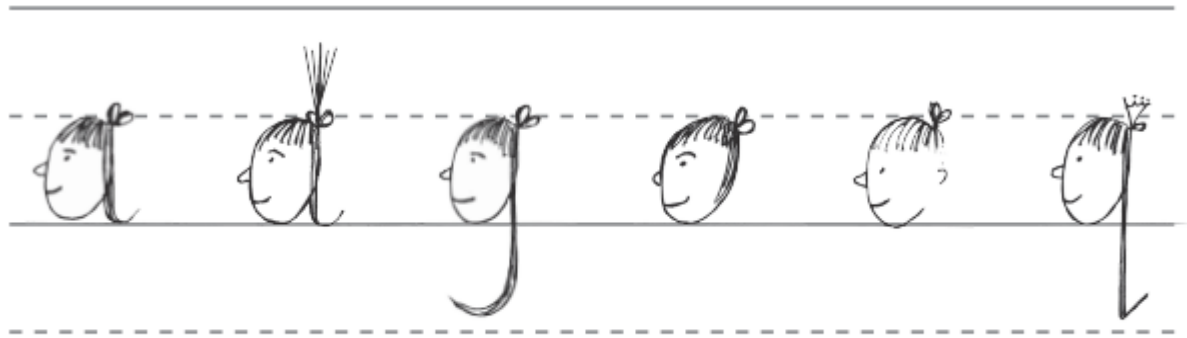
Handwriting Stage 2

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 2* and use the checklists below to teach a mature style of handwriting for the following letters: **a d g o c q u y b p**.



Introduce the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.

The six sisters – Annie, Dina, Gabi, Olivia, Carina and Queenie – all look the same. Their mother tells them that they must all have a different haircut so people can tell them apart!



The uncles – Uncle Umberto and Uncle Yaseen – look just like the sisters, except they are bald on the top of their heads.



The family have a dog and a bunny whose faces are very similar too, but they have long ears.






Handwriting Stage 3

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 2* and use the checklists below to teach joined-up handwriting.



Explain to children that there are two basic joins:

- the arm join (diagonal)
- the washing line join (horizontal).

The arm join has three variations:

- **a.** arm to boat 
- **b.** arm to sun 
- **c.** arm to sister. 

The washing line join has three variations:

- **d.** washing line to boat 
- **e.** washing line to sun 
- **f.** washing line to sister. 