

The Vine Inter-Church Primary School

Handwriting Policy

2024

Intent:

At The Vine, we take great pride in our handwriting and presentation of written learning. Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Despite the advances in technology, handwriting continues to play an important role in everyday life. Pupils must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. The development of this fluid style when mastered allows pupils to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves.

Our aims are:

- To develop high quality handwriting and good presentation of work across the curriculum
- To ensure pupils form letters correctly, leading to a fluent, joined and legible handwriting style
- To enable pupils to write in a consistent, well presented and legible format.
- To promote continuity and consistency in handwriting style and teaching methods
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources
- To develop high teacher-expectations for the presentation of learning
- To have a consistent approach when teaching handwriting which clearly progresses through Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2)

Implementation:

Handwriting is not an innate ability, but a complex psychomotor skill that requires instruction, experience and practice.

At The Vine:

- The teaching of handwriting begins in EYFS through development of gross- and fine-motor skills before letter forms are introduced
- Letter formation is taught through phonics learning in EYFS and KS1
- Handwriting is taught explicitly during handwriting lessons in KS1

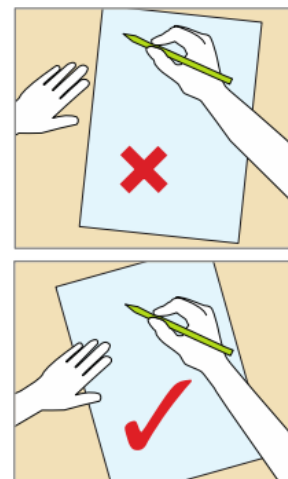
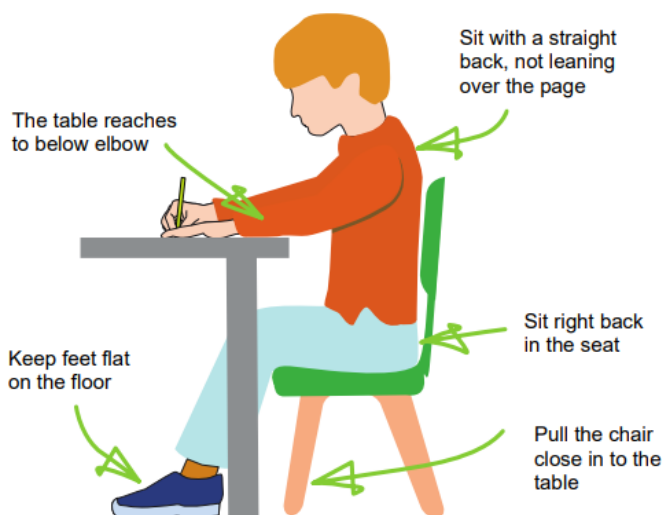
- In KS2, handwriting continues to develop through curriculum learning and scheduled handwriting lessons as required
- Interventions are provided for individuals who need additional support with handwriting
- High expectations are upheld for pupils' handwriting and presentation of written learning
- Handwriting and letter formation is effectively modelled by staff e.g. on the board, in books etc.

Posture & Pencil Grip:

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at the table to support their handwriting:

- **Two Hands.** Insist on children always using two hands when writing. One hand to hold the paper and one hand to write with.
- **Six Feet.** Children must always keep six feet on the floor (their own two feet and the chair's four feet).
- **BBC.** Ensure that children always sit in the BBC position – Bottom Back in Chair:
- **TNT.** Tummy Near Table.
- **Paper Position.** The paper should be upright when the child is writing, or at an angle not greater than 45 degrees.

Sitting Position

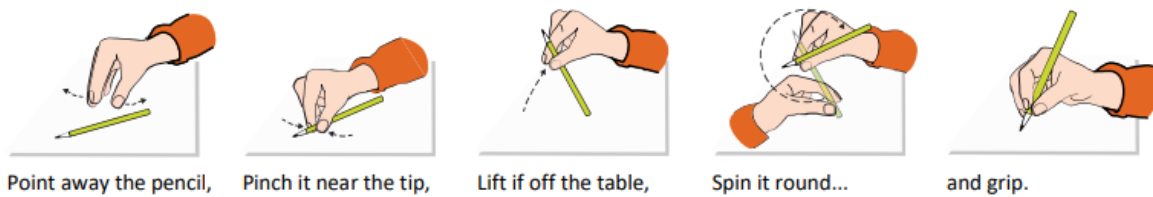


Paper position for right-handed children.

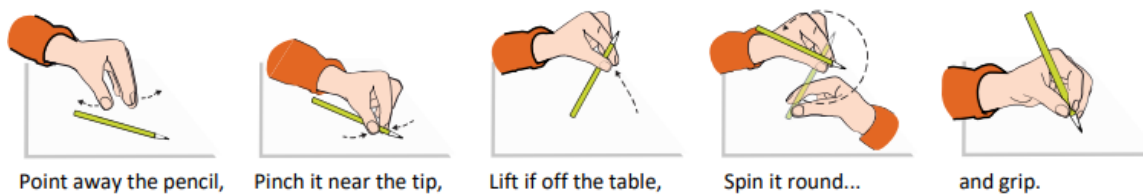
The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right- and left-handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib. We use the Tripod Grip Rhyme:

Right-handed pencil grip



Left-handed pencil grip



Left-handed Writers:

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Where possible, teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Progression of Handwriting:

Early Years Foundation Stage:

DFE and EEF Guidance that states; 'Accurate letter formation is an essential early skill that forms the basis of a fluent handwriting style. There is no quick way to develop these essential skills other than through regular and substantial practice.'

By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage children will be able to recognise and form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

In EYFS children will:

- Develop gross motor skills to support their co-ordination, balance, bilateral co-ordination, core strength and spatial awareness. For example, moving heavy tyres, dancing with props, using balance boards, large upright mark making etc. This will allow them to sit correctly for periods of time and have the necessary co-ordination to write.
- Develop fine motor skills to support their arm, hand and finger strength to build their dexterity. For example, threading beads, manipulating malleable materials, different fastenings etc. This will allow them to hold a pencil correctly and make more intricate shapes to form letters correctly.
- Become familiar with printed letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary.
- Be taught correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Initially use unlined paper or whiteboards as the focus is correct formation rather than size or positioning.

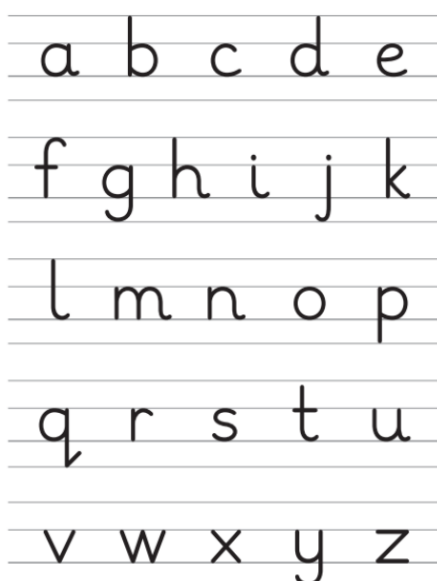
Children will be taught to form letters correctly alongside their phonics learning. They will use Read Write Inc's guidance on letter formation and use the RWI mnemonics to aid the correct letter formation.

Letter formation in EYFS is printed:

Pre-cursive patterns:



Lower case printed letter formation:



Capital letters formation:



Key Stage 1:

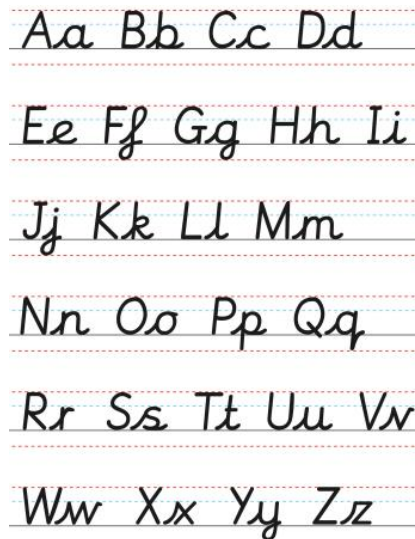
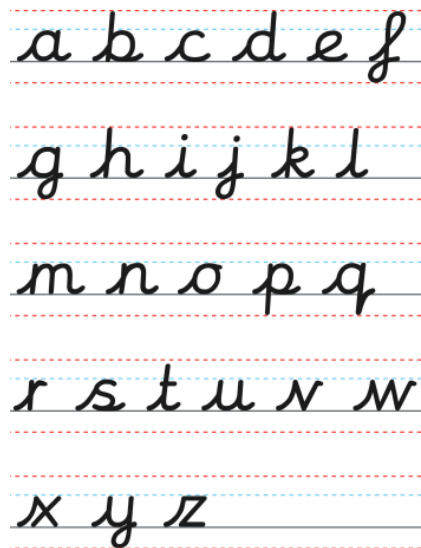
Year 1

By the end of Year 1, children will use pre-cursive handwriting.

Handwriting will be explicitly taught in dedicated handwriting lessons. Children will be taught:

- To embed the skills from EYFS
- Pre-cursive letter formation, starting and finishing in the right place (on the line) with a lead-in and lead-out
- Letter size and proportion, with ascenders and descenders at the correct length
- Number formation (digits 0-9)
- Letter families (letters formed in a similar way)
- Finger spaces between words

Pre-cursive letter formation:



Year 2

By the end of year 2, children will use continuous cursive handwriting.

Handwriting will be explicitly taught in dedicated handwriting lessons. Children will be taught to:

- Embed the skills from EYFS and Year 1
- Use diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters
- Write in a continuous cursive style
- Form lower-case letters of the correct size, relative to one another
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters
- Use spacing between words which reflects the size of the letters

Diagonal joins: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n p q r s t u x y z

Horizontal joins: o r v w

Continuous cursive letter formation:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Key Stage 2:

Years 3 & 4

In Years 3 & 4, children will build upon the skills they learnt in KS1 and continue to develop their continuous cursive handwriting with the aim of increasing fluency.

They will focus on increasing the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting:

- Ensuring that letters are consistently sized and with equal word spacing
- Ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant
- Ensuring that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch

Handwriting will mostly be taught through curriculum learning, however reminder lessons will be taught when required.

Years 5 & 6

In Years 5 & 6, children will develop the legibility, and fluency of their cursive handwriting whilst focusing on increasing speed.

They will focus on:

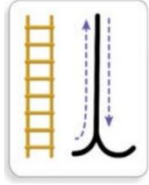
- Improving the speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take quick notes at a faster pace
- Building stamina to have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue
- Choosing which shape of 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
- Understanding what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version
- Using different styles of handwriting for different purposes e.g. printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling and form filling

Handwriting will mostly be taught through curriculum learning, however reminder lessons will be taught when required.

Letter families:

When teaching letter formation, children should understand and learn through different letter families.

Long Ladder Letters:



Long ladder letters include:

i l t u j y

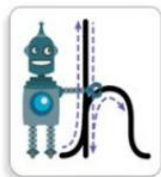
Curly Caterpillar Letters:



Curly caterpillar letters include:

a d c o f e s g q

One-armed Robot Letters:



One-armed robot letters include:

b h k m n p r

Zig-zag Letters:



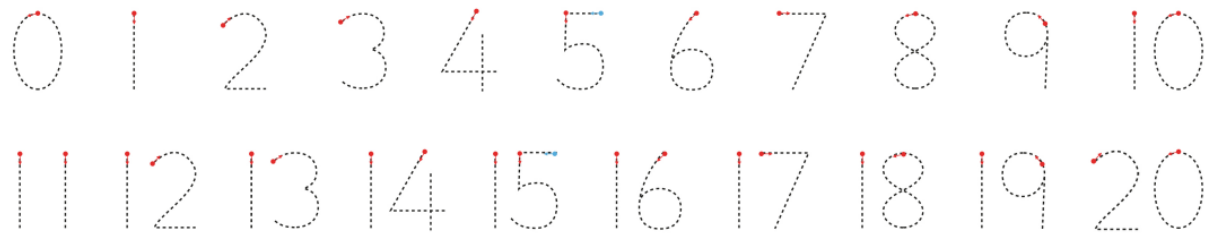
Zig-zag letters include:

n w x z

Number Formation:






Number formation will be taught alongside handwriting and reinforced in Maths lessons. It will be practiced in the EYFS and KS1. Additional support on number formation in KS2 can be supplemental to handwriting practice or as part of individual support programs.

When writing numbers, children must learn to start at the top:



Numbers should be a similar size to capital letters.

The following number formations should **not** be accepted:

- The following formation of 1 (which is often confused with the number 7) 
- Cursive style 2 
- Crossed 4 
- The following variations of 4 (which are not defined enough and often confused with other numbers/letters) 
- Crossed 7 (often used in European countries) 

Punctuation:

Punctuation should also be reinforced when teaching handwriting.

How to Write Punctuation Marks

- FULL STOP**: It sits on the baseline as a small dot. It is not a large circle.
- QUESTION MARK**: It is the same height as a tall letter. It has a curve, straight line and a dot.
- APOSTROPHE**: It is a dot with a curve drawn downwards. It sits at the top height of a tall letter.
- EXCLAMATION POINT**: It is the same height as a tall letter. It has a straight line and a dot.
- COMMA**: The dot sits on the baseline and a small curve is drawn downwards just below the line.
- QUOTATION MARKS**: These are dots with curves. Similar to the numbers 66 and 99. They sit at the top height of a tall letter.
- HYPHEN**: It sits in the middle of the two lines. It is a small horizontal line.
- COLON**: It sits in the middle of the two lines. It is two small dots.
- BRACKETS**: It is the same height as a tall letter. It has a slight curve.

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Pens, Pencils & Equipment:

Paper

Children will use line sizes appropriate to their stage in writing. During handwriting sessions, specific handwriting paper with additional lines may be used. Children will also practise using the use the same sized lines as their other curriculum books so that skills are transferable and that the same expectation of handwriting is set across all writing.

Pencils

All children will use a HB pencil for all handwriting initially.

Pencils must be:

- Sharp
- Never sharpened at both ends
- Not too small for the child's hand
- Kept out of children's mouths

Pens

In years 3 and 4, when children's continuous cursive handwriting is judged to be of consistent high quality across their learning, children can apply for a pen licence. To apply for a pen licence, children will write a short letter to the Deputy Headteacher in their best handwriting to persuade them to be allowed to use a pen. If they are successful, they will be awarded with a pen licence certificate.

In years 5 and 6, children will be expected to write with a pen. If a child has not been awarded a pen licence by the end of Year 4, and their handwriting is still judged to be inconsistent, they will receive a handwriting intervention during Autumn 1 in Year 5 to support their use of a pen.

Children will be able to choose from a selection of black pens (handwriting pens and biro pens) to suit their handwriting needs.

Pens must be regarded as special tools which are to be respected and cared for.

Other equipment

- Rulers must be used for drawing lines and underlining
- Rubbers can be used for pencil mistakes, or mistakes can be crossed out neatly with a ruled line
- Pencil grips or pens with specific grips are available for those children who require them

Additional Presentation of Written Learning:

All children must be encouraged to take pride in their written learning.

They must:

- Begin writing on the left of their page (next to the margin if one is provided).
- Work from the top to the bottom of the page
- Not write below the last line of their page
- Use a ruler for all lines drawn
- Not doodle in, or on the cover of, their exercise books
- Avoid wasting paper by leaving large gaps
- Try to glue sheets in straight

Excellent presentation of written learning will be celebrated with positive praise, house points, by being photocopied and displayed in the classroom etc.

SEND, Inclusion & Interventions:

Handwriting can be a challenge for children with SEND therefore adaptations should be made where appropriate for those who need it.

This can be in the form of physical aids, for example:

- Pencil grips, pens with specific grips, writing slopes etc.
- Larger line sizes in exercise books

Those struggling with continuous cursive handwriting in KS2 should continue to master pre-cursive writing before moving on to continuous cursive. Additional interventions should also be provided for those who require it in KS2.

Dyslexia:

The British Dyslexia Association states: 'It's recommended that children learn to write using continuous cursive handwriting, so they don't have to learn how to form letters twice when they need to write more quickly later on.'

- The flowing action of cursive handwriting can be less fatiguing for dyslexic pupils, so improves writing speed.
- As all cursive letters start on the baseline and move from left to right, this prevents letter reversals, common with dyslexia.
- The joining of cursive letters allows the brain to maintain a thought without interruption.
- As the letters are joined, the spacing of letters within a word is more consistent and the spacing between words more even.

However, cursive handwriting can be harder to read, therefore, a printed handwriting style may be required for some individuals when demonstrating spellings etc.

Handwriting at Home:

The handwriting policy will be shared with parents and carers so they can support handwriting at home.

Additional resources and links will be provided on the school website to enable handwriting practice at home.

For those that require additional support with handwriting, printed resources may be sent home for the child to complete.