



Handwriting Policy

Approved by	Banister Primary School Governing Body		
Date last Amended	March 2021	Approval date	March 2021
Next Review	March 2023		

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Introduction

At Banister Primary School we aim to develop the children's ability to write with ease, speed and legibility, enabling them to maximise the fluency, quality and quantity of their work. Children from Year R onwards learn pre-cursive handwriting, which teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Links are made between handwriting and spelling.

1) Aims

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the school
- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly
- Take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting
- Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.
- Most children will begin to develop a fluent, joined handwriting style by the end of Year 2

2) Statutory requirements

The statutory requirements for teaching and learning of handwriting are laid out in the 2014 English curriculum. The expected outcomes for Early Years are also listed.

i. EYFS - Moving and Handling:

Children show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

ii. Year One Pupils should be taught to:

- 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 letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Handwriting in year one requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil,

pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

iii. **Year Two pupils should be taught to:**

- 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.

In year two pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

iv. **In Lower Key Stage Two pupils should be taught to:**

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes 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, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

In years 3 and 4 pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

v. **In Upper Key Stage Two pupils should be taught to:**

- write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters)

In years 5 and 6 pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an unjoined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form)

3) Teaching and Learning

i. Reception

The first handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that the children we teach learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning. Children who have been allowed to invent their own ways of forming letters will find it harder to change the longer they are allowed to persist, but unless these habits are 'unlearned' (often at great effort since the movement memory is very retentive and will tend to revert to old habits) it will be impossible for them to learn a fluent, joined hand.

Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory: write letters in the air, on hands, then palms; orally describe letter shapes and joins with children. Children will practise their handwriting on lined paper (books) and on lined white boards.

In Reception the children will learn to:

- Develop gross motor control
- Develop fine motor control
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- Learning letter formation alongside the teaching of phonics
- Lined paper will be introduced in preparation for transition into Year 1

Lined paper or line guides will be provided. Lines can be widely spaced. It may help children to leave a blank line between each line of writing initially to avoid ascenders and descenders overlapping.

ii. Year 1

Children will learn the importance of size and placement e.g. capital letters, ascenders and descender. They will also learn the letter families and the related strokes:

- letters l i j t u y
- letters r b h k m n p
- letters c a d e g o q f s
- letters z, v, w, x,

We teach handwriting as a specific skill rather than as an independent task (which can often reinforce incorrect formation having a reverse effect than the intended outcome). At Banister Primary School we will teach handwriting for at least 10 minutes 5 times a week.

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair (page 160 Developing Early Writing)
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory

- Adults checking children’s formation and picking up inconsistencies in size and incorrect formation

iii. Year 2

“Joins between letters are only worthwhile if they increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing *without* reducing legibility”

The 4 basic joins that will be taught in Year 2:

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, on, at
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. at
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. the ‘eb’ in zebra

iv. Key Stage 2

During this stage the children continue to have daily direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting including through dictation and practice of their spellings. Our aim is for children to develop a clear and fluent style by the end of Key Stage 2 and to be able to adapt their handwriting for the following different purposes:

- A neat legible hand for finished, presented work
- A faster script for notes
- Print for labelling maps or diagrams.

v. Teachers

All members of staff are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example. Particularly when marking children’s work, all adult writing should be clear and legible and follow the year group expectation e.g. printed with lead outs in Year 1 (pre-cursive).

vi. Writing on an interactive whiteboard

Accurate handwriting using this technology takes practice, and teachers writing needs to be as neat and legible as it would be on a whiteboard.

- Use lines where appropriate
- Be aware of the legibility of different 'ink' colours. Red, for example, can be hard to read from a distance.
- Be aware of the needs of the children in your class when selecting page background colours
- Stand to one side of the board when writing so all children can see.

5) Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this either in whole class teaching or intervention planning. This would involve additional handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that will be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers will also demonstrate to left-handed children correct formation.

6) Handwriting Awards

Effort certificates are given to children when they are trying hard with their handwriting at all times NOT just during handwriting sessions. Once the children have gained 3 certificates they are eligible for a pen licence. A pen licence allows a child to write using a blue handwriting pen. This can be revoked at any time if presentation becomes poor. After a consistent period of three months the child will receive a Handwriting Certificate of recognition and a fountain pen.

7) The learning environment

In all EYFS and KS1 classes upper and lower case letters should be displayed clearly for all children to see – on the carpet and sitting at tables. Pencil sharpeners will be accessible for children to use to ensure they can write with a sharp pencil. Display writing throughout the school includes block letters, pre-cursive, joined and computer generated writing. When marking or writing comments, members of staff use pre-cursive or joined handwriting as appropriate. Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools. Pens (handwriting and fountain pens) are used once the children have earned the pen licence and handwriting certificates. Red biro's are used by the children for self and peer marking.

8) The role of parents and carers

Parents and carers will be introduced to the school's handwriting style through guidance given out during introductory welcome meetings. The Foundation Stage staff will play an important role in communicating this at an early stage, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names.

9) Activities and exercises to develop Gross Motor Control:

Gross Motor Control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance

in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Cycling
- Gripping climbing frames
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as, going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music

10) Activities and exercises to develop Gross Motor Control:

Fine Motor Control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes). Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
- Drawing in sand and sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving
- Chopping and peeling when cooking
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on small, large boards and easels and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of line