

Ashbury Meadow Primary School Handwriting Policy 2.12.2014

Our aim is for children to develop legible, fluent, efficient handwriting.

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates; for that reason, it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. It is not sufficient to exhort children to improve their handwriting; the different elements need to be taught and practised. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are difficult to correct.

The school handwriting style is based on “Developing skills by Nelson Handwriting”, which is available for reference in each class. A reference sheet showing an alphabet of capital, lower case and joined letters is included in the Appendix and should be available to children in every classroom, and to parents. Where Nelson offers a choice of letter shapes (for example, for the letter **f**, or for a joined **s**), the school style is shown in the reference sheet. Children who join the school with established fluent joined handwriting will be allowed to continue with their current style of handwriting.

The following is a brief outline of our agreed policy:

Gross and fine motor skills: activities to develop gross and fine motor skills are essential to the development of good handwriting. Pattern sheets are included in the Appendix; many other materials and suggestions for activities are available in school.

Posture: children should be taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.

Pencil grip: children should use a tripod grip, and be given constant reminders until this is established. Triangular section pencils and shaped pencil holders are available in school for children who find them helpful.

Position of paper: left handed children should be encouraged to tilt their paper slightly to the right to improve their view of what they are writing, and to reduce smudging later on when they write in ink. Right handed children may find it helpful to tilt paper slightly to the left. Paper should be steadied with the free hand.

Paper: early writers will write on unlined paper so that they are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as children are beginning to control the size of their writing, they will be given lined paper and exercise books, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line. Lines at an interval of 15mm will be standard in KS1 (purple A5 landscape books located in stock room), 15mm in Years 3,4 and 5 (red A5 portrait books located in the Long room) and 8mm (red A4 portrait books located in the Long room) in Year 6, although some children may have different needs. Where work is redrafted and presented for display, children may use plain paper and guidelines, with

the same line spacing. A photocopiable master is included in the Appendix. For the teaching and practice of handwriting, it may sometimes be helpful to use handwriting exercise books or “handwriting paper” to give further support for the relative heights of parts of the letters; photocopiable masters are included in the Appendix.

Correct letter formation: children are taught to form letters correctly, paying attention to the starting point for each letter, the direction of pencil movement, the shape and orientation of the letter, and the relative heights of the body of each letter, and any ascender and descender. Teaching will be multi-sensory and appropriate to the needs of the child. Our policy is to teach a letter shape which closely resembles print for early readers, and which will not need to be changed as handwriting becomes joined. The “patter” used in Reception to accompany correct letter formation is included in the Appendix.

Joining letters: children should be introduced to joined handwriting as soon as they have mastered the shape of individual letters. They will begin by joining vowel and consonant digraphs, to facilitate the recall of spelling patterns. Later, the four basic handwriting joins will be taught systematically (see the outline in the Appendix) and then practised in daily short handwriting sessions, linked to spelling patterns.

Correcting mistakes: use of rubbers is to be discouraged except in the case of work in pencil for display. Otherwise, mistakes in pencil or ink should be crossed out using a single horizontal line, and the whole word rewritten. Using double line spacing for work in draft allows the children space to improve their own work.

Writing implements, linked to assessment: when children have achieved legible joined handwriting in pencil, they will progress to a “school handwriting pen”, which will then be used for all written work in school. Children will use the checklist developed (copy in the appendix) to assess and improve their own work and achievement of this milestone will be celebrated. Handwriting pens will be provided by the school. Children will not be allowed to provide their own writing implements from home unless they are able to make a convincing case of special need; for example parents of some left handed children may prefer to provide a more expensive specialist left handed pen if their child finds that helpful.

Ink: blue ink will be used throughout the school.

Further help and guidance can be sought from the English Subject Leader or from the SenCo.

Appendix

- 1 Alphabet of capital, lower case and joined letters
- 2 Pattern sheets for letter families
- 3 Guidelines

KS1 and Years 3,4 and 5	15mm
Year 6	8mm
- 4 Handwriting paper

KS1
KS2
- 5 YR “patter” for correct letter formation
- 6 Outline of the four basic joins
- 7 Checklist: “What makes handwriting good”

Handwriting

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

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The family of letters which is formed from the first pattern. For the best results practise the letters the same size and shape as the line of pattern.



r n m h b p

r n m h b p

r n m h b p

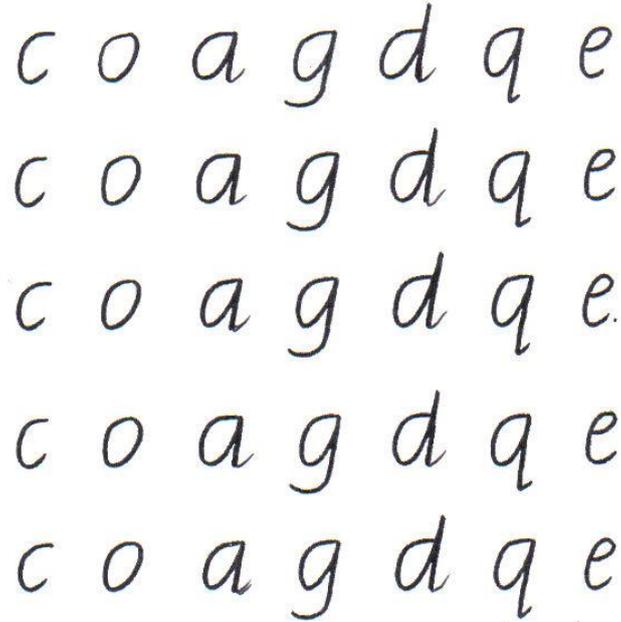
r n m h b p

r n m h b p

r n m h b p

r n m h b p

The family of letters which is formed from the second pattern. The basic 'c' shape, shown large on this page, should be traced several times and its particular oval form memorised. Before copying this page, pupils should have had several lessons on it from the blackboard or overhead projector.



The family of letters which is formed from the third pattern. Remember that the descender of the y is only half the length of the body of the letter. Letter t is not as tall as the letter l, and the crosspiece of t is at the height of the small letters.



i u y l t u

i u y l t u

i u y l t u

i u y l t u

i u y l t u

i u y l t u

i u y l t u

Copy page 8

Stage 1

The family of letters which is formed from the fourth pattern. Note that the centre point of w is of equal height to the arms. Letter x may be formed with either stroke first, whichever is preferred.



YR “patter” to accompany correct letter formation

Curly “c” letters:

- c over the top and round
 - o curly “c” all the way round
 - a curly “c” up, down, flick
 - d curly “c” all the way up, down, flick
 - g curly “c” up, down, give it a tail
 - q curly “c” up, down, kick
 - s curly “c” and round the other way
-
- b straight down, up to the middle, round to the bottom
 - h straight down, up to the middle, over and flick
 - l straight down, flick
 - k straight down, up to the middle, loop and a kick
 - p straight down, up to the top, round to the middle
 - t down and round, take your pencil off, and across
-
- f over the top, straight down, round the other way and across
 - j straight down, round, give it a dot
 - i short down, round, give it a dot
-
- m down, up, over, up, over and flick
 - n down over and flick
 - r down, up and over
-
- u down, up, down, flick
 - y down, up, down, give it a tail
-
- v down, up
 - w down, up, down, up
 - x across and across
 - z straight, across, straight

Basic handwriting joins

There is no join after capital letters, or the following lower case letters: b, g, j, p, q, s, z

Horizontal join (from a letter which finishes at the top to a letter which starts at the top)

on on on on on

Diagonal join from a letter which finishes at the line to a letter which starts at the top

in in in in in

Diagonal join from a letter which finishes at the line to a letter with an ascender

it it it it it it

Diagonal join from a letter which finishes at the top to a letter with an ascender

ot ot ot ot ot ot

It also helps to teach separately horizontal and diagonal joins to "c" family letters, which require a reversal in the direction of movement:

og og og og og

ad ad ad ad ad

We are looking at what makes handwriting 'good'.

We made this checklist to help us

Good Handwriting...

...is readable!

...has careful clear letters.

...sits on the line.

...starts at the margin.

...goes to the end of the line.

...has a finger space between each word.

...has the same letters the same height.

...is not too **big**, and not too small.

...is joined up!

When your handwriting is good in pencil, you will be allowed to use a school handwriting pen.

