

# Burston Primary School- Handwriting Policy and Guidance

The ability to write fluently and legibly gives children the means to communicate their thoughts and ideas efficiently. Handwriting is a skill that must be learnt in order to provide a style which becomes simple to produce and easy to read.

## **Handwriting in the Foundation Stage**

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters and numbers as the ultimate aim.

Children will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters and numbers
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters and numbers, most of which are correctly formed Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:
  - Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
  - Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.

- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment. The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through largescale movements, from the shoulder. In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms.

Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils. Teachers should model letter and number formation using the correct letter formation.

**Reception children should be taught to:**

- Pre-writing stage- patterning
- Individual letter and number formation
- Word formation based on letter groups – linked to letter and sounds, beginning to show joins in diagraphs The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching handwriting:

**Year 1 children 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
- Make links with phonics and spelling

**Year 2 children 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 not joined
- 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.

**Year 3-4 children 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 not joined
- 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.

**Year 5-6 children 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)

Burston Primary School uses the Letter-join programme to support the teaching of handwriting.

**The four joins**

1. letters without ascenders
2. letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders



The break letters (letters that aren't joined from) are:

b g j p q x y z s

### **Resources**

Teachers can use the Letter-join teacher resources and the Interactive Whiteboard Resources

### **Pencils and Pens**

Children will use HB pencils initially and move onto pens. Children at Key Stage 1 use sharp pencils with grips if they require them. At Year three children are able to progress to a pen if their writing is neat and consistent. They are able to write in pen in all their books with the exception of maths. Pens must be introduced in hand-writing lessons in Year four at the latest.

### **Getting ready to write seating and posture**

Chair and table should 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 chair 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 children should sit on the left of their partners



## Pencil grip

A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

### Tripod Grip



## Assessment

Children are assessed on entry into Year three to ascertain if they are using the correct letter formation for individual letters. If they are not starting in the correct place, they will not be able to join letters accurately. Children who need to learn correct letter formation for some letters will be taught this before they begin to join. Some children will have begun to learn and use

joined handwriting in Year two and will need to start from that position in the Progression Ladder.

Teachers assess children at the start of the year and decide where teaching should begin in the Progression Ladder. The year group starting points are a guide and teachers will use their professional judgement. However, they should be aware of the expectations at the end of the relevant year. When assessing the following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of children in line with the National Curriculum?

### **Individual assessment**

Children will be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher will circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers will also monitor and mark whole pieces of writing.

The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
  - Are any letters reversed or inverted?
  - Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the National Curriculum?

### **Teacher modelling**

It is essential that teachers model neat and cursive writing in shared writing on the whiteboard, interactive whiteboard and in children' books. Teachers' writing must be consistent with the Letter-join model.

### **Application**

Children will always be encouraged to apply the hand-writing they are taught in all independent writing. Teachers have high expectations of all children and expect to see examples of what they have been taught in all books. If children are learning joined hand-writing they should be expected to use this in their written work. Children should only attempt joins if they have been taught them. Teachers will monitor this and use praise and next steps marking to bring this to children' attention where appropriate.

### **Progression ladder**

Order of teaching Single letters (R and Y1)

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

### **Joins Y2 (going into Y3)**

Introduction of the four hand-writing joins:

- First join; un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung
- Second join; ch sh th tl ll sli slu ckackststi ink unk



- Third join; odpg re veoonoom
- Fourth join; wlvl of ffflflo
- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters

### **Joins Y3 (going into Y4)**

#### Revision

- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters Further practise of the four hand-writing joins
- inine
- utute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s)
- rirury (practising joining from the letter r)
- oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)
- eeeeaed (practising joining from the letter e)
- owov ox (practising joining from the letter o)
- kyhyly (practising joining to the letter y)
- ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)
- ooooog (practising joining from the letter o)
- erirur (practising joining to the letter r)
- ai al ay
- you oi



- reoefe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)
- fuwu vu (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)
- otol ok (practising joining to ascenders)
- ai al owol (practising all the joins)

#### **Year 4**

- ning ping ting
- oc od oo
- akeome are
- flaflofle
- whowhawhe
- ie in il
- inlykyny
- apar an
- ickuckack
- practise writing with a slope
- he
- we
- re
- fte fir fin
- wrawrikni (silent letters)
- iillttrrnn mm cc ooddssffee
- ewev ex (spacing)
- thhtfl (proportions)



- acagaf
- Capital letters
- Decorated capital letters
- Practising with punctuation ! ? “ ” , ‘ ’

### **Years 5 and 6**

- Practise and ensure consistency and size of letters
- Practising using a diagonal joining line
- Practising leaving an equal space between letters
- Practising joining to the letter y
- Practising using a horizontal joining line
- Practising the size and height of letters
- Practising joining from the letter i
- Practising joining to and from the letter v
- Practising consistency in forming and joining letters
- Practise speedwriting
- Practising crossing double tt on completing the work
- Practising joining to and from the letter e
- Practising joining to and from the letter w
- Practising printing
- Practising drafting and editing
- Practising joining to the letter t
- Practising with punctuation
- Practising break letters



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- Practising joining from the letter m
- Ensuring the ascender on the letter t is the correct height
- Practising spacing within words
- Developing fluency
- Practising printing
- Practising forming and joining the letter f
- Practising speed writing
- Revision
- Looking at different handwriting styles