



Introduction

This programme is to outline how we do 'Hand writing' at Biggleswade Academy.

As a school we recognise that handwriting is an important skill and children's ability to write fluently for the rest of their lives depends on a good foundation of taught handwriting in the early years of their education.



We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practicing speed and fluency and higher presentation skills. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. This is an entitlement that needs skilful teaching if each individual is to reach their full potential at Biggleswade Academy.

Aims

Our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- For all children to develop a well-formed, legible style of handwriting in both joined and printed styles, with increasing fluency, confidence and speed.
- To raise attainment for all pupils in handwriting through a consistent approach, guided by: The Penpals (Cambridge University Press) Handwriting scheme.
- That all teachers and support staff must use and model the agreed cursive style of handwriting when writing on the board or marking work.
- That teachers, support staff and pupils use all opportunities for writing as handwriting practice in all writing across the curriculum.
- To make provision for left handed children to develop free flowing writing.
- For all children's skills in handwriting to be reflected in the presentation of their work and their joy of writing.

In order to achieve this, children will be taught:

- To develop fine motor control,
- The importance of correct posture and paper position whether right or left handed,
- To use a pen/pencil and to hold it effectively,
- To write from left to right and top to bottom on a page,
- To start and finish letters correctly,
- To form letters of consistent size and shape,
- The language of writing and how to use the correct terminology, (e.g. ascenders)
- To put regular spaces between words,
- How to form upper and lower case letters,
- How to join letters correctly,
- How to write legibly in both joined and printed style,

- To use different styles of writing for different purposes,
- The importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

At Biggleswade Academy handwriting is developed through systematic and regular practice in the teaching of handwriting using the Penpals Handwriting scheme. Penpals provides clear progression for children aged 3 to 11 - starting in pre-school where children practise their gross and fine motor skills in readiness for handwriting and finishing in Years 7 and 8 -where basic handwriting issues are revised and speed and fluency improved. This whole academy approach ensures a consistency of style which leads to an effective progression of experience and teaching. Some children who may need extra support with handwriting, may receive extra interventions to support them with their writing development.

PENPALS *for Handwriting*



Penpals: Example Letter formation with joins

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Recommended Timings:

Penpals lessons consist of a 15 minute whole class session followed by a 15–20 minute independent activity session. Children will then apply their handwriting skills within all lessons and other writing opportunities.

Reception - The development of gross and fine motor writing skills are continuous and ongoing every day.

Letter formation will be taught using the Penpals for Handwriting materials:

Year 1 – 3 x 15 minute sessions per week

Year 2 – 3 x 15 minute sessions per week

Year 3 – 1 x 30 minute session per week

Year 4 - 1 x 30 minute session per week

Year 5 - 1 x 30 minute session per week

Year 6 - 1 x 30 minute session per week

Common Approaches:

- To be consistent in the way in which we form individual letters by following the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance
- To follow the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance for 'Joining letter sets, which builds on letter formation in Foundation stage with no joining letter sets to the teaching of joins throughout each year group.
- Handwriting patterns should be taught in a handwriting lesson and are a pleasurable and creative way of practising handwriting movements. They can also be used as decorative borders round pictures or written work.
- Teaching the correct formation of the letters should be given highest priority and that this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining. We aim for all children to be using a pen by the end of Year 3. Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We will never simply ask children to copy models from a sheet or practice book.
- When required, advice will be requested from Occupational Therapists or other relevant agencies to help with specific individual problems.
- Intervention measures are to be included in SEND plans where relevant.

Pencil/Pen Grip

The pen or pencil should be gripped comfortably between forefinger and thumb with the second finger below to steady it. If you pick up a pen which is lying on the table in front of you with its nib towards you in line with your forearm, you instinctively pick it up in the correct grip.

Posture

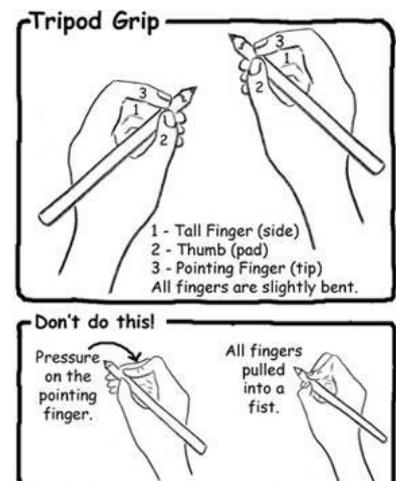
Children should be encouraged to sit up straight with their feet on the floor. The non-writing hand must be used to steady the book or paper.

Pencil Grip

- Children should write with a pencil with a rounded nib.
- Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- Pens can be introduced as pupils develop a clear and legible cursive style. All pupils will be given the opportunity to gain their 'Pen Licence' during years 2-4. All pupils **MUST** be writing in pen by Year 5.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.

For right handed children:

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper could be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left.
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.



For left handed children:

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger.
- Hold about 3cm from the tip.
- The hand should be kept below the writing line.
- The paper could be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°.
- Use the right hand to steady the paper.

Monitoring and Assessment

- The monitoring of the teaching of handwriting is carried out by class teachers, progress leaders and the Leader of English in line with the school development plan.
- Assessment of handwriting is an on-going process and will take place formally and informally, during the regular, focused handwriting sessions and across other curricular areas. This will provide evidence of children's progress and attainment, will serve to inform the children's future learning targets and provide information when reporting to parents.
- Handwriting is assessed as part of the writing SATs at the end of KS1 and 2.
- Handwriting is now a large section of the age – related expectations for each year group too and is part of the writing 'I Can' targets in years 1-8.

Checklist for Teachers

If a child's handwriting is to develop into a pleasing and consistent style, it is helpful to examine each piece of writing in the light of the following criteria:

- Shape- Are all letters properly formed and clear?
- Joining- Are as many letters as possible joined consistently?
- Slope- Is the slope of letters consistent? Letters should either be all perpendicular or all sloping (predominantly a forwards slope will be used, however backwards slopes can be developed).
- Evenness- Are letters of a consistent and reasonable size? Capitals can be too big; tall letters too tall, small letters too small.
- Floating and Sinking- Do letters sit on the line? Words sometimes float above or sink below the writing line. This happens because the writing hand is not moving steadily across the page.
- Particular Letters- Which letters are really well formed? Which ones need careful practise?

Handwriting Skills and Development

To achieve our aims we will give our children opportunities to develop their handwriting through the following: - by using Penpals for Handwriting (Cambridge University Press) as a handwriting scheme, by using the Interim Assessment Frameworks for years 2 and 6, writing 'I Cans' and by monitoring and assessing handwriting as part of the marking process.

Foundation Stage

Children begin the Foundation Stage with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to finer motor skills using a variety of tactile methods. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and to gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters. In Reception pupils will be prepared for handwriting by consolidating their motor control and introduced letter shapes. It is expected that all children will be correctly forming each letter by the end of Reception. Handwriting

should be taught alongside phonics; making use of the kinaesthetic learning to help children to internalise the letter shapes that go with the sounds. Children should write on wide-lined paper when they have the hand control to do it confidently. Lined paper is important because so much about handwriting is to do with the letters' orientation to the line. Letters and Sounds suggests a sequence for teaching the letters sounds, handwriting can thus be coordinated with phonic teaching where two letters stand for one sound.

A range of pre-writing activities opportunities must be provided in the learning environment to encourage and support children develop gross and fine motor skills, develop co-ordination and to promote pencil control and awareness of letter shapes and orientation.

Possible activities:

- large-scale motor movements
- Sky-writing.
- Writing with a stick or finger in sand.
- seeds and other tactile materials
- Letter shapes/feely letter shapes
- Tactile letter tracing using textured shapes
- Large paper and brushes to make writing patterns
- Whiteboards and pens
- Making letters with malleable materials e.g. Plasticine, play dough, clay.
- Roller ball
- Using paints, chalks or large felt tips.
- Use sky-writing and large-scale practise
- Ensure correct posture
- Practise tracing over lines and shapes
- Trace over letters and simple words
- Practise copy writing own name
- Use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- To produce a controlled line which supports letter formation
- To write letters using the correct sequence of movements.
- Introduced joined script for writing child's name – practise writing name in
- Joined script using laminated name cards.

Key Stage 1

Year 1

In Year 1, children practise forming letters and are introduced to diagonal joins, horizontal joins both to letters with and without ascenders. An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed. To form lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join. To practise handwriting in conjunction with phonics, spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion, in a style that makes letters easy to join.

Year 2

By Year 2 children should be moving towards a joined handwriting style and be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They practise and build on Year 1 joins and are introduced to break letters.

Children need to be made aware of:

- (a) Where the letter starts;
- (b) Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline;
- (c) Ascenders and descenders - lined paper will assist;
- (d) Spacing and finger space between words;
- (e) Consistent writing size;
- (f) Capital letters and their appropriate use

To practise handwriting patterns from Yr 1.

To practise the four basic handwriting joins

1. diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ai, ar, un,
2. horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi
3. diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. - ab, ul, it.
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. - ol, wh, ot.

To practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and phonic patterns and to use joined script consistently in their writing

Key Stage 2

In KS2 the children undertake formal handwriting practice 2 times weekly. The children practise their handwriting using a blue or black ink pen (year 5 and 6) if the class teacher feels that they are ready, otherwise they will continue to use a pencil (years 3 and 4).

In year 3 the emphasis is on building upon the joins established in Year 2 and using spellings as a basis for handwriting practise.

In year 4 the emphasis is on ensuring consistency in size and proportion and using joined writing for all writing except where other special forms are required.

In Years 5 and 6 NC guidelines assume handwriting skills should be established and that children should have their own developed cursive style. However, in reality this is not always the case. Children in Years 5 and 6 then will have opportunities to revisit the basics and work on the presentation side of their handwriting as outlined in 'Penpals for Handwriting Years 5/6'. Children should also be given opportunities to practise handwriting in conjunction with spellings.

Year 3

It is our aim that the majority of Year 3 have been taught the whole range of joins and will be developing a degree of accuracy and fluency by the end of the year. In the first 2 terms, children will consolidate joins from Years 1 and 2 and will be taught to join parallel descenders and ascenders. The third term will focus on consistency of spacing, layout, speed and fluency practice.

- To use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.
- To practise correct formation of basic joins from Yr 2.
- To ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practise.

Year 4

Formation of capitals, lower case letters and the two basic join types (horizontal and vertical) should now be familiar and secure. The majority of children should be able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Whilst there is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support

spelling through the revision of common letter patterns, they will also be given opportunities to develop speed and accuracy.

To know when to use;

- A clear neat hand for finished, presented work.
- Informal writing for everyday informal work, rough drafting etc.
- To ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.
- To use a range of presentation skills e.g. print script for captions, sub-headings and labels and capital letters for posters, title pages, headings.

Years 5 and 6

By Years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be writing fluently and are joining their writing across the curriculum. In these year groups the emphasis is on increasing speed, developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes.