

Handwriting Policy

Burnside Primary School

Be Safe Be Smart Be Kind

Intent

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children 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 children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves. Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically throughout the school.

At Burnside Primary School our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- To enable children to write in a consistent, well presented and legible format.
- To have a consistent approach across Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2 when teaching handwriting.
- To ensure that by Year 2 children are introduced to cursive writing and this continues to the end of Year 6, where children are using a cursive writing style with ease.
- To make sure all children know the difference between lower and upper case letters.
- To ensure the skills taught at Key Stage 1 continue to develop throughout Key Stage 2.
- To adopt a consistent approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.

Implementation

Children will be taught to:

- hold a pencil correctly

Children should be encouraged to use a tripod pencil grip, where the pencil is gripped between the index finger and the thumb. The middle finger is then used to support the underside of the pencil as shown below.



- adopt the correct posture when writing

Children should be encouraged to adopt the correct writing position as shown below.

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children

(children who are left handed should reposition the paper the other way and sit to the left hand side if seated next to a right handed child)

- write from left to right and from top to bottom of the page
- join letters correctly in a cursive style (once all letter shapes have initially been taught through the use of Read Write Inc. mnemonics)
- form regularly sized and shaped letters
- use regular spacing between letters and words
- take pride in their written work and the overall presentation.

At Burnside we teach handwriting using RWI mnemonics initially in EYFS. We then continue to use RWI handwriting letter village videos to teach the correct positioning of letters on a line with ascenders and descenders. Children then progress onto forming the correct joins in handwriting starting with RWI handwriting lessons followed by the Penpals Handwriting Scheme (Cambridge University Press) throughout Key Stage 2

The Sassoon Font

Penpals uses the Sassoon font. It is cursive, but not fully cursive. This means it does not start on the line with the lead in but the letters do have the exit flicks.

Aims of the Penpals Handwriting Scheme

Formal handwriting skills will be taught regularly and systematically through the use of the Penpals Handwriting scheme (Cambridge University Press). Five stages are identified and these form the basic organisation of the scheme:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (EYFS)
2. Beginning to join (KS1)
3. Securing joins (Upper KS1- Lower KS2)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Upper KS2)
5. Presentation skills (Upper KS2)

EYES

In Nursery children will be encouraged to develop gross motor control through the use of large equipment for mark making such as big chalks, paint brushes, finger paints, shaving foam etc. They will develop their fine motor skills through the use of a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons and engage in fine motor activities such as threading and manipulating play dough. They will be encouraged to talk about shapes and movement. They will practise the main handwriting movements for the three basic letter shapes c, l and r. As the children progress they will be taught to form letters correctly using Read Write Inc. guidance on letter formation, using the RWI mnemonics to aid the correct letter formation.

In Reception children will continue to develop their fine motor skills using the Theodorescu and Penpals readiness for writing programmes. Children will be taught to form letters correctly using Read Write Inc. guidance on letter formation, using the RWI mnemonics. Letter formation is taught alongside phonic development but additional handwriting lessons also take place outside of the phonics lessons.

Our aim is that by the end of foundation stage all children will hold a pencil correctly and form all letters and numbers correctly. Incorrect pencil grip and letter formation will be immediately addressed, modelled and corrected.

Initially foundation children will use unlined paper as the focus is correct formation rather than size or positioning.

Key Stage 1

All children should receive a daily handwriting session.

RWI handwriting letter village videos are used to teach discrete handwriting lessons. Once children are secure with forming letters of relative size with correct ascenders and descenders, they progress onto learning the basic diagonal and horizontal joins. Our aim is that by the end of KS1 children will be forming all letters correctly and beginning to join some letters. In Year 2 adults will model cursive writing from the beginning of the year. The children will be encouraged to continue the development of basic joins, which they should begin to transfer into their independent writing.

Key Stage 2

All children should receive a minimum of three 15 minute handwriting sessions per week.

In Year 3 children will continue to develop their use of cursive handwriting building upon the skills they have developed in Key stage 1. In Years 4, 5 and 6 children will be expected to use cursive handwriting in all areas of the curriculum. Children in Year 4 are awarded their pen licence when they can join correctly and consistently. Our aim is for all children to achieve their pen licence by the summer term of Year 4.

If any child is not on track to reach these expectations, they will receive additional support through small group booster groups. RWI handwriting is used as extra support for those children who need further support with handwriting.

Handwriting Equipment

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

Children should use a sharp HB pencil for all handwriting initially. When, in KS2, teachers assess that children are competent at joined handwriting, they should be allowed to use a handwriting pen. (No biro type pens will be used.)

In some cases, depending on the specific needs of an individual, children may use pencil grips or pens with a specific grip.

Left-handed writers

Left handed pupils need specific demonstration and adjustments, including by making sure they:

- have space to write
- sit to the left of any right-handed pupil to prevent their arms colliding
- slant their paper to the right
- use softer pencils that require less pressure
- grip the pencil at a slightly higher point so they can see around their fingers
- do not hold the pencil too tightly or press down too hard

Assessment

A uniformed handwriting style should be consistent throughout the school; this will be evident on display boards and monitored through lesson observations and book scrutiny.

On-going assessment in handwriting gives you the chance to spot errors or inconsistencies that are likely to impede a fast, fluent handwriting style.

Teachers will make a summative assessment of pupils by answering these questions in relation to the end of year expectations for their year group:

- Are all letters formed correctly?
- Are letters consistently sized?
- Are the known joins used correctly?
- Are ascenders and descenders parallel?
- Are the spaces within and between words regular?
- Is good handwriting carried over into other areas of the curriculum?

Marking and Feedback

We emphasise constructive feedback in our marking and feedback policy. In handwriting sessions and during independent work it is important that incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation are identified and corrected at the point it occurs (in line with child's handwriting development).

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Read Write Inc (RWI) and Penpals provide information sheets for parents/carers so that they can support at home. Letter formation sheets are given out to children for home practise in Reception, as they are beginning to learn letter formation through the use of RWI mnemonics.

Impact

By year 6 children will use cursive handwriting using flowing movements and patterns. This handwriting style should be demonstrated in all writing across the curriculum. Writing should be fluid in style to allow children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves.

Policy Written by: R. Turnbull

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