

Burnside Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Be Safe • Be Smart • Be Kind



Achieve

High expectations, progression and strong outcomes in handwriting

Intent

Handwriting is a fundamental skill that supports pupils' ability to communicate effectively across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words through flowing movements and patterns; once mastered, this allows children to focus their energy on the content of their writing rather than letter formation.

At Burnside Primary School, our aims in teaching handwriting are to:

- Enable children to write in a consistent, well-presented and legible format.
- Ensure a consistent approach across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Introduce cursive writing in Year 2 and develop this to Year 6, where pupils write fluently and with ease.
- Ensure all children know the difference between upper- and lower-case letters.
- Build upon Key Stage 1 handwriting skills throughout Key Stage 2.
- Maintain consistency in adult modelling across books, displays, whiteboards and resources.

Implementation: Teaching and Progression

Children are taught to:

- Hold a pencil correctly using a tripod grip.
- Adopt correct posture when writing, including appropriate paper positioning for left-handed pupils.
- Write from left to right and top to bottom of the page.
- Join letters correctly in a cursive style once all letter shapes have been taught through RWI mnemonics.
- Form regularly sized and shaped letters with accurate ascenders and descenders.
- Use consistent spacing between words.
- Take pride in presentation across all subjects.

Teaching Approach by Phase

EYFS

Children develop gross and fine motor control through mark-making, sensory exploration and fine-motor activities such as threading and dough work. They learn correct letter formation using Read Write Inc (RWI) mnemonics. Daily handwriting sessions consolidate correct letter formation. By the end of EYFS, children are expected to hold a pencil correctly and form all letters and numbers accurately. Children begin on unlined paper before progressing to lined paper.

Key Stage 1

Daily handwriting sessions continue. RWI Letter Village videos teach correct sizing, ascenders, descenders and early joins ('hill' and 'bridge'). By the end of KS1, children form all letters correctly and begin to join in independent writing. Adults model cursive writing from the start of Year 2.

Key Stage 2

Daily handwriting sessions continue. Year 3 consolidates cursive fluency using RWI Letter Village videos. Years 4–6 follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to develop speed, presentation, individual style, difficult joins and handwriting for different purposes. Children are expected to use cursive handwriting across all curriculum areas.

Additional Support

Children not on track receive targeted small-group intervention using RWI handwriting and Nelson handwriting resources.

Handwriting Equipment

- EYFS: plain paper → wide lines
- Years 1–4: tramline handwriting books
- Upper KS2: standard lined exercise books (develop transferable skills)
- HB pencils used initially; handwriting pens introduced at the end of Year 3
- Pencil grips or adapted pens used where needed

Left-Handed Writers

Left-handed pupils receive specific guidance to ensure comfort and success:

- Adequate space to write
- Seated to the left of right-handed peers
- Paper slanted to the right
- Softer pencils if required
- Pencil gripped slightly higher for visibility

Belong

Consistency, inclusion and pride in presentation

A consistent handwriting style across the school helps pupils feel part of a community with shared expectations. Adults model the agreed handwriting style in all written communication, ensuring clarity and consistency.

Classrooms promote belonging through:

- Clear routines for posture, grip and presentation
- Inclusive support for left-handed pupils and those with additional needs
- Shared language and mnemonics from RWI
- Opportunities to celebrate neat, well-presented work

- Strong partnerships with parents and carers

Partnership with Parents and Carers

RWI provides formation sheets and guidance for families. Reception children receive letter formation sheets for home practice. Parents are encouraged to reinforce correct pencil grip and formation.

Thrive

Confidence, fluency and readiness for lifelong learning

Handwriting supports pupils' wider development by strengthening fine-motor skills, focus, perseverance and self-regulation. As pupils progress, handwriting becomes an efficient tool that enables them to express ideas clearly and confidently.

Impact

By Year 6, children:

- Use fluent, joined handwriting with flowing movements and patterns
- Demonstrate consistent handwriting across all subjects
- Write with speed and automaticity
- Apply cognitive energy to composition rather than formation
- Show pride in presentation and independence in written communication

Assessment, Marking and Feedback

Assessment

Handwriting is monitored through lesson observations, book scrutiny and display checks. Teachers assess pupils against end-of-year expectations:

- Are letters formed correctly?
- Are letters consistently sized?
- Are joins used accurately?
- Are ascenders and descenders parallel?
- Is spacing regular?
- Is handwriting consistent across the curriculum?

Marking and Feedback

In line with the school's feedback policy, verbal feedback is prioritised. Incorrect pencil grip and letter formation are corrected immediately. Teachers model correct formation directly in pupils' books, providing opportunities to practise.

Policy Written by: R. Turnbull

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