

Castledyke Primary School

Handwriting Policy 2025-2028

Rationale

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. The EEF says: 'If children have to concentrate to ensure their handwriting and spelling is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing...'

At Castledyke we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our cursive handwriting style. We use Little Wandle letter formation as the basis of our handwriting policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words together as a series of flowing movements and patterns. We believe that handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically.

Aims:

At Castledyke Primary School our aims in teaching handwriting are that pupils will:

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, leading to forming letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Teaching and Learning

All children:

- Experience continuity in learning and teaching across the school
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- Are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- Are encouraged to use their skills with confidence and pride in real life situations
- Will take part in handwriting daily to begin each writing session and set the expectation for their work
- Take part in warm up sessions before handwriting

While teaching handwriting, teachers should encourage pupils to sit comfortably by:

- explaining why sitting comfortably helps them to write easily
- reminding pupils with pupil-friendly prompts: feet on the floor; bottom to the back of the chair; pencil in one hand and the other hand on the paper
- showing pupils what 'poor' sitting looks like: leaning forward, close to the paper; resting

their head in their hand or on the table; dangling their non-writing arm or hand instead of using it to steady the paper

- checking whether a pupil might have a condition that might mediate against their sitting comfortably, for example, if poor eyesight is causing them to peer closely at their writing

Progression of Skills

EYFS:

For our youngest pupils, we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, threading etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

By the end of EYFS children should:

- Learn how to hold a pencil effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Be given the opportunities to develop their handwriting, using The Little Wandle handwriting style, daily, until pupils can write legibly and easily
- Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.
- Be taught in small steps, with lots of opportunity for practice
- Have skills consolidated before teaching moves on so that pupils do not practise letters incorrectly
- Revisit letters when further practice is needed
- Be exposed to additional sessions of handwriting outside of that which forms part of teaching phonics

Key Stage 1

Children continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multisensory activities. Handwriting should be discussed and linked to phonics sessions. Teachers and support staff continue to guide children how to form letters correctly using the Little Wandle letter formations, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Sessions taught discreetly 3 – 5 times weekly through English and Phonics sessions. All teaching staff will model the Little Wandle style in their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Y1

Consolidation of single letter formation. High expectations from all adults who reinforce the correct formation through modelling and explicit teaching. Handwriting will be taught daily through Little Wandle sessions. Wide-lined paper is essential at this stage. Mid-line guides can also help pupils to position letters. Pupils should be introduced to paper with narrower lines once they can write legibly and easily on wide-lined paper.

Children in Y1 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

Y2

In upper Key Stage 1 pupils begin to join their letters to form cursive writing. We continue to develop gross and fine motor skills, strengthening cursive handwriting, learning numerals, capitals and printed letters and when to use them. To join letters easily and legibly, pupils first need to form the shape of each letter correctly, starting and finishing each one at the correct point and ensuring that its size is properly related to other letters in the same family.

Children in Y2 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 unjoined
- 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, so that later joins do not create extra, confusing shapes

Broken into terms:

- **Autumn Term** : Consolidation of single letter formation. High expectations from all adults who reinforce the correct formation through modelling and explicit teaching. Handwriting will be taught daily through Little Wandle sessions.
- **Spring Term** - Following an assessment at the end of Autumn 2, children who are forming all letter correctly will start to be taught initial lead ins and joins. Adults will model joins now both in teaching and in books.
- **Summer Term** - Continue to develop a joined handwriting style. Progression to be shared during transition meetings.

By the end of Key Stage 1 children should:

- Consistently and accurately leave spaces between words
- Be able to sit comfortably in a position for writing - bottom back in chair and table to tummy. Feet flat on the floor
- Be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately using cursive style

Key Stage 2

During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting daily before each writing session.

All teaching staff will model the cursive style in their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils’ books. Pupils will experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pleasure in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

By the end of Key Stage 2 children should:

- Develop a clear, fluent style
- Be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes e.g. a neat, legible hand for finished, presented work, a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams.

Provision for Left-Handed Children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed children and make appropriate provision:

- Children should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side
- Children should be sat to the left of a right-handed child so they are not competing for space
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before children write from left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are aware that it is difficult for left-handed children to follow handwriting movements when modelled by a right-handed teacher. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis. 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

Capital Letters

Capital letters stand-alone and are not joined to the next letter. Children must practice starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter and not joining the subsequent letter. The class teacher should model this during Literacy and Phonics sessions in accordance to the Little Wandle Letter Formations

Children with an established style of handwriting:

If a child has an established style of handwriting learnt elsewhere (e.g. children coming from a different school) that differs slightly from the agreed style used in the school, they should be free to continue to write in this style if it allows them to write clearly and neatly e.g. looping letters.

Suggested use of pens and pencils:

EYFS - Children should be given an opportunity to use a range of writing implements . Children should write in pencil when working in exercise books. Pencil grips should be available to encourage correct grip when required.

KS1 - Pencils should be used for handwriting practice. Pencil grips should be available to encourage correct grip when required.

KS2 - Handwriting pens are used by all children. Children who might be struggling with handwriting should be given an opportunity to use a range of writing implements e.g. pen/pencil grips and writing slopes.

National curriculum requirements

Key stage 1

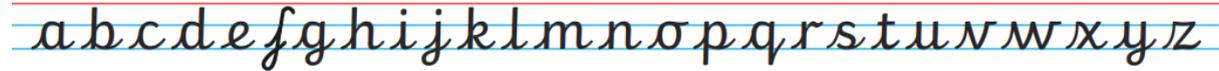
Statutory requirements Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:

Y1

- 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.

Y2

- 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 unjoined
- 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.



Key Stage 2

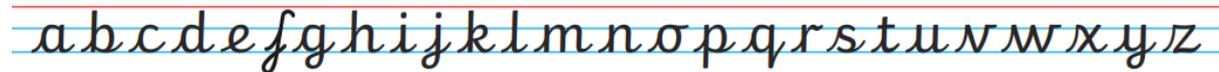
Pupils should be taught to:

Lower Key Stage 2

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Upper Key Stage 2

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.



Roles and responsibilities

- Classroom teacher - models the correct handwriting style to learners.
Ensures children are correctly assessed for handwriting and moved on when ready, supported and given intervention if needed.
Ensures the environment supports the selected handwriting style and displays, books and working walls all support the handwriting style.
- Class teacher models handwriting discreetly during handwriting sessions and sets expectations for all writing across the curriculum.

- Teachers should expect consistently high standards, making sure pupils practise handwriting regularly and consistently throughout primary school to develop and maintain fluency and legibility
- Literacy Subject Leader - monitors application of the handwriting policy.
Quality assures the handwriting sessions and their consistency.
Tracks interventions and their impact.
Supports teachers in the delivery of handwriting and assessment.
- SENCO - tracks children in need of adaptations for fine/gross motor skills, handwriting support, dyslexia adaptations and any SEND needs which may contribute to a delay in handwriting formation and ability.
Ensures seating plans support children who are left handed.
- Parents - attend parents evenings and book looks to discuss progress of children with the classroom teacher
Support their children, where needed or necessary, at home with activities to enable success in handwriting.

Appendix 1

Handwriting Audit

Handwriting routines Current practice	Handwriting routines Current practice
Handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly across the school to all pupils. This begins early in reception and is in addition to writing in phonics lessons.	
Pupils across the school are taught consistent routines for handwriting that support a comfortable writing position and enable them to form letters legibly and to develop fluency. Routines consider	
posture, paper positioning and pencil hold (including for left-handed pupils).	
All adults who work with pupils expect consistently high standards of handwriting and provide good models of handwriting that align with the school's agreed style, across all areas of the curriculum.	
Handwriting instruction focuses on letter formation, size, orientation, spacing and consistency.	
Teachers make sure all pupils in every year group regularly practise handwriting to develop physical skill and control, and maintain fluency and legibility.	

Teachers teach pupils how to hold the pencil using the tripod grip, and support and encourage them to use it when they write.	
Pupils who need support have access to appropriate resources and equipment to enable them to make progress in handwriting in line with their peers.	
Teachers routinely model handwriting in the writing lesson to enable pupils to see how letters are formed.	
Teachers seek advice and work with the SENCO and other adults to support pupils needing adaptations or further support.	
Actions to be taken:	Term actions to be reviewed by:

Handwriting progression	Current practice
A consistent, school-wide approach to handwriting that follows a clearly sequenced progression and supports the gradual acquisition of skills is embedded across every year group. Once print handwriting is mastered, handwriting instruction encourages speed, legibility and consistency	
Teachers begin teaching letter formation at the start of reception for all pupils.	
Joined handwriting is not taught until pupils have mastered print handwriting.	
Teachers monitor pupils' progress in handwriting and take action to support those who are not progressing in line with their peers.	
Pupils who struggle with handwriting and/or are at risk of falling behind are identified early on and are taught and practise the knowledge they are missing. Teachers focus on these pupils during the handwriting lesson and provide individual support.	
Teachers focus on the pupils who need the most support as they practise handwriting during the handwriting lesson. They observe them as they write and provide feedback and	

support, preventing them from practising letter formation incorrectly	
Actions to be taken:	Term actions to be reviewed by: