Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Written by: Kate Slater and Julia Wilcock

Date: May 2020
Review date:

Our church school creates a firm foundation where together, with God's help and with the help of others, we learn for life, achieve our best and grow in faith.

Handwriting Policy

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.

Aims

At Abbots Ripton Primary, our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in accordance with a cursive handwriting script; this teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns.
- Be taught regularly and systematically through the use of cursive script C6 from 'Join-it'. See Appendix 1.
- Develop flow and speed.
- Eventually produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing.

The focus on handwriting in the National Curriculum highlights its importance and makes the connection between a child's handwriting and their composition and spelling ability. An outline of the progress of handwriting skills in the National Curriculum can be found in Appendix 2.

In order to achieve our aims and in order to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, the following principles are followed:

Teaching and Learning

All children should:

- Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the Foundation Stage and the School.
- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line and be given support in finding a comfortable grip.
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- Be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and, therefore, study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Be supported in developing correct spelling through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting.
- Be shown how to be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Be encouraged to use their skills with confidence and pride in real life situations.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

Foundation Stage

Children should be encouraged to:

- Develop gross motor control.
- Develop fine motor control.
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens, chalk and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment.
- Develop a recognition of pattern.
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements.
- Learn letter formation alongside phonics.
- Learn letter formation using 'shape families' in non-cursive formation to support the consolidation of the anti-clockwise circular movement and the vertical movement:
  - **long ladder** letters l,i,t,y,h
  - **one-armed robot** letters r,n,m,k,p
  - **curly caterpillar** letters o,c,a,d,g,q
  - **zigzag** letters v,w
- Write their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation for the remainder.

Joining letters will follow the teaching of phonics, so that when teaching involves digraphs (2 letters which make 1 sound e.g. sh, ch) and trigraphs (3 letters making 1 sound e.g. igh, air), these will be joined when they are presented to the children.

At the end of Foundation Stage or the beginning of Year One, the majority of the children should be using lined paper with lines widely spaced at 15mm or 8mm. It may help children to leave a blank line between each line of writing initially to avoid ascenders and descenders overlapping.

Handwriting books should only be introduced when children have mastered letter formation on a single line.

Handwriting lessons

We teach handwriting as a specific skill rather than as an independent task (which can often reinforce poor formation, having a reverse effect than the intended outcome). All children will receive at least 10 minutes, 3 times a week with additional, independent practise as needed.

The basic structure of a handwriting lesson should be:

- relaxation
- posture check; feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair
- teacher modelling
- children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory

Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory where possible. This could include opportunities to write letters in the air (skywriting), on backs or on hands, or to orally describe letter shapes.

Key Stage 1

Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities.

Handwriting should be discussed within, and linked to phonics sessions; children should have a discreet handwriting lesson for a minimum of three sessions a week. Teachers and support staff should continue to guide children on how to form letters correctly, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.

An introduction to joined writing can begin when a child has developed a consistent, clear non-cursive style, where letters are generally correctly formed. By the end of Key Stage 1, children will be able to join words legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and have correct spacing between words.

Key Stage 2

During this stage, the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practise of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent cursive style and by the end of Year 6, be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes, such as: a neat, legible hand for finished, presented work, a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc.

The use of handwriting pens is introduced once children have a clear, legible script in pencil. We award a 'Pen License' to these children – further details are found in Appendix 3.

Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. It is also worth noting that handedness and language lateralisation are probably linked, although not necessarily for all children. Language is generally located in the left hemisphere of the brain and handedness in the right; for children who have left-handedness, this can mean right brain language function. This can sometimes lead to difficulties, such as dyslexia, stutter, and difficulties with fast language production. During a handwriting session, teachers must be aware of the extra challenges that some of these children may have to face.

All teachers will make the following provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- children should be encouraged to have their hand below the handwriting all the time, not hooked above or dragging the hand over what is written;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;

- extra practise with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are aware of the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat. There are videos on YouTube, which demonstrate how to model left handed handwriting to children. Particularly important, is that children should have their hand below the handwriting all the time, not hooked above or dragging the hand over what is written.

Capital letters

Capital letters stand alone and are not joined to the next letter. Children must practise starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter, which do not have a lead in starting on the line or join the subsequent letter.

There are no capital letters which have any part of them below the line. This can be a particular problem with P and F.

Care should also be given to capital letters which have the same formation as the lower case letter, such as Cc and Oo, to ensure that the capital letters are twice the size of the lower case letter.

This should be made explicit and modelled by the teacher.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support; provision will be made for this. The school will provide additional support using resources such as:

- triangular pencils
- pencil grips
- enlarged handwriting lines
- 'Write from the Start' programme
- 'Speed Up handwriting' programme.

Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENDCo to develop a programme designed for the individual child. Children can become very distressed by their inability (perceived or real) to write neatly, so early input to support can prevent self-esteem issues becoming a problem.

The Learning Environment

In all classes, suitable materials should be available for pupils to utilise at their own tables. All children will have access to sharp pencils of a suitable length as well as a range of other writing implements and line guides.

Our handwriting style should be displayed in every classroom and available on tables for children to refer to.

Children in Upper Key Stage 2 should be given the opportunity to write with a pen and all children by the time they leave our school should be regularly using a pen in preparation for their Secondary Education.

Assessment

A uniform handwriting style should be consistent throughout the school. Handwriting is currently assessed as part of the English Writing assessment framework.

The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style; they are encouraged to practise this with their children at home. This is available on our website and is shared with parents at parents evening.

Ratification of Policy

Handwriting Policy

Presented to: ……committee

Policy ratified on:……..……

Signed by:

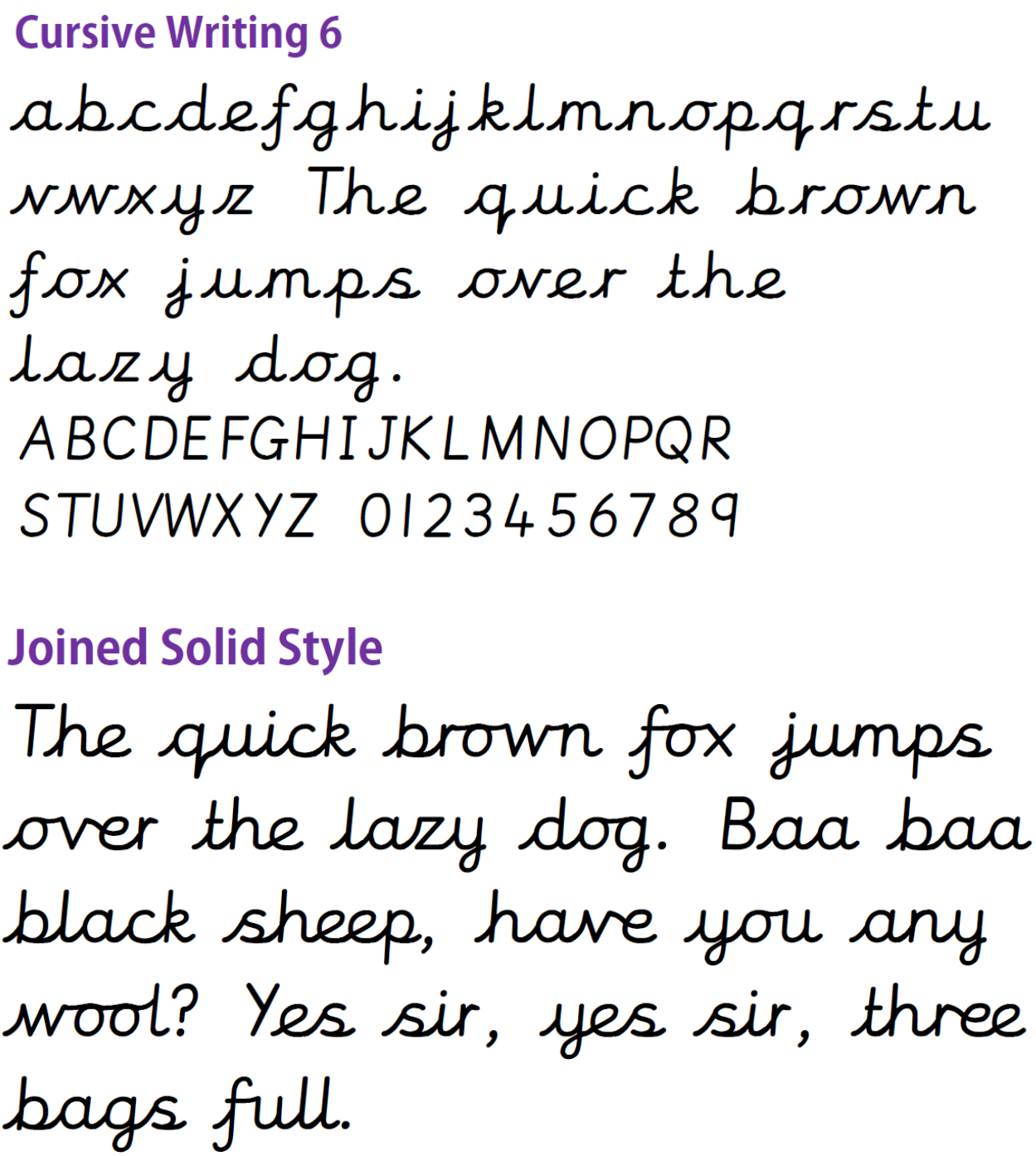
Chair of Committee :……..

Chair of Governors:……..……..

Head teacher:……..……..

Appendix 1

Cursive script C6 from 'Join-it'.



Appendix 2

How Does Handwriting Fit into the National Curriculum?

The focus on handwriting in the new curriculum is much greater, highlighting its importance and making the connection between a child's handwriting and their composition and spelling ability. This we believe is a great step forward!

Foundation Stage (4-5 years old)

Early Learning Goal – Writing

Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. Typical behaviours that relate to handwriting for this learning goal:

- Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence
- Write own name and other things such as labels and captions
- Attempt to write short sentences in meaningful context

Core learning skills for handwriting:

- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are formed correctly.

'*Early years outcomes'*; September 2013; Department of Education.
'*Statutory framework for early years foundation stage*' March 2014, effective September 2014; Department for Education.

Key Stage 1 (5-7 years old)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils 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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.
Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Year 2

Statutory Requirements – Handwriting

Pupils 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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Lower KS2 (Year 3 & 4)

Statutory Requirements – Handwriting

Pupils 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 unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be joining handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Upper KS2 (Year 5 & 6)

Statutory Requirements – Handwriting and Presentation

Pupils should be taught to:

- 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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use and unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 National curriculum in England'; September 2013' (up-dated for implementation September 2014); Department for Education.

Appendix 2

Pen Licence

How do I earn my pen licence?

- Hold pencil with the correct grip
- Work at a steady pace
- Write on the line
- Join letters correctly
- Space words correctly
- Letters are the correct shape and size
- Ascenders are the correct height
- Descenders are the correct length
- Handwriting is always legible
- Show teacher examples of excellent handwriting in English, Topic, Science and Homework books

What does my pen licence mean?

Once you earn your pen licence, you can write in pen in all subjects except Maths. Diagrams or pictures must never be written in pen.

Does my pen licence last forever?

Pen licences must be earned every academic year, beginning in September. Pen licences may be revoked if the teacher feels the standard of handwriting is not maintained over time.