

EYFS Handwriting Policy

Created June 2020
Reviewed June 2020
Ratified by Full Governing Body on 07/08/2021
To be reviewed Summer 2022
overseen by the Curriculum Committee

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. Handwriting teaches pupils to form letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically through the use of our own consistent strategies at Fritch Green.

Aims

At The Fritch Green Academy our aims in teaching handwriting in EYFS are that the pupils will:

- Develop strong fine motor skills, including a defined 'pincer grip.'
- Use control and co-ordination to trace a series of shapes and movements.
- Be able to hold a pencil with the correct tripod grip and apply adequate pressure to the paper when writing.
- Form all letters correctly and independently. with the correct flow of movement.
- Achieve a neat, legible style.
- Be able to write with developing flow and speed.
- Eventually produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing.

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

Teaching and Learning

- Children should experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the 2 Reception classes.
- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line.
- To engage in a variety of 'Finger Gym' challenges to support them with developing their fine motor skills to build up strength in their hand muscles.
- To practice holding tools with control and use this strength to cause changes and manipulate materials e.g. Using sticks to write in the sand.
- To regularly practise holding a pencil with the correct tripod grip (use the 'nip, grip, flip rhyme) and be given support in finding a comfortable grasp

- To learn the Jolly Phonics Songs to support them in recognising the different letters within their handwriting.
- To use the 'Read, Write, Inc' letter formation rhymes to help them learn the correct formation of letters. This may be altered depending on the updated DFE guidance and according to pending updated phonics schemes.
- To practise letter formation as each new letter sound is taught in daily phonics sessions. To also include an opportunity to recap the formation of previously taught letters to ensure no gaps in learning.
- To use muscle memory activities to solidify learning of letter formation e.g. Sky Writing.
- For each classroom to have a 'Finger Gym' challenge station set up where fine motor challenges are offered, assessed and changed regularly. This will continue into the first term of year 1.
- For children who are struggling with fine motor skills to work in support groups to ensure they do not fall behind in their physical development and henceforth literacy skills.
- To include a 'letter of the day' for children to practise. This is to be identified by the class teacher according to the ongoing assessments made of letters the groups of children are finding particularly tricky.
- Include a dedicated portion of phonics sessions attributed to letter formation (2-5 minutes according to the needs of the group).
- From Easter, children to be put into handwriting groups and complete one weekly handwriting session with an adult, targeting problem letters.
- Handwriting targets are to be included in weekly phonics homework - children are not to move on from their weekly sounds until they are forming the letters correctly unless this is discussed with parents. This is linked to their weekly spellings.
- Share the letter formation rhymes with parents at regular intervals.
- Children will understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- Children will be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

- Children will have independent books where they can practise their handwriting and sentence building during child initiated learning.
- They will be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting.
- Children will have a variety of activities carefully planned through continuous assessments that encourage them to work on their handwriting skills.
- Core skills to be developed through lots of hands on and physical learning methods. Children will not work straight on pen to paper, but will develop their large movements and co-ordination first to underpin the key pre-writing skills.
- Teachers in both classes will communicate effectively with each other ensuring that any concerns about groups of children are identified and addressed effectively.
- EYFS leader to ensure there is a consistent standard of handwriting across the 2 classes and that all staff are up to date with the teaching methods and systems used.
- Support groups will be regularly assessed, monitored and changed to allow all children to access the targeted learning needed.
- Support staff to be aware of key skills needed including pre-writing as well as the letter formation rhymes.

Order of learning

- Children are to be taught the formation of letters following the 'Read, Write Inc' formations and in the order of 'Letters and Sounds.' This is as follows:

s a t p i n m d g o c k e u r h b f l l s j v w x y z

This will be reviewed according to any changes to the phonics programmes used across the school.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

- 'Finger Gym' to be a core part of daily activities and to be included in every session (morning activities, phonics, literacy, maths and experience planning). These activities are to include things such as threading, hole punching, play-doh, using fingers to form letters in the sand, using sticks to write letters and shapes in the mud etc. These skills are to be developed through a multi sensory approach to help with muscle memory and kinetic learning.
- Fine motor activities to be highlighted on planning to show progression of key skills.
- Children should begin to learn how to correctly hold a pencil. Then how to use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed. They should be given the opportunities to develop their handwriting to their full potential.
- Incorrect pencil grip should be corrected and not left, even if they are forming letters legibly.
- Ensure children grip their pencil without their hand being too low down so that their vision is not restricted.
- Children to be exposed to capital letters alongside the lower case ones as they are taught. Teachers are to model capital letters alongside lower case but this is not to become a key focus until they are confident with using and lower case letters.
- Encouraging capital letters once children have a basic understanding of sentence structure.

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 pupils and make appropriate provision.

Left handed children are to engage with all the same fine motor activities as above. When teaching specific pen to paper handwriting, ensure paper is positioned correctly, to the right for them so their line of vision is not restricted.

Teaching staff are to be mindful of where children sit when handwriting, so that they are not competing for space.

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 where needed.

Capital letters

Capital letters are to be shown to children alongside the lower case letters as they are taught. Formation of capital letters is not to be a core focus until children are confident in recognising the lower case letters and forming them. They must also have a basic understanding of what a sentence is before they are able to understand the need to start one with a capital letter. Children must practice writing their name using a capital letter.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to learn to write using many of the techniques identified above. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in Individual Education Plans. Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited, by problems with fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child.

The Learning Environment

In both classes, children are to have constant access to writing supplies including pens, pencils, crayons, chalk, whiteboards and markers etc. They are also to have access to a variety of mark making materials such as paints, wands in shaving foam and play dough tools. These resources are to be updated and varied regularly.

The EYFS lead is to ensure both classes have access to the same provision, even if this is on a weekly rota.

Each classroom is to have a 'Finger Gym' table where weekly challenges are set to target fine motor skills. These are to have varying levels of difficulty according to the challenge needed and selected by the children. There is to be an element of choice for the children within this. This is to be open to the children for us during child initiated learning.

Classrooms are to display lower case and upper case letters and this is to be referred to regularly. These are to have picture cues to help children recognise the sounds to help them with their independent writing. Classrooms to also display the letter formation rhymes and staff are to refer to these regularly.

The outdoor area is to include a variety of resources to target fine motor skills and handwriting development. These are to be monitored, assessed and updated regularly.

Assessment

A uniformed handwriting style should be consistent throughout the school; this will be evident on display boards and in book scrutinies. Handwriting is currently assessed and recorded on Assessing Pupil's Progress trackers.

Children will be assessed weekly on their 'target letters' sent home and this is to include how accurate their letter formation is, as well as their pencil grip. If their grip and formation is not secure, this is to be communicated to parents through their reading diaries/phonics books. Children are not to be moved on to the next set of letters until their formation is secure, unless this is discussed with other staff and parents. If children become 3 sets of letters behind, parents are to be spoken to.

The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practice this with their children at home. The 'Read, Write, Inc' letter formation rhymes are to be sent home and shared with parents at regular intervals.

Weekly challenge letters to be sent home in children's phonics books. This homework will include forming letters and this will be assessed weekly by the teachers. Parents to be informed of these assessments in terms of what needs to be focused on for the following week. Parents will be informed if their children need extra support on some letters or are falling behind with the general flow of taught sounds.

Parents to attend information evenings and phonics workshop which will address the way handwriting is taught in EYFS and what they can do to help at home.

Termly focus targets to be uploaded to the class blogs to help parents see their child's next steps in terms of handwriting.

Tapestry to be used as an online journal to share examples of handwriting and fine motor activities used and to inform parents of their child's current attainments and next steps.

Class blogs will share our the current stage of handwriting the class is working at and what is being taught so parents can reinforce this at home.

From Easter, children will have a weekly 'spelling quiz' where they are asked to write down some whizzy words they have been given as a focus for that week. These are to be marked as incorrect if letters are not formed correctly and this modelled in the book for children/parents to practise.

Resources

Finger gym resources to be shared across the classes.

Letter displays in each classroom and, where possible, in the outdoor area.

'Read, Write, Inc' letter formation posters to be displayed in both classrooms.

Fine motor challenges to be planned for and resourced weekly and these are to be shared across the 2 classes to ensure all children access the same curriculum content.

Review

This policy will be reviewed before the start of each new academic year. It is the responsibility of the EYFS lead to write and review it.