



## Handwriting Policy

Date	Reviewed by	Agreed by governors	Next due for review
November 2025	Caroline Jackson and Sally Cross	n/a	November 2028

**BEDS-created**

**3-year recommended review cycle**

**Believe to achieve! "Roots will grow down into God's love and keep us strong." Eph 3:17**

## **Values: Friendship, Respect, Trust, Courage, Perseverance, Thankfulness**

Brinkworth Earl Danby's is committed to providing a secure, happy and stimulating learning environment in which EVERYONE is valued, spiritual growth is nurtured and potential maximised. We believe as a community that each child can reach their vocational potential. We believe each child is of unique worth made in the image of God. We believe in each child being the best that they can be and finding their place in the world. We believe in: a child's potential; being part of a community; being the best you can be.

In partnership with parents/carers, we aim to:

- create a happy, caring atmosphere in which each child feels secure and valued within an environment which is stimulating and attractive
- meet each child's needs physically, creatively, intellectually, emotionally and socially
- educate children about a diverse society and world in order to promote understanding and positive attitudes
- help the child acquire a set of moral and spiritual values that reflect our designation as a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
- inspire each child to be an enthusiastic learner and develop capabilities and attributes that 'build learning power'
- enable pupils to become confident and responsible citizens

Our ethos underpins our unique culture and behaviour in our Church of England School. Our children are at the centre of every decision made. We always ask 'of what benefit will this be to our children? Will this help support them to be the best they can be?' We go the extra mile. Whether it is staff, parents, children, governors or community members, we choose to make that extra effort for a better outcome for individuals and for our school community.

This policy is written with our vision, values, ethos and aims at its heart.

# Handwriting Policy

## Introduction

At Brinkworth Earl Danby's C of E Primary School (BED), we believe that it is important that children learn to write in a legible, cursive (joined) style as research shows it brings many benefits to the children's learning.

While electronic devices have added an element of convenience to the writing process, evidence is mounting that putting pen to paper has benefits that typing cannot replace. Researchers have found ties between writing by hand and everything from language skills to memory, to critical thinking.

In the 2014 study entitled, "The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard," researchers Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer found that students who take notes by hand perform better on conceptual questions than students who take notes on laptops. This is because students who take notes by hand actually digest the content and reframe it in their own words - a process that increases both understanding and recall.

By looking at several different studies, Graham and Santangelo found that teaching handwriting strongly correlates to improvement in the quality of the composition of a piece of writing not just the legibility.

When writing, children use transcription skills such as handwriting and spelling as well as high level skills such as organisation, considering the effect on the reader and the parameters of the topic or genre they are writing about. If children aren't proficient at these skills, they have less working memory available to think about the high-level skills which impacts on the quality of the composition. Therefore, if we want children to be able to focus on what and who they are writing for, we need to ensure they have automaticity in spelling, grammar and handwriting.

## Policy aims

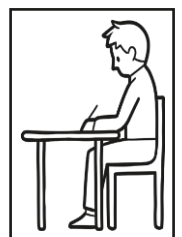
- Handwriting is taught in a clearly sequenced progression;
- Consistent teaching and expectations in handwriting across classes and key stages;
- All children develop legible, fluent and efficient handwriting;
- High standards of written presentation across the curriculum.

## Posture, pencil grip and paper position

### Posture

For children to be able to learn to write and to write neatly they need to have the correct posture. For this reason, when writing, children should be taught to sit correctly at the table. This means they should have both legs down, their feet flat on the floor and their chair tucked in to the table. The table and chair height should allow forearms to rest comfortably on the surface.

The work area should be clean, smooth and clear of clutter to promote proper hand and arm placement, allowing the arms to move freely to write.



### Pencil Grip

How a child holds a pencil is very important when it comes to letter formation and learning to write. A functional, comfortable pencil grip will lead to efficient, pain-free handwriting. The development of a child's pencil grip, however, is a gradual process that will develop as the child grows.

In reception the development of the muscles in the shoulders, arms and hands as well as finger strengthening are all incorporated into the children's play to help them develop their pencil grip. This is through fine and gross motor activities.

There are six developmental stages of a maturing pencil grip, but it is important to remember that while these stages are 'typical' every child is different and will develop in their own way and at their own speed.



#### Stage 1 - Pincer Grip

This grip, although not a grip normally used to grasp pencils, is the starting point of picking up small objects with the fingers. Ultimately it will be used by older children to pick up their writing utensil.

This grip is typically seen from 8 to 9 months when the child will start to use the pads of their index finger and thumb and later advance into using the tips of these digits (typically between the ages of 10 to 12 months). This grip is often seen when children start to pick up food to feed themselves.



#### Stage 2 - Palmar Supinate Grip

This is basically a whole fist grip and is quite commonly seen in pretoddlers when they first experimenting with drawing/painting. The crayon/paintbrush will be held in a closed fist with all fingers curled around the pencil. They will use their shoulder (whole arm movements) to make marks on the surface. During this stage children may prefer to use more vertical surfaces to mark make on. This grip typically develops between 12 to 18 months.



#### Stage 3 - Digital Pronate Grip

In this grip, all 4 fingers and the thumb are used to grip the pencil with the palm of the hand facing downwards towards the paper and also the fingers pointing downwards. This grip is typically seen in children aged between 2 and 3 years. The movement comes from the shoulder and elbow and again vertical surfaces may be the preferred choice of creativity.



#### Stage 4 - Quadrapod Grip

This grip uses 3 fingers (index, middle and ring fingers) and the thumb and can be either static or dynamic.

A 'static' grip is where the fingers are locked in their position, with the hand muscles doing little work. This pencil movement is, therefore, coming largely from the wrist and above.

A 'dynamic grip' is where the fingers can move the pencil allowing for more precise drawing and writing. This is typically seen in children aged 3 to 4 years.



#### Stage 5 - Static Tripod Grip

This is nearly the most efficient grip. The child uses their index and middle finger along with their thumb to grip the pencil however, the web space is much smaller in this stage. Web space is the area between your thumb and index finger. This grip is typically seen in children aged 3 to 4 years.



#### Stage 6 - Dynamic Tripod Grip

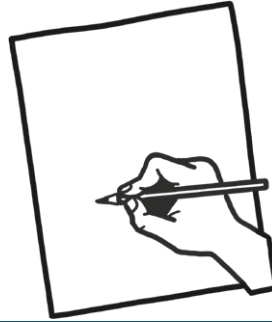
The child will start to hold the pencil between the thumb and index finger with the pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers. This is typically seen in children aged 4 to 5 years.

## Paper Position

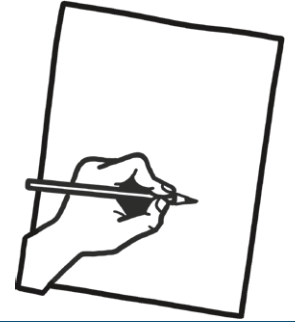
Paper angle helps support natural hand movement and improves handwriting posture. Paper/books should be slightly offset as shown in the diagrams opposite:

The hand which isn't used for writing should be used to hold the paper still on the table to stop it moving and sliding whilst writing.

**For right-handers:** Position the paper slightly to the right. Tilt the paper so that the top left corner angles downward to the left.



**For left-handers:** Position the paper slightly to the left. Tilt the paper so that the top right corner angles downward to the right.



## Teaching progression and expected outcomes

### Handwriting Guidance for Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage, children will have access to triangular pencils. Some children will be given a pencil grip to aid their handwriting.

For agreed letter formation please see diagram at the back of this document and on the Little Wandle examples shown over the page.

In Reception, children are taught to form individual letters as they learn their phonics sounds. Children are taught the correct formation, size and spacing.

It is important for the children to learn to form their letters correctly before attempting to join their writing.

Children are taught each letter during Phonics lessons, using the Little Wandle formation phrases and picture guides. In addition to this, children work one to one with an adult to look at groups of similar letters that progress in difficulty. Children are free to select a writing implement of their choice in continuous provision.

### Groups of letters that progress in difficulty:

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed. The 'families' are grouped according to where each letter starts, although these families may differ slightly, depending on the handwriting programme used.

Typical families are:

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
















Pupils should be taught to write each 'family' of lower-case letters correctly on the line, and then to write words that include letters from that family.















***It is expected that at the end of FS, the majority of children will be able to:***

- ***write their own name with a capital letter and key words in simple sentences***
- ***hold their pencil correctly***













### Lesson organisation in Foundation Stage

- Group of up to 6 for 10 - 15 minutes;
- Four days a week.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 	 snake	Show your teeth and and let the s hiss out <b>sssss sssss</b>	Down the snake from head to tail.
 	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the <b>a</b> sound at the back of your mouth <b>a a a</b>	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
 	 tiger	Open your lips; put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press <b>t t t</b>	Down the tiger and across its neck.
 	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say <b>p p p</b>	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
 	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the <b>i</b> sound at the back of your mouth <b>i i i</b>	Down the iguana and dot the leaf.
 	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the <b>n</b> sound <b>nnnnn</b>	Down, up and over the net.
 	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the <b>m</b> sound <b>mmmm</b>	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 d	 duck	Put your tongue to the top and front of your mouth and make a quick d sound d d d	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
 g	 goat	Give me a big smile that shows your teeth; press the middle of your tongue to the top and back of your mouth; push your tongue down and forward to make the g sound g g g	Round the goat's face and curl under its chin.
 o	 octopus	Make your mouth into round shape and say o o o	All around the octopus.
 c	 cat	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	Curl around the cat.
 k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say k k k	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.
 ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	c Curl around the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and back down to the toe. <b>Catchphrase:</b> Rock that sock!
 e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say e e e	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.



Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 100px;">u</span>	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say u u u	Down and around the umbrella, and back to the ground.
 <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 100px;">r</span>	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a rrrrr sound rrrrr rrrrr	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.
 <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 100px;">h</span>	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply h h h	Down, up and over the helicopter.
 <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 100px;">b</span>	 bear	Put your lips together and say b as you open them b b b	Down the bear's back, up and round its tummy.
 <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 100px;">f</span>	 flamingo	Open your lips a little; put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound ffff ffff	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.
 <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 100px;">l</span>	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little; put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press lllll lllll	Down the lollipop stick.



## Handwriting Guidance for Key Stage One

### Year 1:

In Year 1, children are taught the same progression of letters identified for Reception:

- consolidation of letter formation;
- sizing and spacing of letters;
- formation of punctuation marks and digits 0–9;
- practice linked to phonics.

***It is expected at the end of Year 1, the majority of children will be able to:***

- ***have the correct pencil grip;***
- ***form all lower case and capital letters in the correct direction using a cursive style;***
- ***form the digits 0 – 9 correctly.***

### Year 2

In Year 2, handwriting builds upon the skills introduced in Year 1, moving on to focus on:

- sizing of letters;
- spacing of letters;
- joining letters using the two main joins and in a cursive style;
- practice linked to spelling patterns.

Pupils should be taught two basic joins: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

The diagonal join connects:

- letters from the line to small letters;
- letters from the line to tall letters;
- letters from the line to a, d, g, c, o, q (These letters need an extra stroke backwards across the top of a, d, g, c, o.)

The horizontal join connects:

- v, w, x, f, r to small letters;
- v, w, x, f, r to tall letters;
- v, w, x, f, r to a, d, g, c, o, q.

***It is expected at the end of Year 2, the majority of children will be able to:***

- ***form all lower case and capital letters the correct size and orientation;***
- ***write with equal spacing between letters and words;***
- ***write in a joined cursive script.***

### Lesson organisation in Years 1 and 2

- Class lesson for 10 to 15 minutes;
- Four days a week;
- Practice in Year 1 lessons will relate to phonics;
- Practice in Year 2 lessons will relate to joins and spelling patterns.

## Handwriting Guidance for Key Stage Two

Joined handwriting is used for all writing, except where other forms are required. Children know when to use:

- A clear neat hand for finished, presentation work;
- Informal writing for everyday informal work;
- A range of presentation skills and methods.

***It is expected at the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of children will be able to***

- ***produce a fluent, consistently formed style of fully cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words;***
- ***write with increasing speed.***

#### **Lesson organisation in Key Stage 2:**

- Class lesson for 30 minutes;
- One day a week.

#### **Teaching**

The pedagogy of the BEDs approach to handwriting will follow our direct, explicit teaching through modelling, followed by practice: I do, We do, You do.

We model how to form letters and supervise children when they are practising their handwriting to ensure that all children have a strong mental model of the movement patterns which underpin letter formation.

Teachers and support staff will consistently model good handwriting, including when marking and on displays.



It is important that children have the opportunity to warm up their hands. Hand exercises help the brain increase awareness of where the hands are, improve coordination, prepare the body for controlled movements and furthermore aid precision.

#### **Hand exercises:**

##### **1. Rub hands together**

Rub hands together until they feel warm. Move them up and down, or in circular motions to stimulate blood flow.

##### **2. Push palms together**

Push the palms firmly together and hold for five seconds. Repeat a few times.

##### **3. Finger stretches**

Open hands wide, stretching fingers as far apart as you can. Then make a tight fist, hiding fingers away inside the palm.

##### **4. Drumming fingers**

Drum fingers on the table, one finger at a time. This can be extended to tapping a rhythm.

##### **5. Squeeze forearms and hands**

Use the left hand to squeeze the right forearm and hand firmly, applying gentle pressure to stimulate the muscles and increase awareness. Swap hands.

##### **6. Pulling fingers (like taking off a glove)**

With one hand, grasp each finger of the other hand in turn and gently pull downward, as if taking off a glove. Repeat for the other hand.

##### **7. Oppose thumb to each fingertip**

Touch the thumb to each fingertip of the same hand in turn. For more challenge, this can be done with both hands at the same time, or with your eyes closed.

##### **8. Finger circle tug**

Form a circle with the thumb and index finger. Then form another circle with the other hand, within that circle, and try to pull them apart.

## **Inclusion, adaptations and intervention**

At BEDS we have the same expectations for all children in our school. Occasionally a decision will be made to personalise expectations for a child who has such specific needs that these expectations could be a barrier to their progress for example, difficulties with motor control, dyspraxia or dysgraphia. Difficulties are addressed through appropriate handwriting interventions or specific equipment for example pencil grips, slanted boards.

Left handed children have different needs from right-handers needing adjustments to make sure that they:

- Have space to write;
- Sit to the left of any right-handed pupil to prevent their arms from colliding;
- Slant their paper to the right;
- Grip the pencil slightly higher up so they can see round their fingers;
- Don't hold the pencil too tightly or press down too hard.

## **Assessment and monitoring**

Handwriting is assessed through book looks, learning walks, pupil voice and specific termly writing assessments. Teachers can then address any handwriting needs by planning in handwriting practise for the whole class or maybe an intervention for specific children.

Guidance on the assessment criteria, for example, letter formation, spacing, consistency in size, correct joins, fluency can be found at the back of this policy.

## **Standards for written presentation**

### **Presentation across Brinkworth Earl Danby's:**

- Fonts used across the school:
  - EYFS & Year 1 – Twinkl (abcdefg)
  - Year 2 – Twinkl Precursive Light (abcdefg)
  - Year 2 and KS2 when joining – Twinkl Cursive looped (abcdefg);
- Appropriate font for the age of the children needs to be used by the Teacher/TA when writing on IWB, whiteboard or on children's work;
- All books are named with school labels, logo child's name and subject;
- Every piece of work is dated (all work in books should begin with the date, written in the following way: English and Handwriting long date - Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September. In Maths the short date is to be written in the following format: 10.9.17.) FS will only use the short date on their work;
- Children use guidelines if they are writing on plain paper;
- All drawings and diagrams are in pencil. Pencil crayons, not felt pens, are used in books;
- All sheets are trimmed before being stuck in books and therefore not folded;
- Coloured pens are used for specific reasons by children and adults. Black is used for children to write with, green for children to edit with and blue is for marking by an adult;
- A single line is used to cross out mistakes or edit writing;
- Books are looked after with no writing or doodling on the outside or inside;
- Children should write from the margin to the edge of the paper;
- Children are taught where to start a new piece of work;
- Maths – 1 digit or maths sign in each square;
- Consistent expectations across every subject.

## Celebration and Motivation:

All staff ensure that presentation and handwriting is promoted by:

- Celebrating work of a high standard, including homework, in whole class situations;
- Displaying written work;
- Using joined, legible and consistently formed handwriting on boards, in books, on flip charts and displays;
- Providing modelled examples and reviewing expectations with children.

## Pen Licences

Children write in pencil until the start of Y3 when they can earn their pen licence to write in a black pen. A pen will then be used in all written work (except Maths). To earn a pen licence, children need to be writing on the line with joined, legible and fluent handwriting, their letters consistent in size. Pen licences are awarded with a special certificate and presented in Celebration Assembly (jdrive/certificates).

Once children have achieved their pen licence they can choose from a variety of black pens selecting the pen they prefer to write with.

## Resources

Across the school children use exercise books (including handwriting books) with different spaced lines that are appropriate for their year group.

All children start writing at BEDs using a pencil as they provide a smooth glide across the page which helps children develop control whilst they learn how to write. Along with thin pencils we also have thicker, triangular pencils available to support the development of the tripod grip. At times it might be necessary to encourage a child to use a pencil grip or put an elastic band on their pencil to prevent fingers from slipping and promote good pencil grip.

## Policy monitoring and review

Presentation is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leads on a regular basis through book looks, learning walks and pupil voice.

*Pen Licence  
Congratulations*



\_\_\_\_\_

*for successfully earning your  
pen licence!*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv

Ww Xx Yy Zz

Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv

Ww Xx Yy Zz