



Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Written by: Claire Matthews and Julia Wilcock

Date: January 2025

Review date: January 2028

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.

Intent

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
- 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.

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

Children should:

- Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching from Reception.
- 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 learn handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- 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.
- Encouraged to use their skills with confidence and pride in real life situations.

Implementation

Reception

Children are encouraged to:

- Develop gross motor control through PE sessions, use of the outdoor area and equipment, and Wild Wood.
- Develop fine motor control through daily 'Busy Learning' sessions which focus on fine motor skills.
- Use a range of mark making tools both inside and outside, such as pencils, pens, paint, chalk and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment.
- Develop a recognition of pattern.
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements; for example curved and straight.
- Begin to learn letter formation alongside phonics. Mnemonics are taught in the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Phonic scheme, for formation of each letter. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of the mnemonics used.
- Write their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning letter and correct letter formation for the remainder.

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). Once gross and fine motor skills are developed, children will be introduced to triangular pencils to support them to attain the appropriate pencil grip. When they are ready, children in Reception will receive at least 5 minutes daily, with additional, follow-up practise.

The basic structure of a handwriting lesson should be:

- warm-up to ensure children are ready to write eg using playdough (dough-disco) or physical exercises.
- posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair
- patterns linked to the early development of letter formation which then progresses to the teacher modelling the correct letter formation using the Little Wandle mantras, and then children practising independently with teacher model, from memory

In guided writing, children in Reception should use lines with a 15mm width.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 1, children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities.

Children in KS1 and KS2, will have a discreet handwriting lesson for a minimum of three sessions a week. We use the Teach Handwriting website and follow Route C, Choice 3 <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/route-c-letter-choice-3-fs.html>

In Key Stage 1, children 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
- begin to write in a cursive style

When using books to write, children in Year 1 should use books with lines with a 15mm width, and in Year 2, lines with a 12mm width. There is some flexibility with this to allow for the individual stage of the child.

In Key Stage 2, 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, to be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes, such as: a neat, legible handwriting for finished, presented work, a faster script for note taking and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc.

When using books to write, children in Year 3 should use books with lines with a 12mm width and then progressively, books with lines of a 10mm and then 8 mm width, by the time they reach Year 6.

In Years 3 and 4, children are given the opportunity to use a pen for publishing purposes and in Years 5 and 6, all children are given the opportunity to use a pen for writing but a choice to use either pencil or pen depending on their preference. This is with the acknowledgement that at Secondary School children predominantly use a pen for writing with the exception of Maths.

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 practice 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 demo 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

Our phonics scheme includes guidance for the teaching of capital letters, and mantras are introduced in Reception and Year 1 to support the formation of these. (Please see Appendix 2)

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 join.

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, and provision will be made for this. The school will provide additional support

using resources such as triangular pencils, pencil grips, enlarged handwriting lines, and intervention through the 'Write from the Start' and the 'Speed Up handwriting' programmes. 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. Where necessary, touch typing is taught as a skill, so these children can use technology to support their learning.

The Learning Environment

In all classes, suitable materials are available for pupils to work 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.

Impact

A uniform handwriting style should be consistent throughout the school; this will be evident on display boards and in book scrutinies.

The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practise this with their children at home. This is available on our website and is handed to parents at parents consultation in the Autumn term and at the New Reception Parents Meeting in the Summer term

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the English subject leader every 3 years or earlier if necessary.

Appendix 1

Letter Formation Phase 2 and 3 with mnemonics



All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.

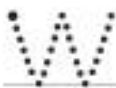




Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.

Letter formation practice sheet





From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.

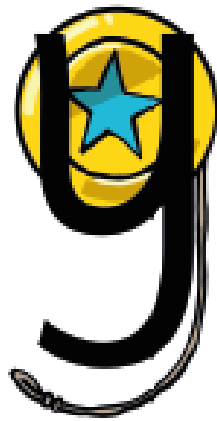
Letter formation practice sheet





Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.





Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.

Letter formation practice sheet





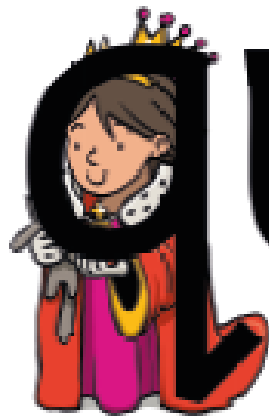
Z



Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.

Letter formation practice sheet





q

qu



q



q



q

qu

qu

qu

qu

qu

qu

qu

Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe and a flick at the end.



Appendix 2

Capital Letter Formation

How to write capital letters

Use this document to ensure correct letter formation when you are teaching children to form capital letters.

Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.