



Ashmole Primary School

Handwriting Policy

We aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practiced in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Aims

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Our school uses *Penpals for Handwriting* to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

Progression of skills

Penpals enables us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS F1 and F2).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS F1/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).

- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

In using *Penpals*, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum' and that 'problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say'.

Handwriting tools

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS.
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school.
- Interactive whiteboard resources.
- Fingers.
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils, displays and artwork.
- Sharp pencils.

Resources

- Interactive smartboard resources, teacher books and year group practise books.

Handwriting is always introduced and practised using the Penpals handwriting resources. During these lessons, pupils have the opportunity to practise the focus of the lesson (letters, words or patterns) in their handwriting books so that they learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders.

In the first few years in Ashmole the lines in the books the children write on are further apart. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write during other lessons gradually decreases.

Using Penpals for Handwriting at Ashmole

- At Ashmole there is a minimum of **2 x 15 minute sessions** per week.
- There are approximately **30 units** for each year group – one to be taught per week. There are assessments included as appropriate for each year group.

Each unit (Years 2-6) consists of:

- 1) Penpals gym
- 2) Teaching
- 3) Practice and apply (including patterns and words)

The units in Early Years and Year 1 are organised slightly differently.

Teaching sequence:

Session 1: Penpals Gym (a shorter session of about 5 minutes). Then the new teaching point (s) and practise on whiteboards (10 minutes).

[Session 2](#): Consolidation of teaching points (s) and practise in handwriting books (contents taken from practise book and linking to spellings).

Environment:

An alphabet is displayed in each classroom.

Current week's practise pattern(s) and joins are displayed on the class' working wall.

Celebration of handwriting achievements

In weekly assemblies, we celebrate the success of pupils who have shown determination in improving their handwriting, presentation and of those who have really mastered new joins. Presentation and handwriting award stickers are given then taken home to share with parents/carers. Children achievements are also shared in the monthly newsletter.

Equality of opportunity

We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual support plans.

Updated: September 2023

Review: September 2025