

REVIEW DATE: April 2027

# Abbot's Hall Primary School



## Handwriting Policy

April 2025

**Be the best that you can be.**

## **Introduction**

The fundamental purpose of handwriting is to enable all pupils to equip themselves with a basic life-skill. In order to prepare children for the adult world and contribute to their personal development, they must learn to write clearly and legibly. At Abbot's Hall Primary School, we are aiming for clear, fluent handwriting which can be written with speed and accuracy so that children can produce a decent quantity of work in all lessons throughout the curriculum.

## **Specific aims**

We will teach our pupils to:

- Correctly hold a pen or pencil.
- Write from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom of the page.
- Start and finish letters correctly.
- Put regular spaces between words.
- Correctly form both lower and upper case letters.
- Write legibly and fluently in a joining script.
- To use different handwriting styles for different purposes (e.g. print for labels, a faster script for notes, a clear neat hand for finished, presented work).
- After learning the basics of handwriting, develop their own personal style.

## **Protocol**

*At the time of updating this policy (April 2025), Abbot's Hall are currently transitioning from using 'PenPals for Handwriting' to teach cursive, joined handwriting to teaching children to use a continuous cursive style. We have moved towards this style of handwriting as a result of using the Rocket Phonics scheme in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 which lends itself to the continuous cursive style of handwriting. Please note that currently, children in Year 4 onwards will continue to use PenPals so that we do not change or disrupt the letter formation that they have been taught.*

*Once we have fully implemented and rolled out the use of continuous cursive handwriting across the school, children will:*

- Use the Rocket Phonics scheme to teach handwriting in EYFS – Year 2
- Use the Letter Join scheme from Year 3 onwards
- Be taught correct formation before they are expected to practise it.
- Learn through teachers modelling. Modelling by an adult is an essential part of learning letter formation.
- Use a pencil in Phase 1 and Phase 2 (though of course children should have experience of using a variety of writing tools as part of the general curriculum).
- Not be expected to join handwriting until a pupil has mastered correct letter formation.
- Use a pen in Phase 3, once a child has developed fluent joined handwriting. A pen should generally be given to children who regularly demonstrate handwriting that is of a consistently fluent joined style and appropriately placed on the page. In certain cases, however, exceptions can be made to motivate a pupil (as long as any discrepancies are only slight).
- Use a black handwriting pen in Phase 3, provided by the school. Biro's will not be used for any work in class (exception is given to the purple biro's to respond to their work).

## **Age Specific Guidelines**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage/ Phase 1**

Handwriting focuses on the accurate formation of lower case letters using a variety of approaches. In Foundation Stage, the children experience a variety of hand-eye co-ordination activities, including Write Dance lessons, hand gym, painting patterns and letter shapes, tracing

and pattern work. Indoors and outdoors they overwrite, underwrite and learn letter shapes. They work with pencils or on white boards using whiteboard pens. A range of different writing surfaces and writing implements are provided at all key inside and outside work stations to encourage the children to record.

By the end of Year 1 it is hoped that most children will be able to: (English NC)

- 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.

## Phase 2

Formal handwriting formation is taught weekly in this phase, and reinforced throughout other areas of the curriculum as often as possible, where appropriate.

By Year 2, it is anticipated that most children will be able to: (English NC)

- 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. Children working at 'greater depth within the expected standard', will use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some letters.
- 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.

'Holding a pencil comfortably and correctly' will be considered on an individual basis after Year 1. Class teachers will allow an incorrect pencil grip, if this grip is comfortable for the child and the handwriting is neat. They will also listen to the views of the SENCo and the parents in this decision. This information will then be given to future class teachers.

## Phase 3

Formal handwriting formation is taught weekly in Phase 3, and reinforced throughout other areas of the curriculum as often as possible, where appropriate. Throughout Phase 3 children will be taught a fluent and legible style of joined handwriting. Children should build up speed and ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters, and spacing between letters and words.

By Year 4, it is anticipated that most children will be able to: (English NC)

- 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 downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

By Year 6, it is anticipated that most children will be able to: (English NC)

- 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.

### **Left Handed Pupils**

At least 10 per cent of the population is left-handed – a slightly higher proportion of males. Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. They should, therefore, be given adequate attention in the classroom to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter a fast, fluent and legible hand. There is no need for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing, if a few simple strategies are employed:

- Model letter formation specifically for left-handed children with your left hand
- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children otherwise their writing arms will clash
- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- To avoid smudging their work, left-handed children should be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5 cm away from the end of their writing implements. The pencil should sit in the 'V' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb. The wrist should be straight.

### **Additional Support**

Special pencil grips and triangular pencils or pens are used by children who have problems with holding their writing implement securely. Where appropriate to meet an individual child's specific physical needs, a writing slope is provided. Our teaching assistants provide extra support for children who continue to experience marked difficulties with letter formation where the class teacher deems this necessary. Some children also take part in *Gym Trail* sessions to help improve their fine motor skills.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and monitor the Handwriting Policy. This is overseen by the Curriculum Committee.

<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Headteacher</b>
<b>Signed:</b>	<i>S. Scarfe</i>	<b>English Lead</b>
<b>Date:</b>		<b>April 2025</b>