

## Handwriting at Richard Bonington Primary School

Aim – to produce children who use fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting, children who, therefore, demonstrate competence in the transcription skills of writing.

### Expectations

By the end of FS2 the majority of children should be able to:

- Draw shapes and patterns involving the diagonals and curves needed for letter formation (FS1 into FS2).
- Sit at a table, holding a pencil comfortably using a tripod grip.
- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Place the majority of letters on the lines in a book.
- Form the digits 0-9.

N.B Whilst we realise that the specific expectations for the teaching of handwriting in FS are limited, we, as a school, have set these guidelines in order that children throughout the rest of our school achieve the most success in their handwriting journey and do not have to relearn or undo bad habits. The expectations from the Development Matters document are outlined as:

- ELG 04: Moving and Handling: Expected Level: *They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.*
- ELG 10: Writing: Expected Level: *They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others.*

By the end of Year 1 the majority of children should be able to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Place the majority of letters on the lines in a book.
- Form capital letters and the digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' and form these accordingly.
- Begin to form lower-case letters of the correct size in relation to one another.

N.B These objectives will be taught as a continuation of the objectives taught in FS.

By the end of Year 2 the majority of children should be able to:

- Begin to form lower-case letters of the correct size in relation 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 un-joined.
- 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.

N.B These objectives will be taught in addition to continuing a focus on the Year 1 objectives.

By the end of Year 3 the majority of children should be able to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

### The Teaching of Handwriting

In order to achieve these goals, children at Richard Bonington Primary and Nursery School will be introduced to the formation of letters in a systematic and consistent way, from the time they begin to form letters through to the teaching of cursive handwriting.

Our priority will be to teach the formation of each individual letter using a consistent set of instructions so that all teaching staff and children are using the same language. The instructions for letter formation will be based around the Handwriting Heroes letter families – consisting of: the bouncers, the cannon pops, the skiers, the skydivers and the surfers. Click here to go to the letter instruction documents ([link](#)).

TAUGHT IN WHAT ORDER – skydivers, cannon pops, bouncers, surfers and skiers?

FS1 – Children should be given opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills through the provision of a range of activities in a variety of media. For more information about the theory of mark-making and ideas, please visit the [Mark-Making Document](#). Children should have access to a range of mark-making materials including, but not limited to, pencils, felt tips, paint and chalk and tools for use in clay, salt, sand and soil. Teaching should focus on mastering the drawing of shapes and patterns and should support children by tracing first before asking them to copy. E.g. vertical lines, an anti-clockwise curve, an up and down diagonal line etc.

N.B As soon as children learn to write their name, correct formation of the letters within their name should be taught. If this does not happen, poor letter formation is already entrenched in however many letters are in their name before they even begin formal education.

FS2 – Children should continue to be given opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills, vital for pencil control, through the provision of a range of activities in a variety of media. Children should continue to be taught to trace and then copy shapes and patterns before/alongside the teaching of formal letter formation. The trace before copying approach should continue when teaching letter formation. They should receive short, focussed, daily sessions which teach the formation of letters in correspondence with the Handwriting Heroes letter families ([link](#)). They should have access to indoor and outdoor writing areas which offer a range of writing and mark-making opportunities as well as label-making linked to curriculum learning. The formation of letters should be modelled and encouraged within the teaching of writing and work with individuals and small groups of children in writing focus groups. Teachers should use a multi-sensory approach and incorporate making letter formations into gross motor activities. For example, have the children crawl, hop or jump each letter to trace it. Try to ask for letter formation recall in as many places as possible – at a table, on a whiteboard, outside on the playground and up in Forest School. See the [Fun-letters document](#) for more ideas.

Year 1 – Children will continue to be taught the groups of letters according to Handwriting Heroes. They will receive short sessions of daily practice to improve speed and fluency and to correct any errors in letter formation. Children who are not forming their letters correctly will be provided with additional interventions or directed teacher support during whole class practice sessions to help them correct their letter formation.

Year 2 – Children will be taught the ‘lead-ins’ needed for cursive handwriting. This will take place in short, regular sessions using the ??????. Children who are struggling to learn the lead-ins will be taught in smaller groups or be given directed teacher support during whole class practice sessions.

Year 3 – Children should continue to receive regular, short sessions teaching and reinforcing the use of cursive handwriting. The focus should be on maintaining consistent size of letters (especially with regard to ascenders and descenders) and to teaching about the spacing of letters in different contexts.

Year 4 onwards – Children should not need specific handwriting teaching at this point but will need regular modelling, reminders and specific interventions to address individual issues with letter formation or the use of cursive handwriting. Children should also receive teaching about the use of different fonts or the use of capitalisation for posters, headings, speech and emphasis. A high level of care regarding presentation should be modelled when presenting learning but teachers should also teach children that handwriting may differ when making lists or using jottings, according to the audience of the writing.

#### Pen Licences

From Year 3, children will have the opportunity to achieve a ‘pen licence’. This will allow them to write using a pen instead of a pencil and show that they have achieved an expected level of consistency and care with regards to the presentation of their writing.

All children will begin each academic year using a pencil. During the first three weeks of the Autumn term, teachers will promote and model the expected level of care regarding handwriting and then select the children who they feel have met the requirements for that year group. These children will be provided with a black pen to use when writing. (Use of a pencil will still be used in Maths.)

Throughout the year, children will continue to have the opportunity to achieve their ‘pen licence’ once they have reached an acceptable level of handwriting. This will happen at different points for different children. We do accept that not all children’s handwriting will be at the same standard and that some children may find this goal un-achievable. If this continues the case, please provide further interventions to help this child and seek support from the English team and the SENCO.

We want to promote high standards throughout school and don’t want children to relax their standards once they have achieved their ‘pen licence’ so children may have their pen licence withdrawn if their handwriting is not maintained at a good standard. Teachers should provide children with ample warning if they are considering removing a pen licence and involve parents in improving handwriting, if necessary, before the final straw of removing a pen licence.

#### Pen Usage

In Year 3 and Year 4, this pen will be provided by school.

In Year 5 and Year 6, children will have a wider choice of pens available to them in order to promote further care and pride in their writing. The use of a particular pen will be at the discretion of the teacher but must allow the child to produce clear, fluent, legible writing. If a pen is not improving the standard of a child's handwriting, it should not be used.

N.B We appreciate that learning to write in a pen is a skill in itself and a period of adjustment is to be given but, for example, if a child wanted to use a biro and their handwriting was less neat than when using a rollerball pen or a fineliner, they would be asked to stop using the biro.