QRA

Handwriting Policy

EDUCATE. EMPOWER. INSPIRE.

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	Sept 2023
2	Rebranded & reviewed	July 2024

QRA Handwriting & Presentation Policy

At QRA we recognise how important it is for pupils to develop a fluent, legible handwriting style they feel good about, and that will serve them throughout their education and beyond.

We are committed to supporting staff to feel confident in teaching handwriting. We understand this is an on-going process of developing knowledge, application in the classroom, and opportunities for reflection and professional discussion.

We provide this through:

- CPD and support from a specialist consultant
- resources that provide consistency in approach across the school
- timetable allocation for structured daily practice
- a guidance document for staff
- staff survey each term
- a review of policy and guidance document each year
- keeping handwriting on the agenda at staff meetings
- A focus on handwriting and presentation during book looks

We will look at supporting parents to help their children in the next phase.

Guidance

This supporting document is designed to provide staff with clarity on:

- the QRA approach to teaching handwriting
- the process in place to support CPD in teaching handwriting
- national expectations and guidance related to handwriting

(DfE & Ofsted)

Approach

Handwriting will be taught discretely:

- In Reception during phonics lessons
- In Year 1 and Year 2 during phonics lessons and in daily handwriting sessions where children are introduced to pre-cursive (Year 1) and joining (Year 2).
- In Years 3 and 4 in daily handwriting lessons linked to spelling
- In Years 5 and 6 through spelling and English lessons

Inclusion

- All children are supported in their handwriting based on the stage they are currently working within
- Staff may use additional resources to support children depending on their needs
- All years should refer to the *RWI Handwriting Guidance* attached to teach the "perfect handwriting position."
- All years will have display materials linked with age related expectations to support children with their handwriting practice.

Reception:

Use RWI rhymes and phrases to form letters in print following RWI Handwriting stage 1a.

Use of ergonomic pencils to support development of tripod grip.

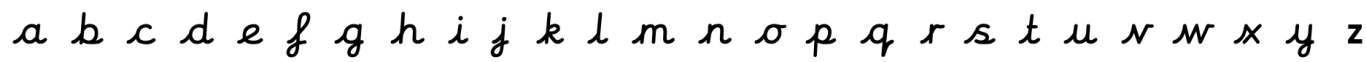
Year 1:

Form capital letters correctly using RWI Capital guidance.

Letters grouped into families. Use of sun, boat, and sea to position letters on the line.

RWI phrases of around, down, curly and zigzag. Use RWI Handwriting stage 1b.

Handwriting sessions: Begin to practice pre-cursive writing with lead ins starting on the line and lead outs (see script below).



Year 2:

Children begin to use pre-cursive throughout the curriculum.

Handwriting sessions: Begin to join letters. Use RWI handwriting stages 2-3 and continue using sun, boat, sea terminology. Use RWI phrases of arm joins or washing line joins.

Introduce Break Letters (break before z, break after capital letters, r and x).

Year 3:

Children expected to start joining across the curriculum.

Teacher to determine when to switch to KS2 English books (smaller lines).

Year 4:

Children to consolidate joining and all be using KS2 English books.

Begin to introduce pen licence when children have consolidated their joining skills and

are joining confidently and consistently.

Supporting Staff

- Handwriting and presentation to be a focus in book looks each term, identifying successes, challenges, questions and requests.
- Staff to approach Literacy Lead at any time to request support
- School leaders will identify on-going training requirements for individuals or all staff

National expectations and guidance

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

Published: 31 March 2021

Effective: 1 September 2021

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

Activities and experiences must include
Physical Development
• Gross motor skills • Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy
Literacy
• Handwriting
Early Learning Goals the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have **at the end of the academic year in which they turn five (Reception)**
Children at the expected level of development will:
Fine Motor Skills
• Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases
Writing
• Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

'Development Matters' Non-Statutory Curriculum Guidance for the

Early Years Foundation Stage – **DfE** Published: 3 March 2017 Last Updated: 23 July 2021

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2

Birth to 3 -babies, toddlers and young children will be learning to:

Physical Development

- **Develop manipulation and control.**
- **Explore different materials and tools.**

Examples of how to support this:

◊ Provide different types of paper for children to tear, make marks on and print on.

Literacy

- **Enjoy drawing freely.**
- **Add some marks to their drawings, which they give meaning to.** For example: "That says mummy."
- **Make marks on their picture to stand for their name.**

Examples of how to support this:

- Provide a wide range of stimulating equipment to encourage children's mark-making.

Suggestions:

- large-scale sensory play, such as making marks with fingers in wet sand or in a tray of flour
- using sticks and leaves to make marks during Forest school sessions
- large brushes with paint or water
- dragging streamers through puddles
- Once large-muscle co-ordination is developing well, children can develop small-muscle coordination. Playground chalk, smaller brushes, pencils and felt pens will support this.

3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Physical Development

- **Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.**
- **Show a preference for a dominant hand.**

Examples of how to support this:

- The tripod grip is a comfortable way to hold a pencil or pen. It gives the child good control. The pen is pinched between the ball of the thumb and the forefinger, supported by the middle finger with the other fingers tucked into the hand. You can help children to develop this grip with specially designed pens and pencils, or grippers. Encourage children to pick up small objects like individual gravel stones or tiny bits of chalk to draw with.

Literacy

- **Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing.** For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; writing 'm' for mummy.
- **Write some (or all) of their name.**

Examples of how to support this:

- Motivate children to write by providing opportunities in a wide range of ways.

Suggestions:

- clipboards outdoors, chalks for paving stones, boards and notepads in the home corner.
- Children enjoy having a range of pencils, crayons, chalks and pens to choose from.
- Apps on tablets enable children to mix marks, photos and video to express meanings and tell their own stories.
- Children are also motivated by simple home-made books, different coloured paper and paper decorated with fancy frames.

3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Literacy (continued)

- **Write some letters accurately**

Examples of how to support this:

- Help children to learn to form their letters accurately.

First, they need a wide-ranging programme of physical skills development, inside and outdoors. Include large-muscle co-ordination: whole body, leg, arm and foot. This can be through climbing, swinging, messy play and parachute games, etc.

Plan for small muscle co-ordination: hands and fingers. This can be through using scissors, learning to sew, eating with cutlery, using small brushes for painting and pencils for drawing.

Children also need to know the language of direction ('up', 'down', 'round', 'back', etc).

Children in Reception will be learning to:

Physical Development

- **Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.**

Examples of how to support this:

- Provide areas for sitting at a table that are quiet, purposeful and free of distraction.
- Give children regular, sensitive reminders about correct posture. Provide different chairs at the correct height for the range of children in the class, so that their feet are flat on the floor or a footrest.
- Provide different tables at the correct height for the range of children in the class. The table supports children's forearms. The top of the table is slightly higher than the height of the child's elbow flexed to 90 degrees.

- **Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.**

Suggested tools:

- pencils for drawing and writing

- paintbrushes
- scissors
- knives, forks and spoons

Examples of how to support this:

- Before teaching children the correct pencil grip and posture for writing, check:

They have developed their upper arm and shoulder strength sufficiently: they do not need to move their shoulders as they move their hands and fingers they can move and rotate their lower arms and wrists independently

- Help children to develop the core strength and stability they need to support their small motor skills.

Regularly review the equipment for children to develop their small motor skills. Is it appropriate for the different levels of skill and confidence of children in the class? Is it challenging for the most dexterous children?

Children in Reception will be learning to:

Physical Development

Continuously check how children are holding pencils for writing. Offer regular, gentle encouragement and feedback. With regular practice, the physical skills children need to develop an efficient handwriting style will become increasingly automatic.

Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.

Examples of how to support this:

- Encourage children to draw freely.
- Engage children in structured activities: guide them in what to draw, write or copy.
- Teach and model correct letter formation.
- Continuously check the process of children's handwriting (pencil grip and letter formation, including directionality). Provide extra help and guidance when needed.
- Plan for regular repetition so that correct letter formation becomes automatic, efficient and fluent over time.

Children in Reception will be learning to:

Literacy

Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.

Examples of how to support this:

- Teach formation as they learn the sounds for each letter using a memorable phrase, encouraging an effective pen grip. When forming letters, the starting point and direction are more important at this stage than the size or position of the letter on a line.

Key Stage 1

End of KS1
Working towards:
form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another in some of their writing
use spacing between words
Working at the expected standard:
form 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.
Working at greater depth:
use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some letters.

Key Stage 2

End of KS2
Working towards:
write legibly.[1] [1] At this standard, there is no specific requirement for a pupil's handwriting to be joined.
Working at the expected standard:
maintain legibility in joined up handwriting when writing at speed [2] [2] The national curriculum states that pupils should be taught 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 unjoined.'
Working at greater depth:
no additional statement

Updated 15 July 2022

research-review-series-english

Handwriting

The national curriculum specifies that children should be taught to correctly form letters of the correct size and orientation.

This requires effort and attention, as well as suitable motor skills. There is evidence that repeated practice in handwriting is necessary to go beyond accuracy to fluency in letter formating. There is no need to start the formal teaching of handwriting before Reception, but children at the end of the EYFS should be able to 'hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases'.

The national curriculum requires children to learn unjoined handwriting before they 'start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters'. Delaying teaching joined handwriting gives teachers and children time to focus on other aspects of the writing process, such as composition, spelling and forming letters correctly.

Research supports the idea that writing letters may be important for supporting children's early reading development, because it stimulates the areas of the brain known to underpin successful reading. A small study with 4- to 5-year-olds showed that practice in writing letters 'stroke by stroke' may be the 'gateway' through which beginning readers learn to recognise the features of each letter, as well as learning which features are not important.

There is also evidence that repeated practice in handwriting, going beyond accuracy to fluency, leads to success in higher-level writing tasks. Skilful handwriting has an impact on composition. According to 2 meta-analyses of research on handwriting instruction, teaching handwriting is closely associated with the quality, length and fluency of writing. As these meta-analyses showed, teaching handwriting can improve writing because the pupil can spend more time planning, thinking about content and constructing the sentences.

Based on the above, high-quality English in early years/key stage 1 may have the following features:

- Children get the practice they need to acquire fluent transcription skills (spelling and handwriting), which is the foundation for their progress in writing.

Research and analysis

Ofsted

Published: 30 November 2017 Last Updated: 5 January 2018

A report looking at the Reception curriculum in successful schools and how well it prepared 4- and 5-year-olds for the rest of their education and beyond.

'Bold beginnings: The Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools'

In the schools visited in which outcomes by the age of five were above the national average, and in which this trend continued across the school, leaders and staff focused resolutely on doing certain elements of the Reception curriculum exceptionally well, including:

- teaching handwriting directly

Handwriting

Strong phonics teaching was the main vehicle for developing children's spelling and handwriting (transcriptional skills). The vast majority of the schools visited used a scheme throughout the school, including to teach letter formation in Reception.

Most of the schools visited taught children to:

- listen to sounds and identify the correct corresponding graphemes (letters or groups of letters), according to the GPCs taught in the school's phonics programme
- sit correctly on a chair at a table when writing
- hold a pencil correctly and comfortably using the tripod grip
- form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters, as prompted by the phonics programme being followed
- write, from dictation, simple English words made up of the GPCs they had learned
- write correctly a few of the common exception words that had been learned for reading
- write their own name correctly
- write simple sentences from dictation
- begin sentences with capital letters and finish with full stops.

Headteachers in the schools visited agreed that children needed to be able to form all letters correctly and consistently before joined-up handwriting was considered. Nearly all were unanimous in their view that they did not teach a cursive or pre-cursive script in Reception. These headteachers believed that it slowed down children's writing, at a point when they already found manual dexterity tricky and the muscles in their shoulders, arms and hands were still developing.

Some of the headteachers also did not encourage the over-use of mini whiteboards in Reception or, indeed, in the school as a whole. They believed that Reception children should have frequent practice of writing on paper – in other words, a rougher surface than a whiteboard. Whiteboard pens were too chunky for small hands to hold in the correct grip that should be used for a pencil. The whiteboard was also slippery, meaning that children could not control their hand movements properly and form letters correctly

DfE Guidance

Validation of systematic synthetic phonics programmes:

supporting documentation

Updated 17 June 2022

validation-of-systematic-synthetic-phonics-programmes

11. provide resources that support the teaching of lower-case and capital letters correctly, with clear start and finish points. The programme should move children on by teaching them to write words made up of learned GPCs, followed by simple sentences composed

from such words as well as any common exception words ('tricky words') learned (see Note 3)

Note 3

At first, children should not be taught to join letters [footnote 3] or to start every letter 'on the line' with a 'lead-in', because these practices cause unnecessary difficulty for beginners. Children may be taught to join the letters in digraphs, but this is optional. (All resources designed for children to read should be in print).

Footnote 3: Children may be taught simple exit strokes for letters that end 'on the line' (a, d, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u).

Capital and lower-case letters

Capital and lower-case letters Programmes teach that each lower-case letter has a corresponding capital letter; they share the letter name and represent the same sound. Children are taught, for example, that both 'a' and 'A' are called /ae/ and are pronounced /a/. Some programmes teach the names of letters only once children have learnt to say the sounds.

For writing (spelling and handwriting), children should:

- practice segmenting spoken words into their individual sounds
- choose which letter or letters to represent each sound
- practice a correct pencil grip
- be taught the correct start and exit points for each letter, which should not include 'lead-in' strokes from the line (see below)
- respond to dictation from the teacher, practicing writing words in sentences that include only the GPCs and exception words they have learnt

Learning to form letters requires considerable effort and attention. Schools, therefore, should consider the advantages to children of delaying the teaching of joined handwriting.

Nearly all the headteachers in the schools Ofsted visited for its 'Bold beginnings' survey did not teach a cursive or pre-cursive script in Reception. They told inspectors that they believed: … it slowed down children's writing, at a point when they already found manual dexterity tricky and the muscles in their shoulders, arms and hands were still developing.

Finally, sitting on the floor and writing on a mini whiteboard does not help children learn to hold a pencil and form letters correctly. To write, they should sit comfortably on a chair at a table. Using a whiteboard also means there is no paper record of the work, for the child, the teacher, or the parent.

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