

Ashton West End Primary Academy

Handwriting Policy



Approved by: The Curriculum Committee **Date:** 17th July 2025

Next review due by: July 2026

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to produce a consistent approach towards the handwriting and presentation of work at Ashton West End Primary Academy. Quality presentation encourages children to work towards a high standard and take pride in every piece of work they produce. A consistent approach by all staff should enable pupils to leave primary school with a legible, fluent and cursive handwriting style.

Aims

In order to achieve this, our aims are:

- To develop the correct pencil grip to ensure a comfortable hand.
- For all children to develop a handwriting style that is consistent in size, orientation and formation, leading into a joined style.
- For all children to develop a legible and comfortable handwriting style with increasing confidence, fluency and speed.
- To make provision for left-handed children to develop free flowing writing.
- To make appropriate provision for any children with gross or fine motor skill difficulties.
- To teach children to write from left to right and top to bottom of a page.
- To teach children to become competent when using a range of writing implements.
- To acknowledge effort, celebrate achievement and value the written work of all pupils.
- To ensure that there is consistency and high standards in the presentation of work.
- To set consistent standards and raise expectations of all children.
- To support high quality teaching and learning.

We recognise that handwriting is a whole-school issue and that it is inextricably linked to the teaching of phonics and spelling. Handwriting is a skill that must be explicitly taught and practiced regularly. At Ashton West End Primary Academy, we follow the Martin Harvey method for teaching handwriting. This means that we do not follow a bought 'scheme'; rather we use a consistent approach of teaching handwriting throughout the school using Martin Harvey's guidelines and clear terminology. The approach progresses through the school with an emphasis being placed on the use of consistent language. For example:

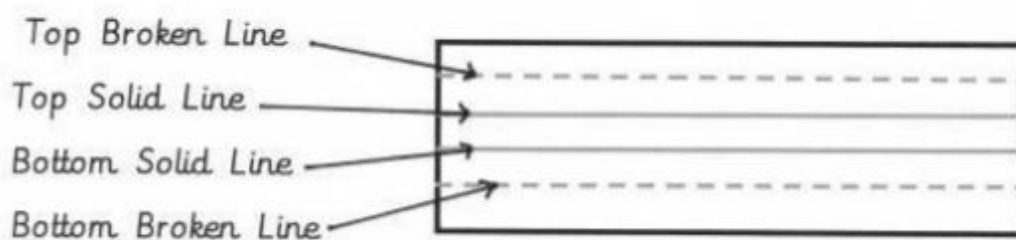
Prior to a handwriting session, staff will ensure that the children are prepared to write by:

'BBC' – Bottom Back in Chair

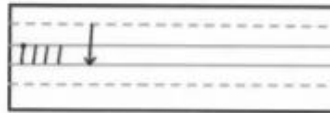
'TNT' – Tummy Near Table

'Six feet, two hands' – Chair and child's feet plus one hand to write with and one hand to hold the page still

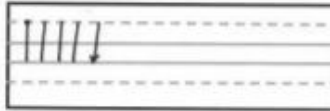
The same use of terminology across the school is extremely important to provide a consistent approach. Please find examples below of the terminology which will be used across the school. For more information, and to see letter formation, please see the 'Achieving Excellence in Handwriting' document.



Short Lines



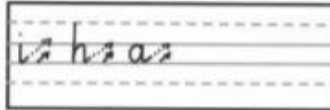
Tall Lines



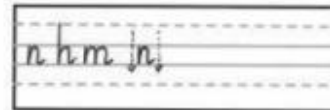
Tail Lines



North-east Joining Line
or
Diagonal joining stroke



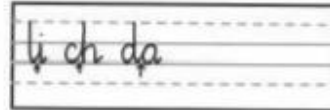
Narrow bridges



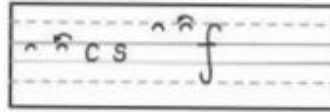
Letters with triangles



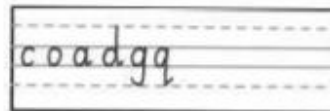
Joins with triangles



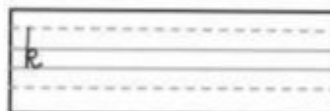
Coat hanger hooks



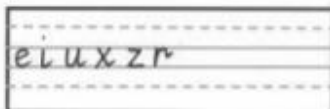
Egg shapes in the
coat hanger letters



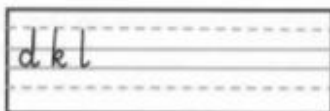
Shoe lace k



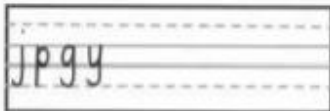
Small letters



Tall letters



Tail letters



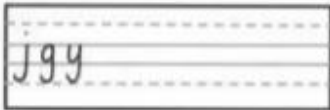
Narrow letters



Letters with sharp
points



Narrow curved tails



Teaching and Learning

Children should experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the school. To achieve this, teachers will follow the 'Achieving excellence in Handwriting' guidance and sequence of learning.

Structure and Progression Through School

EYFS

On entry to EYFS, children will use a range of strategies to secure gross motor skills. Patterning and the development of gross and fine motor skills, in which children develop strength in fingers and pressure with a writing tool, underpins handwriting in the foundation stage. Staff provide daily opportunities to develop skills needed for writing. A love of mark making is fostered by valuing every child's individual needs and abilities. Confidence and motivation to mark make are central to the development of handwriting in the EYFS.

As the children progress, any name writing or more 'formal' writing will be written on the line guides and the children will be introduced to the correct terminology for the line guides and letter formation. (This will be subject to the individual child's rate of progress). Letter formation is prioritized over name-writing: children explore other activities by which to make their own name. As the children progress, they are ready for more formal writing (including name-writing), and will continue to use the line guides as appropriate. To ensure correct pencil grip and good fine motor skills, children will have regular practise at the activities in Martin Harvey's Fine Motor Skills document.

Key Stage 1

During the initial phase, children in Years 1 and 2 will have a minimum of 3 handwriting sessions per week. Sessions will be at least 15 minutes and will always start with a warm up activity taken from the 'Achieving Excellence in Handwriting' document. Handwriting practice will be on the handwriting guidelines in their handwriting books. Children will write in exercise books with pre-printed guidelines across the curriculum.

Key Stage 2

During the initial phase, children in Years 3-6 will have a minimum of 3 handwriting sessions per week. Sessions will be at least 15 minutes and will always start with a warm up activity taken from the 'Achieving Excellence in Handwriting' document. Handwriting practice will be on the handwriting guidelines in their handwriting books.

Children also practise their handwriting for a few minutes at the start of most English lessons. This quick practise takes place in their books and will comprise of revisiting a letter formation or join. The purpose of this is to refresh the children's memories as to the quality of handwriting expected in the lesson.

Presentation Guidelines

Children will encounter a range of writing implements that encourage the development of fine motor skills. In Foundation Stage a variety of mark making equipment will be available for children to use and the correct pencil grip will be taught and reinforced across Foundation Stage and Year One.

In Key Stage 1, children will use pencils to begin with and the correct pencil grip will be reinforced as necessary. Once children are ready, whether this key stage 1 or key stage 2, they will move onto blue pen: this could be any year group depending on the individual child. One pen will be issued to all children when the teacher feels the child is ready. The children will be able to try a range of pens to see which one they feel most comfortable to write with.

Pens must be fibre tip or free-flowing ink. No biro or felt pens should be used. Any mistakes should be crossed out neatly, using one line across the word/number or erased if the work has been done in pencil. Rubbers will not be used, apart from at the discretion of the teacher. The use of Tippex is not permitted.

Staff are the most important role model for presentation and high expectations. Staff will use the resources available to them and model the handwriting and use of guidelines during lesson inputs and handwriting sessions.

Please see our presentation policy for more information.