

Handwriting Policy

2025 - 2026

Overview

This policy gives clear guidance to why and how we teach handwriting at Cranberry Academy. The focus on handwriting in the National Curriculum is clear and highlighting its importance in making the connection between a child's handwriting, their writing composition and spelling ability.

Aims

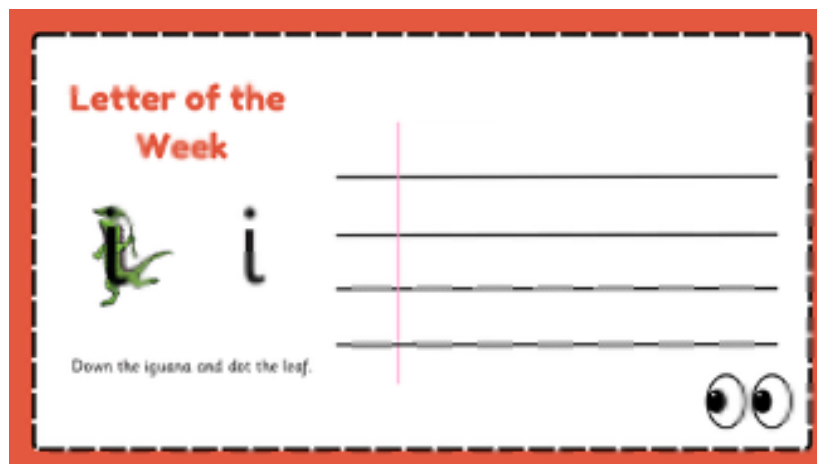
- To have a consistent and progressive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To adopt a consistent approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays/resources.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in joined handwriting.
- Children to develop fluency and speed whilst maintaining legibility through school. This will allow children to place greater cognitive focus on the composition of their writing rather than the transcription of their letters and words.

Teaching and Learning

Following new research and guidance from the DfE, handwriting will be taught precisely through a clearly sequenced and progressive curriculum starting from Reception. Within EYFS and KS1, each class will learn letter sounds through our daily phonics programme - Little Wandle. In our handwriting sessions, letter formation begins in Reception with children exploring the gross motor movement patterns through action and dance. This is then transferred onto paper, developing the initial mark making patterns that are needed to form each letter. The transferring from palm grip to pencil grip is mastered here, if not already achieved. This learning is taught in small steps, working through family patterns from ladder letters through to Zig-zag letters. Continuous provision and teacher-led activities will then provide a wealth of opportunities to practise and embed this

learning further. The set formation rhymes of Little Wandle are also referred to throughout our exposure to letters, whether forming them to learn the sound or shape, to provide consistency and interlinking of knowledge across our curriculum.

The Little Wandle formation rhymes are then revisited in Year 1 to embed and consolidate the learning from Reception. As part of daily handwriting practise, lessons focus on one letter per week which is practised each morning. The Little Wandle visuals are used to support children's understanding which correspond to the rhyme and correct letter formation for each letter. Misconceptions or gaps are addressed and bridged through personalised interventions and activities.

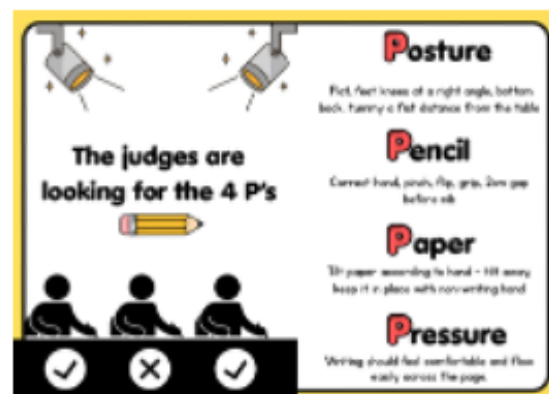


Year 2 will see the children progress to embed accurate letter formation using the 'Letter Join' programme, removing their reliance on the Little Wandle scheme in line with their reading progression. Children will progress to focus on full word formation in their handwriting session, concentrating on consistent letter size and spacing. Pupils can watch modelled videos on their ipads before practising with a stylus on their screen. This is then transferred to paper using a pencil. Video tutorials can be played back to children at their own pace to support and guide formation further.

Within KS2, Year 3 will introduce letter joins, diagonal and horizontal as pupils continue to follow the Letter Join programme. Double joins and progressive written words will then be covered in Year 4 before children are considered to have gained mastery within handwriting. This is taught and embedded using the same progression format as above - teacher and video modelling, interactive practise on ipads and then transference onto paper. From mid-year 4 onwards, joins will not be re-taught but will continue to perfect their learnt cursive style building their fluency and speed. Gaps within learning will be addressed where necessary, as in KS1, using an individualised selection of tools from across our whole school approach.



Visuals and tag lines are used to help the children to remember the individual elements of handwriting as well as the correct positioning, pressure, grip and alignment of materials. These are referred to by teachers and are consistently used across school.



Teachers and teaching assistants will consistently address misconceptions and barriers to legibility within class work. If applicable, marking should also address these. It is important to encourage children to focus on their best handwriting when writing their final draft in English. Here is an opportunity where transcription can become the focus rather than composition, practising and embedding formation, legibility and fluency.

It is expected that handwriting skills gained are evidenced and applied across the curriculum in all pupil writing outcomes. Children are expected to use the correct pencil grip and posture when using all writing tools such as a stylus, pencil or pen, whether writing on an ipad or paper. Handwriting expectations are modelled by staff in books and when working on the interactive whiteboard.

The lower-case print alphabet:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

The capital letters and numerals:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Nursery

- Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp.
- Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
- Can form some letters, e.g. letters from their name.

Reception

- Uses simple tools to effect changes to material.
- Handles tools, objects, construction, and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

- At the beginning of Reception, children begin to form recognisable letters.
- Letter recognition taught within phonics
- Progression from gross motor movements, into fine motor patterns which are then integrated into letter formation each week.
- This movement pattern and letter formation is taught in letter families.
- Throughout Reception, children develop the skill to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Expectations from the National Curriculum

Year 1

- 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' and practise these.
- Wide-lined paper is used at this stage.

Year 2

- 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.
- 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.

Year 3/4

- Joined handwriting should not be taught until pupils can form these letters unjoint.
- When ready, children 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.

Year 5/6

- The building of fluency, speed and legibility continues, enabling cognitive focus to lie mainly on composition rather than transcription.

This is achieved 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.

Posture

Handwriting will not be correct if the child is not in the correct position for writing. Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to children's age and height. Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right. Always make sure that the hand which is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper. If a child is left-handed, they should always be seated to the left of the table (additional handout of support available for left-handed writers). Below shows the tripod grip hold that should be taught and used by all children.



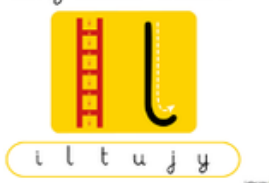
Implements

Children will use handwriting books and paper with the four-line system for positioning their letters writing in the middle lines with ascenders going up to the top line and descenders going down to the bottom line. Children are encouraged to place their letters in the correct position on the single lined paper. To write, Children use a standard HB pencil, well sharpened. The teacher will make a judgement when a child is ready to apply for their pen licence, the child will be meeting their year group objective for handwriting and will be consistently forming all letters correctly with correct orientation and size (see child friendly checklist). The child will then receive their pen licence, if eligible, the child will be presented with their pen licence and special handwriting pen in celebration assembly, to celebrate their achievement but also encourage others. A pencil is always used within Maths regardless of whether children have a pen licence. When working on ipads, children must use a stylus to replicate pencil grip whenever they are writing. The ipad must be laid flat to mirror the position/experience of writing on paper.

Planning

From Reception to Year 1, children will learn to write working through the letter families in order.

Long Ladder Letters



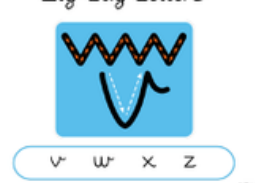
One-armed Robot Letters



Curly Caterpillar Letters



Zig-zag Letters



From Year 2 onwards, children work through our handwriting progression map, beginning their joining journey at the start of Year 3. (See appendix 1)

Resources

- Jiggle and Jot Program
- Little Wandle Phonics Scheme
- Letter Join Scheme

Equal Opportunities and Special Needs

Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper. Children will also have the opportunity to use equipment to improve specific skills and fine motor skills on a more regular basis.

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation, handwriting informs part of this. Within Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, handwriting is assessed as part of children's writing assessments on a half-termly basis. The progress of individuals handwriting will be looked at through the assessment documents below, snapshotting progress. The steps taken to improve it, will be observed through book scrutinies, year group provision maps and intervention folders on Showbie. handwriting is assessed and monitored on a daily basis through book work

Baseline: Letter Formation

a b c d e f g h i

j k l m n o p q r

s t u v w x y z

Name: _____

CRANBERRY

Baseline: Letter Formation

A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q R

S T U V W X Y Z

Name: _____

CRANBERRY

Handwriting: Progress Assessment

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

Pre-intervention

Post-intervention

Name: _____

CRANBERRY

Pen License

Once children are assessed to have mastered correct letter formation, joins and sizing (see pen license checklist) pupils are awarded a pen license. A black handwriting pen can then be used in all lessons aside from Maths.

Appendix 1

Handwriting Progression Map



Focus	Foundations	Letter Families	Word Work Consistent Letter Sizing Correct Formation	Diagonal Joins	Horizontal Joins	Personalised Interventions
Year Group	EYFS	Introduced in Reception Recapped Year 1	Year 2	Introduced in. Year 3 Recapped Year 4	Introduced in Year 3 Recapped Year 4	Occur throughout school moving into Year 5/6
Content	Motor Skill Provision Jiggle and Jot Gross Motor into Fine Motor Little Wandle Phonics	i l t u j y i d c o a d f e s g q b h k m n p r v u x z	Easy Words Hard Words (Letter Family focus)	a n c o d i e i h u i m k a l i m a n p u i	v o w o r u w a o c r o w n v e r e o e	A range of resources are used from throughout the scheme depending on individual pupil need.
Frequency	Taught Daily	Taught Daily	Taught Daily	Taught 2 x per week	Taught 2 x per week	Taught weekly

Pen License Checklist

Handwriting Checklist



- My writing is consistently neat and tidy.
- All my letters are a consistent shape and size.
- My letters are positioned correctly on the line.
- My ascenders all go up.
- My descenders all go down past the line.
- My lower case letters are all correctly joined
- My capital letters are all formed correctly.
- My capital letters are larger and have no joins.