



Ranelagh Primary School
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Handwriting Policy

Reviewed on: 20th January 2025

Next Review due: Spring 2027

Signed by:

A stylized, cursive signature in black ink, likely belonging to the Chair of Governors.

Chair of Governors

Signed by:

A cursive signature in black ink that reads 'N.Y. Ling', identifying the Headteacher.

Headteacher

We aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practiced in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Aims

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Our school uses *Penpals for Handwriting* to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

Progression of skills

Penpals enables us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS F1 and F2).
- Multi-sensory activities are continued and correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS F1/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).

- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

In using Penpals, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum' and that 'problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say'.

Consistencies at Ranelagh

The printed font used for all worksheets and displays is Sassoon Penpals. This is to ensure our font is inclusive to all pupils and examples of this font is displayed in every class on Penpals posters (See Appendix One). When modelling joining online or printing handwriting worksheets with joins, Sassoon Penpals joined is used. When modelling writing, Key Stage One will model correct unjoined letter formation (See Appendix Two). Beginning in year 2 and across Key Stage Two, joined writing (See Appendix Two) will be modelled following the joins taught in Penpals for Handwriting.

Break letters are g j y x z. We do not join from b f p q s r until Key Stage Two. In Year 6, children are encouraged to develop their own personal style and therefore can join break letters if they choose to.

Across Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, there is one discrete 30-minute handwriting session taught each week. In addition, handwriting forms part of early morning writing activities and is a focus in Phonics and spelling lessons. These focus on letter formation and the objectives of the Key Stage One and Two Programmes of Study.

Handwriting tools

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS.
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school.
- Fingers when writing on the interactive whiteboard.
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays and artwork.
- Sharp pencils for most writing until a pen licence is awarded.

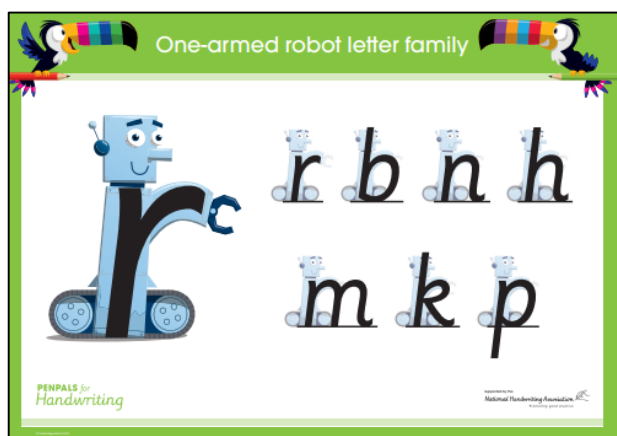
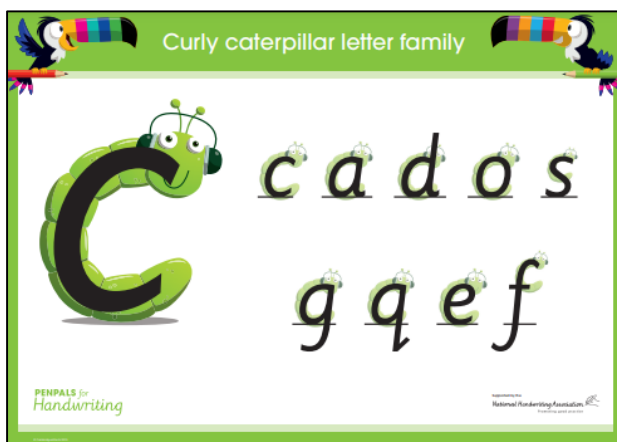
- A handwriting pen for when they sustain a good level of presentation in Key Stage two.

Handwriting is always introduced and practised on lined paper so that children quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases.

Equality of opportunity

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.

Appendix One (Posters displayed in classrooms)





Do the **PENPALS** 7 point check!



Are you ready for handwriting? Relax!

Are your elbows off the desk?

Sit up and lean slightly forward



Are your feet flat on the floor?

Is your body a fist width away from the desk?

Are all chair legs touching the ground?

Left Handers



Is there a circle gap between your thumb and finger?

Is your paper tilted at a slight angle?

Right Handers



PENPALS for Handwriting

Developed by the
National Handwriting Association
Improving good practice



Developmental levels of pencil hold





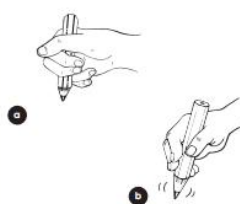
1 Whole-hand grasp: using a fist hand.

- Around 1-2 years.
- Use of upper body muscles.
- Movement comes mainly from the shoulder with the arm moving as a unit.



2 Beginning to use the fingers: no longer using whole-hand grasp.

- Around 2-3 years.
- Use of forearm.
- Movement is still quite stiff but there may be some wrist movement.



3 Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers: no longer using whole-hand grasp.

- Around 3-4 years.
- Both of these grips are the crude beginnings of the tripod grip. The hand tends to move as a unit, with limited wrist movement.

Children at this stage need more experiences that will strengthen their muscles (cutting, working with dough etc.) to increase readiness for a precision pen hold.



4 Moving towards the tripod grip.

- Around 4-5 years.
- Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
- Finger movements and wrist now in play.
- Moving to a comfortable and efficient tripod grip: a precise three-way or tripod use of thumb, index and middle fingers.

PENPALS for Handwriting

Developed by the
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Improving good practice

Appendix Two (letter formation)

Example of Penpals lowercase letter formation before joins:

Bold dots indicate the starting point for forming each letter

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

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

Example of Penpals capital letter formation

Bold dots indicate the starting point for forming each letter

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

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

Example letter formation with joins:

abcdefghijklmnopqrs
tuvwxyz

Break letters:

g j y x z