



THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire, Learn, Achieve

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

This document sets out the agreed handwriting and presentation expectations at The Hermitage Schools.

Person responsible: Senior Leadership Team
Date adopted: Summer 2017
Date of last review: Summer 2026
Date of next review: Summer 2028

INTRODUCTION

The Handwriting and Presentation Policy has a central role within The Hermitage Schools' curriculums and should be referred to by all members of the school community to ensure consistency.

RATIONALE

Handwriting is a movement skill and should be taught using demonstration, explanation and practice. At our schools, we are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care with our cursive/joined-up handwriting style. We place importance on the development of this skill throughout a child's time with us. Children need to practise the skill correctly and often. For children to write their ideas fluently, they must be effective transcribers. The National Curriculum advises that by Lower Key Stage 2, children are able to join their handwriting 'throughout their independent writing'. We therefore need to ensure that our cursive scheme supports and develops this from Nursery onwards. Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work, composition and spelling throughout the curriculum. Children may miss out on learning opportunities and under-achieve academically if they do not have fluent and legible handwriting.

There is great importance of presentation throughout the curriculum and this policy will also outline the expectations of both children and staff in ensuring that a consistently high standard of presentation is upheld. Children and staff should know the standard they are expected to achieve.

AIMS

The National Curriculum (2014) states that in KS1, children should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation and that by the end of Years 3 and 4, 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 un-joined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting; for example, by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

The National Curriculum (2014) also states that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed 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 and style that is best suited for a task.

The Hermitage Schools want children to:

- Develop fine motor skills from Nursery.
- Be taught handwriting throughout their time at the school.
- Develop flow and speed (automaticity) in writing using continuous cursive letters.
- Use joined-up handwriting in all of their independent writing.
- Use their skills with confidence.
- Enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.
- Use handwriting as an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.
- Understand the importance of neat presentation.

SCRIPTS

In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) we use letter-join Print Plus. In Year 1 we use Letter-join No-Lead, moving on to Year 2 upwards using Letter-Join Plus. (See Appendix 1)

This scheme will improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

- *Quality*: Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- *Speed*: Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- *Stamina*: Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time, without fatigue.

Additionally this scheme will allow pupils to have full knowledge and ability of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes:

- Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters.
- Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.
- Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation

STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Considerations when teaching handwriting:

- Pencil grip and tension;
- Writing pressure;
- Clarity of the stroke;
- Orientation of the paper for left/right handed children;
- Body posture.

Nursery: Children benefit from daily experiences that support the development of their gross motor and fine motor skills. Fine motor activities develop hand and finger movements, e.g. using tweezers, threading, spinning tops, using crayons and chalk, and 'dough disco'. Mark making and drawing are prioritised.

Reception: Children will begin Reception with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from mark making to writing their own name unaided. They will continue to develop their gross and fine motor skills using a variety of tactile methods, including 'dough disco'. They require opportunities to make marks in their own way and to gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and individual letters.

All Reception staff must be aware of directionality and when children are showing a firm interest in writing their name, they should be encouraged to use correct directionality and pencil grip (Appendix 2). To aid co-ordination, sand trays and sticks (or fingers), paper, paint and large brushes, modelling materials, blackboards and chalk may be used. They will be taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.

Suggested materials to develop gross and fine motor skills:

- Sand trays/seeds and other tactile materials
- Letter shapes/feely letter shapes
- Large paper and brushes to make writing patterns
- Blackboards and chalk
- Plasticine, play dough, clay.

It is expected that most children will be forming each letter by the end of the phase.

Key Stage One: It is expected that by the end of Key Stage One, the majority will be writing unaided, using capitals where appropriate and presenting their written work legibly.

Year 1: Children practise forming letters and are introduced to diagonal joins and latterly, horizontal joins both to letters with and without ascenders. An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed.

Year 2: By Year 2 children should be moving towards a joined handwriting style and be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They practise and build on Year 1 joins and are introduced to break letters.

Children need to be made aware of:

- Where the letter starts;
- Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline;
- Ascenders and descenders - lined paper will assist;
- Spacing and finger space between words;

- Consistent writing size;
- Capital letters and their appropriate use

Year 3: The majority of children will use blue handwriting pens from the start in Year 3. It is our aim that, by the end of the year, Year 3 have been taught the whole range of joins and will be developing a degree of accuracy and fluency. In the first 2 terms, children will consolidate joins from Years 1 and 2. The third term will focus on consistency of spacing, layout, speed and fluency practice.

Year 4: Formation of capitals, lower case letters and the two basic join types (horizontal and vertical) should now be familiar and secure. The majority of children should be able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Whilst there is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns, they will also be given opportunities to develop speed and accuracy.

Years 5 and 6: By Years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be writing fluently and are joining their writing across the curriculum. In these year groups the emphasis is on increasing speed, developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes.

FREQUENCY

Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Reception - The development of gross and fine motor writing skills are continuous and ongoing everyday. Letter formation will be taught as they are introduced in Read Write Inc.

Year 1: 5 x 15 minute sessions per week, including dough disco

Year 2: 5 x 15 minute sessions per week, including dough disco

Year 3: 2 x 20 minute sessions per week, smaller interventions when required.

Year 4: 5 x 10 minute sessions per week, smaller interventions when required.

Year 5/6: As needed.

Provision for left-handed children: At least 10% of the population are left-handed. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision (Appendix 2)

- Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Capital letters: Capital letters stand alone and are not joined to the next letter. Children must practice starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter and not joining the subsequent letter. This should be modelled by the teacher during English and Phonics sessions.

A uniformed handwriting style should be consistent throughout the school; this will be evident on display boards and in book monitoring.

ROLE OF THE PUPIL

Children will:

- Use the pencil/pen provided by the school and not any other type.
- Children in KS2 will write in pen for all subjects bar maths and when or where a diagram/graph/table is to be drawn.
- Children will be able to understand and explain the importance of neat handwriting and excellent presentation.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

For a successful implementation of this policy, the role of the teacher and support staff is extremely important. They will:

- Follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting and ensure consistency and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years.
- Provide direct teaching and accurate modelling within explicit handwriting sessions.
- Model the high standard of handwriting and presentation by using neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including marking.
- Model excellent handwriting when teaching writing, using flipchart stands and lined flipchart pads.
- Ensure the correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting is taught (see Appendix 2).
- Provide resources and an environment that promotes good handwriting.
- Observe pupils, monitoring progress and determining targets for development.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The vast majority of pupils should be able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils may need more support and provision should be made for this. Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited by poor development of their fine motor skills should, in the first instance, refer to the Occupational Therapy Support Pack and complete frequent intervention activities. If completed and fine motor skills are still a barrier, teachers should liaise with the Inclusion Leader to develop a programme designed for the individual child.

MONITORING AND CELEBRATING HANDWRITING AND PRESENTATION

It is important to monitor the implementation of this policy. We will do so by:

- Carrying out regular leadership book monitoring where handwriting and presentation is a focus.
- Carrying out book monitoring in staff meetings to ensure consistency.
- Year Team Leaders carrying out book monitoring in team planning meetings.

To encourage the children to implement and sustain excellent handwriting and presentation we will:

- Reward children with verbal praise, stickers and house points when they have demonstrated high standards.
- Use display areas to demonstrate and celebrate children's achievements.

PRESENTATION GUIDANCE:

OVERALL

- The guidance for writing covers all subject areas where handwriting is used.
- Children and teachers use a single line to cross out mistakes or edit writing.
- Teachers challenge poor presentation through constructive verbal feedback.
- In KS2, children use purple pens only for editing, marking or re-doing calculations.
- If a piece of writing is not completed to the best of their ability/highest quality, then children will be expected to start the work again on a new page.

WRITING

The expectations for teaching writing include:

- All children in KS1 understanding the school's 'I will...' statements which set out the presentation expectations in child-friendly language, as appropriate to their key stage. For example, these may include:
 - I will have the correct pencil grip
 - I will write the long date on the first line
 - I will start at the left of the page/margin (this should be maintained throughout the piece of writing.)
 - I will ensure my letters sit on the line, with ascenders and descenders being of sufficient and appropriate height.
- All children in KS2 understanding the school's 'I will...' statements which set out the presentation expectations in child-friendly language, as appropriate to their key stage. For example, these may include:
 - I will rule off the last piece of writing
 - I will write the long date starting at the margin
 - I will leave a line and then write the title in the middle of this line.
 - I will make sure that I underline the date and title with a ruler.
 - I will start at the margin and this should be maintained throughout the piece of writing.
 - I will ensure my letters sit on the line, with ascenders and descenders being of sufficient and appropriate height.

MATHS

The expectations for maths include:

- Rule off the last piece of work before starting new work.
- The date should be written in short form (i.e. dd/mm/yy).
- Use one digit per square.
- At KS2, margins are to be two squares in width.
- Writing question numbers in the margin.
- At KS2, corrections should be written out as a new calculation using a purple pen.

WORK FOR DISPLAY

The expectations for display include:

- Any pieces written onto plain paper should use guidelines to support straight writing.
- All writing to be backed on coloured mounting paper.
- In KS2 a title should be written at the top of the piece of work, in the middle of the line and it should be underlined.

APPENDIX 1: CURSIVE SCRIPT

abc

Letter-join Plus

abc

Letter-join No-Lead

abc

Letter-join Print Plus

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

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

EOY Expectations & non-negotiables

N1	EOY Expectations • Develop manipulation and control • Make marks on their picture to stand for their name • To form all pre-writing shapes appropriate for their age (in months) Non-negotiables • Correct grip encouraged • Letter-join Print plus for resources/slides Implements & paper • Chunky pencils/crayons Progression <table><tr><td> </td><td>—</td><td>○</td><td>+</td><td>□</td></tr><tr><td>24m</td><td>30m</td><td>36m</td><td>42m</td><td>48m</td></tr></table>		—	○	+	□	24m	30m	36m	42m	48m						
	—	○	+	□													
24m	30m	36m	42m	48m													
N2	EOY Expectations • Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils • Write some or all of their name • Write some letters accurately • To form all pre-writing shapes appropriate for their age (in months) Non-negotiables • Correct grip • Pencil control activities with adult daily • Daily dough disco • Pre-writing shapes taught through drawing • Name writing practice (Spring/Summer terms) • Letter-join Print plus for resources/slides Implements & paper • Chunky pencils/crayons Progression <table><tr><td> </td><td>—</td><td>○</td><td>+</td><td>□</td><td>/</td><td>\</td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>24m</td><td>30m</td><td>36m</td><td>42m</td><td>48m</td><td>54m</td><td>54m</td><td>59m</td></tr></table>		—	○	+	□	/	\	X	24m	30m	36m	42m	48m	54m	54m	59m
	—	○	+	□	/	\	X										
24m	30m	36m	42m	48m	54m	54m	59m										
R	EOY Expectations Digits & letters (print) formed from correct starting point Most letters are correctly formed To form all pre-writing shapes Non-negotiables • Correct grip & correct digit/letter formation monitored and encouraged in all lessons/groups. • Daily handwriting lesson • Pencil control interventions • Daily dough disco • Letter-join Print plus for resources/slides																

Implements & paper

- Chunky pencils/crayons

Progression

								
24m	30m	36m	42m	48m	54m	54m	59m	63m

1 EOY Expectations

- Digits & letters formed from correct starting point and correctly formed
- 1 digit per square
- Writing on line as appropriate
- Using a ruler to draw a line on a line

Non-negotiables

- Correct grip & correct digit/letter formation in all lesson/groups
- Daily handwriting lesson
- Pencil control interventions
- Using a ruler
- Letter-join No-Lead for resources/slides
- Chunky pencils/crayons

Progression

1	Curly caterpillar	c o a d g q e s f
2	Ladder	l t i u y j
3	One armed robot	r n m h b k p
4	Zig zag	v w x z

2 EOY Expectations

Cursive 2 letter joins being used reasonably consistently and on line as appropriate

Non-negotiables

- Correct grip & correct digit/letter formation in all lesson/groups.
- Daily handwriting
- Handwriting interventions
- Using a ruler to underline and draw shapes
- 1 digit per square
- Letter-join No-Lead for resources/slides

Implements & paper

- Pencils

Progression, begin to

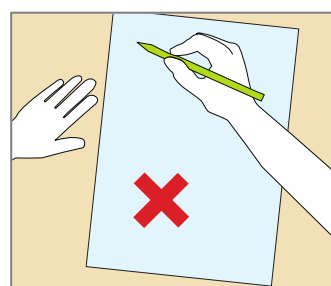
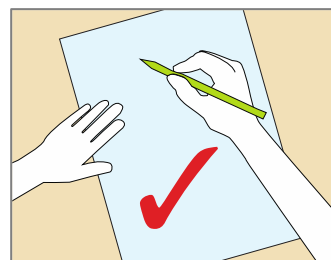
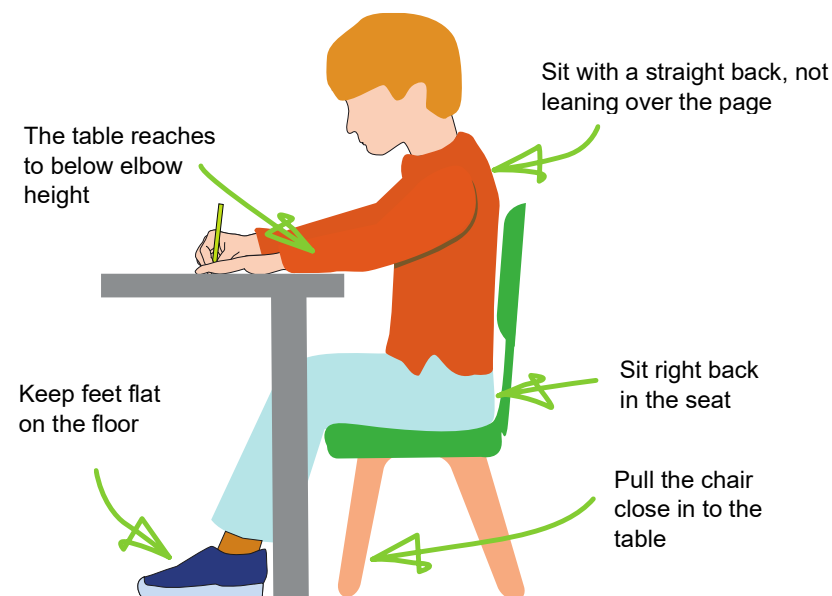
Set	Examples
Horizontal joins	o-o o-n
Diagonal strokes that finish on the baseline and join a taller letter	a-h
Over and back joins	a-d a-c

	Diagonal	
	These letters:	Can join:
	a c d e h i k l m n t u	e i j m n p r u v w y l h b k t
	Horizontal	
	These letters:	Can join:
	a c d g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y b f h k l t	
3	EOY Expectations - Continue cursive with 2 letter joins and work towards EOY expectation: ie cursive script using lines appropriately - Lower and upper case formed & used correctly 1 digit per square Non-negotiables - Cursive script taught & practised daily - Children encouraged to rewrite part or all of work if not in cursive from January. - Handwriting interventions - Using a ruler to draw margins, underline and draw shapes/lines Implements & paper - Pencils - Blue handwriting pens in September Progression - Develop horizontal and vertical joins taught in Year 2	
4	EOY Expectations	
5	Cursive script using lines appropriately;	
6	- lower and upper case formed & used correctly; legible & neat. 1 digit per square Non-negotiables - All writing in cursive. - Cursive script practised 3 times a week (2024-5) - Using a ruler - Children encouraged to rewrite part or all of work if not in cursive. Implements & paper - Blue handwriting pens Progression - Develop horizontal and vertical joins taught in Year 2	

APPENDIX 2: CORRECT POSTURE AND PENCIL GRIP

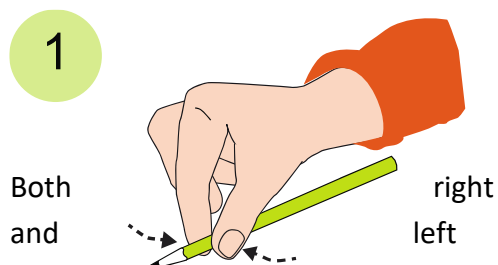
Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children

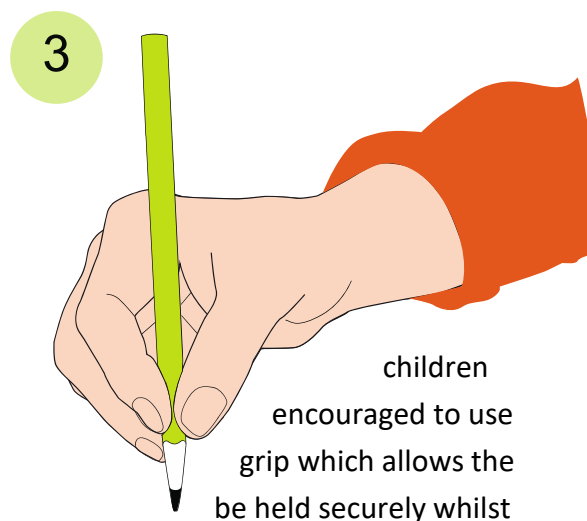
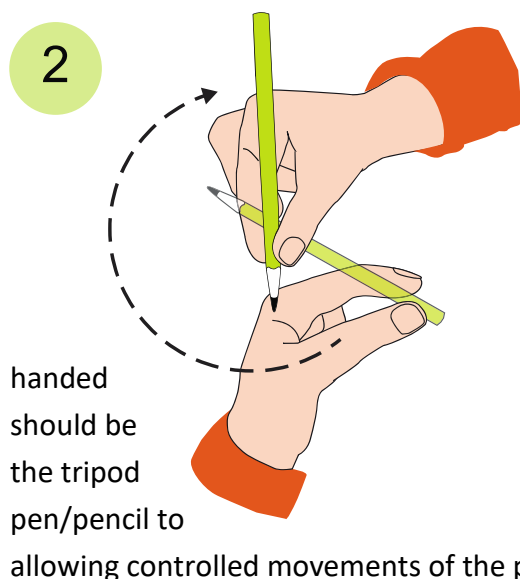
THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP



1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.

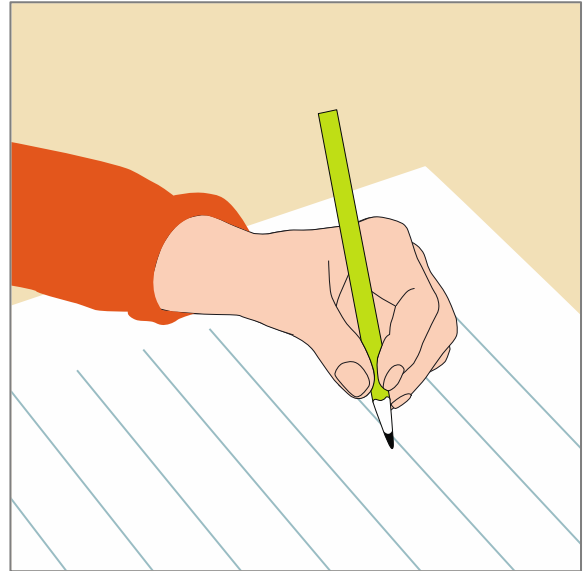
2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.

3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

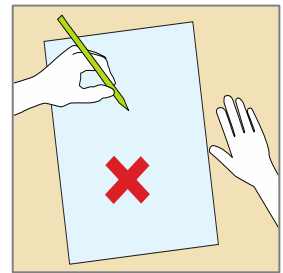
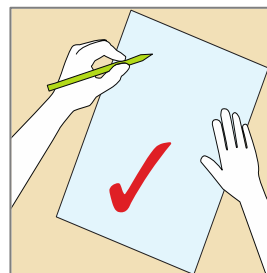


LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow right-handed teachers as they demonstrate letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.



- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children