

# Castle Primary School Handwriting Policy

**Review Date: Feb 2026**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure relevance, effectiveness and practicality. If at any time circumstances or situations should change in this subject area, the policy will be reviewed earlier than stated above.

## Overview

Handwriting is a fundamental skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. These skills are taught regularly and systematically throughout the school, and form part of the *'Transcription'* section of our writing curriculum.

## Curriculum Intent

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns, which can aid spelling.

The development of this fluid style (when mastered) allows children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves.

### *Our pupils will:*

- Form lowercase, upper case letters and numerals correctly.
- Understand the importance of legible, neat handwriting in order to communicate their meaning clearly.
- Take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Write legibly, at speed, in a neat cursive style by the end of key stage 2.

## Curriculum Implementation

At Castle, we set high expectations for handwriting and presentation. Staff provide good role models when writing in children's books, on display boards and classroom screens.

Children are taught how to form the letters of the alphabet accurately, how to join letters and the importance of ascending and descending letters. Handwriting examples are placed in each classroom and extra support is given to children who have difficulty with their fine motor skills, including those children who are left-handed.

The Spectrum Handwriting scheme is used as a basis for handwriting practice from Year 2 onwards. This provides a clear scaffold for the size, shape and consistency of all joined letters.

When children in key stage 2 have achieved a legible, fluent and joined style of handwriting in pencil, they will gain a pen 'licence' complete with certificate and Castle handwriting pen. This is something the children strive for.

## Progression of Handwriting Skills

### Within EYFS

- Gross and fine motor skills are developed through a variety of activities.
- Print letter formation is taught daily in conjunction with learning letter sounds through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Programme* (See Appendix A for details).
- The tripod pencil grip is developed for comfort and control.
- Writing posture is modelled and encouraged at tables, when appropriate.
- Blank resources are used for mark making initially so that pupils are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as the size of their writing is becoming controlled, they are given lined paper and exercise books, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line.
- Fluent, accurate and efficient handwriting is expected by the summer term.

### Year 1

Print letter formation continues to be taught daily in conjunction with learning letter sounds through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Programme* (See Appendix A for details).

#### Pupils are taught to:

- Write lowercase and capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place with a good level of consistency.
- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Form digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- Know which letters are ascenders and which are descenders.

### Year 2

Print letter formation is taught using Unit 2 of the Spectrum Handwriting Scheme.

#### Pupils are taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- 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

#### From spring term onwards:

- Pupils are taught the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join lowercase letters using Unit 3 of the Spectrum Handwriting Scheme. (See Appendix B for details)

### Lower Key Stage 2

Cursive letter formation is practised using Unit 4 & 5 of the Spectrum Handwriting Scheme. (See Appendix B for details)

#### Pupils are taught to:

- Continue 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.
- Confidently use diagonal and horizontal joining strokes throughout their independent writing to increase fluency.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, *[for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].*

### Upper Key Stage 2

Varied letter formation is practised using Unit 7 & 8 of the Spectrum Handwriting Scheme if required. (See Appendix B for details)

#### Pupils are taught to:

- Increase the speed of handwriting so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of writing down what they want to say.
- Be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, *e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version.*
- Confidently use diagonal and horizontal joining strokes throughout their independent writing in a legible, fluent and speedy way
- 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 that is best suited for a task.
- Recognise when to use an unjoined style (*e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address or for algebra*) and capital letters (*e.g. for filling in a form*).

## Assessment of Handwriting

Handwriting is assessed as part of the writing curriculum using the progression of skills above.

Within pupils' workbooks, handwriting is continually monitored and comments made either in written or verbal form to ensure pupil progress is evident.

Assessment pieces of writing are used at the end of each half term to monitor progress in all aspects of the writing curriculum. These six pieces are placed within the pupil's anthology of writing, which is then passed to the receiving teacher at the end of the academic year.

## Curriculum Impact

The progression of skills along with the support of the schemes (where appropriate), provides our school with a consistent approach where handwriting expectations are clear and the same technical vocabulary is used with, and spoken by, all staff and pupils.

Our children's handwriting will become automatic and to a high standard so that they are able to focus on the content of their writing rather than the presentation. The impact will be noticeable within written work in all areas of the curriculum.

## Monitoring Impact

The Head Teacher, English Subject Leader and Governing Body manage a programme of monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning at Castle School. They use a range of strategies to assess the quality of achievements:















- Monitoring of planning and / or children's books
- Lesson observations
- Learning Walks
- Pupil Voice
- Analysis of SAT results
- Monitoring of standards in writing and subsequent setting of targets















Class teachers have a key role in the monitoring and evaluation of their work and that of the children in their class. The Headteacher works with the governing body to inform them about the work carried out within the school.













## APPENDIX A













### Agreed letter formation for EYFS and Y1













(As outlined in the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* programme)

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 s	 snake	Show your teeth and let the s hiss out <b>ssssss ssssss</b>	Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
 a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the a sound at the back of your mouth <b>aaa</b>	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
 t	 tiger	Open your lips, put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press <b>ttt</b>	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.
 p	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say <b>ppp</b>	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
 i	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the i sound at the back of your mouth <b>iii</b>	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.
 n	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the <b>nnnnn</b> sound <b>nnnnn</b>	Down the stick, up and over the net.
 m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the <b>mmmmm</b> sound <b>mmmmm</b>	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 d	 duck	Put your tongue to the top and front of your mouth and make a quick d sound <b>ddd</b>	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
 g	 goat	Give me a big smile that shows your teeth, press the middle of your tongue to the top and back of your mouth; push your tongue down and forward to make the <b>g</b> sound <b>ggg</b>	Round the goat's face, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin.
 o	 octopus	Make your mouth into round shape and say <b>ooo</b>	All around the octopus.
 c	 cat	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say <b>ccc</b>	Curl around the cat.
 k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say <b>kkk</b>	Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner.
 ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say <b>ccc</b>	c Curl round the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and across, back and down and to the corner. <b>Catchphrase:</b> Rock that sock!
 e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say <b>eee</b>	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 u	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say <b>u u u</b>	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.
 r	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a <b>rrrr</b> sound <b>rrrr rrrr</b>	From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.
 h	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply <b>h h h</b>	Down, up and over the helicopter
 b	 bear	Put your lips together and say <b>b</b> as you open them <b>b b b</b>	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.
 f	 flamingo	Open your lips a little; put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound <b>ffff</b> <b>ffff</b>	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.
 l	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little; put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press <b>llll</b> <b>llll</b>	All the way down the lollipop.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 j	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say <b>j j j</b>	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.
 v	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing <b>vvvv</b> <b>vvvv</b>	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 w	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say <b>w</b> <b>w w</b>	From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.
 x	 box	Mouth open, then push the <b>cs/x</b> sound through as you close your mouth <b>cs cs cs</b> <b>(x x x)</b>	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.
 y	 yoyo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say <b>y</b> without opening your mouth <b>yyy</b>	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.
 z	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the <b>z</b> sound <b>zzzz</b> <b>zzzz</b>	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase Catchphrase
 qu qu	 queen	Pucker your mouth, then open it as you say <b>qu qu qu</b>	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end.  qu Quick, it's the queen!
 ch ch	 cherries	Pucker your lips and show your teeth; use your tongue as you say <b>ch ch ch</b>	ch Chew the cherries, children.
 sh sh	 shells	Show me your teeth and push the air out <b>shshshshsh shshshshsh</b>	sh Share the shells.
 th th	 thumb	<b>Voiced:</b> Tongue on your teeth, teeth almost closed to make a 'buzzing' <b>th th th</b> <b>Unvoiced:</b> Tongue on your teeth; push the air out <b>th th th</b>	th Thumbs up, we're having fun.
 ng ng	 ring	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say <b>ng ng ng</b>	ng Bling on a ring.
 nk nk	 pink panda	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say <b>ngk ngk ngk</b>	nk I think I am pink.

Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.

APPENDIX B

Agreed cursive style for Y2 – Y6

Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv

Ww Xx Yy Zz