

HOOK INFANT SCHOOL HANDWRITING POLICY

Introduction

Developing a handwriting style is a form of self-expression that will enable and empower children for the rest of their lives. At Hook Infant School we recognise that children's ability to write depends upon the development of a strong foundation of skills in their Primary years. This policy sets out Hook Infant School's approach to handwriting and presentation. Hook Infant School follows the national framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1). The handwriting requirements of these frameworks apply in full to the school.

Our Aims

- For all children to learn, practice and apply appropriate and effective handwriting skills at each stage of development, working towards handwriting that is legible, presentable, comfortable, fluent, automatic and sustainable.
- To raise attainment by involving children in the development of their own handwriting and to understand the factors which help this process.
- To support handwriting through the use of consistent resources across the school (Appendix B and C).
- To make provision for left-handed children and children who experience difficulties.
- To encourage personal satisfaction and pride in well-presented writing.

Development of Handwriting Skills

Handwriting is a complex activity that is dependent upon the maturation and integration of a number of skills including:

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Visual-Motor Control
- Hand-Eye Coordination
- Cognitive and Perceptual Skills
- Tactile and Kinesthetic Sensitivities
- Behaviour, concentration and memory

Staff across the school understand that handwriting is a whole-body activity, and this informs teaching across the learning stages. Discrete handwriting sessions that last 10-15 minutes take place daily throughout the Early Years and KS1. These are tailored to the development stage and needs of the children involved. As a school we follow the Anima Phonics handwriting scheme where children use the rhymes to help form their letters correctly.

Curriculum - Early Years Foundation Stage (0-5 years)

All areas of learning in the EYFS are integrated, but specific references to handwriting skills are found in Physical Development (movement and growing) and Literacy (writing). Secure learning in this early stage lays the crucial groundwork for effective, lifelong handwriting habits. This begins with informed practice whereby:

- Activities to develop handwriting skills are implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activity. A handwriting carousel takes place four times weekly whereby one group works with the teacher on letter formation whilst other groups develop gross and fine motor skills. Warm-up activities are used before any writing activity begins. Planning takes into account the importance of developing the 'big muscles of the body' (gross motor) as these support the 'little muscles of the hand' (fine motor).
- Teaching correct letter formation in letter families is given high priority, especially the letters in the child's own name. This is explicitly taught and practised in developmentally appropriate ways from the beginning

of the EYFS. The use of capital letters at the beginning of names is modelled and used at all times. Staff and children both use spoken language as they form letter shapes and patterns to reinforce cognitive learning. The 'patterns' used when learning letters are agreed and consistent. They are modelled and practiced using a range of playful activities, media and positions.

- Progress in all areas of development is monitored to ensure that extra support is given where needed.

Curriculum – Key Stage 1

The Year 1 curriculum (appendix A) focuses on the **teaching** of letter formation. As children master letter formation some join clusters are taught in Year 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1 handwriting is taught via a discrete 10-15 minute session teaching specific handwriting skill (either for whole class or target group) directly before writing session.

- Mix of gross and fine motor warm up activities
- Teaching: modeled by teacher and traced in the air/on the floor/on a whiteboard.
- Handwriting undertaken on normal lined paper in books at tables in order to practice correct posture and positioning.
- Children who are working on letter size will work on yellow highlighted lines to allow them to practice accurately.

Agreed language

Staff use consistent language to describe handwriting, including: letter families, lower case, upper case, capital letters, ascenders and descenders. Anima Phonics provide rhymes (Appendix C) and groups the letters into these following families (see Appendix B):

Short mantis letters	Tall mantis letters	Stick letters
Mini stick letters	Curly caterpillar letters	Venus flytrap
Ellie bug	Sand snake	Fire bug
X- bugs	Wiggly worm	Zig-zag bugs

Provision for left-handed children

All staff are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision

- Left handed scissors are provided
- Children are shown how to position paper
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils line of vision
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that elbows do not bump
- Children should be encouraged to have the correct sitting posture for good handwriting

Progression, Assessment and Monitoring

Progress in handwriting development is monitored, assessed and shared throughout the school

EYFS: Some elements of handwriting are formally assessed under the 'Moving and handling' ELG. Pencil grip and letter formation are assessed continuously and shared with Year 1 teachers at end of year transition meetings.

KS1: All children are assessed on entry to Year 1. Handwriting development is assessed each term using the writing Assessment Grid. At all stages, children learn the skills to self-assess their own handwriting and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.

Reviewed and revised November 2022

Approved by the Governing Body, Hook Infant School

Signed *Alison Collier*
Chairman of Governing Body

Date for Review: November 2025


Appendix A

Statutory Requirements	Non-Statutory Requirements
EYFS	
Literacy development involves encouraging children to begin to read and write. Moving and handling: Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. Writing: Children write simple sentences.	Expected descriptors: Shows preference for a dominant hand. Use a pencil effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Exceeding descriptors: They hold paper in position and use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct pencil grip. They are beginning to write on lines and control letter size.
KS1 – 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these Write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher	Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.
KS1 – 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 un-joined Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters Use spacing that reflects the size of the letters.	Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Appendix B


The Anima Letter Families

Short Mantis Letters



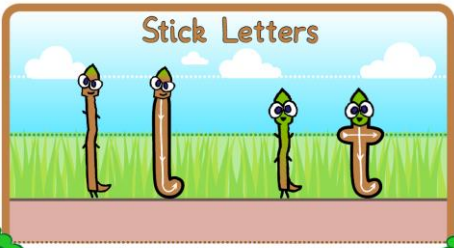
Short Mantis always hides in the grass.
Start on the grass, go straight down her body
then swoop over her arm.

Tall Mantis Letters



Tall Mantis always has her head in the clouds.
Start in the sky, go straight down her body then
swoop over her arm.


Stick Letters



Long Stick starts in the sky.
Go straight down his body
and finish with a flick.

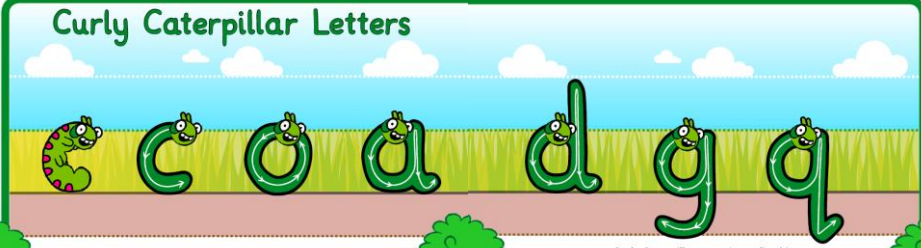
Tiptoe Stick pokes his
head out above the
grass! Don't forget to
cross his arms.

Mini Stick Letters



Mini Stick is very shy and always hides in the grass.
Dig down into the ground for y and j.


Curly Caterpillar Letters



Curly Caterpillar hides in the grass.
Start at his head, then curl around his body.


Curly Caterpillar sometimes digs his
tail into the ground. Dig down into the
ground for g and q.

Wiggly Worm




Wiggly Worm wanders
in the grass. Go down
and up, down and up.

Ellie Bug



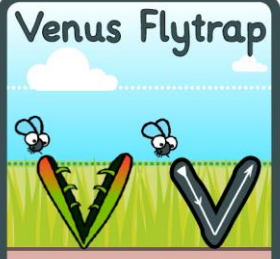
Ellie Bug starts in the
middle. Follow her
trunk across, up and
around.

Sand Snake



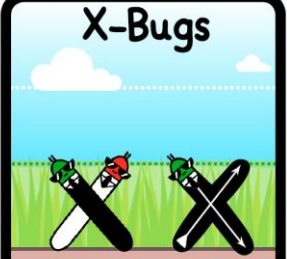
Sand Snake slithers to
the left, slopes down
to the right and then
slides back to the left.

Venus Flytrap




Venus Fly Trap
waits in the grass.
Go down and up
its jaws.

X-Bugs




X-Bugs hide in the
grass. Two lines that
cross is the secret
agent code.

Fire Bug



Fire Bug starts in the sky
and ends under ground.
Flow down the hose and
cross his arms.

Zig-Zag Bug



Zig-Zag Bug
hides in the grass.
Zig, zag, zig!

Appendix C: Anima Handwriting Rhymes

a 	b 	c 	d 	e 	f 
Around the apple and down to Ant.	From the hoop to the ground, then bounce around the ball.	Curl around Crab's claw.	Around Dog, up to her ear, then down to her paw.	From Elephant's mouth, go around her head to the tip of her trunk.	Flow down the firehose, then cross the fire exit.
g 	h 	i 	j 	k 	l 
Around Gorilla's face, then scoop down his arm.	From Hen's head to her toes, then over her body.	Down the stick plus a flick, then a dot for Insect.	Scoop down Jellyfish's tentacles, then add a dot on top.	From Kangaroo's head to her toes, up around her body, then kick out her tail.	Down Lion's leg.
m 	n 	o 	p 	qu 	r 
Down Meerkat and over the mangoes.	Down Newt and over the nest.	Circle around the orange.	Down the pin and up around the bubble.	Around Queen Quail, down her cape with a flick.	Down Rat's tail, then reach to his nose.
s 	t 	u 	v 	w 	x 
Slither down Snake.	Down Tiger's arm and across the watch.	Under the umbrella and drop to the drip.	Down and up the Venus Fly Trap.	Wiggly Worm goes down, up, down, up.	From Fox's hand to her toes, then strike back to make a cross.
y 	z 				
Down and up Yak's horns, then scoop down under her chin.		Zebra's zip goes zig, zag, zip.			