Handwriting Policy

Author: Head of KS2

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Introduction

This document sets out the Castle Primary School's approach to handwriting and presentation. It sits within the context of the school's vision and the other policies of the school; it applies to the whole school community – governors, staff, pupils and parents/guardians/carers.

The School follows the national framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage ("EYFS"), Key Stage 1 ("KS1") and Key Stage 2 ("KS2") and the handwriting requirements of that framework (see Appendix 4) apply in full to Caste Primary School.

The outcomes that we will strive to ensure all our pupils achieve are:

- Having fluent, legible and speedy handwriting that can be performed automatically, so that the attention of the brain is on the content of the writing.
- Having the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Having competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition.
- Writing clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Having a comfortable and efficient pencil hold and working position.

Handwriting is of fundamental importance to educating our pupils because pupils who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently are, in every sense, disenfranchised. The mastery of automaticity in handwriting is therefore one of the key priorities of Castle Primary School.

General Principles

Handwriting comprises physical and cognitive skills that need to be learnt and become part of the automatic cognitive skill set of the pupil. To achieve this, Castle Primary School has chosen the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme, to train teachers and teach pupils.

The programme has four threads:

- Making bodies stronger
- Holding the pencil (for speed, comfort and legibility)
- Learning the letters
- Flow and fluency

The key principles of the programme are:

- Building physical strength underpins handwriting and concentration. This knowledge informs the working positions that children use for writing and the strengthening targets they work on.
- Pupils are not expected to do anything before they are developmentally ready for it.
- The different components of writing are mastered individually before being used in combination.
- Letters are learnt as movements, not as visual shapes, and movement remains central to developing automaticity in letter formation, flow and fluency.
- Posture is important in developing the correct position for handwriting and so children are taught how to organise their working position and paper position to enable comfortable and fluent writing from the start.
- Correct pencil hold is taught from the start (e.g as soon as a tripod grip is developmentally appropriate), and the strength is developed to maintain this, enabling comfort, speed and writing stamina.

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes; strengthening handwriting skills will support reading and writing development as a whole.

Year groups

The Kinetic Letters programme is commenced in Reception and is used throughout the Castle Primary School. By the end of KS1, each pupil should be working at the national standard and most should be working at a greater depth (see Appendix 2). Children begin Joining in Yr2 or Yr3.

Handwriting practice takes place in sessions that are outside English lessons, since handwriting underpins the majority of curriculum areas and is integral to self-esteem and engagement with learning. Handwriting is taught in discrete sessions, separate from Phonics, and achieves Fidelity with the Reading Framework (2023).

Pupils in EYFS and KS1 complete 3 handwriting sessions of at least 20 minutes per week. Thereafter time allocation to maintain handwriting development and increase speed and flow, will be regular but at the discretion of the class teacher so long as appropriate progression continues to be made. Handwriting practice takes place on the 6-lined (or 3-lined or 9-lined if appropriate) Kinetic Letters white boards, supported by visits to Sand Trays, with a transition to books via the ‘Practice Patch’ and the checking of weekly targets in other curriculum (subject) books.

The majority of the time, sessions are taught to the whole class with adaptation enabled Kinetic Letters strategies and resources. Reinforcement may take place in small groups and/or individually.

Strategies to build physical strength for handwriting are integrated into general school life and provision for EYFS.

The Digital Teaching Turtle (DTT), is used as a front of classroom teaching aide to animate letters and animate the strategies for Pencil Hold and Writing Positions.

Assessment

The Teacher Assessment Framework in the National Curriculum will apply to each pupil when their progress is being assessed at the end of KS1 and KS2 (see Appendix 2). Prior to these two measurement points, teachers will use the Kinetic Letters assessment guides on a daily basis (Appendix 3). Marking of work by teachers will be positive and self-correction by pupils will be encouraged.

Formative and summative assessment is built into the structure of the S.T.A.R.T. handwriting session and teachers and pupils use the Kinetic Letters strategy of **A**ssess, **D**etect, **C**orrect (ADC) for all Threads of Kinetic Letters. This is both during specific handwriting sessions, and when monitoring the transfer of the physical and cognitive handwriting skills into daily classwork.

Other Kinetic Letters assessment opportunities are listed and linked to the National Curriculum on Appendix 3 of this document.

Special Educational Needs and Disability ("SEND")

The School's SEND policy applies. However, it should be noted that the Kinetic Letters programme is applicable to pupils with dyslexic and dyspraxia (developmental co-ordination disorder).

Home involvement

It is important that parents/guardians/carers are involved in supporting the learning of handwriting. Parents will be given details of the handwriting programme

Presentation

Class teachers are responsible for displays on the walls of their classrooms which will include the Kinetic Letters Tree with moveable monkeys, Letter Family posters, the weekly target lists and examples of teachers' and pupils' handwriting. These will be relevant, up to date, in good condition and reviewed at least once a term.

Policy adoption

This policy was adopted on September 2025 by the School Governors and will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1

KL fonts

Lower case Regular:	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
Lower case Joined:	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
Upper case:	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Numbers:	1234567890

Letter groups	(in teaching order)
Jumper Family:	hnmrbp
Abracadabra Family	coadgsq
Special Squirter	e
Window Cleaner Family:	ltiu
Fisher Family:	jgfy
Slider Family:	vwxzk
Pushing numbers:	2357
Pulling numbers:	068914

Quick Tree icon: Shift + Tilde (~)= (~)

Appendix 2
Expected Standards progression

The table below, from the teacher assessment framework, has the expected standards for pupils at the end of KS1 and KS2.

The expected standard	Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2		
'Pupil can' statement	**Working towards**	**Working at**	**Working at greater depth**	**Working towards**	**Working at**	**Working at greater depth**
Forming lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place	All	All	All	All	All	All
Forming lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another	Some*	All	All	All	All	All
Forming capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters	Some* capitals All numbers	All	All	All	All	All
Using spacing between words	All	All	All	All	All	All
Using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.		All	All	All	All	All
Use of question marks and exclamation marks			All	All	All	All
Using the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters			Some*	Some*	All	All
Producing legible joined handwriting				All	All	All
Maintaining legibility, fluency and speed in handwriting through choosing whether or not to join specific letters.					All	All

Some 'indicates that the knowledge or skill is starting to be acquired and is demonstrated correctly on occasion but not yet consistent or frequent.'

Source National curriculum assessments – KS1 & 2: Interim teacher assessment frameworks at the end of KS1 & 2

Updated September 2021

Appendix 3: Assessments for monitoring progress			Kinetic Letters assessment strategies										
Expected standards in handwriting and National Curriculum Statutory Requirements 2017-2018	**Corresponding Kinetic Letters Strand- (colour coded)**	**Push up targets. Meerkat- BOGOFs**	**Pupils' writing questionnaire**	**Starter Marker Writing sample**	**3 Colour check**	**Fluency targets**	**Pencil hold diagnostic sheet**	**Assess, Detect, Correct (ADC)**	**Monkey Smile Pencil targets**	**Turtle tick targets Formation/spacing**	**Practice Patch**	**Letter Family challenges**	**3 More, better than before**
Sit correctly at a table	**Writing position Pelvic Girdle strength**	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓		
Hold a pencil comfortably and correctly	**Shoulder Girdle strength 3 Friends Pencil Hold**	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place	**Letter Formation/orientation The Tree symbol**		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another	**Writing characteristics: Heights of letters Grounding**		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
Understand which letters belong to which families and to practise these	**Letter Families Family Features**			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Use spacing between words. Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.	**Writing Characteristics: Spacing within/between words**		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
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	**Letter Formation: letter finish Break letters (Breakers)**		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
Increase legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting e.g. 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.	**Flow and speed More sky above the Tree**		✓	✓				✓			✓		✓

Appendix 3 (continued)
Kinetic Letters assessment opportunities

Push ups: Pupils record weekly progress e.g. on post-its.

Meerkat BOGOFs: e.g. measure using counting/reciting tables/alphabet/register etc.

Pupil's Writing Questionnaire: Use if pupils begin the programme in KS2, to establish starting points (TB 6.18 and Resources pack).

Starter Marker Writing Sample: Use every half term. Pupils write for 5 mins on a simple subject e.g. "what I can see from where am sitting".

1. Whilst pupils write, the teacher photographs writing position/pencil hold. This provides a record of progress and helps set strength targets.
2. A word count can measure speed and Automaticity.
3. Pupils/teachers can carry out all/part of a 3 colour check (see below).

3 Colour check: To assess Formation: Start/Finish and orientation of a continuous Letter Trail = pencil circle of incorrect letters.
To assess Writing Characteristics: Spacing= yellow pen line, Grounding=green pen line. Heights=brown pen line. (TB 5.11).

Assess, Detect, Correct (ADC): Use throughout the day
-for Writing position: (TB 2.14)
-for Pencil Hold: (TB 4.20-29).
-for Letter Formation:(TB 3.28/32/36/39/42/46)
Start/Finish (and continuous Trail)
Orientation
-for Writing Characteristics:
Spacing- within words/ between words/across the line
Grounding- on line/below line.
Heights- lower-case/upper-case/numbers.

Fluency targets: a checklist of features of fluent unjoined writing. Use to inform teaching and as a check of readiness for joining (TB 5.10).

Pencil Hold Diagnostic Sheet: record progress towards maintaining the 3 Friends Pencil Hold. Complete periodically until all pupils can maintain the 3 Friends pencil Hold and to inform strength provision. (TB 2.12 and Resources pack).

Monkey Smile targets: record Pencil Hold maintenance. Pupils self-mark, adding a smile to the stamp of the monkey on whiteboards and Paper (TB 3.21 & 4.12).

Turtle Tick targets: record achievement of the formation/spacing target. Pupils self-mark, ticking the turtle's tummy on their whiteboard (TB 3.21).

Practice Patch: a weekly transfer by pupils of mastered targets to books, at the end of START. It also measures Automaticity in the writing that follows (TB 3.23).

3 More, better than before: a peer-marking activity (TB 6.17).

1. Pupils work on own whiteboards and write the target letter/pair/word, by teach of the Trees-down the board.
2. They each 'choose with their eyes' which they are most proud of, but do not disclose this to their partner.
3. Pupils swap boards and guess/mark with a dot, the letter/pair/word they think their partner chose.
4. Pupils swap boards back and discuss each other's judgements. (e.g. 'you didn't flick' or 'it's not a Brave Monkey letter' etc.)
5. They both try '3 more, better than before', on the last three lines of the board, to correct what they learnt from the feedback above.
6. Pupils share/discuss the improvements each made and 'take a photo with their eyes' their best line, before rubbing off boards to play again.

Letter Family Challenges: complete regularly as part of START sessions. Use to work on specific targets (see details for each e.g. Letter starts) and to reinforce the Family Feature within the Letter Families, to gain Flow and Automaticity (TB 3.48 and Portal> Teaching Resources).

Appendix 4

Handwriting requirements – national framework - statutory

This page and the following one set out the National curriculum handwriting requirements for early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

References:

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2021)
Early years foundation stage profile handbook (2022)
National curriculum - Framework documents (2014) and primary curriculum (2015)
National curriculum assessments - Key stage 1 & 2: Teacher assessment frameworks at the end of KS1 & KS2 (2018/19 onwards)

The National framework document for Key stage 1 and Key stage 2 makes the following statements about the outcomes that must be achieved by teachers:

- Ensuring all pupils write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences (English: Aims p13)
- It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition. (English: Writing p15)
- Pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised. (English: Purpose of study p13)
- Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (Language and Literacy: 6.3 Reading and Writing p10)
- Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. (English: Writing p15)

The Statutory framework for EYFS specifies learning and development requirements.

The areas of learning relevant to handwriting, together with the early learning goals children should reach at the end of the academic year in which they are 5, are in the table below.

Early Years Foundation Stage: Statutory Framework	
Activities and experiences in areas of learning	Early Learning Goals (ELGs) 'Expected' level of development
Prime area: Physical development • gross and fine motor experiences to develop strength, coordination and positional awareness through tummy time crawling and play movement. • adults can support children to develop core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. • fine motor control and precision helps with hand eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Specific area: Literacy • writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting).	ELG • Gross motor skills Demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination when playing ELG • Fine motor skills Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing-using the tripod grip in almost all cases. ELG • Writing Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

<table>
<tr><th>Statutory requirements</th><th>Guidance</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Key stage 1 Year 1
Pupils' writing during Year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pupils should be taught to:
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</td><td>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</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Year 2
In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 should be able to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down, and to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pupils should be taught to:
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 between words that reflects the size of the letters.</td><td>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.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Lower key stage 2 Years 3-4
Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.</td></tr>
<tr><td>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, e.g. 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.</td><td>Pupils should be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation.

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Upper key stage 2 Years 5-6
Children should be able to write down their ideas quickly. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless to manage the general demands of the curriculum in Year 7.</td></tr>
<tr><td>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 that is best suited for a task.</td><td>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an un-joined 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).</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix 5

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">School Presentation Protocols</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>EYFS (Rec)</th><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>Years 3 & 4</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Writing implements
- for Handwriting practice

-for Classwork</td><td>When developmentally appropriate,
whiteboard pens on whiteboards</td><td colspan="3">Whiteboard pens on whiteboards for handwriting practice</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Thin triangular pencils for writing on paper in classwork</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Pencils</td><td colspan="2">Black handwriting pens may be used for some displays.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self-correction</td><td colspan="2">Simple, straight line through error.</td><td colspan="2">Simple, straight line through error.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">Target checking – Some lines in work may be checked with a Turtle Tick to ensure targets mastered on whiteboards are being transferred into work in books.

Practice Patch - Some pages may begin with the top three lines of a page forming the Practice Patch. There should then be a space equivalent to an empty line after which the title and written piece can follow. This allows transfer of handwriting practice from whiteboard to paper.

Coloured pens may also be used to assess for letter heights (brown), spacing (yellow) and grounding (green).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ruler use</td><td></td><td colspan="3">All straight lines to be drawn using a ruler and the correct use of the Helping Hand to position and steady it.</td></tr>
<tr><td>New work</td><td>New work to commence on a new page.</td><td>New work will usually commence on a new page, unless teacher advises otherwise.</td><td colspan="2">New work to be commenced after ruling off previous work, if there is usable space available.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Un-joined / Joined writing</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">All writing will be un-joined.</td><td colspan="2">Joined writing gradually integrated into independent work.</td><td>Joined writing fully</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Un-joined writing used for dates, titles, labels, data, email addresses, algebra.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date and title</td><td colspan="4">These are to be written on the second line of the page in order for pupils to use the same line spacing as for the writing that follows and learn the comparative heights of numbers and upper and lower-case letters. These are always written unjoined even when the subsequent work is in joined writing, in order for pupils to continue practicing both skills.</td></tr>
</table>

	All work to be dated (day month) by teacher.	All work to be dated (day month year) by child or teacher at top, right hand side.		All written work to be dated by child, at top, right hand side using full date. Maths to use numbered date format dd/mm/yyyy eg.14/11/2014
Writing surface (whiteboard / paper)	KL 6-line whiteboards transitioning to appropriate size (15 mm gap) lined paper, with the additional guide of the Kinetic Letters tree, for the majority of the time.	KL 6-line whiteboards transitioning to appropriate size (15 mm then 12 mm gap) lined paper. Squared exercise books for maths.		KL 9-line whiteboards and narrow lines (10 mm gap) and small squared exercise books.
	3-line whiteboards, wider lined paper and large squared exercise books to be used by some pupils at teacher discretion.			
	Lines on worksheets / sheets of paper to follow the same widths as those used in exercise books.			
	Writing on whiteboards may be photocopied to create a permanent record, or writing in Sand Tays photographed.			
The KL Tree	The Kinetic Letters Tree will be used to guide letter formation, either in its full form with monkey faces, or as the Quick Tree (two-line tree with ground-line and sky-line). The tree may be drawn on whiteboards and/or added to the left-hand edge of books/paper, used by the teacher before demonstrating letters / words / numbers etc. and by pupils when handwriting. The Quick Tree is also a shortcut key in the font, so that teachers can type 'By the Tree'.			
	EYFS	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Years 3 & 4**