

A Guide to Handwriting

'Being the BEST we can be in all that we do'

Purpose

At Kings Worthy Primary School, our teaching of handwriting aims to ensure that all pupils will:

- Experience continuity and progression in handwriting across EYFS, KS1 and KS2
- Be able to legibly and fluently, with increasing speed, express themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations
- Develop a fluent, joined handwriting style

General Guidelines

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

By the end of the Foundation Stage

- Print individual letters using a non-joined script
- Correctly form all lower-case letters
- Correctly orientate all lower-case letters
- Use the correct tripod pencil grip
- Know and adopt the correct body position when writing

By the end of 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
- Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated in cursive script, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.
- Write accurately with spaces between words
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways).

By the end of 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 unjoined
- 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

By the end of Year 4:

- Use diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting

By the end of Year 6:

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

Teaching and Learning

In EYFS children will develop skills of:

- Gross motor control
- Fine motor control (during our Fidgety Finger morning sessions)
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- Learn the main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes: l, c and r
- Develop and produce letter-like shapes
- Record their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation
- Learn letter formation alongside phonics using Letters and Sounds and Ruth Miskin's 'Read Write Inc.'

At Kings Worthy Primary School, handwriting is taught as a specific skill, with additional practise as required.

Basic structure of handwriting sessions in KS1 and KS2 (and later stages of EYFS)

- Relaxation
- Posture check (feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair, book slightly tilted and free hand resting on paper for stability)
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory

Sessions are fun, varied and multi-sensory, e.g. sky writing, writing on backs with fingers. Children are to practise their handwriting in the back of their English writing books. Handwriting books can be available for those children that need further support.

In EYFS, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, children learn letter formation using "shape" families:

Long ladder letters: l i j t u y

One-armed robot letters: r b h k m n p

Curly Caterpillar letters: c a d e g o q f s

Zigzag letters: z v w x

The Joining Style

- Upper case letters are not joined.
- All lower-case letters have an entry stroke

For further exemplification on joining, please see the letter formation and handwriting exemplar document for each year group.

Pen Permits

The English Leader will award Pen Permits to pupils who have developed a fluent, joined handwriting style. Children need to provide three books in a range of subjects to show consistency of handwriting. To celebrate children's handwriting, a copy of their work and picture will be displayed on the 'Pen Permit' display.

Inclusion

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

- 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
- Developing Early Writing page 161 has further guidance

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENCo and English Leader to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are introduced to the school's handwriting style through a reminder letter at the start of each academic year. The Foundation Stage staff play an important role in communicating this at an early stage, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children by using capital letters only for the beginning of their names.

The Role of Staff

All members of staff are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

Teachers should ensure that all modelled writing is in line with the agreed cursive style, including handwriting demonstration, modelled writing during all lessons, dates and titles on the board and marking.

When writing on the Interactive White Board or standard white board, staff should remember to:

- Be aware of the legibility of different ink colours. Red, for example, can be hard to read from a distance
- When using the IWB change the thickness of the pen

Agreed key indicators of good practice in handwriting

- Short, regular practice in order to establish, develop and maintain good writing habits
- Good examples of handwriting, pupil and adult, on display around the classroom
- Correct vocabulary used in KS1 and KS2 (ascenders, descenders, loops, formation, spacing, size, join)
- Correct formation of all letters, adherence to the agreed school policy for handwriting
- Correct sitting position – all pupils comfortable and facing the teacher when modelling good practice
- Correct pencil/pen grip to be encouraged – held between thumb and first finger, resting against middle finger. Pencil grips can be used to support pupils with difficulties
- Paper position comfortable for pupil – adjusted for left or right-hander, spare hand used to steady paper
- Where appropriate, the teacher is seen by pupils to model the school handwriting style
- Suitable and well-maintained writing implements available to pupils
- Evidence of transfer seen in pupils' other exercise books
- Teachers carefully analyse pupils' work for errors in joins/formation
- Evidence of differentiation – special consideration for left-handers
- Teachers check that pupils who need to wear glasses are doing so
- Learning objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of handwriting sessions and are re-visited at the end