



Grosvenor Road Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Rationale

The ability to write fluently and legibly gives children a means to communicate their thoughts and ideas efficiently. Cursive handwriting helps children to learn and remember spelling patterns. Children's self-esteem and confidence is increased when they are able to produce well-presented work of which they can be proud.

Aims

At Grosvenor Road Primary School, our aims in teaching handwriting are that pupils will:

- Understand the importance of clear presentation in order to communicate meaning
- Take pride in presentation of work, developing handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- Be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multisensory approach to handwriting
- Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- Develop a fluent, comfortable, legible and joined handwriting style
- Know when a joined or printed style is appropriate.

In order that children eventually acquire legible, fluent and fast handwriting style, they need to develop skills including:

- Good gross and fine motor skills
- A recognition of pattern
- A language to talk about shapes and movements
- The main handwriting movements involved in the 3 basic letter shapes (l, c, r)

Our agreed cursive style:

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

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Teaching and Learning

Using 'shape families' to teach letter formation

All of our cursive script letters have lead in lines, starting on the line.

For simplicity, the letters of the alphabet can be sorted into four main movement groups. Some letters have different forms – b, k, y, v, and so these fall into two groups. Some letters e.g. f, s, have some affinity with a group but could be taught separately. The advantage of aligning letters with a key letter is to help children to remember the starting point and subsequent movement of the letter. This is particularly effective in discriminating b from d.

The four groups are:

- down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l (**long ladder**): letters i, j, l, t, u (v, w with rounded bases)
- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r (**one-armed robot**): letters b, h, k, m, n, p, r; (numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction)
- anti-clockwise round, exemplified by the letter c (**curly caterpillar**) letters: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s; numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9
- zigzag letters: letters: v, w, x, z; numbers: 1, 4, 7.

Preventing confusion between the letters 'b' and 'd'

Introduce each letter of the alphabet in association with its key letter (l, c or r). The letter d is a 'curly caterpillar' letter: it starts exactly like a c, but then 'goes up to the top in a straight line and then down again'. The letter b is a 'one-armed robot' letter: it starts higher than the letter r, but when it touches the line it goes back again, over and round. In this way children learn letters as movement rather than as visual shapes, and so they have a mechanism for remembering letters that are visually confusing.

This is the patten we use across school to remind children of three of the groups:

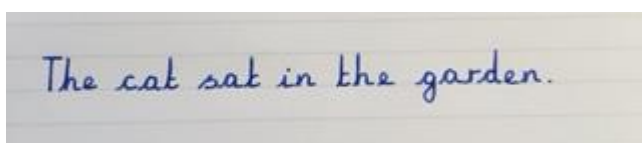
The long ladder letters all start off straight
Come down to the line, flick stop and wait
For u and y curl up and back down
For j - come straight down under the ground

The one armed robot is nice to know
You start at his head and go down to his toe
But don't stop there; he will do you no harm
So go back up and give him an arm

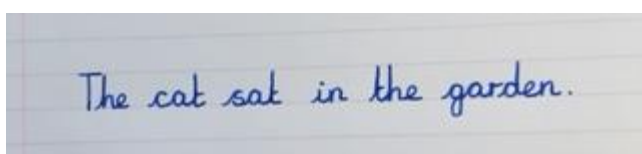
The curly caterpillar curls around
But always remember he sits on the ground
Sometimes he stops there; sometimes up and back down
And some will even go under the ground

The zig zag letters are just like they sound
They start at the top and sit on the ground
They do not curl; they do not bend
You keep them straight from beginning to end

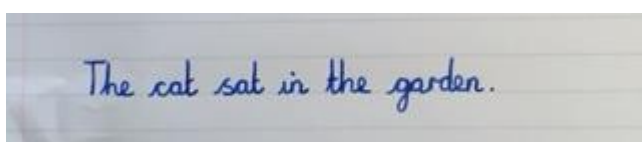
- Handwriting is taught regularly and systematically in classes, groups or individually as appropriate.
- Patterns are used initially, by writing with a variety of tools and using multisensory methods, to help free flowing hand motions.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.
- Display writing throughout the school includes cursive writing and computer generated writing.
- All lowercase letters are taught with the pen / pencil starting at the bottom (or on the line).



- Once each letter is formed correctly the children are then taught to overlap the beginning and end of each letter to create a fluid word.



- Once each word is consistently written then children are asked to join letters within each word.



- All capital letters and tall letters touch the line above.
- Capital letters do not join.

When should I introduce joined up writing?

As soon as possible once children are secure in the movements of each letter.

Words such as: at, am, it, in, up make good starting points. Some rhymes work well: pin, win, tin, bin, din, etc.

Rhymes containing the vowels a and o are harder to join into from the base because the pencil has to travel up and round to the starting point of the letter, e.g. cat, dog, and should be avoided at the beginning. By introducing each digraph as one joined unit, it reinforces phonics and handwriting, using multi-sensory channels to reinforce both.

As soon as possible, start encouraging the use of joined up writing for practising some of the high frequency words to help reinforce the fact that these words need to be remembered as wholes, e.g. the, little, was.

Here is our stepped approach to introducing cursive script:

Step 1: single letter formation, forming each letter correctly as grouped above

Step 2: Lead in lines of cursive script

Step 3: Cursive script joined with exit lines

Just as we differentiate the learning of phonics, teachers will use assessment to decide when a child should move on to the next stage. By the end of Reception, we expect that most children will be at step 2, using lead in lines. Children will only move onto step 2 when they can form each single letter correctly using a dynamic tripod grip.

By the end of Year 2 we expect that most children will be on step 3 and joining their writing using cursive script.

By the end of Year 3 we expect that most children are writing cursively using a pen.

In the Early Years, children:

- Develop their fine and gross motor skills with a range of multisensory activities
- learn the vocabulary of movement by talking about the movements children make, such as going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements. E.g. *the curly caterpillar*, *the long ladder* and *the one-armed robot*. Use of 'patter', for example for the one-armed robot: '*Start at his head and go down to his feet. Bounce back up and go over for his arm.*'
- Are shown how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders. For example, fix ribbons on to the end of sticks for the children to swirl in the air. Encourage the use of both sides of the body.

- Make different body shapes/actions in response to music to help them to remember the shapes.
- Skywrite with both hands.
- Make patterns in the air or on each other's backs.
- Make a letter shape in the damp sand tray. Invite each child in the group to trace over the shape, going a little deeper each time.
- Make patterns using pegboards.
- Chop and peel in cooking activities.
- Play with woodworking tools – pliers, screwdrivers, hammers.
- Use finger rhymes, counting fingers, playing with words and sounds, etc.
- Play with small construction toys.
- Use sand and water play to include sieving, pouring, picking up toys using tools, etc.
- Develop the pincer movement: show the children how to use tweezers to pick up and sort sequins, small beads, etc., sprinkle coloured sand, glitter, salt, etc. on pictures.
- Will use paints, finger paints, etc. for making big patterns on differently shaped paper, for example fish, balloons, kites. Talk about the patterns they make. Focus on developing the *curly caterpillar*, *long ladder* and *one-armed robot*.
- Strengthen their fingers by using clay, play dough, Plasticine, etc., for modelling. They can make letter shapes and patterns using the modelling media.
- Cut out large letter shapes or patterns. They can use different coloured marker pens for tracing along inside the shapes. Emphasise that circles and curly caterpillars need to be traced from the top and anti-clockwise.
- Use thick paintbrushes and water to paint patterns on walls, fences, etc.
- Children will begin to show a preference for a dominant hand.
- Children will begin to use anti-clockwise movements and retrace vertical lines when drawing and writing.
- Hold a pencil effectively (children's pencil grip is monitored and displayed in the classroom).

Expectations in the Early Years

- The children are introduced to pre-cursive and cursive script at the earliest stages of writing
- Children writing in the pre-cursive script to enable a smoother transition in Year 1, depending on their ability. However, the expectation is that by the end of Reception pupils will start to transfer towards a cursive script depending on skill and ability.
- Displays in both Nursery and Reception should include models of cursive script.
- Utensils such as chunky triangular pencils, large chinks and chunky pens etc. are used by children to rehearse skills on paper, chalk boards, whiteboards, walls, ground etc.

- By the end of Reception, children will hold paper in the correct position and use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct grip.
- Children will be able to write on lines and begin to control letter size.

Expectations in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

- Within KS1, every class will have two 15 minute handwriting sessions per week.
- Within KS2, every class will have one 15 minute handwriting sessions per week.
- In handwriting sessions, spellings, relevant key vocabulary or sentences/paragraphs related to core texts will be modelled by an adult then practised by the children.
- In KS1, children use four-lined handwriting paper.
- Lined paper is used for handwriting specific exercises. Lines are well spaced to start with e.g. 10mm apart, gradually reducing to single lines about 5mm apart.
- In KS 2 at the top of every maths work, children write out the digits 0 – 9.
- In KS 2 at the top of every piece of literacy work children write out either a specific letter join or key words from their spelling lists.

Dependent upon need, children in all phases are taught to:

- Practise patterns and free flowing hand motions
- Write both lower case and upper case letters
- Start and finish letters correctly
- Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words.
- Sit letters on the line and ensure that ascenders reach the appropriate height and that descenders sit below the line
- Have a correct pencil grip (dynamic tripod grip)

Posture

- Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to the children's age and height.
- Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor.
- A right handed child should have their book slanted to the left, with their left hand holding the paper.
- A left handed child should have their book slanted to the right, with their right hand holding the paper.

Inclusion / Equal Opportunities

We ensure that all children receive an equal learning experience regardless of ability, culture and gender.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with a defined record of support are supported in their handwriting and presentation through individual education plans, monitored by the class teacher and Special Needs Coordinator. Triangular pencils, pencil grips and wider lines will be used by children experiencing problems writing alongside other activities to develop their fine motor skills.

Left-handed children

At least ten per cent of the population is left-handed. There is no need for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing, if a few simple strategies are employed:

- Model letter formation, skywriting, etc. specifically for left-handed children, with your left hand.
- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.
- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins, as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of the centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- Experiment with seat height – some left-handed children may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.
- To avoid smudging their work:
 - left-handed children should be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of their writing implement
 - the pencil should sit in the 'V' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb
 - the wrist should be straight.
- Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. They should, therefore, be given more attention in the classroom to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will hinder the development of a fast, fluent and legible hand.

Writing Implements

- Children use a standard HB pencil, well sharpened.
- When the class teacher deems a KS2 child ready i.e. the child is fluently using a joined cursive script, the child will be presented with a Pen License.
- A pencil is always used during Mathematics, regardless of the Pen Licence.

General

- Display writing throughout the school includes block letter, cursive writing and computer generated writing.
- When marking of writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.