

Helping your child with writing

Our handwriting policy

Reception aged children are introduced to large and fine motor skill exercises and then, through the school, the teaching of the correct letter formation and letter joins is taught when appropriate. Children will practise handwriting every week with their class teacher.

Below is a summary for each year group with detailed information on what letters and joins will be taught in which year.

Reception

Pattern practice and 'play' writing are an important part of handwriting development in Reception. Your child will be practising letter formation in a number of exciting ways: in sand, using paint, in the air, on the interactive whiteboard as well as on paper with a pencil! When your child is ready for letter formation, ask these questions:

- Where does the letter start?
- Is it a short letter? (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z)
- Does it have an ascender? (b, d, f, h, k, l, t)
- Does it have a descender? (f, g, j, p, q, y)

Year 1

Letter formation should now be becoming familiar and secure. Weekly practise sessions are more formal as each individual letter is practised and perfected.

Year 2

Children will begin to join some pairs of letters within a word. They will be introduced to two main join types:

- joins from the baseline, known as diagonal joins
- joins from the top of the letter or the cross bar, known as horizontal joins

Letters which are not joined from at this stage are known as break letters.

The main aim during this year is for children to begin to develop an easy and clear handwriting style which can become fluent and automatic. This will help to prepare children for writing and spelling tasks during the school year.

Later in this year group, children will gradually learn to join more letters in a word, using all the different joins. To begin with, however, children will focus on joining letters that combine to make a common letter pattern e.g. ee, oi, oa. Learning to combine letters in this way links handwriting with spelling and helps children to become more confident spellers.

Year 3

The main aims during this year are for children to refine their handwriting and to make sure that the size and proportions of all letters, and the spaces between letters and words, are consistent and even. By this stage children should be secure at joining and able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. There is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns.

Year 4

The main aims during this year are for children to begin to slope their handwriting and to make sure that the size and proportions of all letters, and the spaces between letters and words, are consistent and even. Attention is also given to keeping ascenders and descenders parallel. By this stage children should be secure at joining and able to use joined-up writing for most of their work and at an increased speed. Children will be introduced to writing in ink.

Year 5 and 6

By this stage children should be secure at joining and able to use joined up writing for most of their work. Children will be experimenting with sloping their writing and using different joins for a more mature and comfortable style and will be writing mostly in ink. The materials used in Years 5 and 6 let children develop speed and fluency in writing and also to practise handwriting for different purposes.