

## **Handwriting Appendix (see Presentation Policy for further details)**

This handwriting appendix sets out in more detail the school's vision with regards to handwriting. It should be read in conjunction with the Presentation Policy.

Handwriting develops as children develop control over their bodies and a desire to communicate through mark making.

### **The teaching of handwriting skills in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

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

- Good gross motor skills (the movement of whole body parts) and fine motor skills (smaller movement-usually of the hand and fingers);
- A recognition of pattern;
- A language to talk about shapes and movements;
- The main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes as exemplified by l, c and r.

Therefore, practitioners in EYFS should offer activities which encourage children to develop controlled movements-both in terms of fine and gross motor control-through all kinds of play and cross-curricular opportunities.

Children should be allowed to pick up the writing implement themselves and decide which hand they prefer. Only then should they be given help with the pencil hold. Once they are confidently using flowing movements, then they can be introduced to smaller, more controlled activities. At this point, reinforcement of the left to right hand movements, top to bottom of a letter and the anti-clockwise movement etc. should occur.

### **Pencil grip**

The grip on a pencil needs to be relaxed but allow for efficient control. If a child grips too tightly, they will not develop a free-flowing movement. Children should be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger, with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements (required for writing) are possible.

### **Posture**

Posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably.

### **Left handed children**

Left handed children will not be discouraged from using their dominant hand. However, as writing from left to right is more difficult for left handed children, they should 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 handwriting style.

To avoid smudging, left handed children should be encouraged to position their fingers about 15mm away from the end of the writing implement; with the pencil sitting in the 'v' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb; and the wrist should be straight.

### Using 'shape families' to teach letter and number formation

The letters of the alphabet (and numbers) can be divided into four main groups. Some letters – b, k,y,v have different forms so they fall into two groups. Children should be taught the lead-out for letters in EYFS but ensure that the starting point of the letters is the same as it would be when joining using the lead-in. The four groups are below. Year 1 will also ensure that the children can use all of the upper case (capital) letters.

<u>Long Ladders (straight down and off in another direction)</u>	<u>One armed robots (down and retrace upwards.)</u>
i j l t u  Words to practise: it, lit, ill, till, tell, jet, bill	b, h, k, m, n, p, r (numbers 2,3,5 follow a clockwise direction)  Words to practise : hit, rip, rip, pill,
<u>Curly Caterpillars (anti-clockwise round)</u>	<u>Zig-Zag letters</u>
c,a,d,e,g,o,q,f,s numbers 0,6,8,9  Words to practise: at, cat, mat, cod, rod, bad, glove	v,w,x,z, numbers 1,4, 7  Words to practise: at, cat, mat, cod, rod, bad, glove

In Year 2, the children will be encouraged to lead-into the next letter when the children are ready to do so. Lis should be in the agreed font, showing lead-ins, in KS2 and an appropriate point for Year 2 (when the majority of the children have started to use lead-ins).

*a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,I,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,u,v,w,x,y,z*

*0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9.*

B and d are often confused. However, the letter d is a curly caterpillar while the b is a one-armed robot. If children learn the movements associated with these two letters from an early age, then they will have a mechanism for learning these visually confusing letters.

### Ascenders and descenders

Positioning of the letters is another aspect of handwriting, with lined paper essential to show the relationship between the relative positions of the ascenders and descenders. In the agreed style, the letter t is slightly shorter than the other ascenders.

### Joining Letters

To facilitate joining, letters will be taught with lead-outs from EYFS and then lead-ins will be encouraged from Year 2 as appropriate to the letter (s,b,j g and y are often not joined in many styles- although the school encourage the joining of the g).

Children should be taught to join once they are secure in the movements of each letter and the placement of each letter on the line. Words such as at, am, it, in and up make good starting points. Words containing a and o in the middle of the word are harder to join and should be avoided at the beginning. By the end of Year 2, most children will be:

*...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. (National Curriculum)*

By the end of Year 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. (National Curriculum)*

Finally, by Year 6, a child will be:

*...choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters. (National Curriculum)*

### Handwriting Practice

Handwriting practice should continue throughout the child's primary phase. As the child progresses through the school, handwriting fluency and speed are the areas focused upon during the teaching of handwriting. It is also more likely to be taught as part of another lesson (e.g. spellings or presentation of a final draft) rather than as a discrete lesson the further the child progresses.