



Handwriting Policy



Introduction

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.” (Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child’s handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, rather than upon the act. We adhere to The British Dyslexia Association’s recommendation that children learn the continuous cursive style.

The key advantages are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children’s hands develop a ‘physical memory’ of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape.
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q).
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.

Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing.
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations.

Teaching and Learning

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using ‘letter speak’; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.
- The cursive font, with lead-ins (see appendix 1), is taught as a specific skill with additional, individual or group practise where necessary.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.

- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.
- The cursive font should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style.
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

Handwriting Teaching Schedule

Year Group	Time Allocation for Handwriting	Focus / Notes
Reception	Taught Daily. Handwriting is based on mark making, core work and letter join.	Focus on fine/gross motor skills, letter formation, and early joins.
Key Stage 1	2 taught sessions per week (15–20 mins) following the Letter join programme followed up with daily practise in class.	Focus on joining, letter families, consistent sizing, fluency, spacing, and joins between digraphs.
Year 3	1–2 taught sessions per week (20 -25) following the Letter join programme followed up with regular practise in class.	Refine legibility and consistency; introduce pen licence expectations.
Year 4	1 taught session per week (20–25 mins) following the Letter join programme followed up with regular practise in class.	Maintain fluency and speed; handwriting across the curriculum.
Year 5 & 6	Regular practise in class when appropriate	Maintain fluency and speed; handwriting across the curriculum.

Handwriting Progression (See appendix 1)

Reception	Children are to take part in activities that develop fine and gross motor skills. The children are introduced to the cursive script and practise correct formation, including the joining of digraphs
Year 1	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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. <p>N.B. The cursive script has a lead in and exit line that naturally encourages the children to join their handwriting. The children are to begin to join when they are ready.</p>

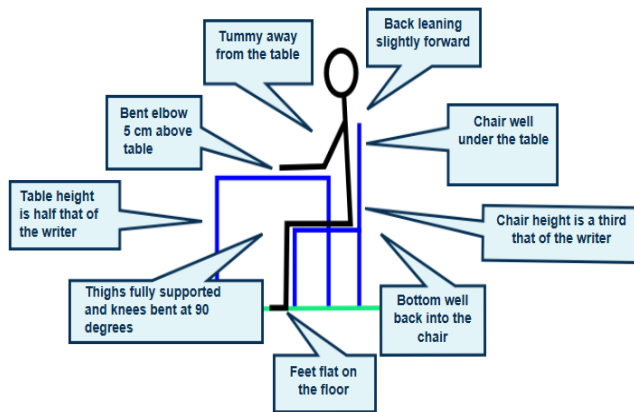
Year 2	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another · write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters. · Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters <p>N.B. If they have not already done so, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.</p>
Year 3 and Year 4	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch <p>N.B. When the children are producing consistently formed, sized and joined handwriting, they will be granted a 'pen license' and encouraged to write in pen where appropriate.</p>
Year 5 and Year 6	<p>Children should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters · choosing the right implement that is best suited for a task

Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins

- Always model good handwriting.
- Demonstrate formations.
- Talk through the process.
- Encourage children to verbalise the process.
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body.
- Finger trace over tactile letters.
- Write in sand with finger or a stick.

During handwriting lessons, teachers should observe the following:

Best Sitting Position at a Desk For Handwriting

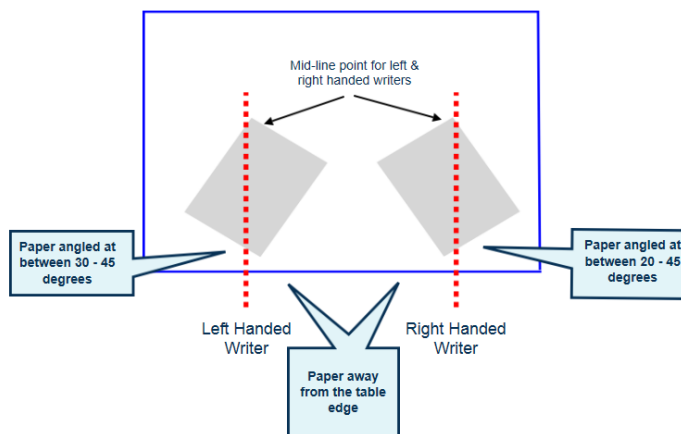


suitable.

- How a pencil is held/pen control (including aids where appropriate).
- How a child is sitting; position, foot support, chair and proximity to the table.
- The angle of the paper.
- That the paper is held by the 'other' hand.
- That the child uses a suitable pencil (or for older children, pens) and that these are good quality, sharp and

During handwriting lessons, children should be taught the following:

Best Paper Position for Handwriting



- To form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- To form capital letters.
- To form digits 0-9.
- To understand which letters belong to which 'families' (i.e. letters formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

The daily RWI phonics session in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

Provision for left handed children

Left handed children always sit on the left side of right-handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5cm from the point of their pencil. Pens appropriate for left handed writers will be provided, to avoid smudging.

Resources and writing materials

Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools. Pens (handwriting pens not biros) should be used by those who have achieved a consistent, cursive style. All children should write in blue ink. Children will be allowed to bring in a pen of their own choosing as long as it encourages neat, blue handwriting and is not a biro. The children are to practise their handwriting in a handwriting book chosen for this specific purpose. Guidelines should be used when writing on plain paper.

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

The SENCO will provide resources for those who have difficulty with fine motor skills – pencil grips, fine motor control programmes and referrals where necessary.

Policy Success Criteria

We know Oak Green School's Handwriting Policy is effective if:

- A scrutiny of work confirms the appropriate development in handwriting skills
- Specific difficulties are addressed in the marking of handwriting tasks
- A scrutiny of work confirms that the presentation protocol is adhered to

Equality Statement

Oak Green School provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is committed to equality and reflects and values diversity.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the English lead and Co-Headteachers within the processes of school self-evaluation. The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner should National Policy change.

Appendix 1:

Handwriting Progression

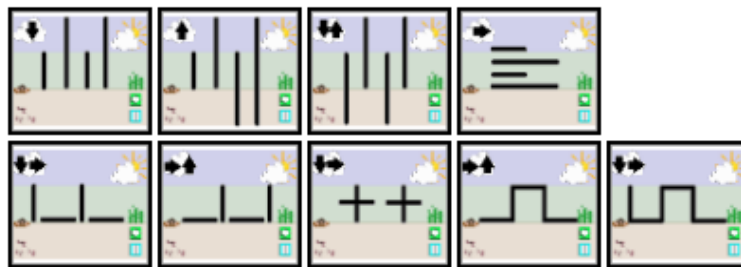
<http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/index.html>



Pre-Handwriting:

Straight Line Pre-handwriting Patterns

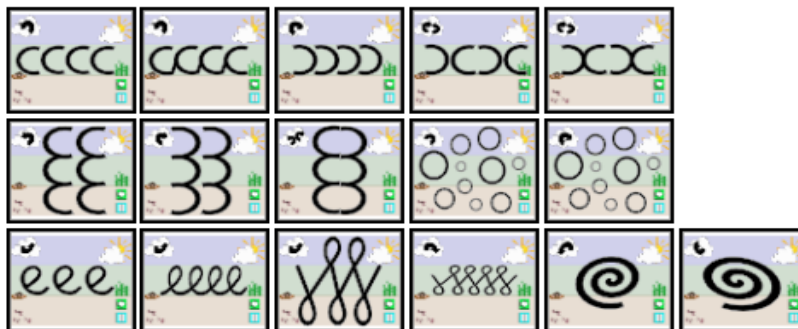
- Practising vertical straight line patterns teaches children the correct directional pushes and pulls of the pencil required to form the vertical sticks of letters for all handwriting fonts.
- Practising horizontal straight line patterns teaches your child the correct directional left to right pushes.



Curves and Tunnels Pre-handwriting Patterns

- Practising curves and tunnels line patterns teaches your child the correct directional and orientational pushes and pulls of the pencil required to form the curved shapes of letters for all handwriting fonts.

Curve Pre-handwriting Patterns

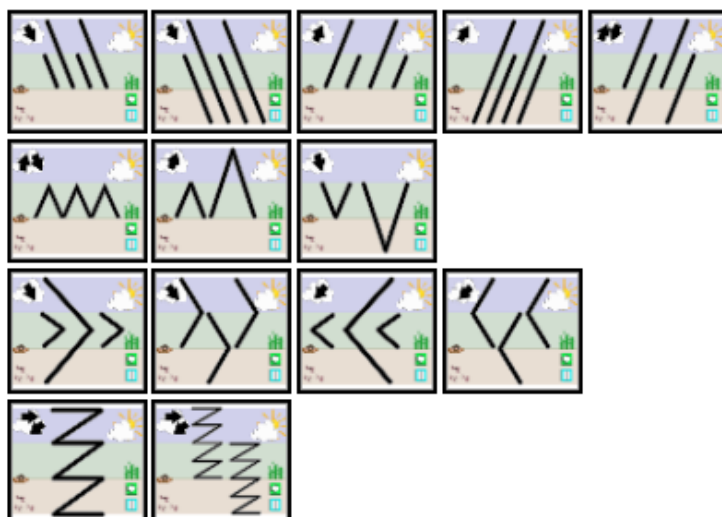


Tunnel Pre-handwriting Patterns



Diagonal Line Pre-handwriting Patterns

- Practising diagonal line patterns teaches your child the correct directional and orientational pushes and pulls of the pencil required to form the diagonal lines of letters for all handwriting fonts.



Pre-handwriting Join Patterns

- Practising the different join patterns teaches your child the correct directional and orientational pushes and pulls of the pencil required to join letters for cursive and continuous cursive fonts.



Lower case continuous cursive letters: 'The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog.'

Cursive letters of the alphabet are quite often taught in groups rather than in alphabetical order, when teaching handwriting to children, as certain groups use the same, or similar, shape and directional push and pulls of the pencil to form the letter, for instance the letter c has the same start point and anti-clockwise directional movement shape that is needed to create the letters a, d, g, o and though a little more complicated the letter s and e.

Teaching the cursive letter formations in groups can help to limit letter reversals such as b and d. Also by teaching letter groups in certain orders enables children to write whole words, which have meaning to them, and this in turn encourages them to write more.

Continuous cursive letter Groups:

How to form straight line continuous cursive letters



How to form curves to start continuous cursive letters



How to form tunnel continuous cursive letters



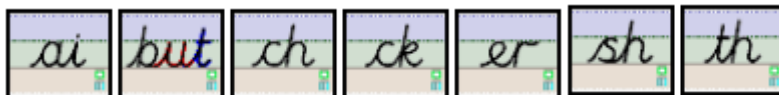
How to form top exit continuous cursive letters



How to form hooks, loops & line continuous cursive letters



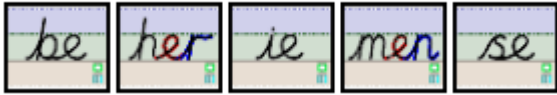
Continuous Cursive Bottom Letter Joins



Continuous Cursive Bottom to "c" Shaped Letter Joins



Continuous Cursive Bottom "e" Letter Joins



Continuous Cursive Top "e" Letter Joins



Continuous Cursive Top Letter Joins

