

The Art of Handwriting



Padnell Infant
School



'Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow'

Objectives for this Session

- ▶ To recognise the importance of handwriting
- ▶ To understand how handwriting is taught across the school
- ▶ To identify ways to support your child's handwriting at home



Handwriting Facts

- ▶ Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. Handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities.
- ▶ A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity.
- ▶ The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and may require a lot of practice.
- ▶ Handwriting needs to be systematically taught.

Key Aims of Our Handwriting Teaching

- ▶ All pupils should develop a fluent, neat and legible style of handwriting of which they can be proud.
- ▶ All pupils understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- ▶ All pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- ▶ All pupils are able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.

Continuous Cursive Style

Joined-up writing where each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper - and consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement.

Key Features of Our Handwriting Style

- ▶ By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape.
- ▶ Children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (b/d or p/q). In cursive, writing these letters require a huge difference in directionality.
- ▶ All lowercase letters start on the line with an 'approach stroke'.
- ▶ The pencil does not leave the paper until the word is complete.
- ▶ The letter 't' is crossed and 'i' and 'j' are dotted when the whole word is complete.

Reception Year

In the Foundation Stage focus is initially placed on the introduction and reinforcement of fine motor movements and pencil control that is necessary for the formation of letters.

Pencils should be gripped correctly and held effectively to form recognisable letters that are correctly formed. Each individual letter shape is taught with the lead-in and out stroke from the writing line. Practice is also provided for the upper case letters.

Several different activities are used to practise the letter strokes, for example, sand letters and rainbow letters.

Years 1 and 2

Within Year 1, the skills of joining letters is introduced with letters joining from the top.

Within Year 2 the cursive form is further developed to the point where the handwriting style is joined and legible.

Handwriting and presentation

In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught:

- ▶ How to hold a pencil
- ▶ To write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
- ▶ To start and finish letters correctly
- ▶ To form letters of regular size and shape
- ▶ To put regular spaces between letters and words
- ▶ How to form lower and upper case letters
- ▶ How to join letters
- ▶ The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning effectively.

Phonics and Handwriting

- ▶ Children learn the correct formation by building a strong mental picture of the letter.
- ▶ In phonics, children are introduced to the printed letter and learn the cursive mnemonic. The mnemonics will help to link the print letter to the cursive and are accompanied by writing cues to form the letter correctly.
- ▶ Younger children should rhythmically chant the formation as they practice. In the early stages, the movement is more important than the appearance of the writing.
- ▶ Digraphs and trigraphs are introduced as joined to reinforce them as a unit. i.e. ch, ai, igh

Continuous Cursive Letter Groups

The alphabet is organised into stroke-related groups for easy teaching

Letter families

For teaching letter formation

Curly club

a c d f g o q s

Tall stick club

b h k l t

Short stick club

i j m n p r u y

Odd club

e N W x z

Continuous Cursive Joins

There are four basic joins that children are taught

- ▶ Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders

ai, um

- ▶ Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders

ou, wi

- ▶ Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders

ab, it

- ▶ Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

ol, wh

Handwriting books

cccccc

~~~~~

Can the cat catch?

# Lets Practise!



# Helping Your Child at Home

- ▶ The best way to support your child is to practise, practise, practise!
- ▶ Motivate your child by providing him/her with a variety of tools such as felt-tips, chalk and paint as handwriting requires a lot of practice.
- ▶ Lined paper helps children to practise the letter formation as the key feature of our handwriting style is that the lowercase letters always start on the line.
- ▶ Please pick up a leaflet about handwriting to help you learn more about handwriting.
  - ▶ Check the internet for more ideas how to help your child. A good start is:

[www.teachhandwriting.co.uk](http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk)