

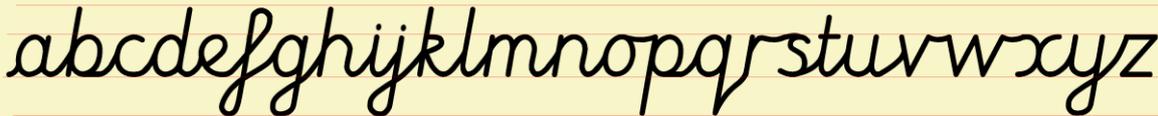


# KING OFFA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Handwriting Policy

### Introduction

We are committed to enable pupils to achieve a high standard of handwriting and presentation of written work, through the use of effective and efficient pen control, good concentration, mark-making and writing that starts on the line (cursive style).



In school children are exposed to both cursive and print styles as well as commercial print. They develop an awareness of reading in print and writing in cursive side by side in their learning, such as prompts around rooms/school – labels on displays, teaching aids and through teachers modelling of writing.

All handwriting activities are undertaken for the following reasons:

- To develop effective and efficient pen hold.
- To develop the habit of concentration, this is crucial to good handwriting.
- To place a strong emphasis on the importance of presentation.
- To provide the class teacher with the opportunity to help assess individuals' progress and monitor areas requiring reinforcement.

### Development

Children need opportunities to make marks using a wide range of materials, both indoors and out. Many children are too quickly urged to write at a table with only pencils or pens. It is important that we observe each child individually and ensure that they have the prerequisite skills they need before we move them onto formal writing. Young children need to be exposed to activities using ribbons, dance and large paint brushes, involving big movements to develop gross motor control. When that is secure then we can develop the fine motor skills which will eventually develop into writing.

### Pencil grip development

Pencil grip follows a predictable pattern. This develops from:

- the basic palmar grasp, where the child wraps all their fingers round the pencil and moves the whole arm to make marks
- to the digital finger grasp, where the hand is above the pencil and the child uses the whole arm to manipulate it.
- to the tripod grasp, where fingers are placed near the tip of the pencil with the thumb opposing the fingers and movement is controlled by the fingers.

### 'Pinch and swing'

If a child needs reminding about grip, the 'pinch and swing' start is recommended. This method requires the child to pick up the pencil by the writing tip. While holding the tip, the child swings the top of the pencil over and onto the back of the hand between the thumb and index finger. This is the natural position for writing.

## **Seating and posture**

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

## **Left Handed Children**

Each left handed child is identified and closely monitored by the class teacher. The following guidelines are useful to help left – handed children.

## **Guidelines for writing left handed**

Ensure that:

- The writing surface and chair are suitable for the child's own height;
- The child sits towards the left of their partner leaving plenty of space for writing on the left side of his/her mid-line (this allows maximum space for arm movement);
- The writing paper is to the left of the child's body midline;
- The paper is tilted up to 32 degrees in a clockwise direction;
- A writing tool which moves smoothly across the paper is used;
- The paper is supported with the right hand;
- The writing forearm is parallel with the paper edge as the child writes;
- The writing tool is held sufficiently far from its point to ensure that the child can see what he/she is writing;

## **Children with difficulties**

Sometimes some children may experience difficulties but this is often due to a co-ordination problem or adapting a left handed style. Teachers should be aware that children with Dyspraxia, Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome and any other motor functioning impairment may have ongoing difficulty with handwriting due to the nature of their special need and therefore may need to be supported with alternative means of recording. Activities to develop 'gross motor skills' can be promoted as these will assist fine motor skills, as will plenty of pre-writing activities to loosen up the wrist and upper arm.

## **Links to spelling**

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised. Remember to use **Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check**

The child:

- Looks at the word carefully
- Says the word
- Covers the word so that it can't be seen
- Writes the whole word from memory
- Checks the word is written correctly
- If not, repeat.

## Developmental stages

### Foundation Stage:

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Teachers are vigilant to ensure that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met.

In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding that marks on paper convey meaning. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. Children who we feel are at the appropriate stage will begin practicing basic handwriting joins.

Order for teaching: c a d g q o e s f i l t u y j k r n m h b p v w x z

### Key Stage 1

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's agreed handwriting style. Focus on the four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders).

There are four basic handwriting joins:

- diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai, ar, un
- horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi
- diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ab, ul, it
- horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol, wh, ot

Children are encouraged to meet the necessary criteria to be eligible for a pen licence.

### Lower Key Stage 2

In Year 3 the pupils consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. By Year 4 joined handwriting is used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes. Children are encouraged to meet the necessary criteria to be eligible for a pen licence.

### Upper Key Stage 2

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Children are encouraged to increase speed whilst maintaining legibility. Children are encouraged to meet the necessary criteria to be eligible for a pen licence.