

Slimbridge Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Handwriting Principles

Handwriting is an important life skill. Despite the increased use of computers for writing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life. At Slimbridge School we recognise that children's ability to write well for the rest of their lives depends on firm foundations in their primary years. Our aim is that all our pupils develop neat, legible, fluent, joined handwriting. We have high expectations of our pupils' presentation skills and our own - teachers aim to model good handwriting at all times e.g. when writing on the board and when marking books.

Handwriting in the Foundation Stage

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Foundation Stage learn handwriting through a range of movements designed to develop fine and gross motor skills. Children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play, balancing, climbing, using wheeled toys and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.
- Effective pencil grip.

The key movements underpinning letter formation are introduced through large-scale movements ('sky writing') and they are then reduced in scale using activities such as writing in different materials (sand, shaving foam, paint etc.) and finally using pens and pencils. The children are taught the letters of the alphabet using letter groups: curly caterpillar letters (c, a, o, d, g, q); long ladder letters (l, i, t, j, y, u); one armed robot letters (r, m, n, b, p, h, k); and zig zag monster letters (v, w, x, z). The letters e, s, f are taught separately. These letters are taught using a pre-cursive script (see below).

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

We do not introduce cursive handwriting to Reception children as at this stage the focus is on recognising the letters, and beginning to form single letters correctly.

Keystage One

In Year 1 a cursive script is introduced (with entry and exit strokes).

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

This is initially practised in practical ways (such as using paint and sand), then it is practised in handwriting books and when children are ready they are encouraged to use cursive script in their independent writing. In Year 2 children are encouraged to join the letters within

words together, using the entry and exit strokes they have learnt. From Year 2 onwards children can gain a 'pen licence' for correct formation of letters and consistently correct joins – this is highly prized and a good motivator for them. Throughout Keystage 1 children have daily handwriting sessions to practise their letter formation.

Keystage 2

Our aim is that by the end of Year 3 children should have developed effective joined up writing and should have gained their 'pen licence'. Once they have done so, they will still have regular handwriting sessions to practise their skills, and these will usually be linked to spellings (for example, practising sets of words with a specific spelling pattern to embed it in their 'muscle memory').

Equal opportunities and Special needs

All children must have the opportunity and the encouragement to reach their full potential regardless of race, creed or sex. Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper. Children will also have the opportunity to rehearse specific skills on a more regular basis. Intervention is available for children who experience significant difficulties to practice pre writing skills and fine motor coordination.

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation, handwriting informs part of this. Within Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, handwriting is assessed regularly as part of children's writing assessments.

Left handed pupils

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision. This may include:

- Making sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.
- Putting a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.