



Handwriting Policy

At Sitwell Infant School, we aim to equip children with the necessary skills to develop a fluent and legible handwriting style which can be adapted to a variety of tasks. Although we need to recognise the three objectives of legibility, character and speed, it is also important that children take the necessary time and care with their writing in the early stages so that correct habits are formed. When a smooth, flowing, functional style becomes habitual, speed will increase without effort and without loss of legibility. It is hoped that by following our scheme every child will develop a neat, attractive handwriting style which will take on individual character as it matures and can be adapted to fast note-taking and communication.

The rationale for our scheme is that when reliable handwriting is established, thinking, letter and word sequencing and movements for writing can be brought together to enable children to write creatively and confidently. We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking. In Foundation Stage children will be taught a fully cursive style, which will be built upon in Year 1 and 2 so that children leave school having developed the necessary handwriting skills to be able to join their writing legibly and fluently.

Celebrating Success: Handwriting Heroes

Handwriting heroes are children in school who show a real commitment to improving their handwriting and presentation; they take pride in their work and always give 100%.

How to spot a 'Handwriting Hero'

1. A child who has produced a stunning piece of writing
2. A child who has made impressive improvements to their handwriting
3. A child who always produces a high standard of presentation in their work; their books are a pleasure to look at.
4. A child who has shown great perseverance to improve their handwriting and presentation skills.

Once children have been identified as a 'Handwriting Hero', they are presented with a 'Handwriting Hero' certificate.

How We Teach Handwriting

To support the above aims, we intend that:

- Handwriting will be taught daily in Foundation Stage (FS) and at least 3 times per week in Key Stage One (KS1).
- Children will be taught a fully cursive script in which **ALL** letters apart from capital letters will be joined. To set clear objectives at the learning stage, letters will be taught in an upright position, vertical to the line. As writers become more fluent, some children will naturally slope their writing particularly as speed develops and this is quite acceptable as it gives individual character to the writing. However, any sloping must be consistent throughout, and not so exaggerated that legibility is affected.
- In Foundation Stage, children's fine motor skills will be developed through activities such as dough disco, magic wands and finger gym. Then they will be taught to write letters in the cursive script with an entry and an exit stroke. It will be explained to the children that this will help them to join their writing as they move through school. During year one, children will be taught how to join letters and will start to use these joins in their own writing in year two and beyond.
- Correct formation of capital letters will be taught alongside lower case. Plenty of practice with the correct formation of capital letters will be provided so that children learn to make large, bold capital letters in their writing. This should lead to more thoughtful use and avoid the meaningless and haphazard proliferation of capitals, which degrades the accuracy of so much written work.
- We will provide opportunities for using a variety of paper and a range of writing tools so that children are engaged and enjoy writing. In KS1, during handwriting sessions, children will have the opportunity to use paper/books/whiteboards with a centre guide line (skinny line) while correct size relationships are being taught. It is intended that the children will then apply these size relationships within their everyday writing. In Foundation Stage children will use a variety of media, but will practise the correct letter formation on plain whiteboards to begin with, moving to using line guides, as and when appropriate.
- Towards the end of KS1, handwriting pens will be introduced during teaching and practice sessions for those children who have developed a neat, legible and fluent handwriting style. For any children who have difficulty holding the pencil correctly, special pencil huggers will be provided.
- FS and KS1 classes will all display a large alphabet line, showing both the lower case and upper case letters which can be referenced to during teaching and learning.
- Teachers' and Teaching Assistants' own writing, for example, when marking children's work and during whole class teaching, will reflect the school scheme at all times, providing children with an excellent model to learn from.
- Great emphasis will be placed on teaching the correct posture, position and grip from the beginning and this should be carefully monitored and corrected where necessary.

Points to consider...

An intensive introduction

An intensive introduction is vital to developing the good habits associated with excellent handwriting, therefore lessons will be taught daily in FS, reducing to 3 or 4 times a week in KS1. Handwriting lessons are designed to last between 10-15 minutes initially in Foundation Stage, but will eventually build up to be around 20 minutes when appropriate. This timing then continues through KS1. For children who may find the skills associated with handwriting difficult to grasp, we may teach them, where possible, in small groups where a more focussed explicit lesson can be delivered in order to teach the children at a slower, more suitable pace.

High Expectations

For children to produce outstanding handwriting, expectations have to be high for all pieces of writing. It is a clear expectation that handwriting in Literacy books should match the quality in Handwriting books. For display work, children may be given time to work on ensuring 'stunning presentation' for example, to present their story writing on special paper or with illustrations. When children make improvements or when they produce a piece of work that is beautifully presented they feel very proud. Improving handwriting is a great way for children to make visible progress in a clear, measurable way.

Children's names

Children's names are a useful source of learning for both phonics and handwriting. During children's first term in FS, they will be introduced to writing their name in a cursive style. However, we are aware that some children will come to school already able to write their names, and may associate the wrong movement with certain letters (the common error is forming 'o' and 'a' using a clockwise movement); alternatively they may write their name in upper case letters. Class teachers will support all children to learn how to form each letter using our scheme, as this will give them a solid basis to develop legible, fluent handwriting, which will ultimately enable them to join much more quickly as they move through school.

Supporting children at home

At Sitwell Infant School, all staff work closely together to develop a consistent and clear approach. We want to support parents at home to continue with this approach, therefore we have attached several videos to model the scheme in action within the 'Curriculum Support' in the 'Parents' section of our website at www.sitwellinfantschool.co.uk

'Certain' letters

Within the cursive approach to handwriting, there are certain letters which do not join as naturally as others. 'r' joins very well to some letters (particularly vowels), but not others, therefore some children may choose not to join this letter at times. 'x' is also another common letter that is difficult to join – we will teach children to join letters to 'x' but it will not have an exit stroke. It is our policy in school to model how to join these letters wherever possible, but discussions will be held with children about using their judgement to decide if they want to join these letters. Class teachers will monitor the impact this may have on children's writing.

EYFS and National Curriculum Requirements

Foundation Stage

Statutory Requirements

Physical Development

40 – 60 months

Moving and handling: Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. *NB: Children cannot achieve the Early Learning Goal in Moving and Handling if they do not form their letters correctly.*

Literacy – Writing

40 – 60 months

Writing: Use some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, represent some sounds correctly and in sequence.

Year 1

Statutory requirements

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- 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.

Year 2

Statutory requirements

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start 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
- 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.

Handwriting Scheme



Correct posture and pencil grip

SITTING POSITION

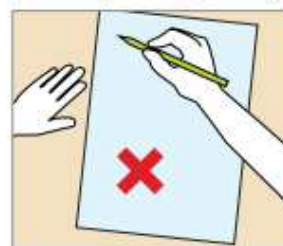
The table reaches below the elbow

Keep feet flat on the floor

Sit with a straight back, not leaning over the table

Sit right back in the seat

Pull the chair close to the table



Paper position for right-handed children

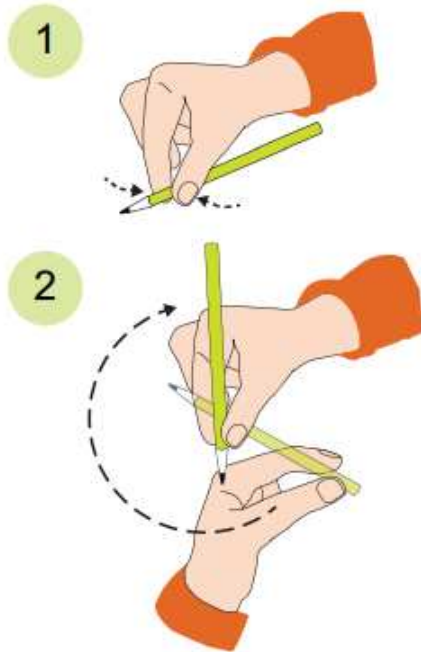
PREFERRED HAND

Teachers, particularly within FS, will 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 are allowed to pick up the writing implement themselves and decide which hand they prefer.

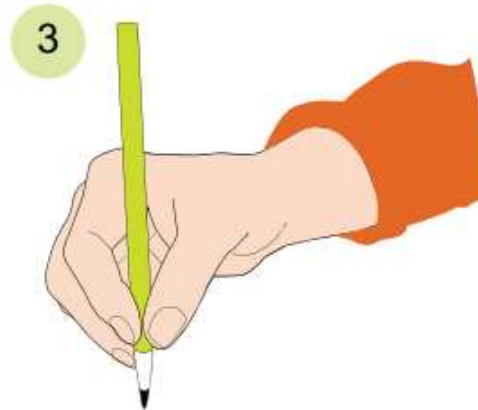
Only then will they be given help with the pencil hold. As children begin to discover their preferred hand for holding a pencil and once they are confidently using flowing movements, they can be introduced to smaller, more controlled activities. Through these, teachers will reinforce left → right hand movements reinforcing the anti-clockwise movement, etc.

THE TRIPOD GRIP

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pencil to be held securely hilt allowing controlled movements of the pencil nib.



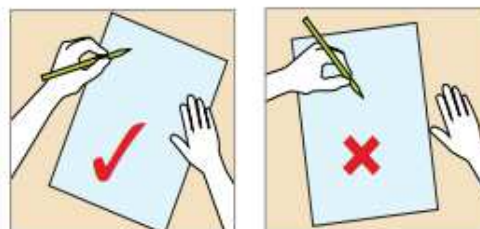
1. Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
2. With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
3. Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.



LEFT HANDED CHILDREN



- Left handed children should sit to the left of a right handed child so they are not competing for space.
- Children should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted (as shown).
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this interrupts children's line of vision.
- Extra practise with left to right exercise may be necessary before pupils write left to right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children



Pre-Writing Patterns

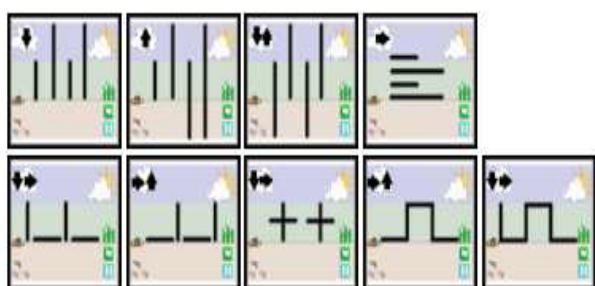
Pre-handwriting patterns help children to learn the shapes and directional pushes and pulls of the writing tools required to form letters. All letters are a combination of these shapes and lines.

Young children learn many of these directional pushes, pulls and changes in direction on a much larger scale, long before they pick up a pencil, through playing with cars, large construction or pretending to cook. These movements become the drawings/scribbles which young children form once they start mark making, initially as big uncontrolled movements then becoming more controlled and smaller as their gross and fine motor skills develop. These handwriting patterns do not need to be taught as worksheet activities (although they do help to understand, and perfect, how to make the shapes, lines and patterns), drawing pictures and patterns in sand, paint and with other writing tools are all fun ways to practise these patterns.

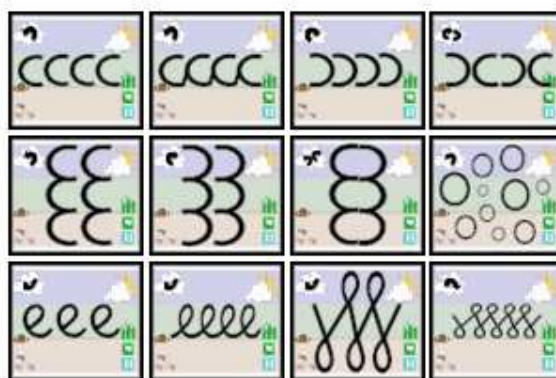
Once the pre-handwriting patterns have been mastered children will have the skill base necessary, and be more confident to form letters, numbers and symbols.

There are 4 main patterns that children will work through:

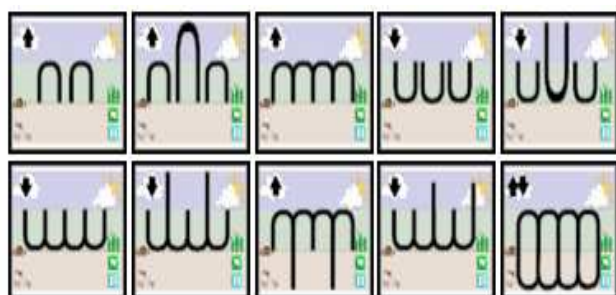
Straight



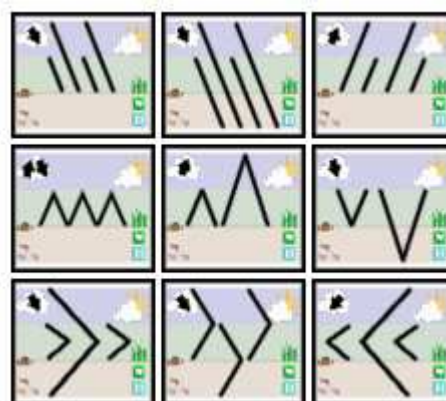
Curved



Tunnel



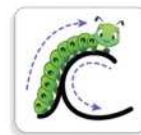
Diagonal



Within Foundation Stage, children will develop their fine motor skills through pattern activities, as well as learning about the formation of each letter of the alphabet. The letters are taught in the sequence set out in Phonics planning. As each letter is taught, the letter family it belongs to is also discussed. In Key Stage 1, letter families will be focused on in more detail. This approach helps to eliminate any 'b', 'd' and 'p' confusion. Children also focus more on ascenders (where part of a letter stands tall) and descenders (where part of the letter goes underneath the line).



The curly caterpillar family (c a o d g q e f s)



<i>c</i> – slide up, ping back and curl around the caterpillar	<i>q</i> – slide up, ping back around her head, up past her earring, down her neck and flick
<i>a</i> – slide up, ping back around the apple, down the leaf	<i>e</i> – slide up, lift off the top and scoop out the egg
<i>o</i> – slide up, ping back all around the orange	<i>f</i> – slide up high, around the petals, down the stem and draw the leaves
<i>d</i> – slide up, ping back around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck and	<i>s</i> – slide up, ping back and slither down the snake
<i>g</i> – slide up, ping back around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl	

Curly caterpillar letters are letters which follow an anti-clockwise movement. Once the entry stroke has been formed; the letters are then followed through in an anti-clockwise direction. Each letter is different but the initial movement is the same. 'e', 'f' and 's' are a little trickier but still follow a similar pattern, which is why they are included within this family of letters.

c

a

o

d

g

q

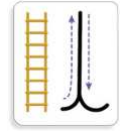
s

e

f



The long ladder family (l i t j u y)



<i>l</i> – slide up high, down the long leg	<i>j</i> – slide up, down his body, curl and a dot for his head
<i>i</i> – slide up, down the body and dot for the head	<i>u</i> – slide up, down and under the puddle, up to the top and down
<i>t</i> – slide up high, down the tower, across the tower	<i>y</i> – slide up, draw a horn, up a horn and under his head

Long ladder letters are the letters which go up for the entry stroke, then down and off in another direction. This is exemplified by the letter ‘*l*’. Long ladder letters can have ascenders and descenders such as ‘*j*’, ‘*y*’ and ‘*t*’.

l

i

t

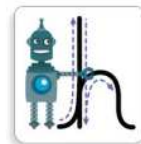
j

u

y



The one armed robot family (r n m p h b k)



r – slide up, down the robots back and curl over his arm	h – slide up high, down his head to his hooves, then over his back
n – slide up, down Nobby and over his net	b – slide up high, down the boot to the heel and back up around the toe
m – slide up, down Maisie, mountain, mountain	k – slide up high, down the kangaroos body, around his head and kick his leg out
p – slide up, down the pirates plait and back up around his face	

One armed robot letters are the letters which go up for the entry stroke, then down and retrace back upwards. This is exemplified by the letter 'r'. One armed robot letters normally sit between the skinny lines, but can have ascenders or descenders like 'p', 'h', 'b' and 'k'.

r

n

m

p

h

b

k



The zig zag monster family (v w x z)



v – slide up, down a wing, up a wing	x – slide up, down the arm and leg, repeat the other side
w – slide up, down, up, down, up	z – slide up, zig, zag, zig

Zig zag monster letters are the letters which follow a diagonal movement. In our scheme, each of these letters is described as being pointy or spiky to make sure the children do not curve the lines. This is exemplified by the letter 'v'. All zig zag monster letters sit between the skinny lines.

v

w

x

z



Capital letters without lifting (C L O S U V W Z)

Capital letters never join onto lower case letters, therefore they do not need an entry or exit stroke. Also, all capital letters begin at the top of the letter, unlike our lower case letters. The following capital letters are written in one movement, so children do not need to lift their pencil off the page to write them.

C

L

O

S

U

V

W

Z



Capital letters with 2 movements and 1 lift (B D G J K M N P R T X Y Q)

Capital letters never join onto lower case letters, therefore they do not need an entry or exit stroke. Also, all capital letters begin at the top of the letter, unlike our lower case letters. The following capital letters are written in two movements, with one lift of the pencil to complete the full shape of the letter.

B

D

G

J

K

M

N

P

R

T

X

Y

Q



Capital letters with 3 movements and 2 lifts (A E F H I)

Capital letters never join onto lower case letters, therefore they do not need an entry or exit stroke. Also, all capital letters begin at the top of the letter, unlike our lower case letters. The following capital letters are written in three movements, with two lifts of the pencil to complete the full shape of the letter.

A

E

F

H

I



Moving onto joining...

Most lower case letters join diagonally from the bottom e.g. *man*, *cap*.

Other letters join horizontally from the top of the letter e.g. *on*, *we*.

Joining of handwriting will only be done when children are forming all letters in the correct way and are showing that joining will enable them to build up speed in their writing. Within our scheme, children will work through 4 different joins to support them to develop fluent and legible joined handwriting.



Diagonal join 1: Across and up joins – these are used to join letters that finish with upstrokes to:

e, i, j, m, n, p, r, u, v, w, x, y, z.

an am ar li lu



Diagonal join 2: Across and high up – these are used to join from letters that finish with upstrokes to: *b, f, h, k, l, t.*

ab mb al at et



Diagonal join 3: Across, around/up, STOP and ping back – these are used when joining from a letter with an upstroke to:

a, c, d, g, o, s and q.

na ha nd md ng



Horizontal join: Across the top – these are used from the letters *o, v* and *w*. *r* can also join from the top to particular letters.

on vet we out

rip rat rot run



Diagonal Join 1

Across and up joins – these are used to join letters that finish with upstrokes to:

e, i, j, m, n, p, r, u, v, w, x, y, and z

Some examples are listed below, however; this is not a comprehensive list and there are many more that can be practised.

in

un

um

an

am

ar

ir

ip

up

aw

hu

du

ti

ki

ay



Diagonal Join 2

Across and high up – these are used to join from letters that finish with upstrokes to:

b, f, h, k, l, and t.

Some examples are listed below, however; this is not a comprehensive list and there are many more that can be practised.

ck

nk

nt

st

ch

th

mb

it

et

at

if

sh

al

il

el



Diagonal Join 3

Across, around/up, STOP and then come back – these are used when joining from a letter with an upstroke to: *a, c, d, g, o, s* and *q*.

Some examples are listed below, however; this is not a comprehensive list and there are many more that can be practised.

no

go

es

ng

ig

ad

id

uc

fa

to

sa

ma

nd

ld

sc



Horizontal joins

Across the top – these are used from the letters *o*, *n* and *w*. *r* can also join from the top to particular letters.

Some examples are listed below, however; this is not a comprehensive list and there are many more that can be practised.

ne

na

we

wa

wh

ou

ow

oi

oy

ol

ot

ro

ra

re

rt

rh



Number Formation

The correct formation of numbers is also a very important aspect of children's handwriting development. By the end of Year 2 children are expected to be able to record the majority of their Mathematics work and present it neatly. Each class will practise number formation in a similar manner to practising letter formation; as many of the numbers will follow one of the movement patterns from the letter families.

Curly caterpillars: 0, 6, 8 and 9

Long ladders: 1

Zig zag monsters: 4 and 7

One armed robots: 2, 3 and 5

0 – Around and around we go, when we get back we have a zero.	1 – Start at the top and down we run, that's the way we make a one.
2 – Around and back on a railroad track, two, two, two.	3 – Around the tree and around the tree, that's the way we make a three.
4 – Down and over, down some more, that's the way we make a four.	5 – Down and around, then a flag on high, that's the way we make a five.
6 – Down we go and make a loop, number six makes a hoop.	7 – Across the sky and down from heaven, that's the way we make a seven.
8 – Down the 's' and don't be late, when it's joined up you have an eight.	9 – Make a loop and then a line, that's the way we make a nine.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Sitwell Infant School

Handwriting Formation Guide

