



Strathmore Infant and Nursery School

Handwriting Policy

Handwriting at Strathmore Infant and Nursery

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Handwriting at Strathmore Infant and Nursery

At Strathmore Infant and Nursery School we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our handwriting style. We have developed our own sequence of progression alongside the handwriting intervention support from Herts for Learning as the basis of our Handwriting Policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Objectives

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. Our role as an infant school is to ensure that all pupils leave us on track to reach the requirements, at the end of Key Stage 2.

As stated in the *HfL Handwriting Progression and Toolkit*, evidence suggests that handwriting is:

a language act, and that 'orthographic and memory processes (the ability to recall letter shapes) contribute more to handwriting than...motor skills.' (Berninger & Amtmann, 2003). In order for children to be able to focus on the composition of their writing, it is vital that they have handwriting automaticity.' This is the ability to write accurately at speed, without having to concentrate on their letter formation, allowing them to focus on developing the content of their writing.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims:

- To make handwriting an automatic process that allows pupils the opportunity to focus on developing their creativity and grammatical accuracy.
- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style, preparing children to use continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work, with children understanding the purpose of good presentation.

Expectations

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Consistency throughout the school

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Teaching of Handwriting

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Discrete, formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met. Each class will have a minimum of four discrete handwriting lessons a week, alongside a focus on handwriting within phonics and English lessons. This should be between 10-15 minutes.

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft triangular pencil. They will be given opportunities to practise their

writing using a range of different implements and taught to write using a tripod grip. Pencil grips will be available for all pupils who need additional support with developing their pencil hold. Children are taught to pick up their pencil and hold it using crab fingers, holding it between their thumb and forefinger.

Lesson Plans

Each handwriting lesson will follow a clear sequence, which is shared within our lesson plan. The sequence of the lesson is:

Warm up exercises	Alternating between: shoulder stability and strength, crossing the mid-line, wrist strength and flexibility, thumb and finger strength and dexterity, whole hand strength and dexterity.
Ready to write	Remind children of how to sit (see appendix a) and how to hold a pencil. Practise picking up the pencil in the correct grip. Note – make sure all left-handed pupils are sitting on the left to allow room for movement.
Introduce/revise letters	Introduce the letter or join being learned by the children. Model writing letter using the correct formation. For pupils learning the individual letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet use the resource: Little Wandle Letter Formation.pptx Model writing the letter using 'magic fingers', this can be large movements, on their hands or on each others' backs.
Practice	Use the visualiser to model how the children will be practising their letters, teacher to model writing the letters using the same resource as the children (e.g. sheets or books). Remind children of ready to write behaviours and children to practise the letter a minimum of 5 times. During this part of the lesson teachers and TAs should be circulating and addressing misconceptions as the children write.
Apply	When the children are confident with writing the letter, they then move on to writing the letter in words. This may be in a following lesson in the week. During this part of the lesson teachers and TAs should be circulating and addressing misconceptions as the children write.

Teachers will follow the introduction/revision of letters with either practice or apply sessions, they may use both within a session if appropriate.

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties, often due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place from the beginning of their writing journey.

We use the Herts for Learning *Handwriting Initial Assessment Audits* found in the HfL 'Progression and Toolkit' to support teachers to identify areas of development and next steps for pupils who find forming letters challenging.

Interventions are then put in place to support all pupils who are not on track to meet age related expectations at the end of their key stage. This can include fine motor intervention (e.g. JIMBO), hand strength (e.g.

theraputty or dough disco), pencil control (Teoderescu Write from the Start programme) or letter formation intervention.

Progression of Handwriting

Early Years

Nursery

For our youngest pupils we use Pen Disco to support our pupils with developing their pencil grip and forming letter shapes/patterns. The children are encouraged to mark make within the environment and are given lots of opportunities to practise their gross and fine motor skills. The children are also encouraged to write their own names and numbers accurately, with a focus on formation. We also use the Little Wandle programme 'Foundations for Phonics' to prepare them for entry to Reception and to raise awareness of the letter shapes.

Reception

Our Reception children are first introduced to letters through the phonic programme Little Wandle. Within every phonics lesson, as the sounds are introduced, the children are shown how to form the letters using the formation phrases (see resources below) and images to support the children's understanding.

Alongside Little Wandle letter introductions, children are also taught handwriting in discrete sessions, using the Little Wandle handwriting programme. In the Autumn term, these form the main English sessions, ensuring children have secure transcription skills in order to allow for instinctive letter formation and the removal of barriers while the children are developing their composition skills.

By the end of the Autumn Term, the children will have been introduced to every letter of the alphabet. There should be a focus on where ascenders and descenders sit on the lines.

Reception children will also be taught the formation of capital letters and numbers in discrete handwriting sessions.

The learning environment and curriculum is designed to give the children lots of opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills. Intervention is put in place for any pupils not on track to meet age related expectations at the end of the year. These interventions are put in place in the Autumn term and reviewed regularly.

The handwriting pattern playbook is also used, to give additional support to children who struggle with individual letter strokes.

Key Stage 1

Our Key Stage 1 curriculum is a progressive model. The majority of the cohort will work through these stages together, however, some pupils may spend more time working through an earlier stage and some may be ready to progress quicker than others. Intervention and additional practice will be put in place for all pupils as soon as the need is identified.

Stage 1 - Letter families

On entry to Year 1, the class will review the letter formation of all letters through letter families. Staff will continue to use the formation phrases to teach the letter formation to ensure consistency.

While teaching formation the lead out lines for each letter will be shared to prepare children for joining letters later in the program. There will be a clear focus on the placement of ascenders and descenders.

All handwriting practise in Key Stage 1, apart from pattern practice, will be in specific handwriting books, unless a child has an additional need that means sheets are more appropriate. Modelling will be completed using the visualiser and a handwriting book. The majority of children will be able to copy the letters accurately into their handwriting book, however, for any pupils who are not able to transfer from the board to their books the classroom staff will need to write the first letters on the lines for the pupils.

Letter order:

- Curves to start - c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s
- Straight lines - i, l, t, x, z
- Top exit - r, v, w
- Tunnels - n, m, h, b, p, u
- Hooks, loops and lines - j, y, f, k

Intervention will be put in place for all pupils who struggle with forming their letters, this may be fine motor intervention (e.g. JIMBO) or hand strength (e.g. theraputty). For pupils who struggle with the letter strokes required for certain letters, patterns in the handwriting patterns playbook will be used to provide additional practice. This may be for individual pupils, groups or the whole class and guidance on selecting appropriate patterns to support each letter family can be found at the front of the playbook.

Capital letters and number formation

Following the letter families, handwriting sessions will focus on the correct formation of capital letters.

This may include going over every letter or focusing on those that the cohort needs to practice.

Number formation should continue to be focused on in every maths lesson.

Stage 2 - Preparation for joins

Before beginning to join letters, handwriting sessions will focus on pre-cursive patterns. When the children have fluid control of their pencil and can follow patterns accurately without taking their pencils off the page, they will progress to stage 3.

Stage 3 - Introducing joins

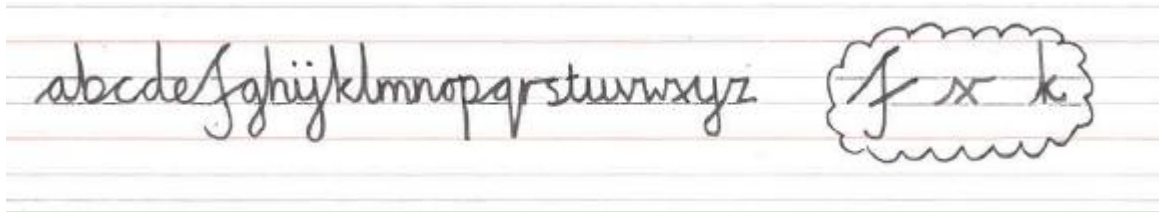
When children are ready to progress to joined handwriting, this will be introduced to the children through the joining of digraphs.

We will teach the joins through joining digraphs initially, starting with the long vowel sounds and working through the order of the Little Wandle 'Grow the Code' sound mat. We will introduce lead in and lead in lines for each letter as they are introduced through these digraphs.

Letter forms

Certain letters can be joined multiple ways and we have taken time as a school to choose our letter forms. We have selected the joins that affect the look of the letters the least. Our formation guide can be found below.

Resources:



Stage 4 - Developing cursive writing

Once the children are confident at joining digraphs, the next stage is to begin joining whole words. We will teach the lead in and lead out lines for all letters not already taught through digraphs and handwriting sessions will practice these joins through practising the non-statutory example words in The National Curriculum in England - English Appendix 1: Spelling

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Appendix 1: Writing position

We follow the 'Ready to Write' guidance found in the handwriting and progression toolkit from HfL.