

Handwriting Policy

School aims

We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.

An effective handwriting policy is based on a style that is quick and easy to learn. It should be neat, legible and fast. Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters intuitively. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content. At Great Ouse Primary Academy we use a continuous cursive style of handwriting to support our teaching of handwriting. Handwriting should be taught alongside phonic and spelling knowledge at all stages.

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 aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Resources

We provide resources to support the learning of continuous cursive handwriting and is accessible to all staff, children, parents and carers.

Handwriting skill

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. Handwriting is a motor activity. A movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting. It is within our hands that the kinaesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter.

Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers' demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly.

Handwriting Principles

- Handwriting is taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. It is modelled by the teacher then supervised.
- Where possible, handwriting should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns. This will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings.

- Teachers will model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and when marking books.

Handwriting in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children will have copious opportunities to develop:

- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching 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

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder.

In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)

- Pre-writing stage- patterning
- Individual letter formation
- Word formation based on letter groups

The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching handwriting:

Year 1 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 practice these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

Year 2 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 not joined
- 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

Year 3-4 pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters)

Joined up handwriting style

At Great Ouse, we introduce joined up handwriting at an early stage of a child's development: from Year 1 upwards. Learning a series of early rhythmical movements can help children with specific learning difficulties improve their fine motor coordination.

The advantages of teaching Continuous Cursive handwriting:

- The starting and finishing points for all the letters are easier to remember (they all start on the line and, other than a few exceptions, all finish on the line).
- Children are able to write at a faster pace
- Lessens the chance of reversing letters
- Spaces between words become more obvious
- Upper and lower case letters are clearer.
- The child only has to learn one style of writing
- The transition to joined writing is simple and occurs sooner.
- It aids the flow of the writing as the letters naturally provide a left to right directional movement. This rhythmical flow also aids speed and fluency.
- Many children with specific learning difficulties find the continuous cursive font style easier to learn and it is often recommended by specialist teachers, educational psychologists and is used in dyslexic friendly schools. Words are written in one set of movements without the pen being taken off the paper, this helps the motor memory to store spellings. This is especially important for irregular spellings that can be hard to commit to memory.

Supporting individual children:

- Children should be encouraged to use the correct pencil grip and sit with a good posture.
- Left handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their writing arms from bumping each other. The angle of the paper depends on the handedness of the pupil. Left-handed children should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents them smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. A left-handed writer may also benefit from holding the pencil higher up.
- Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, will be given additional support. Additional resources may also be used (i.e. a writing slant).

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GreatOuse
PRIMARY ACADEMY

