

Handwriting - A Parent's Guide

This leaflet is to explain why and how we teach handwriting at Ashgate Primary School.

It also includes ideas on ways in which you can help to develop your child's handwriting.



At Ashgate Primary School, our aim is that pupils will be supported to develop a handwriting style which is clear, joined and fluid. Inevitably some will be neater than others, but each child can acquire a consistent and fluent style.

Although there are many opportunities to practice handwriting across the curriculum, we will also provide regular lessons for teaching and revising these skills. The frequency and length of these lessons will vary according to the age and competence of the children.

Formal handwriting skills will be taught regularly and systematically through the use of the PENPALS Handwriting scheme (Cambridge University Press).

Five stages are identified and these form the basic organisation of the scheme:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (Foundation)

2. Beginning to join (Lower KS1)
3. Securing joins (Upper KS1/Lower KS2)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Lower KS2)
5. Presentation skills (Upper KS2)

Opportunities for linking handwriting with early phonics and spelling work are fully exploited through the PENPALS scheme.

It is important that children hold their pencil correctly and ensure their posture is correct.

Pencil hold

*Pencil held between finger and thumb
Middle finger provides extra support*

Posture

*Feet flat on the floor
Head up, not resting on the desk or hand
Paper at the correct angle
Spare hand steadies the paper*

Progression from year EYFS – Year 6

EYFS

We begin at school with letters being written separately (not joined up yet). When the child's letter formation is accurate we then introduce joins.

Year 1

During this school year children will begin to join some pairs of letters within a word. They will be introduced to two types of joins:

- Diagonal joins
- Horizontal joins

Year 2

The main aim this year is for the children to become fluent and develop an automatic style.

New joining letters this year are:

- Joins from 'q'
- Joins to and from 'r'
- Joins to and from 's'
- Joins from 'f'

Year 3

Children will refine their handwriting and make sure that the size and proportions of all letters and the spaces between letters and words are consistent. New joins introduced are:

- Joins from 'p' and 'b' to a short letter, an ascender and an anti-clockwise letter

Year 4

In Year 4 children will begin to slope their handwriting and will keep ascenders and descenders parallel. Children will begin to practise writing at increased speed and will be introduced to the print alphabet for captions, headings, labels and posters.

Year 5/6

By this stage children should be secure at joining and able to use joined up writing for most of their work. Children will be experimenting with slopes and will have a more mature and comfortable style ink.

How can you help your child?

- Have a small selection of handwriting materials readily available at home. Soft pencils fibre-tip pens and some sheets of A4 typing paper are enough for a start.
- Encourage your child to write on a line, even if they have to draw it themselves
- Encourage your child to join his/her writing in any work brought home
- Let handwriting play a part in your family's daily life, for example:

- *making lists and labels*
 - *keeping a family diary*
 - *leaving notes for each other in busy households*
 - *keeping in touch with distant friends and relatives*
 - *designing and making homemade notepads and greetings cards.*
- *Many children like to do their homework lying on the floor, but don't let them! So do your best to provide somewhere where your child can work, the end of the kitchen table is perfect!*
- *Praise, praise, praise!*