

Penmanship Guidance

Introduction

Whenever children express themselves in the written form, their thoughts and ideas must be valued and should be celebrated. This celebration involves both the writer and the audience and therefore well-formed and legible handwriting is a necessity throughout all key stages.

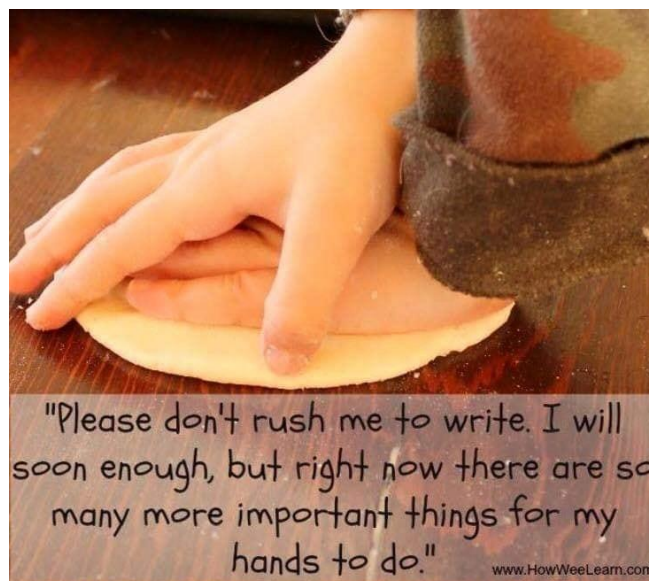
Handwriting should be seen as a developmental process and is not necessarily based on age. As children develop both physically and mentally they pass through various stages. Each year group will have children from all stages of this development and the teaching of handwriting should take this into account.

Handwriting should involve the whole body to ensure that spellings flow out of the pencil as children taught in a multi-sensory way make fewer errors with spelling.

Aims

By the end of stage 5, children will:

- recognise and be able to form each letter correctly and use them consistently.
- recognise and be able to form each join correctly and use them consistently.
- understand where and why the different joins are made.
- have developed a handwriting style in line with the school models.
- be able to write neatly and legibly in ink.
- be given the opportunity to apply for a pen license and develop a style with a pen.



Approach

The teaching of handwriting should be taught alongside the teaching of spelling.

Children should be allowed to pass through each stage as they become developmentally ready. This means therefore that within any given classroom the structure of the handwriting lesson will vary.

Stage One - Gross and Fine Motor Co-ordination

Stage one, although not age specific, should begin at the EYFS. The approach needs to be multi-sensory and should involve practical experiences, e.g.

- lego
- movement for learning (cross patterning in particular)
- sewing
- clay
- peg boards
- PE experiences
- sand
- water
- follow the path sheets
- tracing
- sky writing the four basic shapes
- writing on backs (maybe even when lining up)
- writing on the palm of the hand with a finger
- Write Dance



Although this is begun in the EYFS, older children may still be working within this stage. This stage progresses onto paper only when children are completely ready.

Stage one involves the pre writing shapes and only four basic letter shapes as many of the later letters are based on combinations of these shapes.

l c r w

When the children are completely competent in creating these shapes they are ready to move to stage two.

Stage Two - First Letter Shapes

The letter shapes in stage two need to be taught in sequence, e.g.,

l t i
r n m
c a o e
w v etc.

All letter shapes need to be taught and formed on blank paper, e.g. A4 blank books or whiteboards.

When the children are completely competent forming all letter shapes correctly, they are ready to move to stage three.



Stage Three - Positioning

This stage involves children positioning the letters on a line. At no time before this stage should the children be writing on lined paper or with lines guides.

The children should be taught at this stage that all letters have their bodies on the line, but some have a tail below (descenders) and some have a stick above (ascenders).



Only once the children can write every letter correctly and fluidly on the line are they ready for joining.

Stage Four - Joining Through Letter Strings

This stage involves teaching letter joins through spelling patterns (Charles Cripps 'A Hand for Spelling' - see classroom management).

All of the joins are to be taught as laid out in 'A Hand for Spelling'.



Only when the children have control of a simple join can we teach the children to use ink.

Stage Five - Style

When the children are consistently demonstrating legible, correctly formed school policy handwriting, they could have the opportunity to apply for a pen licence. Once awarded a licence, the children will then be taught to develop their style in pen.

Classroom Management

Handwriting should be taught in a short, lively and fun session. These sessions should be taught frequently and should incorporate the whole school agreed children friendly sayings. These sayings describe the letter formations and joins.

Each session should involve a teacher demonstration and stage appropriate activities. These may involve A4 paper, whiteboards (individual or class), plain tablecloths, easels, sugar paper, sand, lego, brain gym, sewing, clay, peg boards, PE, play dough, water, follow the path sheets, tracing, sky writing, etc.

Every time children write they should be encouraged and expected to use the correct letter formation, etc, relevant to their stage.

Children's handwriting achievements should always be celebrated.