



A Parent's Guide to Handwriting

This leaflet is designed to provide parents with an overview as to how handwriting is taught in our school. Our full handwriting policy can be viewed on our website:

http://www.dishforth.n-yorks.sch.uk/docs/policies/Handwriting_Policy.pdf

Aims of our handwriting policy

- Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.
- Our aim is that the children will be able to write clearly, fluently and quickly so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school.
- We aim for our pupils to develop a legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of high- quality presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.
- We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Early writing

All children in Reception are introduced to handwriting in print, ensuring correct letter formation. We use the Read Write Inc rhymes to support correct letter formation.

Children in Year 1 are introduced to pre-cursive handwriting (this type of handwriting uses leading lines at the start of the letter and a flick at the end, but does not yet join up).

By the end of Year 2 it is expected that some children will have achieved a continuous cursive (joined up) handwriting style.

Cursive Handwriting

Our handwriting style is what is known as the 'continuous cursive' style. In other words, it is joined up writing where each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper –consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement. Children in KS2 will begin to use a handwriting pen when their handwriting is legible and correctly joined.

Key Advantages of Continuous Cursive Handwriting

- By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape.
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (b/d or p/q)

- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower-case letters.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.

Cursive handwriting is recommended by the British Dyslexia Association

Key Features of our Handwriting Style

- The majority of letters start on the line with an 'leading line'.
- The majority of letters end on the line with a 'flick'.
- The pencil does not leave the paper until the word is complete.
- t is crossed and i is dotted when the whole word is complete.

Letter Formation

Formal teaching of handwriting is carried out regularly and systemically in school to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

For simplicity, the letters of the alphabet can be sorted into 4 main movement families:

The four groups are:

- Long ladder: down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letters: **l i j l t u**

- One-armed robot: down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letters

r r b n h m k p and the numbers: **2 3 5** • Curly : anti clockwise round, exemplified by the letters

c c a d e g o q and the numbers: **0 6 8 9** • Zig-zag letters: **v w x y z** and the numbers: **1 4 7**

Four Basic Joins

Children will be taught the 4 basic letter joins:

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai, ar, us.
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi.
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ab, ul, it.
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol, wh, ot.

How can you support your child's handwriting at home?

The key is practice and the more creative the better! With younger children you might like to write letters in foam, sand trays or in chalk outside. Encourage your child to say the letter as they write and allow them to become familiar with the movement of each letter. Older children might like to practise their handwriting by keeping a diary or writing a story. Being left handed is not generally a problem, however some children do experience difficulties. It is therefore important to support your child in developing the correct pencil grip, sitting position and focus on initial letter formation.

Please contact your child's class teacher if you are concerned about your child's handwriting or you require any further information.

Please see our handwriting policy if you would like more detailed information on how the progression of handwriting throughout school.