

Handwriting Policy

Adopted: December 2022



Handwriting at Emmer Green Primary School

Handwriting is an extremely complex skill to master, one that involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be coordinated into an integrated fashion. Legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows a child to attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content. This is important when assessments are based on written work, particularly in time-limited written examinations, which remain a major form of assessment for many formal qualifications. Without fast and legible handwriting, students may miss out on learning opportunities and under-achieve academically.

(The National Handwriting Association)

At Emmer Green Primary School, we know that handwriting is a complex, demanding skill that needs to be taught explicitly, with consistent and correct modelling. Handwriting is an important skill and it is vital to teach pupils to clearly and neatly present their ideas to communicate meaning clearly. When children can write quickly, it allows them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively. Consistency in approach, methods employed and models used are key to effective learning, in addition to regular practice.

Intention - Aims for the Pupils:

By the time our pupils leave us at the end of KS2, they will be prepared for their next stage of education because they will:

- know how to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
 - having a correct pencil grip
 - Forming all letters correctly
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters
 - Knowing that when joining, all letters start from the bottom with a lead-in stroke

- know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
- be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version.
- be able to choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

National Curriculum Expectations:

At Emmer Green Primary, we follow the National Curriculum and assess children against the expectations as laid out there. For handwriting, the expectations are:

Reception:

Handwriting is not a specific focus but children are taught to use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds, as well as being able to write some common words with irregular spellings. Letter formation is taught within phonics lesson as part of the *Little Wandle Letters & Sounds Revised* programme.

Planned opportunities are provided for children to develop their writing of simple sentences, which can be read by themselves and others. Children develop the use of effective pencil grip throughout their time in Reception. Also, as part of the Physical Development strand, children are assessed on how well they can use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.

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 practise these.

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 unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters

Handwriting statements in the End of KS1 Assessment Framework 2019 state:

Children who are Working Toward the Expected Standard (**WTS**) can:

- form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another in some of their writing

Children who are working at the Expected Standard (**EXS**) can:

- form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters

Children who are Working at Greater Depth within the Expected Standard (**GDS**) can:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some 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 unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Year 5 & 6

Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

Handwriting statements in the End of KS2 Assessment Framework 2019 state:

Children who are Working Toward the Expected Standard (**WTS**) can:

- write legibly

Children who are working at the Expected Standard

(EXS) can:

- maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed

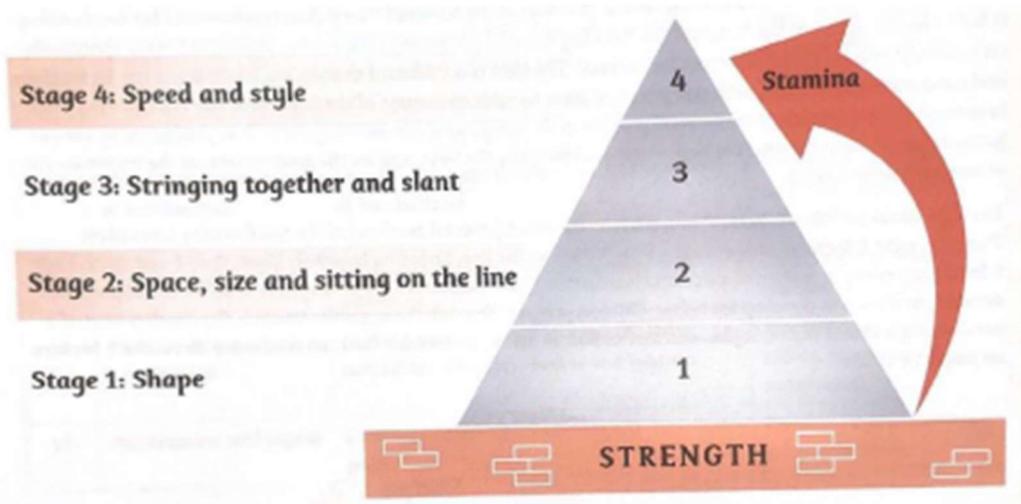
Implementation - Our Teaching Approach: WriteWell

At Emmer Green Primary School, we have adopted the **Schofield and Sims WriteWell approach** to teach and develop our children's handwriting. This approach develops fluency, legibility and eventually speed, so that by the end of KS2, children can write their ideas confidently across the curriculum. Using WriteWell materials to support us ensures that there is a systematic, consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting, and provides us with a clearly structured whole school scheme.

WriteWell is based on the eight S Factors as recommended by the National Handwriting Association.



These are then grouped into four developmental stages. The progression of the stages is shown in the pyramid below.

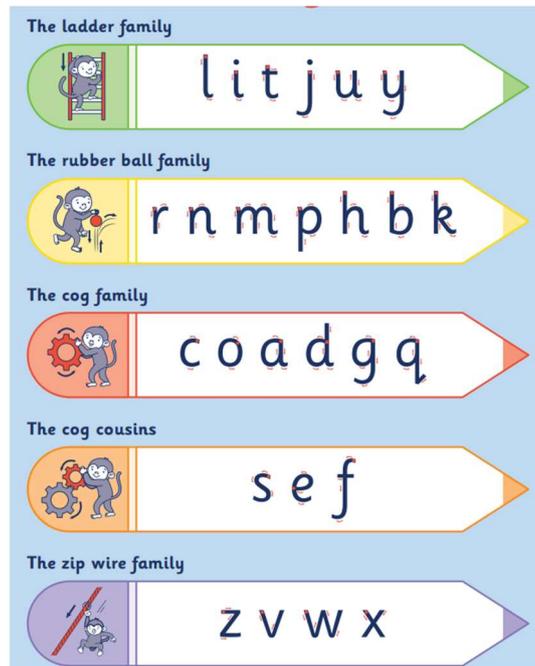


The foundation of the pyramid is '**Strength**'. Children need to have developed the necessary physical and visual abilities, muscle strength and motor skills before they are ready to start writing letter shapes (e.g. can they draw kisses correctly?). Running alongside the whole pyramid at every stage is the importance of building **Stamina** as children progress through primary school, resulting in them writing for increasingly extended periods of time.

The Four Stages of Development

WriteWell's four stages are split into discrete modules that take the form of eleven pupil books. These offer clear guidance and progression from Reception up to Year 6. Although the average age of development is listed here, children will progress onto each stage when they are ready.

Stage 1: (Reception) Children begin with patterns and boosting pencil control, before being introduced to the correct letter formations for lowercase letters, based on 'family groups'. They then move onto capital letters and numbers.



Stage 2: (Year 1) Once letter formation is secure, children learn how to arrange their writing on baselines and form letters of the correct relative size. They also learn about spacing letters within words and leaving appropriate spaces between words.

Stage 3: (Years 2-4) This is the most detailed stage, in which children are systematically introduced to the basic diagonal and horizontal joins. Throughout this stage, children also build confidence by using joins to join longer words and to develop a consistent joining style.

Stage 4: (Years 5&6) Once joining is secure, the focus shifts to developing a personal style that is fast, fluent and legible and can be adapted for different purposes and tasks. Children are encouraged to adopt a slanted style and to experiment with changes to their joined style, such as looping.

The 'P Checks'

Alongside the Stages of development, we also use the P checks with pupils, as recommended by the National Handwriting Association. This is to help focus staff and pupils on important features of the physical writing process and establish good practice. Here is the pupil reminder sheet:

Use the **P checks** to make sure your body is in a comfortable position for writing.



Before you start, check your **posture**, **pencil grip** and **paper position**. As you write, check that you are applying the right amount of **pressure** through your pencil.

Posture



Sit back in your chair, face forwards and place both feet flat on the floor.

Pencil grip



right-hand pencil grip

Hold your pencil between your thumb and index finger while it rests on your middle finger. Don't hold the pencil too tightly!



left-hand pencil grip

Paper position



right-handers

- Place your paper slightly to your right.
- Tilt the top left-hand corner downwards.
- Use your non-writing hand to hold it still.

- Place your paper slightly to your left.
- Tilt the top right-hand corner downwards.
- Use your non-writing hand to hold it still.



left-handers

Pressure

Make sure you don't press the pencil too hard or too lightly when writing.

Guidance on Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when ready) with a rounded nib.
- Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil for right handers
- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper. For left handers, use the right hand to steady the paper
- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger • Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°

NB It is very important that a right-handed child is NOT seated on the left-hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

Frequency of Teaching of Handwriting

From Reception to Year 2, there are 3 x weekly handwriting lessons which take place within the Phonics or English lesson. From Year 3 to Year 6, there are 2 x weekly handwriting lessons. Regular additional opportunities to practise are also provided, for example, presenting work for display or for Special Writing books.

Assessment:

All children will be assessed regularly by their teacher to ensure they are the correct stage of the Write Well programme (guidance and examples given in Write Well Teacher's Book). Teachers will assess children's handwriting progression during lessons as they write as well as once they have completed their writing and when making summative assessments at the three writing assessment points in the year (Terms 2, 4 & 6).

Criteria for assessment may include:

- Does the child adopt the correct posture?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movements when forming/joining?
- Does the child write fluently?
- Is the writing legible?
- Is the child's handwriting developing in-line with statutory curricula?
- Are joins being made correctly?
- Are spaces between letters, words and lines correct?
- Is writing size appropriate?

Inclusion

Children with English as an additional language are encouraged to make the same outstanding progress in handwriting as their peers. To support their understanding of letter formation, handwriting will consistently be modelled by the class teacher and Write Well animations used to support this modelling. Children with Special Educational Needs may experience difficulties making good progress in their handwriting development. They may need additional support with their fine motor development, pencil grip or letter formation. The class teacher will liaise with the Inclusion Managers to put into place the most appropriate form of support. This could include:

- Pencil grip or jumbo triangular pencil
- Fine motor skills intervention
- Additional handwriting group
- Additional handwriting homework

Handwriting font

The WriteWell programme uses font from the Sassoon family.

The **Sassoon Infant Font** is used in Stages 1 and 2 (Books 2 to 5). The lowercase letters are taught with exit flicks from letters ending on the baseline in preparation for joining. Entry strokes are not taught as these use diagonal lines, which children often find difficult when they are first learning to write.

Lowercase letters

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Capital letters

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Letter families

Lowercase letters are grouped into 'families' which require similar movements.

The ladder family

l i t j u y



The rubber ball family

r n m p h b k



The cog family

c o a d g q



The cog cousins

s e f



The zip wire family

z v w x



The joins

At the beginning of Stage 3 (Book 6), the Sassoon Joined font is introduced. This font is then used as the main handwriting font for the remainder of the series (Books 6 to 11).

There are two main types of join – **diagonal joins** and **horizontal joins**. These basic joins are divided into three sub-groups to distinguish between joining to letters with different starting points and formations.

Diagonal joins

- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to short straight letters and letters with descenders (starting at the short letter height) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**
- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**
- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**

Horizontal joins

- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to short straight letters (starting at the short letter line) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**
- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**
- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**

Some letters (e.g. **e, s, r, f**) require a variation on these joins and are introduced separately.

Break letters (letters that do not join to the next letter) are letters that finish with a descender (**y, g, j, q**), letters that finish on the left (**s, x, b, p**) and the letter **z**.

(Note: Optional joins from break letters are introduced in **Stage 4** to aid speed or as a stylistic choice.)