

Introduction

At Dovedale, we believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from letter formation through to letter joins while practising speed and fluency. Being taught letter formation in the correct families during the early foundation years of a child's education will ensure a lasting and fluent handwriting habit. It is of utmost importance that the correct letter formation, letter direction and spacing are all embedded and used with skill before introducing joined up handwriting.

Handwriting should become an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of their writing. In order for this to occur, it is important that **all adults model the correct formation** at all times, when marking, teaching, and for display.

Pupils will be taught the agreed style using the **Letter Join** programme across the whole school. This scheme follows the requirements of the current English National Curriculum.

Cursive Lower Case Letters



Aims:

- To ensure consistent teaching through a whole school policy.
- To improve handwriting and achieve a higher standard in presentation skills in all subjects.
- To teach / model handwriting in everyday lessons through every piece of writing throughout the whole school.
- To make pupils aware that different degrees of neatness may be appropriate for different tasks.
- To demonstrate there is a balance between speed and legibility.
- To provide equal opportunities for all pupils, including left and right-handers and pupils with SEND

Provision

Handwriting and expected standards of presentation should be taught as a whole class activity. Handwriting and spelling are sometimes taught at the same time, one reinforcing the other.

Inclusion

Handwriting will be monitored as part the writing monitoring cycle, led by subject leaders. Slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips and gross and fine motor skills activities may be used to help children who find handwriting difficult. In Key Stage 2, the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme is used to support children in intervention groups.

Six stages of developing handwriting

1. Readiness for writing, gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation.
2. Learning and embedding letter formation.
3. Learning and beginning to join.
4. Securing joins.

5. Practising presentation skills, speed and fluency using joined-up handwriting.
6. Embedding presentation skills, legibility and fluency using joined-up handwriting.

The Role of the Teacher

- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- To use all opportunities for writing as handwriting practice, regardless of subject.
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.
- To use and model the correct letter formation and joined up handwriting.
- To ensure correct posture - children sitting comfortably and upright, both arms on the table, feet flat on floor.
- To teach the correct grip and writing pressure.
- To always ensure correct formation through close monitoring of individuals.

Children will be taught:

- To develop fine motor control.
- The importance of correct posture, sitting position and paper position whether right or lefthanded.
- To start and finish letters correctly.
- To form letters of consistent size and shape.
- The language of writing and how to use the correct terminology, (e.g., ascenders).
- To put regular spaces between words.
- How to form upper and lower-case letters.
- The importance of neat and clear presentation to communicate meaning effectively.

Foundation Stage

To enable children to acquire a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style, they need to develop good gross and fine motor control skills and recognition of letter shapes and patterns from an early stage.

Children will take part in a multi-sensory approach through activities to develop their fine and gross motor-skills and to recognise patterns. This will help prepare children for handwriting, consolidate their motor control and introduce letter shapes. Exploring letter shapes and letter formation using their index finger in sand; sky writing with both hands; making patterns on each other's backs and using large equipment to make marks e.g. big chalks, Jumbo pencils and crayons, large paint brushes and finger paints will help pupils feel the movement in the hand. They will be given a range of materials to practise handwriting opportunities and to develop their handwriting to their full potential at that age.

Children should begin to learn how to correctly hold a pencil, then how to use a pencil to form recognisable letters. To aid movement, close attention will be given to pencil grip; correct posture and sitting position; the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space.

A wide range of activities will help to develop hand and finger strength which leads on to developing a good pencil grip. Children will be taught to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger - the dynamic tripod grip.



At this stage the correct formation of letters is important. To encourage the correct letter formation, children will be taught letter formation in the correct families as per the requirements of the current English National Curriculum. We will be using the **Letter**

Join scheme, which shows the correct starting point and the correct letter direction. Children will focus on the correct letter movement rather than neatness at this early stage. Children will receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip, sitting position, or letter formation are seen.

The letter formation families are:

- 'Around' letters: c a o d g q
- 'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y
- 'Curly' letters: e f s
- 'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x.

Children will be encouraged to write from the left hand edge of the page, or margin.

Key Stage 1

Pupils at Key Stage 1 will continue to develop a legible style using **Letter Join**. Handwriting lessons will be frequent, ensuring the correct letter formation is used. Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor skills with a range of multi-sensory activities. Teachers and support staff will continue to guide and correct children on using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and writing pressure. Emphasis will be on neatness and correct letter formation.

Linking handwriting and spelling are also important at this stage. The regular practise of letter patterns and the copying of high frequency words will help develop good visual and writing habits. By copying and tracing whole words and linking their handwriting to patterns learnt, the children will develop a good motor memory, which will aid independent writing and spelling.

Teachers will continue to monitor the progress made by all learners and ensure that the specific needs of left-handed pupils and those with Special Educational Needs are met. Children will receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip; writing pressure; sitting position or letter formation are seen. Children need to be made aware of:

- Where the letter starts and finishes.
- Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline.
- Ascenders and descenders.
- Spacing and finger space between words.
- Consistent writing size.
- Capital letters and their appropriate use.

By the end of Year 1, most children will be able to write most letters using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Letters are correctly formed and orientated, and children put spaces between words.

By the end of Year 2, most children will be able to print legibly using upper- and lower-case letters appropriately within words, with ascenders and descenders clearly distinguished, and observing correct spacing within and between words.

Some children will be using the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in their writing. They will begin learning the diagonal and horizontal strokes, including the three joining strokes needed to join letters together using **Letter Join**. Children will also be taught which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined (the break letters).

Pupils should be able to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another using the correct direction confidently, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.
- Produce writing which sits on the line most of the time.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (ie. letters that are formed in similar ways)

Key Stage 2

Children in lower Key Stage 2 will build on the work done in Key Stage 1 to help ensure correct letter formation. Once correct letter formation and sizing is secure, children will begin learning the diagonal and horizontal strokes, while other children will continue to increase the legibility of their joined-up handwriting.

They will begin to 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).

Handwriting will continue to be taught in upper Key Stage 2 using a holistic approach, with the aim of increasing the fluency and speed. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Teaching and learning will focus on:

- Embedding letter formation, consistency in size, proportion and spacing of each letter.
- Sitting correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Writing with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely.
- Ensuring that Capital letters do not join to lower case letters.
- Developing a legible, joined handwriting style.

- Using joined-up handwriting the majority of the time.
- Maintaining legibility while writing fluently and with increasing speed.
- Neat and legible handwriting for presentation purposes.

We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent style and by the end of Year 6, pupils should be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes, such as:

- A neat, legible hand for finished, presented work.
- A faster script for note making.
- An ability to print for labelling diagrams, or for algebra.
- Capital letters for filling in a form.

By the end of Year 6, most of the children will have developed a clear, consistent joined handwriting style, enabling them to write neatly and legibly. Teachers will continue to monitor the progress made by all learners and ensure that the specific needs of left-handed pupils and those with Special Educational Needs are met. Children will receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip; writing pressure; sitting position or letter formation are seen.

Assessment

In the Foundation Stage, assessment of letter formation will be ongoing, and any incorrect letter formation will be addressed immediately and worked on in class, with support from home if possible.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, overall assessment of handwriting will be on-going through the marking of books and teacher observations where constructive feedback will be given.

Monitoring of handwriting will take place throughout the year by the Writing Subject Leaders.

The Role of Parents/Carers

We value the support of parents in encouraging and assisting their children with handwriting development. Therefore, parents/carers will be made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practise this with their children at home. Parents/carers will be informed of the school's approach to handwriting and they will be given guidance on the correct letter formation prior to their children starting at the school and as part of meetings for parents as children move up the school. At times, homework activities will be also used to promote and practise handwriting styles.