How We Teach Handwriting at Martlesham Primary Academy



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# Handwriting Intent

***English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know.* National Curriculum (2014)**

The 2014 National Curriculum for handwriting outlines:

In 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’ (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

In 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
* use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

In year ¾, 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, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

In years 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

Implementation:

At MPa we use the ***Letterjoin*** scheme. is focused on whole-class teaching using digital resources to enable modelling and interactive learning. Each class in school will partake in three sessions each week.

At MPA, children in the early years and KS1 are taught to form their letters using the following style – We understand that for children to be able to form legible letters, they need to be developmentally ready. Children in EYFS and KS1 have opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills through hand gym. Cursive handwriting is taught from key stage 2. If appropriate pre-cursive/cursive can be taught in KS1 to children that are developmentally ready. All adults are expected to model the correct handwriting style for their class.

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It is essential for teachers to set a good example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when providing written feedback.

• All pupils should have opportunities to watch adults writing and have opportunities to write for themselves.

• All pupils should be encouraged to attempt writing for various purposes using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions.

Progression of handwriting and lesson structure through our school

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| EYFS | For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following: • enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities • exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc. • becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary • correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting  Lesson Planner Module 1  For EYFS teaches pre-cursive patterns and cursive, lower case letters. It starts with Getting Ready for Handwriting including fine and gross motor skills warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip. The first module is divided into three sections covering: • pre-cursive patterns • easy letters and words • harder letters and words At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and form all the lowercase letters of the alphabet and write words using the correct joining techniques. |
| Key stage 1: years 1 and 2 | Teaching progresses from five short, to two longer lessons per week: • continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises • strengthening cursive handwriting, learning and practice • numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice • KS1 SATs SPaG exercises Lesson Planner Module 2 for Year 1 contains lessons for teaching how to write capital letters, printed letters, numbers and symbols, whilst reinforcing cursive handwriting using Letter-join’s on-line and printed resources. It is divided into three sections covering: • capital letters • printed letters • numbers and symbols On finishing this module, children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their use.  Lesson Planner Module 3  For Year 2 includes lessons to improve letter formation and orientation of letters through regular practice and to support spelling, grammar and punctuation in readiness for KS1 SATs. The sections in this module cover: • letter families • high frequency words • joining techniques • sequencing sentences • dictation exercises • times table facts • SPaG practice for KS1 SATs With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing. |
| Years 3 and 4 | Handwriting lessons will continue twice a week in Lower Key Stage 2. Lesson Planner Module 4 for Year 3 is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French and Spanish), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.  Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children’s handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.  Lesson Planner Module 5  For Year 4 focuses on using handwriting practice to support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, French and Spanish. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum.  Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module’s lessons.  On concluding this module, children will have practised applying size appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum whilst maintaining fluency and legibility. |
| Years 5 and 6 | More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during two weekly lessons:  • reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum  • form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters  • dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills  • KS2 SATs SPaG practice  Lesson Planner Module 6  For Year 5 continues to build on combining fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum.  In this module, learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. With Letter-join’s wide range of resources they will be able to work towards producing consistently neat and well-presented handwriting in all curriculum subjects  On completing this module, children should be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.  Lesson Planner Module 7  Year 6 presents learners with a range of tasks where they have to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils’ revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based worksheets will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length.  Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to aid KS2 SATs SPaG revision. They are designed to support year 6 pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of SPaG preparation and plenty of handwriting practice.  By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters. All of these writing styles are covered in this module. |

# Impact - How we assess writing?

By the time our pupils leave Martlesham Academy, we aim to ensure that they can write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed. Teachers assess children’s handwriting frequently by observing letter formation and pencil grip during writing lessons and through end of lesson marking. Our Letterjoin handwriting scheme also has an Assessment Tracker which should be used termly. Interventions are planned for if a child is struggling with a particular handwriting skill.