

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 Years 3 and 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, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

In Years 5 and 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

At Martlesham, we believe that the fluency developed in handwriting has to be correctly formed in each letter as well as the joins. If children do not develop fluency in their foundational stages, their handwriting becomes a barrier to being a successful writer.

Implementation:

At MPA from KS1 onwards, we use the **Letterjoin** scheme. This is focused on whole-class teaching using digital resources to enable modelling and interactive learning. EYFS children use the Little Wandle handwriting which links to their phonics learning, allowing the children to develop their letter formation using sayings which match their phonics. EYFS and KS1 classes partake in handwriting practise daily, whilst LKS2 and UKS2 classes partake in handwriting three times a week, with the flexibility to remove handwriting practise from UKS2 once handwriting is secure.

At MPA, children in the early years and KS1 are taught to form their letters individually as shown below. 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 a range of activities. In EYFS, children begin their day completing a fine motor activity and further activities are provided as part of continuous provision. In KS1, for those children who require it, further fine motor activities are provided within their English provision.

From the beginning of their handwriting journey, once they are developmentally ready, children will be taught the correct pencil grip and the correct posture for writing. This will continue to be referred to through the child's primary schooling.



Cursive handwriting is taught from Key Stage 2. If appropriate, 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, matching what they have been taught up to that point.

Handwriting is a taught skill, and it is important that teachers are seen to put a high value on teaching and sustaining neat handwriting. We believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by high quality presentation.

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

EYFS	<p>For our youngest pupils, we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Key stage 1: Years	<p>In KS1, children complete five handwriting sessions each week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises • strengthening cursive handwriting (when the children are ready), learning and practice

<p>1 and 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice • KS1 SATs SPaG exercises <p>Lesson Planner Module 2 for Year 1 contains lessons for teaching how to write capital letters, printed letters, numbers and symbols, whilst reinforcing 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.</p> <p>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. The sections in this module cover: • letter families • high frequency words • joining techniques • sequencing sentences • dictation exercises • times table facts • SPaG With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing.</p>
<p>Years 3 and 4</p>	<p>Handwriting lessons will continue three times a week in Lower Key Stage 2.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>Years 5 and 6</p>	<p>More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during three weekly lessons whilst the children require this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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.</p> <p>Lesson Planner Module 7 for 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.</p>
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For children who require extra assistance with their handwriting, children can complete the Little Wandle practise books which show clear start points and progressively develop each letter. There are a range of other strategies used throughout the school, dependent on the child:

- pencil grips (different choices depending on the child)
- adjusting the chair and table height so they can sit with the correct posture
- bubble handwriting to support letter size consistency

- handwriting lines to support letter size consistency
- highlighted lines to support letter size consistency
- different coloured paper
- Letter Join handwriting intervention in KS2

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, pencil grip and posture during writing lessons and through end of lesson marking. Interventions (as shown above) are planned for if a child is struggling with a particular handwriting skill.