

## Handwriting at Queens' Federation

Developing a fluent, legible handwriting style is a key component of becoming a confident, independent writer. Where a child does not develop secure handwriting skills, this can be a significant barrier to his / her wider progress as a writer. It is therefore important that handwriting is taught regularly and progressively throughout school. In the early stages of development handwriting is best taught little and often, in several short sessions per week.

The Early Years Foundation Stage and the 2014 National Curriculum sets out the following objectives for teaching handwriting:

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Lower KS2	Upper KS2
<p>PD: Gross Motor Skills Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.</p> <p>Literacy: Writing Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</p>	<p>Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly</p> <p>Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</p> <p>Form capital letters</p> <p>Form digits 0-9</p> <p>Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these</p>	<p>Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another</p> <p>Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters</p> <p>Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters</p> <p>Use spacing between words that reflects size of the letters</p>	<p>Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters</p> <p>Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, (e.g. 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)</p>	<p>Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters</li> <li>- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task</li> </ul>

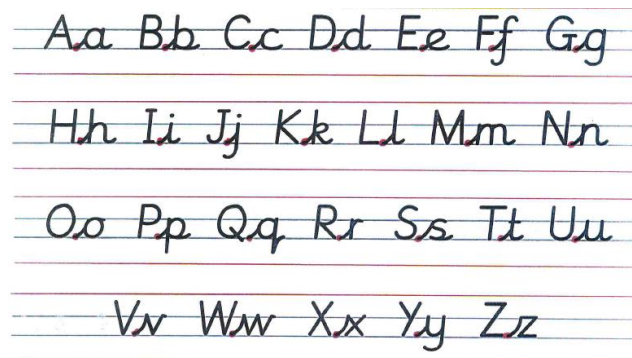
### **Our Pre-Cursive Script...**

We teach a pre-cursive style of handwriting in Nursery and Reception. The development of both gross and fine motor skills support the development of correct letter formation. Children will also be taught to hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.



### **Our Cursive Script...**

We teach a cursive style of handwriting from the beginning of Year 1 (and where appropriate in Summer term – Reception). This is built upon and developed throughout Key Stage 1. It is the expectation that all children will be using a fluent joined style of handwriting by the end of Year 3.



We have identified 5 main stages for the teaching of handwriting:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (Foundation)
2. Beginning to join (Lower KS1)
3. Securing joins (Upper KS1 / Lower KS2)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Lower KS2)
5. Presentation skills (Upper KS2)

These stages offer a helpful guide to development in handwriting and we aspire for most children to achieve these goals. However, it is vital that teachers identify the current stage that a class (and particular children within it) is actually working at and begins teaching from there, rather than simply pitching in with that year's programme. For example, it would be inappropriate to begin practising speed and fluency with a Year 4 class with poor basic letter formation. Instead, revisiting earlier stages would be beneficial.

### Letter Formation...

The teaching of letter formation is broken into the following groups:

- 'long ladder' letters: *l, i, t, u, j, y*
- 'one-armed robot' letters: *r, b, n, h, m, k, p*
- 'curly caterpillar' letters: *c, a, d, o, s, g, q, e, f*
- 'zigzag monster' letters: *z, v, w, x*

### Joining...

The teaching of joining is broken down into the following areas:

- diagonal join to ascender: *at, th, ch, cl*
- diagonal join, no ascender: *in, im, cr, dr, tr, lp, mp, ai, ay, ine, ime*
- diagonal join, no ascender, to anticlockwise letter: *id, ig, nd, ld, ng, ice, ide*
- horizontal join, no ascender: *op, ome, one, ow, ou, oy, oi*
- horizontal join, no ascender, to anticlockwise letter: *oa, og, ode, wa, wo*
- horizontal join to ascender: *ol, ot, wh, oh, ole, obe, ook, ool*
- joins to and from tricky letters (*f, e, r, s*):
  - *of, if, ft, fl, fu, fr, ff*
  - *ee, ea, ear, er, ere*
  - *ur, ir, or, oor, url, irt, air, rr, re, pre*
  - *ws, rs, sh, si, su, se, sp, sm, ss*
- joins from b and p: *bi, bu, pi, pu, ba, bo, pa, po, bl, ph*

### Fluency...

Once the full range of joins have been securely learnt, teaching of handwriting fluency will then need to address:

- relative size of letters
- consistency of letter spacing
- parallel ascenders
- parallel descenders

Children in the Early Years and KS1 begin by writing in pencil. Once a consistent style of handwriting has been developed, children may be awarded a 'pen license' and will be introduced to writing in a blue roller ball pen. It is the expectation that by the end of Year 3 all children will write in blue ink pen (ballpoint pens are not permitted).

### Some general tips...

- Ensure pencils are sharp before use.
- Short pencils should be discarded.
- Children should be sitting on a chair properly – sitting up with a straight back, chair pushed in a comfortable amount, with both legs under the table and feet flat on the floor.
- All four chair legs should be on the ground.
- The non-writing hand should be on the table, with palm flat, in front of the child in a supportive position.
- Writing books should be fully open, not folded over. Children should be sitting so that their books are not overlapping another child's book when they are writing.
- Right handers can tilt their book to the left. Left handers can tilt their book to the right. Children should not be allowed to write at a 90-degree angle.
- Capital letters should be twice the height of lower case letters and no higher than ascenders.
- Capital letters do not have a lead in line and do not join to other letters.
- By the age of 8, most children have adopted a pencil grip, formed a style and developed habits which are hard to change. It is essential that children are taught the correct habits from an early age.