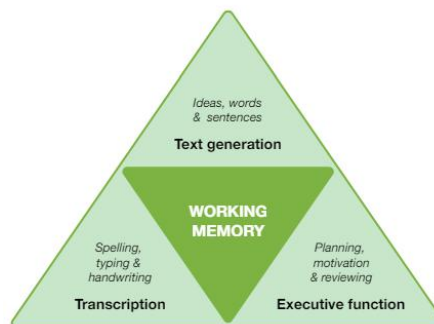


Handwriting at Ashlands Primary School

At Ashlands Primary School, we believe that handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, impacts on work across the curriculum. We believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards as children take pride in their work, feel a sense of achievement and are empowered to write creatively.

Why is it important to have a systematic, explicit approach to teaching handwriting?



The simple view of writing - based on research by Beringer (2002).

The diagram above shows the complexity of writing- it requires pupils to coordinate a number of different processes at once. The model highlights three overarching processes that are essential to writing:

- text generation—which involves thinking of ideas and using oral language skills to put those thoughts into words and sentences;
- executive functions—such as self-regulation (controlling one's own behaviour, thoughts, and emotions), planning, problem-solving, and monitoring writing;
- transcription—putting oral language into written language where handwriting is a key determiner for success.

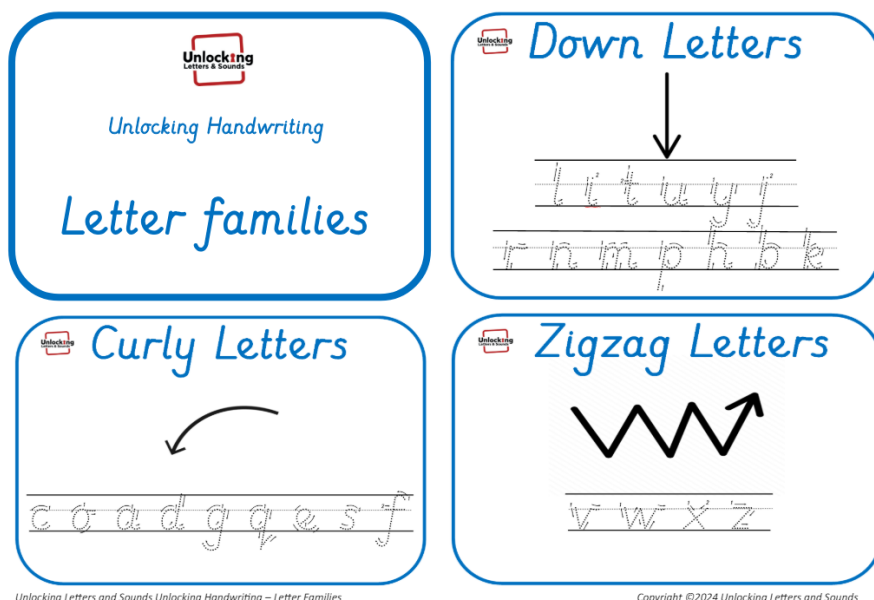
When writing, pupils must coordinate these processes in their working memory (the brain's system for holding and using information while completing a task). It has a limited capacity so many children find this challenging. Extensive handwriting practice is therefore essential to reduce cognitive overload during the writing process. If a pupil's working memory is freed from focussing heavily on handwriting, they're able to redirect their focus to the composition of their writing. It is therefore essential that children engage in extensive handwriting practice which is monitored and where feedback is given to ensure accurate formation habits are formed and misconceptions are addressed.

Unlocking Handwriting Scheme

At Ashlands Primary School, we use the Unlocking Handwriting programme. This is a whole school handwriting programme. The progression follows the National Curriculum, with some additional content included which is based upon research and good practice in schools. The progression is structured broadly in units which are broken down into multiple sessions, offering a clear focus for each discrete handwriting lesson. Similar to the structure of Unlocking Letters and Sounds phonics programme, Unlocking Handwriting provides 'Mastery' units for children to embed and secure the knowledge they have previously learnt. The programme also provides frequent opportunities for children to revisit previous learning and embed this before further refining their handwriting skills. This handwriting practice is additional to the daily opportunities for practicing letter formation within phonics lessons in EYFS and Key Stage 1.

EYFS

Daily handwriting sessions are taught from the beginning of Reception. Children are taught pre-cursive (unjoined) handwriting based on 'letter families' and how to position these correctly on lined whiteboards, consistent with the lined paper in their writing books.



Letters are grouped which are formed similarly into these 3 letter families. They are named and grouped depending on their direction and shape.

Year 1

In Year 1, children continue to be taught pre-cursive handwriting and are further taught to discriminate between ascenders, descenders and small letters.

Precursive font used in Reception and Year 1



Lowercase Letter Formation Visual Guide

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



Uppercase Letter Formation Visual Guide

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



Number Formation Visual Guide

0 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

Year 2

Children revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They are taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Year 3 and 4

Children use joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting continues 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, supports their composition and spelling.

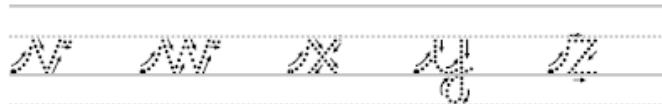
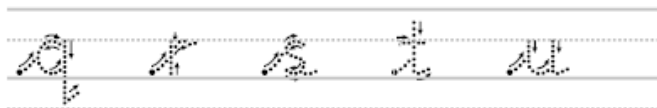
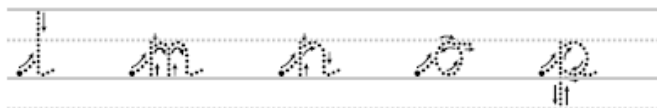
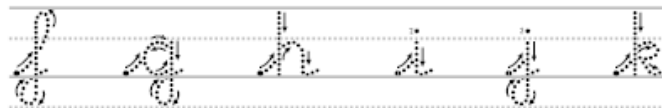
Year 5 and 6

Pupils continue to practise handwriting and are 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 think about the standard of handwriting that is appropriate for a particular task (for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version). They are also taught to use an unjoined style where appropriate (for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters).

Cursive font used in Year 2 and above



Cursive Letter Formation *Visual Guide*



Handwriting progression

Year group	Unit	Number of lessons	Focus
Reception	1	ongoing	Developing gross and fine motor skills mastery
	2	ongoing	Establishing the correct pencil grip and writing position
	3	6	Pre-writing skills mastery
	4	14	Lowercase letter formation
	5	13	Forming letter families
	6	Ongoing	Name writing
	7	6	Number formation

Year 1	1	ongoing	Establishing the correct pencil grip and writing position mastery
	2	ongoing	Name writing mastery
	3	6	Number formation mastery
	4	14	Lowercase letter formation mastery
	5	14	Uppercase letter formation
	6	12	Forming letter families mastery
	7	12	Uppercase letter formation mastery
	8	8	Form lowercase letters of the correct size relative to one another

Year 2	1	4	Revisit number formation
	2	6	Revisit lowercase letter formation
	3	6	Revisit uppercase letter formation
	4	14	Cursive letter formation
	5	16	Letter joins
	6	16	Letter joins mastery
	7	3	Form lowercase letters of the correct size relative to one another mastery
	8	5	Uppercase and numbers correctly sized in relation to one another
	9	3	Spacing within and between words which reflects the size of the letters

Year 3	1	3	Revisit number formation
	2	6	Revisit uppercase letter formation
	3	8	Cursive letter formation mastery
	4	16	Revisit letter joins
	5	5	Revisit forming lowercase letters of the correct size relative to one another mastery
	6	ongoing	Uppercase letters and numbers correctly sized in relation to one another mastery
	7	4	Spacing within and between words which reflects the size of the letters mastery
	8	6	Spacing Lines of writing sufficiently so ascenders and descenders do not touch
	9	ongoing	Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting

Year 4	1	3	Revisit number formation
	2	6	Revisit uppercase letter formation
	3	ongoing	Revisit uppercase letters and numbers correctly sized in relation to one another
	4	6	Revisit cursive letter formation
	5	9	Revisit letter joins
	6	5	Revisit forming lowercase letters of the correct size in relation to one another
	7	4	Revisit spacing within and between words which reflects the size of the letters
	8	6	Spacing lines of writing sufficiently so ascenders and descenders do not touch mastery
	9	ongoing	Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting mastery

Year 5	1	3	Revisit number formation
	2	ongoing	Revisit uppercase letters and numbers correctly sized in relation to one another
	3	9	Revisit cursive letter formation and letter joins
	4	5	Revisit spacing within and between words which reflects the size of letters
	5	Ongoing	Revisit increasing the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting
	6	10	Increase the speed and fluency of handwriting
	7	15	Using an unjoined style for a particular purpose

Year 6	1	3	Revisit number formation
	2	Ongoing	Revisit uppercase letters and numbers correctly sized in relation to one another
	3	9	Revisit cursive letter formation and letter joins
	4	6	Revisit spacing within and between words and across lines of writing so ascenders and descenders do not touch
	5	ongoing	Revisit increasing the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting
	6	10	Increase the speed and fluency of handwriting mastery
	7	4	Using an anjoined style for a particular purpose mastery

Handwriting lesson structure

Rosenshine (1987) described explicit instruction as “a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students.” For that reason, Unlocking Handwriting has used the same lesson structure and sequence as is found in its phonic lessons.

Teaching sequence

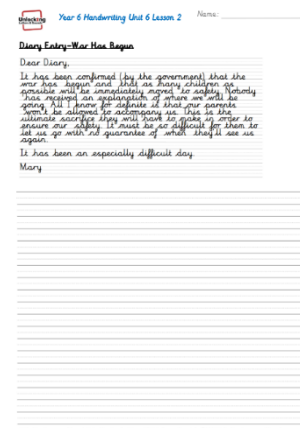
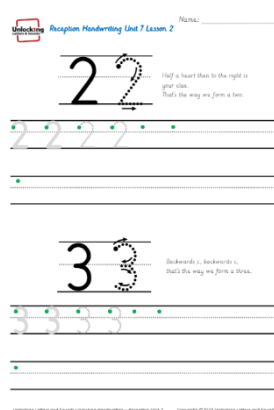
1. Revisit

Teachers recap establishing the correct writing position and pencil grip.

2. Teach

Live modelling where the teacher is voicing aloud their movements and thought processes.

3. Practise using worksheets from Unlocking Handwriting.



4. Revise

- Children self-review their practice attempts and decide which letter/word is formed most accurately. They circle this one.
- The teacher addresses any common misconceptions with the children.

5. Apply

- Children are given frequent opportunities to apply the taught formations through writing opportunities across the curriculum.

Timetabling of handwriting

Each handwriting session is around 10-15 minutes.

Year group	Lesson frequency per week
EYF	1- 2 in addition to the short opportunity in daily phonic lessons
1	2 in addition to the short opportunity in daily phonic lessons
2	2-3
3	2
4-6	1-2

Inclusion

The majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils will need more support and provision. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by difficulties with fine motor skills will liaise with the SEND Lead to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting practice, use of a handwriting intervention such as Pegs to Paper and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of the table etc. The school will provide a range of resources to support a child's need such as: pencil grips, posture cushions, fiddle tools and other strengthening equipment.

Left-handed pupils

Teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned to the left for right-handed pupils and to the right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space - avoiding elbows knocking.
- Left-handed pupils should be encouraged to bring their hands down and round so a hooked, claw like style doesn't develop
- A left-handed child will push the pencil when writing as opposed to pulling it across the page like a right-handed child. For this reason, left-handed children should not use a pencil that is too sharp as it will inhibit their ability to write smoothly.
- Letters which have a cross-stroke such as T, t and f will be formed slightly differently by left handers, where the cross is formed right to left rather than left to right

