

Itchen Abbas Primary School Handwriting Policy



Rationale

Good handwriting is an essential skill in the journey towards fluent, confident and competent spelling and writing. To support young children whilst they develop gross and fine motor skills essential for handwriting, we initially teach non-cursive writing in year R and 1. However, from year 2, we begin to teach cursive writing. A joined handwriting style links kinaesthetic 'muscle memory' with the relationship between the sounds and shapes of digraphs and trigraphs (letter groups) and whole words. The ability to write neatly can raise self-esteem and can be a motivating factor in the production of written work.

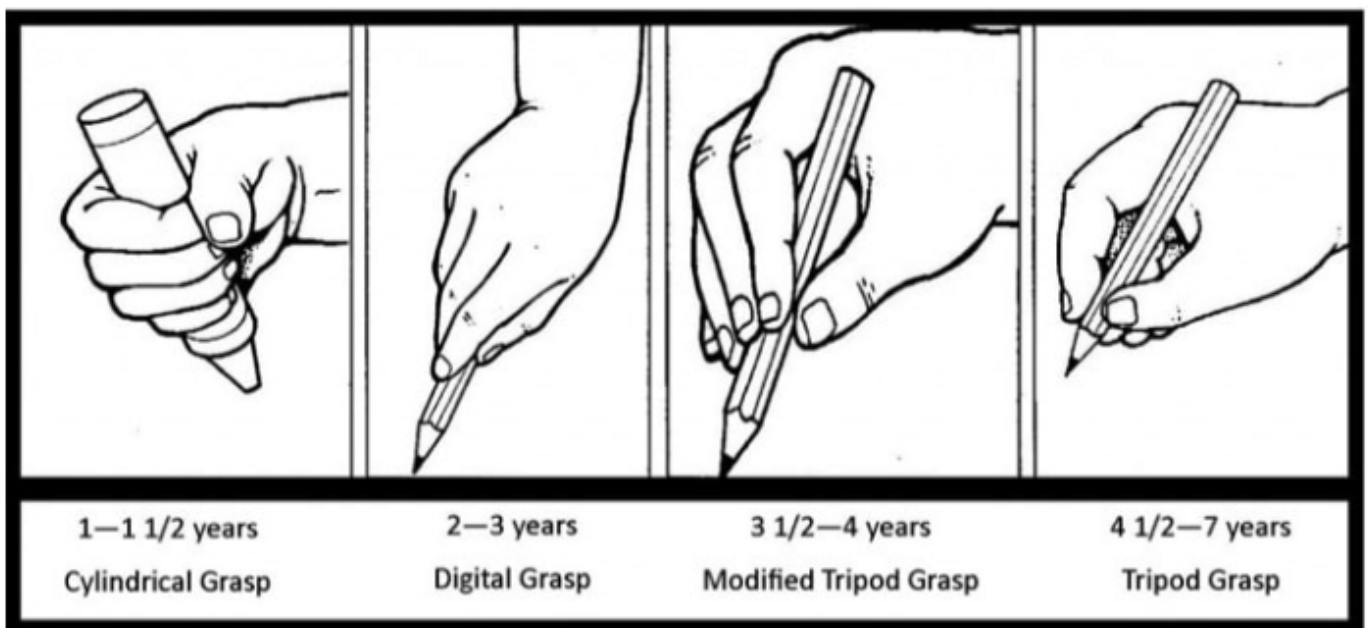
Handwriting is a physical skill that depends heavily on the movement memory. It is essential that correct letter formation is learned as early as possible because it is easier to learn a new skill than to correct a skill that has been wrongly-learned.

All teachers and support staff are expected to use the same letter formation as the class they are working with.

We teach non-cursive handwriting to children in year R and 1 following the Little Wandle formation phrases. Letter formation is taught alongside the letter learning the letter sound and is therefore consistent with our phonics teaching.

Pencil Grip and Posture

We teach the tripod pencil / pen grip. The following chart shows the natural stages in tripod grip development. Children are supported and taught the next grip if they are not yet at an age appropriate stage.



It is equally important for children to develop the correct seating and posture.

- Children must sit up straight, with both feet firmly on the floor.
- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height.
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.

- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor.
- Rooms should be well lit.

Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed. All 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;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- Children should be encouraged to have the correct sitting posture for good handwriting e.g. the bottom of the back to go into the back of the chair

Year 2 to Year 6 – Cursive Writing

From year 2, we use the Debbie Hepplewhite scheme for handwriting.

In year 2, children are expected to begin using cursive handwriting. They are taught to 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. By the end of year 6, children should be able to write fluently and legibly with increasing speed.

The order of teaching lower case letter shapes

It is important to teach the letters which start like the letter c to fluency before the other letters. Teach, “Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, then hook over, back and round” for the letter c. For the subsequent letters which start like c, describe and model how to, “...catch the hook...”. After the letters o, r, v, w, x which all end with washing line joins, an extra ‘hook over’ needs to be added to then form the c group of letters c, a, d, s, g, o, q.

c	a	d	s	g	o	qu	f
l	t		h	b	k		e
r	n	m	p		i	j	
u	y		v	w	x		z

We use the Debbie Hepplewhite patter to support letter formation which can be found here:

https://debbiehepplewhitehandwriting.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Patter_DH_joined_writing.pdf

Using Pen or Pencil

Children in year R and year 1 will use pencil for their handwriting practice and writing within their learning. In year 2, they will continue to use pencil but in the Summer term, children may begin to use pen when they meet the following criteria:

- Consistently using the tripod pencil grip
- Consistently using correct posture
- Correctly using the diagonal and horizontal strokes to join appropriate letters
- Using correct and consistent letter formation and size.

We expect all children to be using pen by the end of the Autumn term in year 3.

Inclusion:

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this within the class.

Monitoring this Policy

The English Leader and Headteacher have responsibility for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. This is reviewed by the Governing Body.

Date agreed: June 2022

Date of next review: June 2025