

# Handwriting Policy



**Wistaston Academy**  
Primary and Nursery School  
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

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<b>Responsible Governor's Committee</b>	Standards
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*'Handwriting should be well-formed by Year 2 to help children become prolific writers. Competency will enable interchanges between teacher-child to be of a higher order if handwriting is sound'*

Bennett , 1985

Students who can write quickly achieve up to a grade higher at GCSE regardless of academic ability. Slow handwriters also tend to be poor spellers.

Teacher Training Agency, 2004

For children with learning difficulties, good handwriting is crucial because it is linked with reading and spelling

Ramsden, 1992

Good handwriting is not just a presentation perk which is applied to the surface of school work; it is inextricably interwoven with the total learning and sense-making process that should constitute a child's schooling.

Smith, 1977

Joining the letters is desirable for all but essential for the dyslexic pupil. He is likely to confuse any printed shape, so in teaching him to make separate printed shapes his problems are increased.

Kathleen Hickey, 2007

## **Aim**

We aim to ensure that all children will be able to write clearly, fluently and quickly so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school both now and in the future.

## **The Process**

Children are taught the conventional ways of forming letter shapes, both lower case and capitals, through purposeful guided practice in order to foster a comfortable and legible handwriting style. Teachers may use a whiteboard or exercises on the Interactive Whiteboard as well as gross muscular movements to embed physical patterning of handwriting.

Correct posture should be encouraged at all times e.g. elbow away from the body, forearm supported by the table. Correct pencil grip should begin in the Early Years as faults are hard to undo later.

Teachers use a dialogue linked to letter formation from the outset to encourage consistency across the school e.g. one armed robots, long ladder letters, curly caterpillar letters. These are the three basic letter shapes. The 'patter' is always the same e.g. for the one-armed robot: 'Start at this head and go down to his feet. Bounce back up and go over for his arm'. Children can add sounds to the 'patter'. At all times, teachers demonstrate movements in the air, on the board and with IT. Then children practice with the teacher observing or, for younger children, practice may be in a damp sand tray; each child in the group traces over the shape, going a little deeper each time. The object is to get down to the base of the sand tray without the sides falling in. In the Early Years, there are many ways of promoting fine motor skills from painting to drawing with a finger in shaving foam!

The dialogue for letter formation is repeated whatever the activity, becoming a mantra. Through drilling and analysing weaknesses e.g. are letters being formed in the right direction, is the pencil held properly? Writing will become automatic and poorer readers will be supported by the multi-sensory act of linking phoneme to grapheme.

As children begin to write letters, they are provided with large paper and a single line. Lined paper is important because so much about handwriting is to do with the letters' orientation to the line. Books with lines are introduced in our Reception class. The width of line decreases as the child moves up the school and the number of lines per page increases. Teachers always consider the needs of the child first in deciding on the book/paper to be used.

### Agreed Style of Writing

- The Penpals scheme is used in Key Stage One and Foundation to provide progression from the Foundation stage upwards. This was introduced to avoid re-teaching in year one after printing in the Foundation Stage. This includes certain 'break letters' which will be joined as the children enter Key Stage Two.
- In the foundation Stage, pupils are taught to form their letters by printing so that their letters resemble the texts that they read. They begin to join graphemes linked to their phonics work.
- In Key stage two, pupils are continuing to join using a lead in stroke as they have done in previous years.

Figure 1 shows the written forms of the letters with their approach and carry-on strokes and their beginning points marked. All letters are to be joined so 'loops' cannot be avoided. There are only five of these : f, g, j, y and z

- It is helpful to have the beginning points of each letter clearly illustrated. They are indicated with a small cross in Figure 1. Each letter needs to be approached from the line of writing with an approach stroke which goes to the beginning point of the letter. The letter is then written in one flowing movement. The carry-on stroke leaves the letter where it finishes and is ready to become the approach stroke of the next letter.
- In most cases the carry-on stroke leaves the line of writing except for : o, r, v and w where it comes off the top of the letter and makes a bridge to the next one. These letters need extra attention.
- Some letters follow the same pattern of movement and it is useful to practice these letters in their groupings. Encourage children to verbalise using the established 'patter' as they write.
  - The over and back letters: there are seven of these : a, c, d, g, q, or and s.
  - The 'off the top' letters where the 'carry-on' stroke or bridge to the next letter comes off the top of the letter: there are four of these:  
o, r, v, w
  - The 'up down, up again, over and off' letters: there are five of these:  
h, k, m, n, p, b

- The 'up down, up again, down again' letters: there are three of these:

u, w, y

- Letters with tails: there are five of these

f, g, j, y

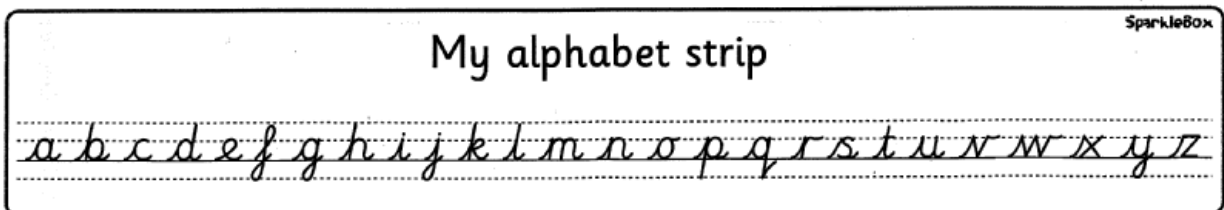
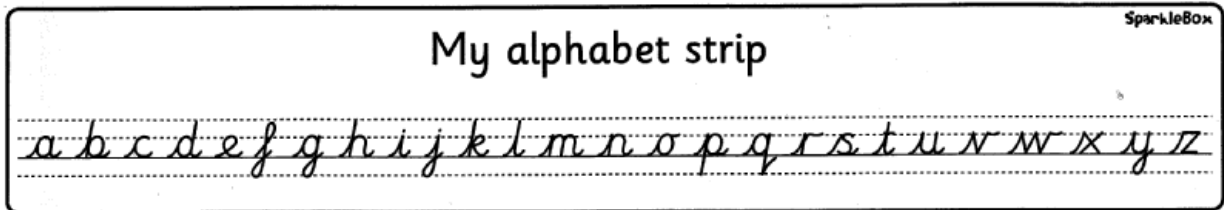
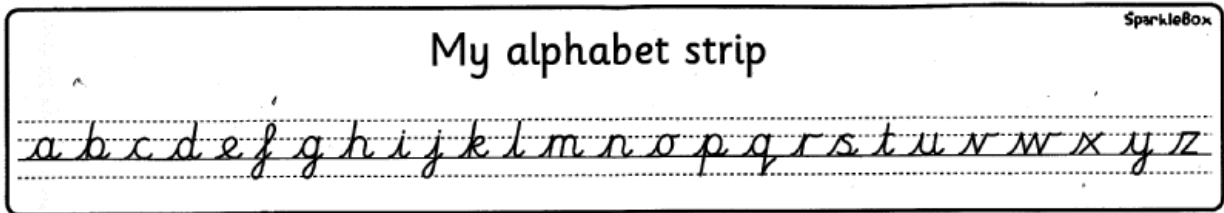
- Letters which need special practice: there are eight of these

f, k, g, r, s, e, x, z

- Special handwriting books help children to understand the uniform height of the lower half of the letters. Placing a mark on the writing line helps show the child where to begin. When writing shows some ease and uniformity, the child can work without the extra line.
- All children write in the handwriting books from Key Stage One upwards. Children with motor control difficulties may work on double size sheets or have additional pattern work sheets.
- A timer can be used to increase the speed of writing – one of the many on the staff server under 'Cooperative Learning'. At intervals, children can try to beat their own time record and at the same time keep up their standards of legibility.
- At Wistaston Academy, all children regularly work in pencil though, in the later years of KS2, teachers may ask pupils to produce a best copy for display or a special book and use a school fountain pen with blue ink.
- Handwriting is practised for 10 minutes every day using vocabulary from phonic work and from literacy and other class topics. Sometimes, practice will concentrate on the writing of one letter only and then adding another letter to show how the first letter joins to others. Practises and the choice of material will be appropriate for the age group and individual child. Handwriting will also be practised in our Read, Write Inc training sessions.
- Capital letters are not joined.
- Consider seating arrangements for left handers (left-handers to the left of right-handed writers). Appropriate seating positions are modelled in the Penpals materials and should be shared with the children regularly.
- Consider the use of gripping aids and slanted supports for some children with special educational needs where fine motor and muscular control are delayed.

See Below – Alphabet Strip

**Ground, grass and sky alphabet strips**



**Teacher's Handwriting.**

The teacher's handwriting is the model for the children. All teachers should aim to produce quality writing at all times. It is pointless to provide the children with handwriting lessons if the blackboard model does not match the prescribed style – it should at all times in marking and on the board.

**Support Staff.**

Support staff should use the prescribed script when writing in the children's books so that the models offered to the children are consistent.

**S.E.N.**

Teachers will need to be sensitive to the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and to genuine developmental needs. Left-handed children need particular sensitivity.

**Parental Involvement**

Parents will be informed of our approach to handwriting before their children start in school so that they can reinforce this policy.