

Handwriting at St Charles

Our School Aims:

- To use a clear and neat presentation.
- To write legibly using Kingston Handwriting Scheme; a neat, cursive script, with increasing fluency and speed by:
 - o having and using the correct pencil grip
 - o knowing that all letters begin on the line and finish with a lead out
 - o ensuring all letters are correct in size and capital letters are larger than lowercase letters
 - o knowing and using the correct formation of letters.

Kingston Handwriting Scheme:

The key advantages to this system are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape;
- Due to the fact that letters and words run from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which can be difficult (such as: b/d or p/q);
- There is a clear difference between capital letters and lower case letters.

Handwriting should be taught/modelled for the whole class frequently and practised in groups for short periods with an adult present to ensure that good habits are formed from the start. The children are taught to join up their letters using the Kingston Handwriting Scheme.

Each teacher/teaching assistant has a copy of the basic letter/number formation for upper and lower case letters and numbers and a copy of the 'joined' letter clusters; all teaching of letter shapes should be based on this. It is imperative that children see good examples at all times of adults' writing on the board, in their books and on display.

In the foundation stage, children learn to recognise pattern, left/right sequencing, good gross/fine motor control and basic letter shapes that stem from the three groups of letters. As they progress through KS1, the teaching of handwriting is linked to the spelling objectives and key words in the Primary Curriculum.

As children progress throughout KS2, they begin to write with an ink pen when their writing is consistently joined, legible and neat.

Every letter has a 'lead-in' and a 'lead-out'. This allows letters to be joined as soon as the child has learned the correct formation of letters. When teaching the 'lead-ins' we remind children to always start on the line to avoid confusion.

Linking our handwriting to our Phonics Scheme: Essential Letters and Sounds, all letters have a rhyme or mnemonic to help with the formation of the letter. (See appendix 1) We remind children to 'lead in' before saying the mnemonic.

This is predominantly used lower down the school whilst pupils are learning to form letters and focus on sizing. The letters should finish with a 'lead-out' to facilitate joining later.

Children who learn cursive script handwriting have a greater advantage in their learning. In particular, spelling, thought processes, context and memory are greater.

Techniques for Teaching:

Techniques for teaching the Kingston letter formation:

- All teachers and support staff are required to model good handwriting all the time; in books and on white boards.
- Good modelling whilst talking through the process, using the mnemonic if necessary.
- Encourage children to form 'air letters' and/or trace over tactile letters.
- Tracing over dotted lines
- Forming letters in sand, with plasticine, on mini whiteboards and/or around templates.
- Encouraging children to verbalise the process as they write.

Writing Tools:

Children in KS1 use a handwriting pencil. As they progress into KS2, pen license certificates are given out to those who are ready to use a handwriting pen.

Left-handed children may need extra support and should always be seated on the left side of desks. Good pencil grip needs to be encouraged from the beginning; some children may need to use commercial pencil grips for a period of time. Good posture is also essential for good handwriting: sitting up straight with both hands on the table.

Displays:

Correct letter formation displays are in all classrooms for children to refer to. All class teachers are expected to demonstrate good handwriting at all times.

Handwriting lessons:

All pupils receive handwriting lessons. Children are expected to watch the class teacher model whilst talking through the process. Children will see the correct letter formation being presented before trying themselves in their handwriting books.

Handwriting books have red ruling guides above and below the blue centrally ruled lines which allow our pupils to practise the formation of cursive script.

Our pupils are expected to transfer their skills to all areas of the curriculum when writing.

National Curriculum (2014) Requirements for Handwriting:

Year 1	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
Year 2	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 letter
LKS2 (Year 3 and 4)	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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]
UKS2 (Year 5 and 6)	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

Appendix 1: Mnemonics and Rhymes to Support

Phase 2:

s - snake - swerve around the snake
a - ant - around the head, down the body
t - teacher - down her body and cross her shoulders
p - parrot - down his body, around his face
i - inventor - down her body, spot her idea
n - nest - down the bird and over her nest
m - meerkat - meerkat, mound, mound
d - duck - over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet
g - goat - start at his ear, around the face and down the beard
o - ostrich - around the ostrich's body
c - camel - curl around the camel's back
k - kid - down the body, up the arm, down the leg
ck - a camel and a kid - the camel stood by the kid
e - elephant - around the head and down the trunk
u - umbrella - under the umbrella and down to the tip
r - runner - down her body, up over the arm
ss - two snakes - sunbathing snakes
h - heron - from his head to his feet, up and over his back
b - bike - down the person and around the wheel
f - fox - over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw
ff - two foxes - two foxes facing forwards
l - ladder - down the long ladder
ll - two ladders - ladders in a line
Plus: words with /s/ at the end (sits, fits, cats, bats)

Start of Phase 3:

j - jellyfish - swoop down the tentacles and dot the head
v - viper - down the tongue, up the tongue
w - wallaby - hop to the top, land and hop, land and hop
x - x x x - criss-cross the kiss
y - yacht - under the hull and down to the anchor
z - zigzag - zig and zag zz - two zigzags - a zigzag duet