



Coates Primary School



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Handwriting

At Coates Primary School we teach the children cursive writing and all children complete handwriting practice daily. In Year 1 - 6 this is also linked to spelling practice.

Although some people may feel that handwriting will not effect a childs' education and prevent them from reaching their full potential I wanted to highlight its importance in line with the curriculum expectations.

The National Curriculum Aassessment Arrangements states that for a year 2 pupil to meet the expected standard in writing their writing must:

- form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- form 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 letters.
- Pupils are only able to reach the greater than expected standard if they are able use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in most of their writing.
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The Assessment Arrangements for Key Stage two states that pupils must be able to maintain legibility, fluency and speed in handwriting and this must also be evidenced through accurate joining to achieve the expected standard and pupils cannot gain the greater depth standard without showing this consistently across their work.

In reception the children will be exposed to both cursive and print writing styles but will be taught cursive as part of their handwriting practice. Although is looks complicated, it is actually quite simple for the children to learn as all the lower case letters start from the same place. This will later help the children to join their letters (a year 2 expectation) with ease and without having to relearn their letter formations using different letter movements.

The Early Years Curriculum states that for pupils to reach the expected standard they need to hold a pencil effectively and form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. This means that their letters can be either printed or cursive however if they start using the cursive style they will not have to relearn the handwriting movements when they join year 1. It is very difficult to relearn writing styles already taught as the letters will use very different movements. Also letters learnt incorrectly are not able to be joined and will prevent the flow of writing.

Before children are able to begin to write they need to develop their fine and gross motor skills (to develop the correct strength in their hands and arms.)

What is the difference between gross and fine motor control?

Gross motor control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs (arms or legs). Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as dance, football, use of small apparatus, cycling, gripping climbing frames and building with large-scale construction kits all develop gross motor control.

Fine motor control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers. Fine motor control is best developed through activities which involve small-scale movements e.g. cutting, threading, peeling, painting etc.

Until children have gained reasonable fine motor control through art, mark making and other activities, formal handwriting worksheets are not appropriate.

Why is correct pencil grip important?

If children are to develop a fluent and fast handwriting style, they must learn to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for efficient control of the pencil. If children grip a pencil too tightly, they won't develop a free-flowing movement and they will tire very quickly. Experts agree that children should be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements required for writing are possible. This can be practiced when holding chalk, paintbrushes etc. It is also helpful to start with larger paintbrushes and pencils including ones thickness and length.

How is accurate handwriting celebrated?

At Coates we have four handwriting licences which the children work towards throughout their education.

1st Is awarded for holding their pencil correctly during independent writing across different activities

2nd Is awarded for forming their letters correctly

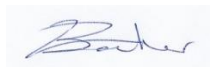
3rd Is awarded for joining their letters consistently

4th Is awarded for when their writing is of the correct standard consistently and they are ready for using a pen. (A handwriting pen is also awarded.)

In line with the higher importance the Government placed on handwriting in the assessment framework last year the children worked incredibly hard to develop their handwriting style and we were really proud that during external moderation some of them were commended for their improvement and enabled some of our pupils to achieve a higher end of year outcome. The schools aim for the next few years is to ensure all pupils develop fluid and joined handwriting early on so more time can be spent in later years concentrating on their writing content without their formations being a barrier.

To support your child at home I have attached the letter formation sheet to support writing practice at home.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs L Boucher

Headteacher