

Agreed Handwriting Approach @ CHI

At Coombe Hill Infants' we recognise the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school.

All staff have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high quality teaching of handwriting.

- Ensure a rigorous, sequential approach to teaching handwriting with coherence and continuity across the school
- Teach regular, discrete handwriting lessons focussing on handwriting 'families' (letters that are formed in a similar way)
- Encourage appropriate sitting posture at a table when practising letter formation
- Use handwriting practice resources closely matched to children's individual needs
- Be multi-sensory (particularly in EYFS) in order to develop necessary fine motor skills needed for correct letter formation
- Expect that the teacher's own handwriting is used as a consistent and high quality model throughout all lessons
- Assess handwriting attainment informally - address gaps quickly and effectively
- Able pupils will be expected to develop their handwriting skills to a higher level, and those expected to make GDS level at the end of KS1 will be taught the necessary skills for cursive handwriting. This will build upon the skills previously taught, and focus on joining letters with lead ins and legible fluidity.

[w Handwriting Policy.docx](#)

We use the Little Wandle Letters & Sounds Revised letter formation and ditties - see below.






Letter formation - letters start in the air and fall to the ground






"Letters start in the air like they just don't care"

Write the letter here

Curly Letters

 	<p>snake Slide down the slippery snake</p>	
 	<p>astronaut Around his head, up to the top, down and a flick</p>	
 	<p>goat. Round his body, up and down, down underground and curl</p>	
 	<p>cat Curl around the cat</p>	
 	<p>octopus All around the octopus</p>	
 	<p>duck Round the body, up, up, and down with a flick</p>	

<i>"Letters start in the air like they just don't care"</i>		Write the letter here
	flamingo Backward rainbow, down, down underground fly through the air and across	
	Queen Curl like a cat, up to the top, down, down underground and flick	
	elephant Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.	
Letter formation - letters start in the air and fall to the ground		
One arm letters		
<i>"Letters start in the air like they just don't care"</i>		Write the letter here
	rainbow Down, up and over the rainbow.	
	bear Down, down, boing and half way up and forward roll.	

	<p>net Down, boing and up, over the rainbow, down and a flick</p>	
	<p>helicopter Down, down, boing and half way up and over the rainbow.</p>	
	<p>mouse Down, boing and up, over the rainbow down boing and up over the rainbow and down and a flick</p>	
	<p>kite. Down, down, boing and up to the middle, kick and back and kick to the ground.</p>	
	<p>penguin Down, down underground, Up to the top then forward roll</p>	

Letter formation - letters start in the air and fall to the ground
Straight letters

"Letters start in the air like they just don't care"

Write the letter here

	<p>lollipop Down, down and a flick</p>	
	<p>iguana Down, flick fly through the air and a dot</p>	
	<p>tiger Down, down, little curl, fly through the air and across</p>	
	<p>umbrella Down and around and up, down to the ground and a flick.</p>	
	<p>jellyfish Down, down underground, little curl, fly through the air and a dot</p>	
	<p>yoyo Down and around and up, Down, down underground, and a curl</p>	

Letter formation - letters start in the air and fall to the ground

Zig zag letters

"Letters start in the air like they just don't care"

Write the letter here



V

volcano

Down the slide,
up the slide



W

wave

Down the slide,
up the slide,
down the slide,
Up the slide



X

box

Down and across,
cross the cross



Z

zebra

Zip across,
Zag down and
Zip across

Useful Strategies for Developing Handwriting

- 1) Strengthen fine motor skills: playdough, theraputty, pick-up sticks, peg boards, marbles, sewing, buttons, zips
- 2) Encourage development of skills at home. [Tips for developing fine motor skills at home :](#)
- 3) Position is key! 2 feet flat on the floor, paper at midline, slightly slanted, encourage use of supporting hand.
- 4) Pre- handwriting activities – a formal pre-handwriting programme is Write from the Start (with Jackie in Giraffe Room)
- 5) Encourage pattern making across whole lines to encourage fluency; also challenge them to restrict the repetitions to 4/5 at a time
- 6) For very poor control/ faint contact – try a sloping board
- 7) Consider using a pencil grip.
- 8) Encourage tripod grip
- 9) Practise letters in shape families – use other media: sand /rice trays, water pistols
- 10) Practise letter shapes using whole body: skywriting /large board/wall, encourage exaggerated movement across the body for c shapes
- 11) Model the shapes verbally, reinforce the vocabulary of movement
- 12) Model correct formation on their backs with your finger as a prompt
- 13) Get children to write letters with their eyes closed
- 14) Informally assess gross motor – is there a need to practise gross motor development activities – (resources in our OT cupboard)
- 15) Practise regulating whole body movement – circling the body, folding and unfolding, contrast long slow with quick jumpy movements
- 16) Practise crossing the midline and using both sides of the body– skywrite figure 8s from left to right, use a wall or large white board

We follow the National Curriculum, EYFS Curriculum and Development Matters documentation guidance, the DfE English Curriculum Research Review, the Reading Framework and research into the development of handwriting in very young children.

[Curriculum Research Review - English Handwriting](#)

The national curriculum specifies that children should be taught to correctly form letters of the correct size and orientation.^[footnote 70] This requires effort and attention, as well as suitable motor skills. There is evidence that repeated practice in handwriting is necessary to go beyond accuracy to fluency in letter formation.^[footnote 71] There is no need to start the formal teaching of handwriting before Reception, but children at the end of the EYFS should be able to 'hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases'.^[footnote 72]

The national curriculum requires children to learn unjoined handwriting before they 'start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters'.^[footnote 73] Delaying teaching joined handwriting gives teachers and children time to focus on other aspects of the writing process, such as composition, spelling and forming letters correctly.

Research supports the idea that writing letters may be important for supporting children's early reading development, because it stimulates the areas of the brain known to underpin successful reading. A small study with 4- to 5-year-olds showed that practice in writing letters 'stroke by stroke' may be the 'gateway' through which beginning readers learn to recognise the features of each letter, as well as learning which features are not important.^[footnote 74]

There is also evidence that repeated practice in handwriting, going beyond accuracy to fluency, leads to success in higher-level writing tasks.^[footnote 75] Skilful handwriting has an impact on composition. According to 2 meta-analyses of research on handwriting instruction, teaching handwriting is closely associated with the quality, length and fluency of writing.^[footnote 76] As these meta-analyses showed, teaching handwriting can improve writing because the pupil can spend more time planning, thinking about content and constructing the sentences.

[The Reading Framework](#)

Handwriting

Learning to form letters and spell words requires considerable effort and attention. Schools, therefore, should consider the advantages to children of delaying the teaching of joined handwriting. Nearly all the headteachers in the schools Ofsted visited for its 'Bold beginnings' survey did not teach a cursive or pre-cursive script in Reception. They told inspectors that they believed:... it slowed down children's writing, at a point when they already found manual dexterity tricky and the muscles in their shoulders, arms and hands were still developing.