

KS1 Handwriting and Spelling Workshop

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Why is Handwriting important?

- It is important that writing is comfortable for children, awkward pencil grip and posture can place strain on the shoulders and arms.
- Having correct letter formation will allow children's writing to flow and increase the speed at which children are able to write. The more comfortable it is, the more children can think about content.
- At school we aim for a speedy, sustainable script rather than a consistent style.

The 4 P's

- Pressure
- Posture
- Paper
- Pencil

Posture

- Bottom at the back of the chair
- Back straight
- Feet flat on floor (use phone book if needed)
- Small gap between tummy and desk (about size of child's fist)
- Arms able to rest on desk

Pencil Grip

- Pencil grips (for correct finger placement).
- Different sizes/textures of pencils.
- Magic writing stones encourage three finger grip but can also be useful for trying to stop children pressing so hard.

Letter Families

- Curly caterpillar
- Long ladder
- Monster letters
- One armed robot including special *k*

Joining

- The children are taught common letter joins towards the end of Year One and throughout Year 2. Joins are taught in stages. We do not expect children to be joining all their letters by the end of Year 2, this will come later.
- It is natural that children experiment with joining their handwriting. We encourage this. However if your child's joined up handwriting is unclear or if it is slowing their writing down, we may ask them to stop. This allows us to go back, revisit previously learned joins and introduce joining again.
- Break letters (non-joining letters) – b, g, j, p, y, x and z. After forming these letters we ask the children to lift their pen from the page, without joining.

Spelling in the New National Curriculum

- For the first time, there are statutory spelling patterns that the children must know by the end of Year 2.
- Many of the spelling patterns are closely linked with phonics e.g. /igh/ light, might, tight
- The writing in bold are statutory requirements. This means that the children are expected to be using these spelling patterns consistently by the end of Year 2. The words in grey are examples.
- We teach these patterns through phonics and during separate spelling lessons.

Phonics

- Phonics is still taught throughout Year 2, even though the children completed the phonics check last year.
- Phonics is still one of the main ways we encourage the children to spell unknown words.
- Phonics is taught for 20 minutes, 4 days a week.
- In Year 2 phonics lessons are usually focused more on spelling patterns, exceptions to rules and revision/application of content learned in Reception and Year 1.

Spelling in class

- Spelling is taught and practised daily. We have words of the week (up to 5) and these are not the same for every child. We select these words based on the children's writing.
- We introduce new words, look at their shape and see if we can find any patterns or words within words that might help us.
- We use mnemonics, rhymes and sayings to help the children remember the word.
- Spelling is often about muscle memory. If the children can spell it with their eyes closed, they've got it!
- We do not do spelling tests. We check to see if the children are consistently spelling the words correctly, but we do not do formal tests.

Tips for spelling during writing

- If a child asks 'How do I spell..?' it is important to help them spell it, rather than just giving it to them.
- Break the word down into sounds or syllables.
- Once they have had a go, encourage them to read it back to themselves out loud. Have you missed out any sounds?
- Look at the shape of the word. If you were reading that in a book, would it look like that? Does it have any ascending or descending letters?
- rayn, rain, ran, rane – the children will quickly be able to tell which looks right.
- If it is a word they cannot sound out, where could we look to find out how to spell it? 100 word list, spelling pack, etc.

Top Tips for Handwriting and Spelling at Home

- Lots of opportunities to write – shopping lists, labels, birthday cards, notes and messages.
- Writing and drawing activities – paper and pencils, a journal.
- Homework books – the weekly spelling words will be in red on the sticker. Spend a few minutes practising before starting the writing task.
- Quick games – How many times can you spell the word correctly in 1 minute? Can you beat your top score?
- Ask the children to show you the letters, joins and spellings they have learned in school that week.
- Little and often! No more than 5-10 minutes each day.