

## Riverside school Handwriting information

Handwriting requires frequent, focused and direct teaching. The aim should be that pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a pupil's hand. We are always working towards using the pincer grip. Whatever tool is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs (see tips below) and all handwriting should be taught using the pupils' dominant hand.

Pupils that are engaged in handwriting, overwriting or mark-making activities should be monitored by an adult to ensure poor habits are not embedded.

Please note; if pupils cannot write 'o' and 'l' then they should not be taught to write any letter shapes.

### **Strategies**

- develop strength in core muscles, shoulder, arm and wrist through physical exercises, eg crawling, sweeping, brushing from side to side, hanging from bars
- develop gross motor skills through movement to music, ribbons on sticks, skywriting, sand play
- develop hand-eye coordination through hand gym activities and fine motor games or tasks.
- build grip strength through physical exercises (hand gym), eg squeezing large ball of modelling clay, using scissors to cut out shapes
- build fine motor skills through physical exercises (hand gym), eg using tweezers to transfer beads from one bowl to another
- offer opportunities for pupils to write other than at a table, eg whilst lying on their tummy, on paper stuck underneath desks, on vertical surfaces, standing up at high tables
- provide resources to support pupils as necessary including a slanting board and pencil grips
- teach each of the four handwriting groups one at a time in a multisensory approach e.g. sensory trays or a short 'rhyme' for forming the letter shape: -  
long ladder - down and off in another direction: **i, j, l, t, u, y**  
one-armed robot - down and retrace: **b, h, k, m, n, p, r**  
curly caterpillar - anti-clockwise round letters: **c, a, d, e, g, o, s,**  
zigzag - **v, w, x, z**

- ensure handwriting in the 'Comic Sans' font is evident in the classroom environment, eg displays, labels
- repeat a consistent commentary for writing each letter that supports the pupil in remembering the starting point and direction e.g. down - up - over the bridge for the letter 'n'
- ensure the child has the necessary vocabulary needed for handwriting such as curve, circle and line
- use a finger space prompt above their writing, rather than below, to aid with fluency in writing
- identify where pupils are in the pencil hold progression - four finger and thumb grip → static quadruped grip/tripod → dynamic tripod grip
- teach pupils to 'air write' with a straight arm from the shoulder and two fingers pointing (note: use air writing when practising spelling).

#### **Tips for left-handed writers**

- Place your paper to the left of your body. ...
- Tilt the paper so that your arm is at a right-angle to the bottom edge of the paper.
- Write with your hand below the writing line and with your wrist straight.
- Use your right hand if needed to steady your paper. ...
- Try to pull your pen across the paper rather than pushing it.

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