



Whitehirst Park Primary School



Cursive Handwriting - Guide for Parents

At Whitehirst Park Primary School we have adopted a 'joined-up', or cursive style of handwriting, throughout the school from Primary 1 to Primary 7. We believe this raises standards in writing in the early years, which will impact throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy, fluency and improved presentation.

There are many reasons for teaching handwriting in fully joined cursive form, rather than individual, separate, printed shapes. They are as follows:

It follows natural movement...

Young preschool children love to make marks on paper. They let the crayon or pencil run in free flowing forms. They make broad sweeps, curvy squiggles and scribbles. They enjoy 'taking the pencil for a walk'. They do not naturally make abrupt staccato movements. In any kind of teaching it is always better to capitalise on what comes naturally than to go against something that works really well.

Correct letter formation is taught from the start...

The correct letter formation is taught to the child. He does not have to pick it up for himself. He does not have to abandon a halfway learned print style and learn joined writing at a time when he needs his brain for other things, such as ideas, punctuation, grammar, spelling etc.

There is nothing to unlearn later...

The child learns from the beginning the letter formation he will use for the rest of his life. The only thing the child has to do after the initial teaching is practice, practice, and perfect.

This style aids left to right movement...

We read and write English from left to right. The cursive script begins to the left of the letter and moves to the right in every case, sometimes in an up-down stroke, sometimes up and over, but **always** left to right.

There is less 'load' on memory...

The children learn two basic rules for mastering the letter shapes initially:

1. Every letter begins on the line
2. Every letter has a lead in and a lead out stroke

This prevents pupils from worrying where to put their pencil on the paper, whether the letter begins at the top and goes down, or begins in the middle and goes round and so on. This is unnecessary worry and an unnecessary waste of brain space. Every letter begins on the line, be it a real line or an imaginary one - it doesn't seem to bother children, and, as already stated, every letter moves in a left to right direction.

Spacing is helped...

Letters don't get crammed together, nor do they roam too far apart. Finger spacing, which is often a great distraction to children, is unnecessary. Joins make natural spaces.

Words are seen as separate whole units...

Words begin when a pen touches the paper and end when it is lifted. They are separate entities with spaces between. This helps children in the very acquisition of the concept of a word as well as in their writing.

The method helps the child who has persistent reversal problems...

The letters b and d look like mirror images of each other in their printed form. Their cursive formation is different and distinctive, and helps the child to separate them in his mind and writing.

This method increases speed...

Fast, fluent writing is essential if a state of flow is ever to be reached. It is rarely possible to print quickly. Also, it is difficult to achieve the 17-23 words per minute required for examinations in Years 4-6 in Secondary Education if the pen is lifted at every letter.

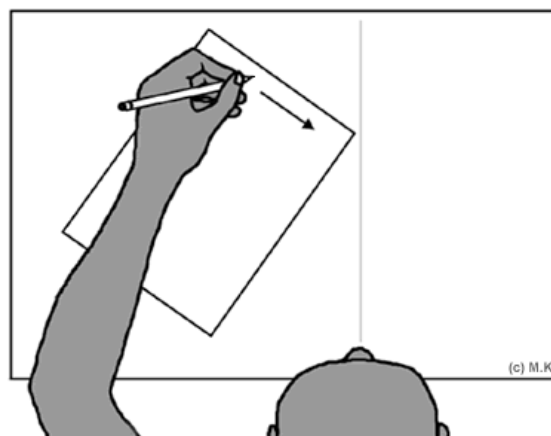
It improves spelling...

Sound writing skills are crucial foundations for later learning. Welded words last better in the memory than those made of separate entities, which can so easily drift apart or change places.

Left Handed Children

Young children may not favour one hand over the other; however, when they do settle on their right or left hand it is important to be able to support left handed children appropriately. The following guidelines may be useful:

- The child will need space to his / her left as he / she writes;
- The writing paper is to the left of the child's body midline;
- The paper is tilted up in a clockwise direction;
- The paper is supported with the right hand;
- The writing forearm is parallel with the paper edge as the child writes;
- The writing tool is held sufficiently far from its point to ensure that the child can see what he/she is writing.



Upper and lower case letters in our school cursive handwriting script.

Lower Case...

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Upper Case...

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

NB: CAPITAL LETTERS DO NOT JOIN

The quick brown fox
jumps over the lazy dog.

NB: Be sure to choose letter formation the same as above as there are many different styles of cursive writing.

We have letter formation sheets available in school. Please ask your child's class teacher if you would like one.

We hope you find this document useful. If you have any queries about your child's handwriting please speak to his/her class teacher.

Many thanks.

