



Little Hill Primary School

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Part of the OWLS Academy Trust

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Dear Parents/Carers

How you can improve your child's Handwriting

Overview

With the telephone, fax machine and e-mail is handwriting being outdated? By no means! The need to be able to write well and quickly is greater today than it ever was. This letter looks at ways in which you can help your child to get better at handwriting.

Although children in schools everywhere now spend a lot of time learning how to use computers and electronic gadgets, after speech, handwriting is still the most accessible, versatile and creative way of getting and keeping in touch. It holds its place as a basic skill in the primary school curriculum, allowing children to express themselves and enriching all areas of learning. It becomes a life-long source of pleasure to all who master it, and gives delight to all who receive or read it.

How can you help?

Most importantly, you can show your child that you value and admire the skill. At the end of this letter is our handwriting scheme so you will know how your child knows how to 'form' their letters. We use 'Penpals' handwriting scheme, like many schools.

Have a small selection of handwriting materials readily available at home. The class teacher may be able to advise you about this, but soft pencils (HB Grade), fibre-tip pens and some sheets of A4 typing paper are enough for a start. With Foundation Stage children using chalks outside, painting and large scale movements are also valuable.

Let handwriting play a part in your family's daily life, for example....

- Making lists and labels
- Keeping a family diary
- Leaving notes for each other in busy households
- Keeping in touch with distant friends and relatives
- Designing and making home-made notelets and greeting cards

Display your child's work- you could use your fridge door. After being on display, favourite pieces could be pasted into a scrap book to build up a unique record of progress and achievement.

Encourage your child to sit properly when they are writing. This way they will get the best results if-

- They are in good light
- They sit on an upright chair
- They sit at a comfortable height
- They keep their back straight
- Their head is high enough to see the pen/pencil point forming the letters.



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Many children like to do their homework lying on the floor, but don't let them! They can't develop good handwriting that way and they can't present their work in a way that does them justice. Good posture is vital for any child, but it is particularly important if your child is left-handed, because people who are left handed have a tendency to develop a cramped, curled hand position which makes writing very hard work. Sitting properly helps to prevent this. So do your best to provide somewhere where your child can work, even if it's the end of the kitchen table.

What materials are needed?

You can make a start with whatever pens, pencils and paper are to hand, but, as your child gets better, they will begin to have particular preferences, and you might need to widen the choices available.

If you're choosing pens, remember that young children get on best with those that have a bit of 'bite'. Ball points tend to run too easily over the paper and this is a particular problem for left-handed children. Fibre tips and felt-tips are easier to control.

Learning to write well can use up quite a lot of paper, so it is sensible to save the better quality sheets for final drafts and special assignments. You can use cheaper recycled or reused paper for daily practice and it's a wonderful way to make use of junk mail.

Please find attached a set of guidelines as these can help your child to produce regular, well-sized writing. Border patterns are more than just decoration. They help to develop a feel for the rhythm of fluent writing, establish basic hand and arm movements and also encourage regularity in the size and shape of letters.

We would not recommend you try to teach your child to join their writing before they are ready. This would normally be in the beginning of Year 1 or 2 depending on each child's needs. By the end of this most children should have developed this habit. If not, it should be addressed in Year 3 unless your child has particular difficulties. If you are at all unsure, please speak to your child's class teacher.

To sum up....

Good handwriting is still a vital accomplishment, and practice doesn't have to be a chore. Make sure that your child has somewhere to work, a small collection of varied writing implements and an interesting reason for getting started. That way you're laying the foundations for a skill that will be valuable all their life.

Remember though that although handwriting is important the content of what is written is also important.

With thanks

Mrs Cartledge-Splitt
Deputy Head/Literacy Lead

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