

A parent guide to handwriting at Redwell

At Redwell Primary, we want children to develop an automaticity with handwriting. This ensures that handwriting becomes a valuable tool, does not hinder learning and alleviates the cognitive load on the child, allowing them to focus on their creativity and other aspects required to write effectively. Handwriting is of fundamental importance to educating our pupils because pupils who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently are, in every sense, disenfranchised. The mastery of handwriting is therefore one of the key priorities of the school. We follow the National Curriculum, for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The outcomes that we will strive to ensure all our pupils achieve are:

- Having fluent, legible and speedy handwriting that can be performed automatically, so that the attention of the brain is on the content of the writing.
- Having the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Having competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition.
- Writing clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Having a comfortable and efficient pencil hold and working position.

To enable the above to happen, we now teach using the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme which uses four key strands to develop children, these are:

- Making bodies stronger
- Learning the letters
- Holding the pencil
- Flow and Fluency

The underlying principles of Kinetic Letters

- Building physical strength underpins handwriting, as poor writing may be due to poor strength.
- Children are not expected to do anything before they are developmentally ready for it.
- The different components of writing are mastered individually before being used in combination.
- Letters are learnt as movements not as visual shapes and movement remains central to developing flow and accuracy.
- When handwriting is automatic, the brain can concentrate on content.
- Reading and writing are a reciprocal process and so strengthening handwriting skills will support reading and writing development as a whole.

Handwriting at Redwell Primary School

As part of this, we will be doing lots of activities that will make our bodies stronger for writing. You could try some of these activities at home as well:

- We do some of our writing lying on our tummies, resting on our elbows with our legs out straight. We call this our strong lizard position.
- You can do lots of climbing on apparatus to make children's shoulders strong. You could do this by going on the monkey bars at the park. We are also becoming experts at the 'plank' position and chair push ups.
- To make our 'three friends' (thumb and first two fingers on our writing hand) really strong, we have been doing lots of pinching and squeezing activities using rubber bands, pegs, play dough, foam shapes and tweezers and threading activities.

Once the children learn to form the letters, they hear stories about Brave Monkey and Scared Monkey who help them to know where to start their letters. We use special whiteboards to give the children a prompt to remember this. Ask your child about Brave and Scared Monkey to find out more.



Timetable expectations:

- EYFS and Year 1 should teach this daily (minimum of 15 minute sessions).
- Year 2 – 6 at least 2 lessons a week (a minimum of 15 minute sessions).

Where children in KS2 have already started to develop a fluent and legible style, they will still taught this approach as Kinetic Letters teaches a faster route to joining fluently but they will be allowed to make their own stylistic choice, in line with the National Curriculum expectations, when completing their writing.

Please see the Kinetic Letter website for more information: <https://kineticletters.co.uk/>