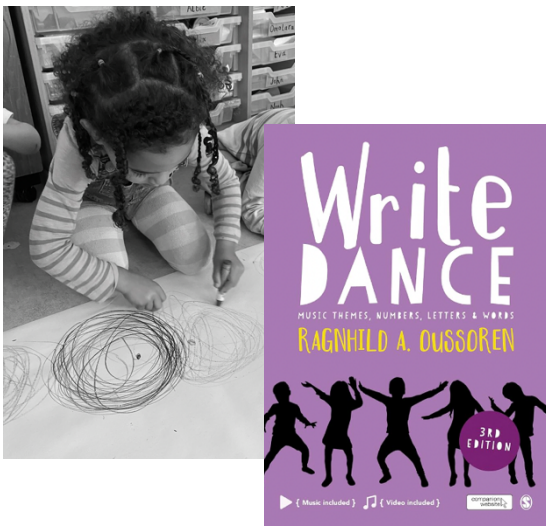
Handwriting at Ashmead *– supporting your* ***Reception*** *child's handwriting at home*

In reception, we start the year strengthening our fine and gross muscles before learning patterns and letter shapes.

We develop gross motor skills *through whole-body movements (round and round, up and down, over and under, standing up, lying down, balancing etc). These gross motor skills are taught and supported through the provision where the children will paint with a mop, brush or rollers, throw, catch and squeeze balls, push and jump in and out of hoops, dance, balance on blocks and planks, climb and grip ropes, and play with large-construction (e.g. blocks, crates and tyres).*

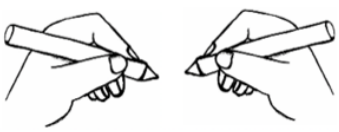
Our fine motor skills *are developed and supported through messy play with sand, playdough and mud and creating with clay, paint, glue and using tools such as teapots, hole punchers, pegs, tweezers, keys, scissors, lollipop sticks etc.*

We have daily ***handwriting lessons****. In Autumn these sessions Write Dance sessions that include movement to develop the physical skills needed for handwrirting. We then we move onto developing patterns. (dots, straight lines, crosses, cricles, curves, loops and waves and spirals). This is taught in short, playful handwriting sessions.*



We are ready to ***write letters*** *in Spring. We teach the letters in their 'letter families' and focus on the* ***shape of the letters*** *with the correct starting and finishing points. At Ashmead we use the Sassoon Penpals font to form our letters. Videos are available on the year group page of the Ashmead website. Your child can use these to copy the correct formation. For example, the curly caterpillar letters start with a curve and the robot letters "start at the top, go down and bounce back up.." retracing the line.*

We introduce a tripod grasp with the pencil held between thumb and index finger with the middle and fourth finger supporting.



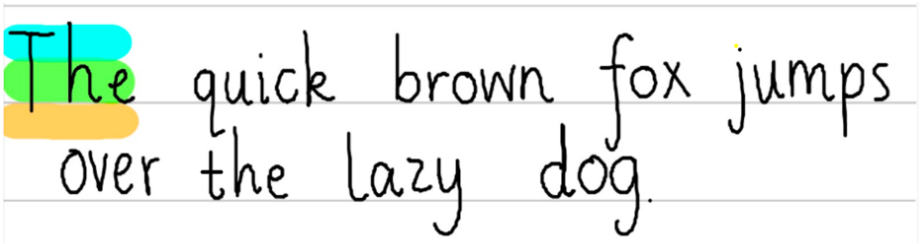
Handwriting at Ashmead *– supporting your* ***Year 1*** *child's handwriting at home*

In Year 1, we focus on becoming fluent in forming the shape of letters, leaving spaces between words and positioning letters in relation to the base line. When the children are confident with the shape, space and sitting, they move onto the size of letters.

Shape Reception & KS1	Space KS1	Sitting KS1	Size KS1
Once a child is ready to write, the first important task is to learn how to form the letters correctly – best taught as a motor skill – and in families. Children learn best by watching the letters being made and hearing a simple patter and then having a go themselves in developmentally appropriate ways then using pencils. 	Children need to understand that spaces need to be left between words so they can be easily read – about the size of 1 or 2 letter 'o's. Lolly sticks make good spacers for beginner writers.	Once children are secure in forming letters correctly, they need to know where to position them in relation to the base line…	…and also, to their relative sizes: Small, tall letters with ascenders, tailed with descenders. A visual image helps children understand the 3 levels, e.g. sky/grass/ground:

Shape: *At Ashmead we use the Sassoon Penpals font to form our letters. Videos are available on the year 1 page of the Ashmead website. Your child can use these to copy the correct formation. We teach handwriting in 'letter families'; the long-legged giraffes; the curly-caterpillars; the one-armed robots and the zig-zag monsters:*

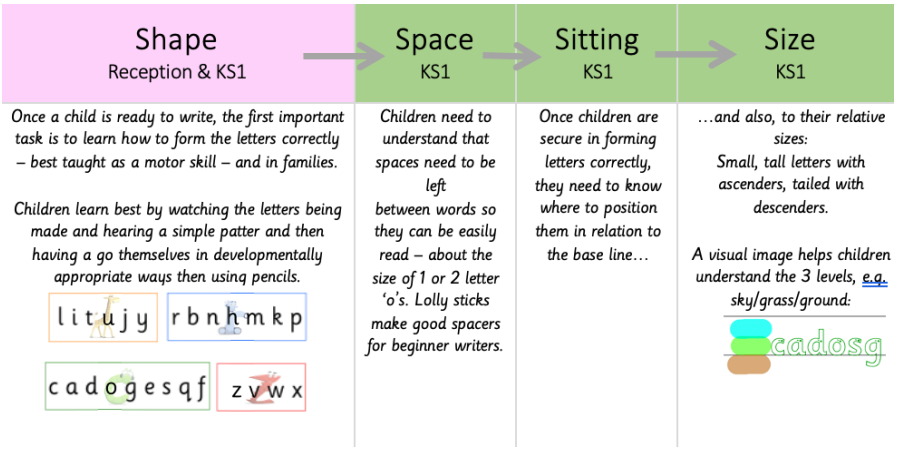
Size: *We teach the size of letters in relation to the base line by imaginaning the tallest letters are in the sky, the medium letters are in the grass, and the letters that go under the line are in the soil. This can help children understand the sizing of each letter:*



Pencil grip: *We use a dynamic tripod grasp, with the pencil held between thumb and index finger with the middle finger supporting.*

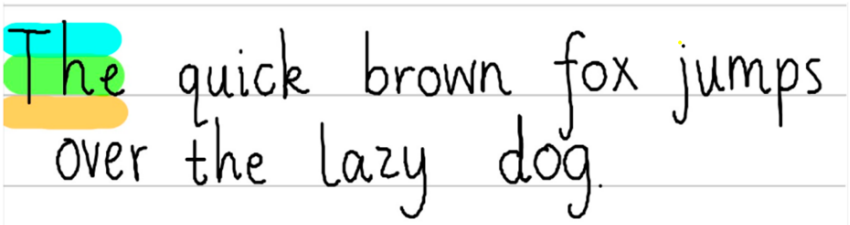
Handwriting at Ashmead *– supporting your* ***Year 2*** *child's handwriting at home*

By Year 2, we are confident with the shape of our letters and can recall which letters belong to which handwriting family. We leave spaces between words and position our letters accurately in relation to the base line. We spend the majority of the year refining letter size until we are fluent and the correct shape and size of letters are automatic. Only then do we begin some simple joins/stringing of letters that then continues into year 3.



Shape*: At Ashmead we use the Sassoon Penpals font to form our letters. Videos are available on the year 2 page of the Ashmead website. Your child can use these to copy the correct formation. We teach handwriting in 'letter families'; the long-legged giraffes; the curly-caterpillars; the one-armed robots and the zig-zag monsters:*

Size*: We teach the size of letters in relation to the base line by imaginaning the tallest letters are in the sky, the medium letters are in the grass, and the letters that go under the line are in the soil. This can help children understand the sizing of each letter:*



Pencil grip*: We use a dynamic tripod grasp, with the pencil held between thumb and index finger with the middle finger supporting.*

Stringing/Joining*: From Spring onwards, we learn horizontal and diagonal joins in these steps:*

Diagonal joins to no ascender/ascender: th ch ai ay ir er
Horizontal join no ascender/ascender: wh oh ow ov
Horizomntal and diagonal joins to e: oe ve ie ue ee
Diagonal join to anticlockwise letters: ea igh ng dg
Horizontal join to anticlockwise letters: oo oa wa wo