Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to inform you that your child is now using a structured handwriting programme called *Nelson Handwriting*. As with reading and spelling, handwriting can be practised at home, as regular reinforcement of key concepts will support children's development in this area.

Handwriting needs to be taught in a consistent way. From the earliest stages, children will be developing their fine motor skills when they pick up writing tools and make marks on paper. This should be encouraged, and opportunities provided for children to scribble, draw, colour and develop other early writing skills. However, it is important for children to develop good habits with writing, and pencil hold and formation are important parts of this process.

When your child starts to write, we would encourage you to reinforce the 'tripod' grip through modelling and correction where necessary. This pencil grip gives children the most control over the movement of their writing tool. When children are beginning to form letters, we encourage children to follow set formation (generally starting at the top of the letters). Once a child can form their letters correctly, joined writing is introduced. When starting to join, we encourage clear joins, which aid fluency and accuracy in writing. Please get in touch for more information about letter formation and joins.

There are other ways in which you can be of help. These include:

- pointing out letters which have a similar formation e.g. the letters **c a o d g q** all start in the same way
- model writing key words (such as names) using correct letter formation and joins as appropriate for the level of your child's progression e.g. your child's name starts with a capital letter and capital letters do not join
- praising good effort in handwriting, especially if the error is a 'reasonable' attempt, before correcting any mistake
- encouraging other development of fine motor skills, such as colouring in or drawing, as well as giving ample opportunity to write.

Once children are joining their handwriting correctly in all subjects, they will begin to use a black ballpoint pen.

For year 6 to meet age expected in writing, they must join their writing.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs King
English lead