

HANDWRITING PROGRESSION USING LETTERJOIN

CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Castle Primary School Handwriting Development and Progression EYFS and Key Stage 1

Policy Aims

At Castle Primary School, we believe that effective handwriting is a fundamental skill that supports children's ability to record their learning confidently and fluently. This policy outlines a clear, progressive approach to handwriting development from EYFS through to Key Stage 2, ensuring children develop the physical readiness, fine motor control and letter formation skills required for successful writing. Handwriting is taught as discrete sessions, separate to phonics and spelling teaching as advised in the Firm Foundations guide.

Our aims are to:

- Develop strong posture, core stability and shoulder strength as the foundation for writing
 - Support the development of fine motor control and an effective pencil grip
 - Teach clear, consistent letter and number formation
 - Enable children to write comfortably, legibly and with increasing fluency
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Handwriting Progression Overview

Handwriting development is taught in progressive stages:

- **Stage 1:** Pre-writing development (EYFS)
- **Stage 2:** Learning to print (EYFS / Year 1)
- **Stage 3:** Pre-cursive introduction (EYFS where appropriate / Year 1)
- **Stage 4:** Cursive Introduction: (Year 2)
- **Stage 5:** Cursive Rehearsal: (Year 3/4)
- **Stage 6:** Cursive Mastery: (Year 5/6)

Children progress at different rates; therefore, movement between stages is based on individual readiness rather than age alone.

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NC/EYFS expectation	NC Non-statutory guidance EYFS Development Matters 2021	Teaching	Application
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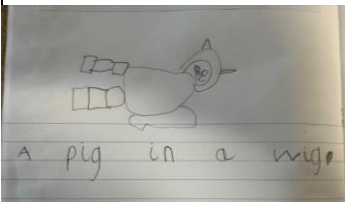
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EYFS	Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases. Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.	Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient. Examples of how to support this: Teach and model correct letter formation. Continuously check the process of children's handwriting (pencil grip and letter formation, including directionality). Provide extra help and guidance when needed. Plan for regular repetition so that correct letter formation becomes automatic, efficient and fluent over time. Form most lower-case letters correctly. Examples of how to support this: Teach pre-writing development Learn to print using RWI mnemonics encouraging effective pencil grip. When forming letters, the starting point and direction are more important at this stage than the size or position of the letter on a line.	Stage 1: pre-writing development Posture and Postural Control Before a child can write effectively, they must be able to maintain balance and stability while sitting without using their hands for support. Strong core, trunk and shoulder muscles are essential to allow controlled arm and hand movements. Pencil Control Development As children develop pencil control, movement progresses from large shoulder movements to controlled finger movements with the forearm resting on the table. Shoulder stability must be secure before refined finger movements can occur. Writing readiness is supported through the ability to form early pre-writing shapes, which provide the foundation for all letters and numbers. Stage 2: Learning to Print (EYFS / Year 1) At this stage, children begin to learn printed letter formation alongside phonics teaching. • Letters are modelled and taught in phonetic order • Letter formation is taught alongside Read Write Inc mnemonics	Physical development is planned for daily this includes fine and gross. Activities to Develop Postural Control • Using large outdoor equipment (e.g. climbing frames) • Obstacle courses involving crawling and climbing • Ball and beanbag games (sitting, kneeling or squatting) • Rolling, cutting and shaping dough • Cleaning tables and large surfaces • Painting on easels or walls • Chair press-ups or wall sitting exercises e.g. funfit activities Activities to Develop Fine Motor Control • Construction toys and building blocks • Lacing and threading • Puzzles and pegboards • Marbles and small object play • Origami, sewing and weaving • Cooking activities (chopping, peeling, mixing) • Woodwork using tools such as pliers or screwdrivers • Finger rhymes and finger counting • Sand and water play (pouring, sieving, using tools) • Tweezers to pick up small items (beads, pom-poms) • Finger painting, clay and playdough • Tracing activities Learning to Print • RWI alignment: Teach letter formation in the same order as RWI Set 1 Speed Sounds, using the RWI picture mnemonics (e.g., 'Maisie, mountain, mountain' for m).
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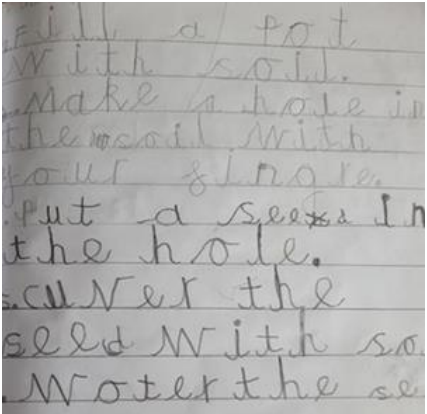
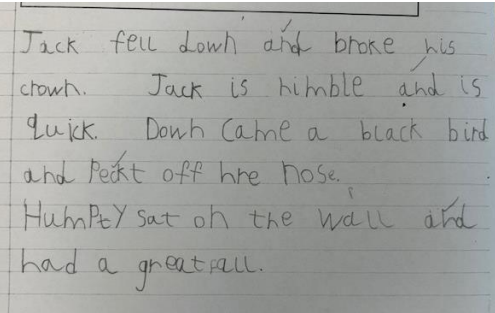
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			- Children are offered a range of writing tools varying in size, shape and colour - Triangular pencils may be used to support tripod grip development - Write from the Start – perceptuo-motor programme introduced Continued development of gross motor skills, fine motor skills and core strength remains essential throughout this stage. 	- Letters are modelled and taught in phonetic order - Letter formation is taught alongside Read Write Inc mnemonics - Children will use wide lines. - Incorrect letter formation and misconceptions will be picked up robustly from the start. Handwriting is taught discretely as well as within phonics so pupils receive sufficient explicit modelling and practice.
Y1	Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. Begin to	Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) Children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their	Stage 3 – Pre-cursive introduction Pupils should be taught to... - sit correctly (bottom back in the seat, square in the chair, feet flat on the floor) Perfect sitting in RWI - how to hold a pencil both comfortably and correctly - forearms on the table - non-writing	In the Autumn Term handwriting is taught daily for at least the first half of term. Teaching then progresses from five short, to two or three longer lessons per week: It is divided into 3 sections: warm-ups, letter families and capital letters Long letter families: i l t u j y Curly caterpillar letters a c f e

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form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. Form capital letters Form digits 0-9. Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and practice these.	use. To be confident in understanding the letter families. 	hand supporting the paper - begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place - form capital letters - form digits 0-9 - understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. 	s g One armed robots b h k m p r Zig Zag v w x z - uses of printed letters - numbers and symbols (• introducing pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters) - continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises - strengthening handwriting, learning and practice - numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice - dictation Children will use a sharp HB pencil. Handwriting will be practised in a handwriting book when children are able to sit their writing comfortably on the line Writing books will have 11mm lines. Incorrect letter formation and misconceptions will be picked up robustly from the start.
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Y2	Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. (...in some of their writing. End of KS1 WTS) Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. (End of KS1 GDS) Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters. (End of KS1 EXS) Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. (End of KS1 EXS)	Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation. Children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing and their writing should be mostly joined.	• Stage 4: Cursive Introduction: (Year 2) Cursive Introduction: Pupils should be taught to: - form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another - start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined - write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters - use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation. A child is only ready to start learning to join their handwriting when: • They have learnt to form all 26 lower-case letters correctly using pre-cursive. • Letters are of a consistent and suitable size (not necessarily the perfect size, remember big is beautiful). • Letters are positioned appropriately on the writing line as well as in relation to one another. Module 3 Starting Cursive: Year 2 introduces children to cursive letters and how to join them. They will have regular practice in letter formation and joining their handwriting. It is divided into 3 sections: • cursive letters and words, letter families, high frequency words, joining practice, sequencing sentences and dictation exercises • further dictation exercises, more high frequency words, 2, 5 and 10 times table facts and SPaG practice • more dictation and number writing practice With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing.	In the Autumn Term handwriting is taught daily for at least the first half of term. Teaching then progresses from five short, to two or three longer lessons per week • KS1 SPaG exercises based on the No Nonsense Year 2 Spelling Programme will reinforce handwriting. Children will use a sharp HB pencil to write with. Handwriting will be practised in a handwriting book. Writing books will have 11mm lines. By the end of year 2 children will be beginning to use cursive handwriting in their work books Joining commences when pupils demonstrate secure formation, consistent size/spacing and automatic letter-family habits. Foundational transcription and simple sentence work take precedence over test-style tasks in KS1. RWI alignment: Begin pre-cursive/joining when pupils are READY (secure formation, size/spacing, fluent letter-family habits). Use Letter-join pre-cursive/cursive resources while
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				continuing to draw decodable content from current RWI code (Green words/simple sentences, and Get Writing tasks) so transcription practice reinforces phonics. Incorrect letter formation and misconceptions will be picked up robustly on an ongoing basis.
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Y3/4	Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting.	Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling. At the end of year 4 children should have fluent, consistent and legible cursive handwriting across the curriculum.	• Stage 5: Cursive Rehearsal: (Year $\frac{3}{4}$) • Cursive Rehearsal: Pupils should be taught to: - use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined - increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling. Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say. Module 4 for Year 3 is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French and Spanish), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings. Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum. Module 5 for Year 4 focuses on using handwriting practice to	In the Autumn Term handwriting is taught daily for at least the first half of term. Writing books will have 8 mm lines. Handwriting lessons will continue twice a week in Lower Key Stage 2. KS12 SPaG exercises based on the No Nonsense Year 3 and 4 Spelling Programme will reinforce handwriting. Pupils transition from pencil to handwriting pen when legibility, pressure control and spacing are consistently secure, and by task (eg, quick notes versus final presentation). Children will use a purple pen to edit. The great majority of pupils will write in a fluent, legible cursive style by the end of Year 3; reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with identified needs. RWI alignment: For any pupils still consolidating the code (including intervention/Fast Track), continue to source decodable words/sentences from the current RWI set while using Letter-join for
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			support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, French and Spanish. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum. Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module's lessons. RWI alignment: For any pupils still consolidating the code (including intervention/Fast Track), continue to source decodable words/sentences from the current RWI set while using Letter-join for fluency and legibility. For fluent readers, use curriculum-linked Letter-join tasks to build speed and presentation.	fluency and legibility. For fluent readers, use curriculum-linked Letter-join tasks to build speed and presentation.
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Y5/6	Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed. Maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed. (End of KS2 EXS)	Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. By the end of year 6 children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters.	• Stage 6: Cursive Mastery: (Year 5/6) • Cursive Mastery: Pupils should be taught to: - write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: • choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters • choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters). Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an un joined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form). To have mastered cursive handwriting at Castle Primary School, pupils should demonstrate that: - All letters are formed correctly with clear descenders and ascenders which are consistent in size. Handwriting is neat, joined and legible. - All capital letters and lower case letters are clear and used correctly. Letters are joined appropriately. - All letters are written on the line with a regular space between words. - Punctuation is the correct size in relation to the text. - The writer writes with good pace. - Titles use capital letters correctly. - All	More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during two weekly lessons: • reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum • form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters • dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills • KS2 SATs SPaG practice Writing books will have 8 mm lines Children will use a purple pen to edit. Children will use fully cursive writing. Children will write with a handwriting pen.
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			written work starts from the margin. - Any mistakes are rubbed out neatly or crossed out with one neat line. Module 6 for Year 5 continues to build on combining fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum. In this module, learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. With Letter-join's wide range of resources they will be able to work towards producing consistently neat and wellpresented handwriting in all curriculum subjects. On completing this module, children should be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing. Module 7 Year 6 presents learners with a range of tasks where they have to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based worksheets will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length. Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to aid KS2 SATs SPaG revision. They are designed to support year 6 pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of SPaG preparation and plenty of handwriting practice. By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters. All of	
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				these writing styles are covered in this module.	
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Interventions

The expectation is that if children are not keeping up with ARE handwriting expectations, teachers will intervene to target specific handwriting difficulties. These interventions may include short burst 1:1 or group sessions.

Resources to support handwriting intervention:

Each handwriting lesson has differentiation suggestions for those pupils who require extra practice or an extra challenge – See specific modules.

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Before I Can Write, I Need To...

Develop Physical Skills

It is essential that children develop their physical skills to help them feel ready to write.

These skills can be developed through:

- running, climbing, crawling, carrying, swinging, digging, throwing and catching
- pinching
- colouring, tracing, threading, building and cutting
- making various large and small movements
- improving posture
- squashing and squeezing
- developing spatial awareness
- combining and refining fine and gross motor skills into purposeful mark making
- crossing the midline
- pushing and pulling
- improving bilateral coordination
- strengthening all muscles, including hand muscles
- building shoulder, hand and wrist strength

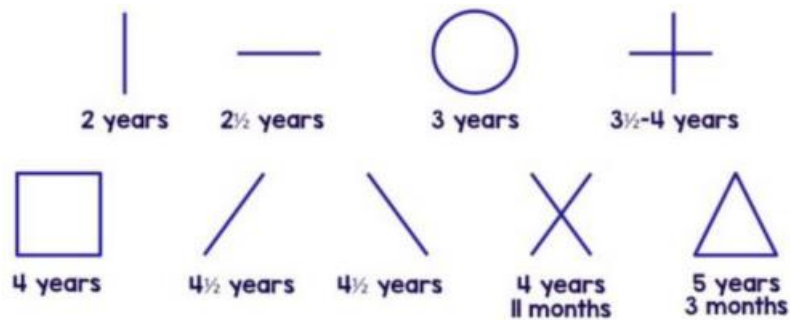
Disclaimer: Every setting's needs are different and as the recommendations in this resource may not be suitable for all settings. The examples used are not an exhaustive list and it is for you to consider whether it is appropriate to use this guidance within your setting.

CPD Early Years

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Writing readiness can be guided by the child's ability to write these first shapes, as they form the foundations of all letters and numbers.



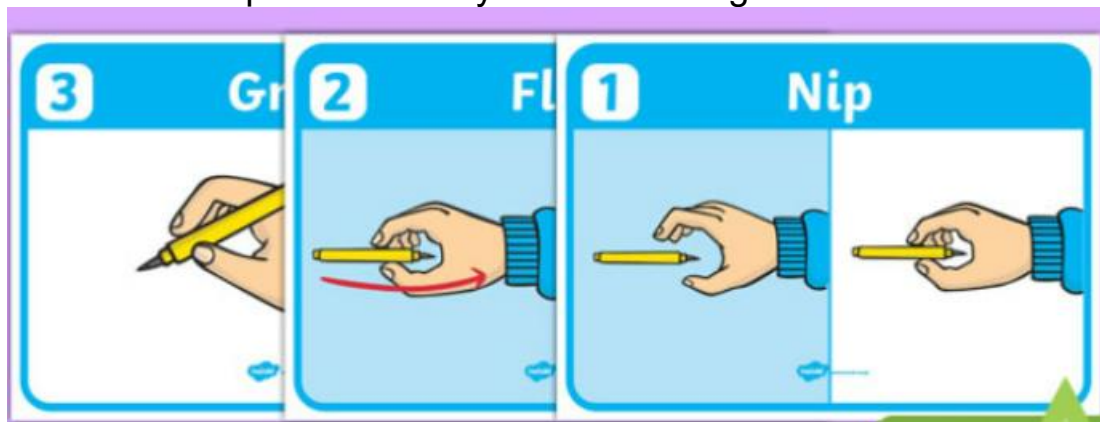
Fine Motor Skills including Developing Finger Strength, Grasp, Pincer Movement – A child needs to have a well-developed hand use, grasp and fine motor skills in order to manipulate and control a pencil accurately. Signs that this is developed effectively include that they are able to grasp objects with their whole hand, manipulate objects by turning them over and moving them over their fingers, pick up small objects using a pincer grip (tips of thumb and index finger), pick up object and manipulate them using a tripod grip (thumb, index and middle fingers). There are four main grasps that a child will likely progress through including: Palmar Supinate Grasp, Digital Pronate Grasp, Static Tripod Grasp and the Dynamic Tripod Grasp. A child will need to be able to use either the Static Tripod or the Dynamic Tripod Grasp in order to write. This means that they: - Hold the pencil between the tips of the thumb, index and middle fingers - Hold the pencil in a relaxed way without too much pressure being applied - The pencil rests on the hand between the thumb and the index fingers (on the webspace) - The webspace gap should be rounded and open like a circle - The ring and little fingers are held away from the pencil and lightly bent into the palm. Should they find it difficult to correct their grip, pencil grips may help.

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1-1½ years Palmar Supinate Grasp	2-3 years Digital Pronate Grasp	3½-4 years Static Tripod Grasp	4½-6 years Dynamic Tripod Grasp

Tripod Pencil Grip

How to hold a pencil correctly for handwriting



Left handed?

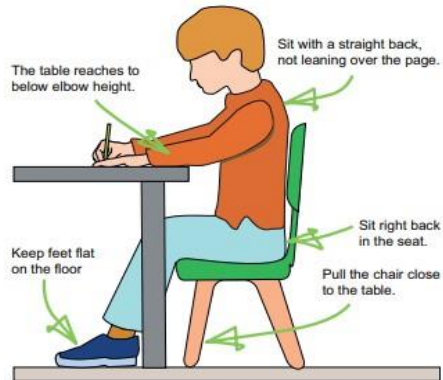
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Comfortable Sitting Position and Correct Paper Position

Right handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

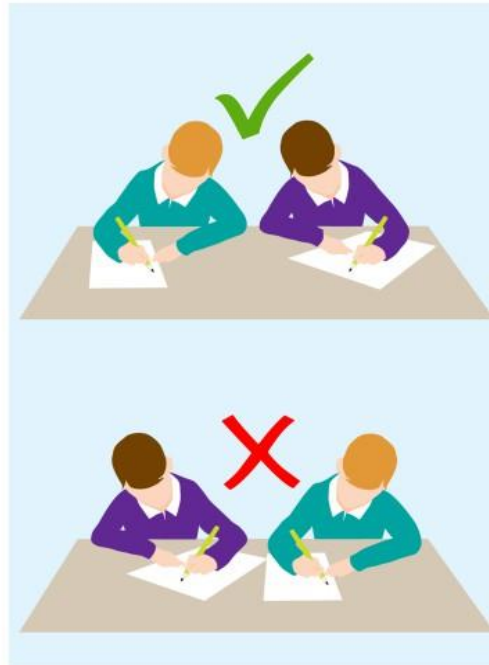


How to hold and position the paper.



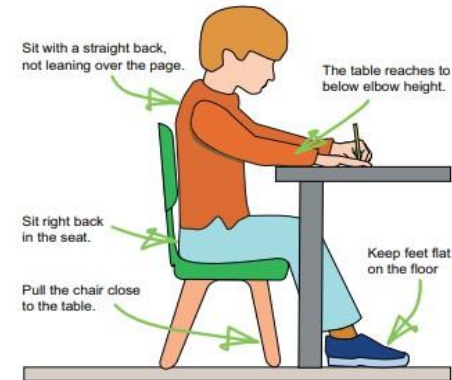
Sitting position

Sit left-handed children to the left of their partner so they have plenty of room to write.



Left handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.



How to hold and position the paper.



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Silent handwriting signal

This signal indicates how children should sit:

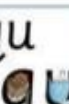
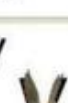
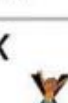
- feet flat on the floor and bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist away from the table, shoulders down and relaxed
- left/right hand holds the page, left/right hand holds a pencil - ready in tripod grip.



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Read Write Inc. Mnemonics

a  Around the apple and down the leaf.	b  Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	c  Curl around the caterpillar.	d  Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	e  Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	f  Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g  Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	h  Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	i  Down the body and dot for the head.	j  Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	k  Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	l  Down the long leg.
m  Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	n  Down Nobby and over his net.	o  All around the orange.	p  Down the pirates plait and around his face.	qu  Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.	r  Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
s  Slither down the snake.	t  Down the tower, across the tower.	u  Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	v  Down a wing, up a wing.	w  Down, up, down, up.	x  Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y  Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	z  Zig-zag-zig.				

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EYFS

Fine and gross motor activities are planned for and within the provision daily. Children are targeted and interventions are in place to support bottom 20% Printed (non-joined) letterforms are taught using RWI mnemonics to maintain fidelity and increase practice.

Write from the start sessions take place 3 times per week

Year 1 discrete handwriting slot: minimum minutes and model sequence

• Handwriting is taught as a short, discrete daily session (see Discrete slot below) and is reinforced within phonics to maintain fidelity and increase practice.

Daily 8–12 minutes suggested structure:

- Posture and pencil grip check (30–45s): feet flat, paper slanted, tripod grip; quick reset as needed.
- Explicit modelling (90–120s): teacher demonstrates the day's letter(s) using the RWI mnemonic; emphasise start points and stroke order.
- Guided practice (3–4 min): trace–copy–independent on wide-lined paper; immediate feedback to prevent errors from embedding.
- Application (2–3 min): micro-dictation of fully decodable Green words/small sentence using taught GPCs; focus on formation and spacing.
- Quick review (30–45s): celebrate exemplars; set up home practice via Letter-join log-ins.

RWI–Letter-join whole-school notes

- Publish one style card (letter shapes + stroke order) derived from the RWI formation chart and apply the matching Letter-join font across displays and worksheets.
- Sequence Letter-join lessons by the RWI order of GPCs (avoid alphabet order).
- Maintain fidelity to the SSP: early handwriting words are fully decodable from the taught code.

Joining readiness checklist (introduce pre-cursive/joining only when secure)

Teachers confirm all items are secure before teaching pre-cursive patterns or formal joins:

- All lower-case letters formed accurately with correct start points and stroke order.
- Consistent relative size and clear spacing on the line in short sentences.
- Automaticity within letter families (e.g., c-a-o-d-g-q; l-t-i-u-y-j; b-h-k-m-n-p-r; v-w-x-z; e-f-s).
- 1-minute copy task shows legibility and steady pace without excessive grip pressure.
- Micro-dictation of decodable words/sentences shows accurate transcription without reversals.

Pen transition rubric (implement/task selection)

Pupils move from pencil to a handwriting pen when the following are consistently secure; teachers may also vary implement by task (e.g., quick notes vs final presentation):

- Legibility: letters sit on the line with clear ascenders/descenders; no crowding or drifting.
- Pressure control: even line weight without tearing or shiny compression; relaxed grip sustained for 10+ minutes.
- Spacing and size: consistent word spacing matched to letter size; capitals and digits correctly proportioned.
- Speed with control: 1-minute copy at an age-appropriate pace while maintaining legibility.
- Self-monitoring: pupil can identify and correct formation/slant errors without prompting.

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Where to tighten (strategic edits) — policy consolidation

This appendix consolidates the strategic policy points agreed through review. These items are enacted in the main progression but are stated here explicitly for clarity and staff reference.

- Joining criteria and timing: joining starts only when pupils are READY (secure formation; consistent size/spacing; automatic letter-family habits). See Appendix A1 and Year 2 notes.
 - EYFS & Year 1 beyond phonics: handwriting is taught discretely every day (8–12 minutes) as well as reinforced within phonics sessions.
 - Y3 expectation: ambition maintained but phrased as “the great majority...” with reasonable adjustments for identified needs.
 - KS1 caution: foundational transcription (formation, spacing, simple sentence composition) takes precedence over test-style tasks.
 - Pen transition: criteria-based, not age-based. Implement choice varies by task (see Appendix A2).
 - Fluency monitoring: half-termly dip-sample (1-minute copy + legibility check) to inform keep-up support.
 - Inclusion & targeted support: the lowest-attaining, disadvantaged and SEND pupils receive more high-quality in-class interaction and practice; withdrawal groups are used sparingly; the core curriculum is adapted; keep-up is short, focused and daily where required.
- Inclusion & targeted support: pupils with lower starting points, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND receive more high-quality interaction and practice within the core lesson; withdrawal groups are used sparingly; short daily keep-up sessions provide focused rehearsal without replacing core teaching.