



HANDWRITING PROCEDURE

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What is handwriting and why is it important?

One of the two main dimensions in the teaching and learning of writing is transcription. The National Curriculum states that as well as spelling skills, transcription depends on fluent, legible and eventually speedy handwriting.

Handwriting is an essential life skill. Children who can write fluently and clearly are better able to use writing to record their thoughts and ideas. When handwriting is automatic, their ideas can flow. Handwriting skills help children develop reading and spelling skills. Handwriting also helps with the ability to recall and remember information.

Progression of handwriting

Early Years Foundation Stage

The key focuses in Nursery and Reception are fine motor skills and letter formation according to the school's phonics programme.

By the end of Reception, children working at the expected level of development will:

- Sit correctly at a table (TNT – Tummy next to table; BBC – Bottom to the back of the chair; 6 Feet on the floor)
- Hold a pencil affectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Attempt to use finger spaces between words

Year 1:

Resources and modelling should support the teaching of lower-case and capital letters correctly, with clear start and finish points. Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. The size of the writing implement should not be too large for the pupil's hand. The pupil should be able to hold the implement correctly so that bad habits are not formed. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Skills that will be consolidated:

- Correct sitting at a table (TNT – Tummy next to table; BBC – Bottom to the back of the chair; 6 Feet on the floor)
- Comfortable and correct pencil grip
- Use of finger spaces

Skills that will be taught:

- Formation of capital letters and lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place, in line with the school's phonics programme
- Formation of digits 0 – 9
- Understanding of which letters belong to handwriting 'families' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Year 2:

Pupils should revise and practise the 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. Resources and modelling should support the teaching of lower-case and capital letters correctly, with clear start and finish points and cursive joins for children who are at this stage in their development.

Skills that will be consolidated:

- Correct sitting at a table (TNT – Tummy next to table; BBC – Bottom to the back of the chair; 6 Feet on the floor)
- Comfortable and correct pencil grip
- Correct formation of capital letters, lower-case letters and numbers 0 – 9 according to the school's phonics programme.

- Use of finger spaces

Skills that will be taught:

- Kicks and flicks to lead into the next letter and joining digraphs
- (When appropriate) Use of diagonal and horizontal stokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined (see handwriting poster)
- Appropriate use of spacing between words that reflect the size of the letters
- Correct formation of capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters (see handwriting poster)
- Correct formation of lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another (see handwriting poster)
- Correct formation and use of ascenders and descenders (see handwriting poster)

Lower Key Stage 2:

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting will continue to be taught with the aim of increasing fluency. This will, in turn, support their composition and spelling.

Skills that will be consolidated:

- Use of diagonal and horizontal stokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined (see handwriting poster)
- Appropriate use of spacing between words that reflect the size of the letters
- Correct formation of capital letters, lower-case letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another (see handwriting poster)

Skills that will be taught:

- Progression of speed and pace when writing for different reasons; developing fluency of handwriting
- Progression of legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch)

Upper Key Stage 2:

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it. They should be clear about what standard is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or filling in a form.

Skills that will be consolidated:

- Progression of speed and pace
- Progression of legibility, consistency and quality

Skills that will be taught:

- Increased speed when writing down ideas and notes
- Decision making when writing at speed (choices about whether to join specific letters or not, about how near something has to be)
- Understanding of which writing implement that is best suited for a task

Modelling handwriting

All staff whose writing will be seen by children should be modelling the correct handwriting for their year group expectations.

EYFS

- The correct formation of letters, starting and ending in the correct place according to the school's phonics programme

Year 1

- The correct formation of letters, starting and ending in the correct place according to the school's phonics programme

Year 2

- The correct formation of letters, starting and ending in the correct place
- Within year - Use of diagonal and horizontal stokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined (see handwriting poster)

Lower Key Stage 2

- The correct formation of letters, starting and ending in the correct place (see handwriting poster)
- Use of diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined (see handwriting poster)
- Consist in size

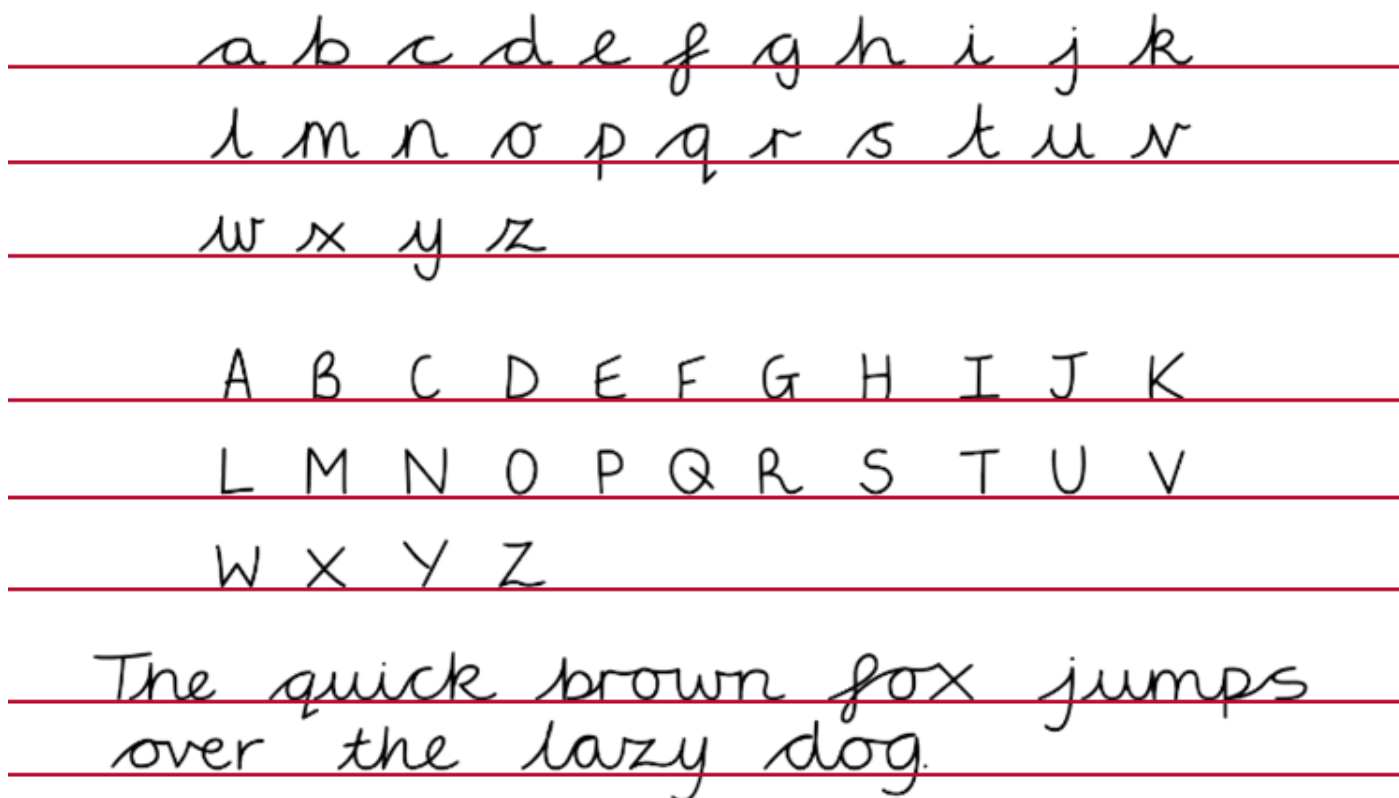
Upper Key Stage 2

- The correct formation of letters, starting and ending in the correct place (see handwriting poster)
- Consist in size
- When writing to publish and in children's books - use of diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- When writing notes (e.g for working walls) – writing in a legible and consistent way that is time efficient (ensuring children understand that they can make a choice when not writing to publish)

Handwriting example

See below the handwriting formation to be taught during Year 2 and onwards. Please note that some children may choose to join some ascenders when they develop their own style.

See handwriting procedure for progression throughout year groups, modelling through teachers' handwriting and interventions for writers who are not working at age related expectations.



Intervention and support

How do I engage children in the process of practising handwriting?

- Be explicit about the expectations
- Raise the profile of handwriting and presentation so pupils value its importance
- Ensure children are aware of their strengths and next steps
- Celebrate success and progress
- Create a genuine purpose for handwriting/presentation
- Individualised handwriting and fine motor skill intervention to develop handwriting and literacy skills

How can I support children who write with their left-hand?

- Model letter formation with your left hand or use online clips / video left-handed staff members to demonstrate good practice.
- Put a mark on the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins.
- Remind children to slant their paper in the opposite direction to their right-handed peers.
- Seat children on the left-hand side of a pair of seats at a table, so that their elbows have free movement.
- Consider adjusting seat height – some left-handed children may need a higher seat in order to view their writing and to avoid their elbow locking into their side as they move across the page
- To avoid smudging children should be encouraged to position the fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of their pen/pencil

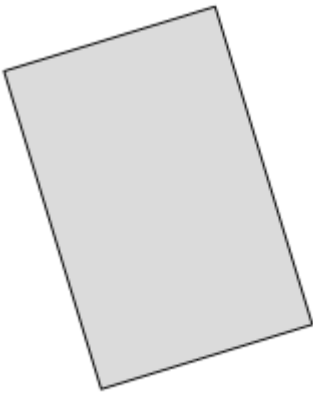
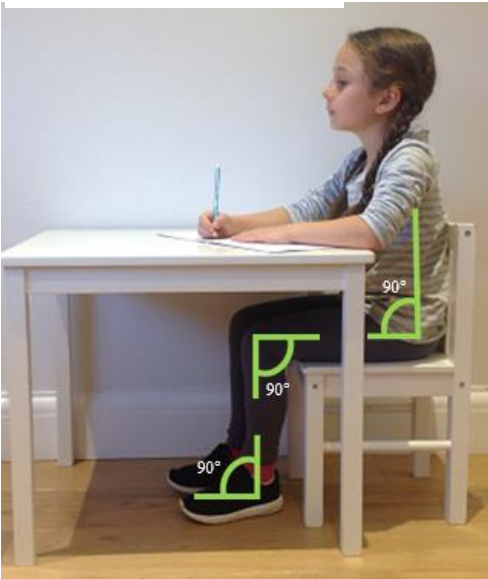
Below are some possible activities that may help to develop a specific skill for those with **significant gaps** in handwriting skills or knowledge.

Activities to build stability (Gross motor):	Activities to strengthen Shoulder Girdle (Gross Motor):	Activities to develop fine motor skills:	Warm-ups for hand/finger dexterity (Fine Motor)	Pre-handwriting:
<p>Climbing, running, balancing and skipping</p> <p>Hanging activities, eg from monkey bars, rope ladders, knotted ropes, traverse walls</p> <p>Hand/eye co-ordination games e.g. throwing and catching games</p>	<p>Large write activities e.g. sky writing, squeezezy bottles, writing in foam, painting and writing with large tools</p> <p>Chalking on playground</p> <p>Aeroplane arm exercises</p> <p>Push ups against wall</p>	<p>Cutting and sticking</p> <p>Threading and sewing</p> <p>Sorting with tweezers</p> <p>Jigsaws</p> <p>Play dough, plasticine and clay</p> <p>Using woodwork tools</p> <p>Drawing, colouring and tracing</p> <p>Using a variety of writing tools</p>	<p>Thumb scrunches with fabric on table</p> <p>Finger scrunches with fabric on table</p> <p>Hand exercises with squeezable materials</p> <p>Popping bubble wrap</p>	<p>Explore line and pattern work</p> <p>Develop scissor skills</p> <p>Construction games, such as Lego</p> <p>Use finger / pointing stick to track through mazes</p>

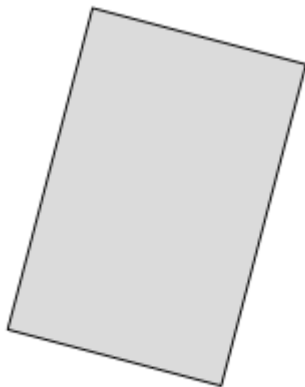
Below are some possible activities for those with **minor gaps** in handwriting skills or knowledge, but the child is still operating broadly within the range for their year group.

EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3 / Y4	Y5 / Y6
<p>Eg marks made with a pencil are faint</p> <p>Frequent shoulder girdle activities to strengthen muscles</p> <p>Activities to strengthen hands and wrists</p> <p>Use range of writing implements</p>	<p>Eg overly large letter formation</p> <p>Frequent fine motor / busy fingers activities</p> <p>Hand-over-hand support from an adult</p>	<p>Eg letters not formed correctly</p> <p>Establish which letters and tackle systematically, grouping into letter families if appropriate</p>	<p>Eg letters not correctly differentiated by size and position on line</p> <p>Establish which letters and tackle systematically, grouping into letters with descenders / ascenders</p>	<p>Eg letters not joined consistently</p> <p>Establish which letters and tackle systematically, grouping into letter families if appropriate</p>

Correct sitting position



Paper position for right-handed writer



Paper position for left-handed writer

Using pens

For children in Year 2, after cursive handwriting has been taught, teachers can decide if a child is ready to use a pen. From KS2, any child can choose to write in black pen or pencil. They should be encouraged to choose the implement that makes them feel comfortable, increases their fluency and speed and is appropriate for the task. Regardless of the implement the child had chosen to use, a progression in handwriting should be seen throughout their books. Setting small achievable targets and having high expectations, as well as explicit handwriting teaching, should facilitate this

Writing at home

Encouraging writing at home from an early age allows children to put their learning into practise and see it as a transferable skill. Provide opportunities to write at home by asking children to help with everyday tasks like shopping lists and birthday cards. Putting the children's pictures and writing on the fridge or wall will make them feel proud of their work. Below are some ways to help raise the profile of handwriting at home:

- Make a place for writing at home. Have a stable chair and a surface at the level of the child's belly button. If the kitchen table is too high, use a cushion or tall chair with a footstool to support the child's feet
- Use chunky crayons and chalk until the child develops the finger and thumb grip needed to hold a pencil
- Trace simple top-to-bottom and left-to-right lines on a page, trying to stay on the lines all the way to the end. Make up a story to add interest to the activity – for example, 'Help this puppy find the way home'
- Practise drawing anticlockwise circles that start at the top of the page. This is the pattern used to form letters
- When the child has more control over the crayon or pencil, encourage them to draw simple stick figure people
- Trace over the letters of the child's name. Show them where to start drawing the letter by putting a green dot at the starting point and a red one at the finishing point.
- Give the child opportunities to write and draw with other materials. E.g sand, mud, playdough, washable pens on windows, bath crayons, stones/pebbles