



1. RATIONALE

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a wide range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through school, the requirement to write legibly and fluently increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases. Children need to be encouraged to adapt the correct pencil grip and writing posture from the start of their school life. They also need regular and constant opportunities to learn, practice and apply specific handwriting skills.

This will ensure children know:

- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
 - Having correct pencil grip.
 - Knowing the all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle.
 - Knowing the correct formation of all letters.
 - Knowing the correct size and orientation of letters.

2. HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND NON-NEGOTIABLES

High expectations **MUST** be applied to handwriting and presentation in the same way that our expectations are high in other areas of the curriculum:

- It is acceptable that there are times (in notes, rough planning or draft) that a child needs to write quickly and therefore, may not spend as much time focusing on handwriting and cursive script.
- It is **NOT** acceptable though, for children to sustain bad habits, posture, pencil grip or standards of presentation as they move through school. Teaching **MUST** have an impact on standards.
- It is **NOT** acceptable for children to vary the standard of their handwriting on a day to day basis- they must strive to show their best.

Also it is not acceptable to assume children know how to do all of the above. They must see, be taught and have access to modelling which exemplifies, explains and outlines what a skill is, how to do it and how to improve. They therefore, must have access to quality teaching.

3.3. WHOLE SCHOOL CONSISTENCY

Whole school consistency is vital to ensuring success and progress.

The letter formation that children encounter first at FPS in Year Reception is print. As children progress through the school, they will be shown how this can progress into cursive script, where letters are all joined. Print and cursive letters start at the top of the letter. The Letter Join program will form the basis for handwriting lessons – all staff have access to the program resources in which modelled examples of letters and patterns can be shown to the class. In addition to this, each class has a handwriting book with structured lines to support accurate and consistent formation and spacing.

Teachers are expected to exemplify the cursive style in their marking of books, in classroom displays and when writing within lessons (On interactive whiteboard/flipchart paper).

Children should experience daily practice of handwriting in a variety of places – from English lessons to discrete daily practice in Handwriting books. Staff should consider where this practice should occur within their timetable and plan accordingly.

Children should experience/have access to:

- Daily practice of handwriting.
- Same language (in line with Letter Join) to be used in each year group
- Letter Join resources, online modelling tools, handwriting lined exercise books and worksheets to be used to support main teaching tool.
- Pencils to be of a good quality and sharp. High expectations regarding pencils. Children should not be completing work with blunt pencils.
- Pens to be well cared for and comfortable,
- Where handwriting is displayed, it should be of a high quality. Our cursive and print fonts to be used according to age group.
- Letter formation is to follow the progression policy outlined in this section.

4. TEACHING TIME

Handwriting practice should, in varying forms, take place DAILY where possible (games, English lesson starters, handwriting sessions etc.). More formal taught handwriting sessions need to be built in to the EYFS framework and timetable. They should also, be discretely built in to and taught through the KS1 and KS2 timetable.

EYFS

For our youngest children we aim for two to three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes that will include the following:

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.

KS1

Handwriting skills will continue with daily sessions totalling 40 to 50 minutes covering:

- Gross and fine motor skills exercises.
- Cursive handwriting reinforcement, learning and practice.
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters: where and when to use, learning and practice.

KS2:

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during daily sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes teaching:

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement.
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters.
- Dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and handwriting at speed.

Most handwriting sessions should be taught at the start of the school day to set children up for the handwriting expectations for the day ahead.

5. TEACHING STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS:

EYFS

- Concentrate on letter formation including verbalisation of how to form letters (see appendix)
- A number of examples of initial mark making and opportunities to explore mark making.
- Use of Letter Join's resources to develop muscular strength, coordination and recognition of letter formation.
- Use of thicker triangular pencils for all children initially, until motor skills sufficiently developed to use a normal school pencil.
- By the end of Year R children should be able to: Use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters [with a exit], most of which are correctly formed and apply their writing in exercise books.
- Write Dance used whole class to support early writing development. FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions to be used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- Embed approach of "This is how we write it... 'around the astronaut's helmet and down into space!" for recognising letters in Little Wandle Letters and Sounds.

YEAR 1

- Continuation of year R strategies. Ensure consistency is maintained with "This is how we write it... 'around the astronaut's helmet and down into space!" for recognising letters in Little Wandle Letters and Sounds.
- Handwriting books introduced at the beginning of year 1
- Write Dance used whole class to support early writing development. FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions) used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- All children to have their own handwriting exercise book and to follow the whole school approach.

YEAR 2

- Introduce joining and can practice sounds/letters for split diagraphs and two letters one sound joins.
- Support will be given to children where needed. Alternative paper, lines, pencils and resources will be used to support.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- Move to narrower line guides.
- All children to have their own handwriting exercise book and to follow the whole school approach.

KEY STAGE 2

Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

Quality: Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.

Speed: Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.

Stamina: Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.

YEAR 3

- High expectations regarding letter formation, joins and presentation in books – handwriting is should be applied across the curriculum.
- High expectations in class mean progress should be evident and poor handwriting practice never just 'accepted'.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who need support.
- Children should be accessing taught daily sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation in handwriting practice books.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

YEARS 4 AND 5

- High expectations regarding presentation, letter formation and consistent joining.
- Children to be developing the speed and fluency of handwriting skills.
- Handwriting learning applied through grammar, spelling or creative writing activities.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who need support.
- Children should be accessing daily taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation in handwriting exercise books and 8mm lined exercise books (no additional guide lines)
- All children to have their own handwriting exercise book to support their learning.

YEAR 6

- Continued high expectations regarding presentation and joining.
- Children to be developing the speed and fluency of handwriting skills.
- Handwriting should be applied throughout the curriculum and be a chance to explore different grammar, spelling, punctuation or creative writing techniques.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children.
- Children should be accessing daily taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation in handwriting exercise books and 8mm lined exercise books (no additional guide lines)
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

8. HANDWRITING BOOKS

From year 1, children use specialist handwriting guide lines to support accurate letter sizing and orientation.

7. PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & REPORTING

Handwriting should be evident in curriculum planning folder. This does not have to be typed up – but can be noted and evidenced against in the long term and medium term English plans.

Assessment is formative on daily basis.

Handwriting is predominantly assessed during writing and is an important facet of overall writing effectiveness. Teachers however, should be assessing children's needs/standards of presentation in all lessons – not just writing.

Targets/reporting of progress in handwriting should be included in parental reports if necessary.

Pupils should be encouraged to self-assess and peer assess handwriting during English and handwriting lessons.

8. SEN AND INCLUSION

Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems such as fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENDCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources, use of specialist pens/pencils/pencil grips, or participation in specialist interventions such as Fun Fit, Write dance or Hand Eye Co-ordination. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

9. POSTURE AND GRIP

Tripod Pencil Grip

How to hold a pencil correctly for handwriting.

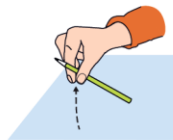
Right handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,

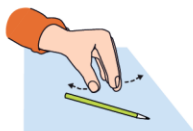


4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.

Left handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...

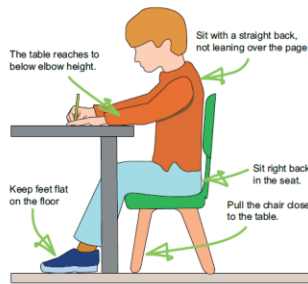


5. ...and grip.

Comfortable Sitting Position and Correct Paper Position

Right handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

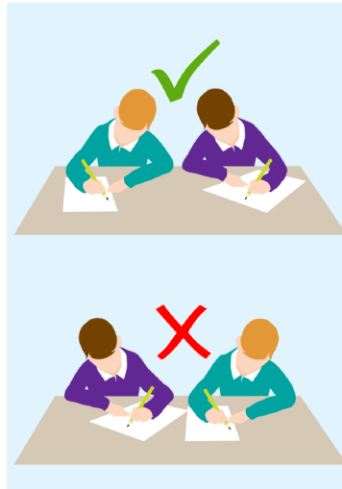


How to hold and position the paper.



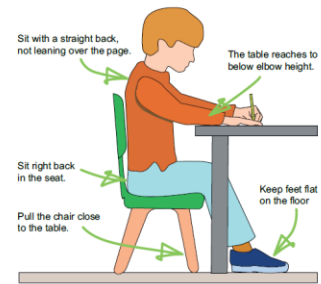
Sitting position

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.



Right handers:

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point.
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Left hand must be used to steady the paper

Left handers:

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger.
- Hold about 3cm from the tip as closer grips can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- The hand should be kept below the writing line.
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Right hand must be used to steady the paper.

NB: It is very important that a right handed child is NOT sat on the left hand side of a left handed child. If a child struggles to use the traditional grip, please refer to SENDCO. A range of specially designed pens and pencils are available which can be used in classes. Specialist left handed pens and pencils are also available.

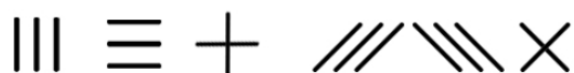
10. PROGRESSION

Children will initially start with mark making and will need to practice certain pattern formations, which will naturally support good pen grip development, fine motor skills and pen control. IT will also feed in to the next stage which is letter formation. The key patterns are:

Circles and spirals



Lines and diagonals



Jellies and zig-zags










Loopies and waves









Letter formation in EYFS – Little Wandle mantras

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
s s	 snake	Show your teeth and let the s hiss out ssssss ssssss	Down the snake from head to tail.
a a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the a sound at the back of your mouth a a a.	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
t t	 tiger	Open your lips, put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press t t t	Down the tiger and across its neck.
p p	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say p p p	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
i i	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the i sound at the back of your mouth i i i	Down the iguana and dot the leaf.
n n	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the nnnnn sound nnnnn	Down, up and over the net.
m m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the mmmmm sound mmmmm	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
d d	 duck	Put your tongue to the top and front of your mouth and make a quick d sound d d d	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
g g	 goat	Give me a big smile that shows your teeth, press the middle of your tongue to the top and back of your mouth, push your tongue down and forward to make the g sound g g g	Round the goat's face and curl under its chin.
o o	 octopus	Make your mouth into round shape and say o o o	All around the octopus.
c c	 cat	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	Curl around the cat.
k k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say k k k	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.
ck ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	c Curl around the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and back down to the toe. Catchphrase: Rock that sock!
e e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say e e e	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
u u	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say u u u	Down and around the umbrella, and back to the ground.
r r	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a rrrrr sound rrrrr rrrrr	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.
h h	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply h h h	Down, up and over the helicopter.
b b	 bear	Put your lips together and say b as you open them b b b	Down the bear's back, up and round its tummy.
f f	 flamingo	Open your lips a little; put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound ffff ffff	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.
l l	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little; put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press llll llll	Down the lollipop stick.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
j j	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say j j j	Down the jellyfish and dot its head.
v v	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing vvvvv vvvvv	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
w w	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say w w w	Down and up and down and up the waves.
x x	 box	Mouth open, then push the ex/x sound through as you close your mouth cs cs cs (x x x)	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again across the box to the bottom.
y y	 yo-yo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say y without opening your mouth yyy	Down, around the yo-yo and curl round the string.
z z	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the z sound zzzzz zzzzz	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.