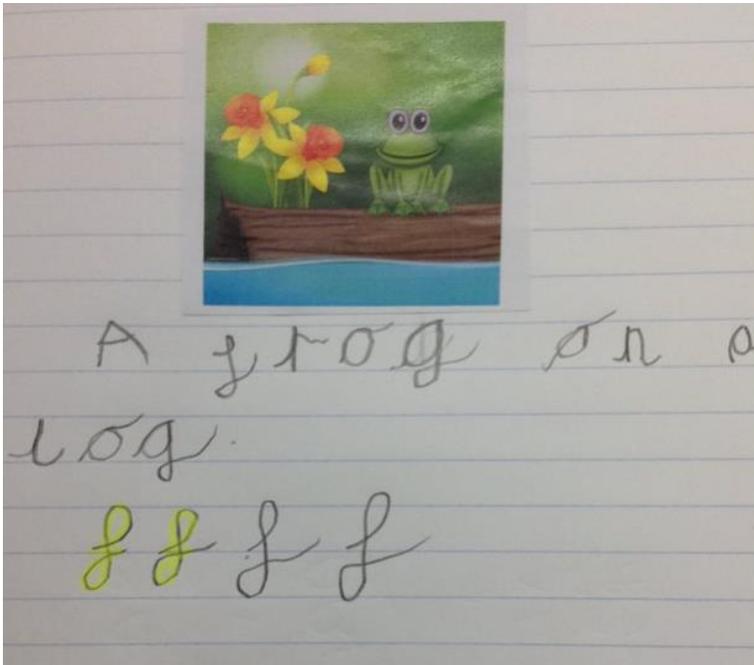


Handwriting

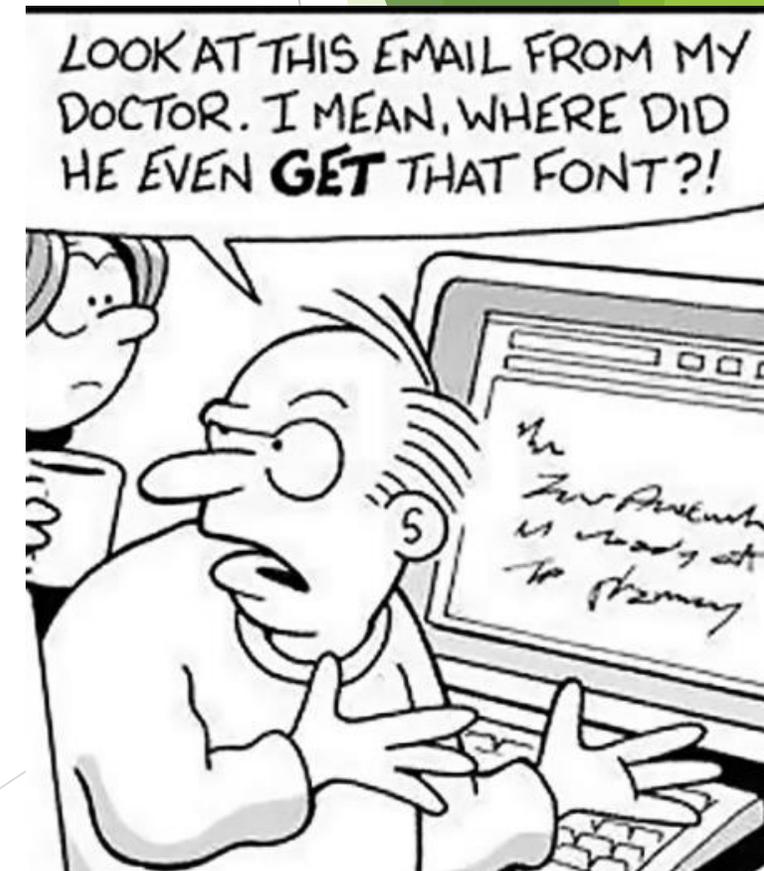
EYFS and KS1

Parent Workshops – 23rd Feb 2022



Why does handwriting matter?

- ▶ Legible handwriting that can be produced at speed, and with a minimum of thought, allows a child to give their full attention to the composition and content of their writing, and to their learning in other curriculum areas. Without fast and legible handwriting, students may miss out on learning opportunities and under-achieve academically (National Handwriting Association).



What does 'good' handwriting look like?

There are different viewpoints about handwriting styles and about teaching joined handwriting.

The British Dyslexia Foundation recommends that children use a continuous cursive style from as early an age as possible:

'Typically, when first learning to write, children 'print' their letters. They then move on to 'joined up' writing at a later stage. For children with dyslexia, learning two styles of handwriting can add an extra layer of difficulty and cause confusion. It is, therefore, much more helpful if a young child can learn to use a single system of handwriting right from the start.' (British Dyslexia Association)



Department
for Education

The DfE guidance (Jan 2022) for teaching phonics states:

At first, children should not be taught to join letters or to start every letter 'on the line' with a 'lead-in', because these practices cause unnecessary difficulty for beginners.

In EYFS,

Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

In Year 1 and Year 2,

Continuous Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

It is essential that there is a whole school approach to handwriting.

Whichever style that you decide upon, the handwriting will require frequent, discrete and direct teaching.

How does the handwriting journey begin?

Handwriting isn't all about the hands! Effective writers need strength and control through their shoulder, elbow, wrist and core muscles.

Shoulder Control



Gross Motor Activities

In Nursery and Reception, the children are given opportunities to build their strength through big physical activities – often outside.

- ▶ Sweeping or raking
- ▶ Climbing and hanging
- ▶ Large scale mark making on vertical and horizontal surfaces.

It is very helpful to encourage these kinds of physical play **at home** to build strength for writing.

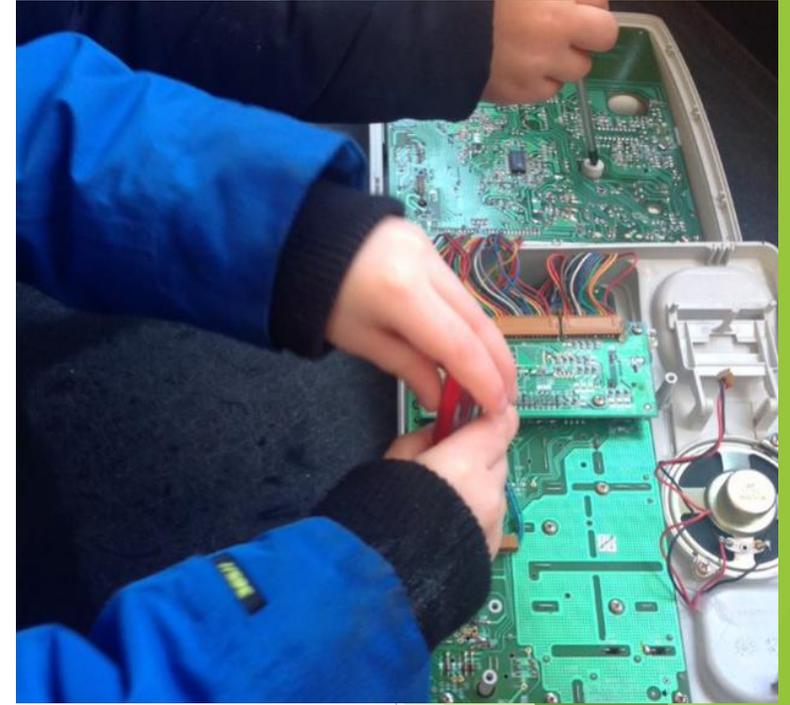
Fine Motor Control - hand muscles

There is access to fine motor activities within play including –

Using tools such as scissors, tweezers, screwdrivers, hole punches.

Handling small objects such as loose parts and collage materials

Activities such as cutting, weaving, threading, painting and drawing.



Fine Motor Control - hand muscles

In Nursery, the children also enjoy Dough Disco. This is offered to all the children but particular children are encouraged to participate.

In Reception, all the children take part in Finger Gym activities every day after lunch for about 15mins.

At home, encourage your child -

To use their hands and fingers in fun ways which match their interests.

To use their cutlery independently.



Letter formation - Nursery

- ▶ In Nursery, the children have name cards and are encouraged to write their own name, within play, using correct formation.

Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Letter formation - Nursery

- ▶ In the January before starting school, the children are introduced to a letter of the week. The correct letter formation is modelled and the children 'air write' the letter before having a chance to practise this within their play.

Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Letter formation - Nursery

- ▶ If your child is writing their own name **at home**, please use a capital letter to start their name and then lower case letters. Please do not print in block capitals.

Letter formation - Reception Class

- ▶ In Reception, the children continue to practice writing their own names with the goal of using correct letter formation for all the letters of their name by Christmas.

Letter formation - Reception Class

- ▶ Letter formation continues to be taught alongside Phonics with more practice on paper than in Nursery.
- ▶ Once the individual letters of the alphabet have all been taught as part of Phonics, the children start to be introduced to handwriting families.

Letter formation - Reception Class

- ▶ **At home** – Mrs Paget will send home ideas for practising letter formation alongside continuing with activities to build gross motor and fine motor control.

Early Learning Goals

▶ ELG: Fine Motor Skills

▶ Children at the expected level of development will:

- ▶ - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip
- ▶ in almost all cases;
- ▶ - Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- ▶ - Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

▶ ELG: Writing

▶ Children at the expected level of development will:

- ▶ - Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- ▶ - Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- ▶ - Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Letter formation - Year 1

- ▶ In Year 1, the children practise the letter formation taught within Reception.
- ▶ This year, the children are using continuous cursive.

Continuous Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Letter formation - Year 1

Continuous Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

- ▶ Handwriting is taught in discrete, weekly lessons.
- ▶ Handwriting lessons focus on the letter families to help the children to understand that many letters follow the same pattern.
- ▶ The children begin to think about using the lines more effectively.
- ▶ We start to consider the relative sizes of letters ready for Year 2.

Letter formation - Year 1

Continuous Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

At home –

Practise using correct formation when writing spellings

Write cards in best handwriting

Avoid printing in block capitals!

Letter families

Letter Families

1

The Ladder Family (l, i, u, t, y, j)

- l** down from the top
- i** down, lift and dot
- u** down, round, up and down
- t** down from the top, curve, lift and across
- y** down, round, up, down and round
- j** down to the bottom, around, lift and dot



Letter families

2

The One-Armed Robot Family (n, m, h, k, b, p, r)



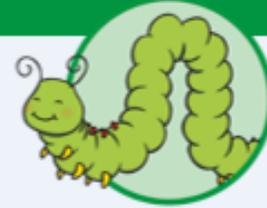
- n** down and up, around, down and stop
- m** down and up, around, down and up around, down
- h** down from the top, up, around and down
- k** down from the top, up and right round, kick
- b** down from the top, up and around
- p** down from the top, up and around
- r** down, up, around and stop

Letter families

3

The Curly Caterpillar Family (c, a, d, e, s, g, f, q, o)

- c** curve around and stop
- a** curve around, up and down
- d** curve around, up to the top and down
- e** up and diagonal across, curve round and stop
- s** curve around, curve around
- g** curve around, up, down to the bottom and around
- f** curve, down and cross
- q** curve around, up, down to the bottom and flick
- o** curve around and up around



Letter families

4

The Zig-Zag Monster Family (z, v, w, x)



- z** across, diagonal down, across
- v** diagonal down, diagonal up
- w** diagonal down, diagonal up, diagonal down and diagonal up
- x** diagonal down, lift, diagonal down

Capital letters

- ▶ Capital letters are always tall
- ▶ They are never joined
- ▶ They do not have a lead in or a lead out.



National Curriculum - Year 1

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- ▶ sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- ▶ 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Letter formation - Year 2

- ▶ In Year 2, the children revise the letter formation taught within Year 1.

Continuous Cursive

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

- ▶ Handwriting is taught in discrete, weekly lessons.
- ▶ Handwriting lessons focus on accurate sizing and spacing.

Different joins

Diagonal joins (the most common letter join – formed from the baseline)	used to join: a, b , c, d, e, h, i , k, l, m, n, p , q, s , t, u, x, z	to these letters: b, e, f, h, i , j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	and to these tricky letters (where the letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement): a, c, d, g, o, q, s
Horizontal joins (formed from the top of the letter)	used to join: o, r, v, w	to these letters: b, e, f, h, i , j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	and to these tricky letters (where the letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement): a, c, d, g, o, q, s
Descender joins (formed from the loop of a descender)	used to join: f, g, j, y	to these letters: b, e, f, h, i , j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	and to these tricky letters (where the letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement): a, c, d, g, o, q, s

- Denotes a letter that is joined using a more complex bottom diagonal join.

National Curriculum - Year 2

Handwriting

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 unjoined
- ▶ 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

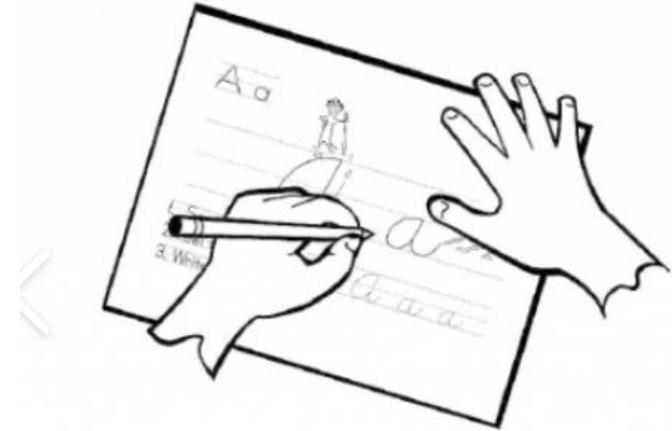
Left handed writers

- ▶ May find it easier to slant their paper to avoid smudging
- ▶ Can hold their writing implement slightly higher – about 2cm from the tip – so that what they are writing is less shielded from view
- ▶ Are given space to avoid crashing elbows with right handed writers
- ▶ May form some letters, such as capital letters, differently.



All writers should think about their posture and the position of the paper.

Left hand



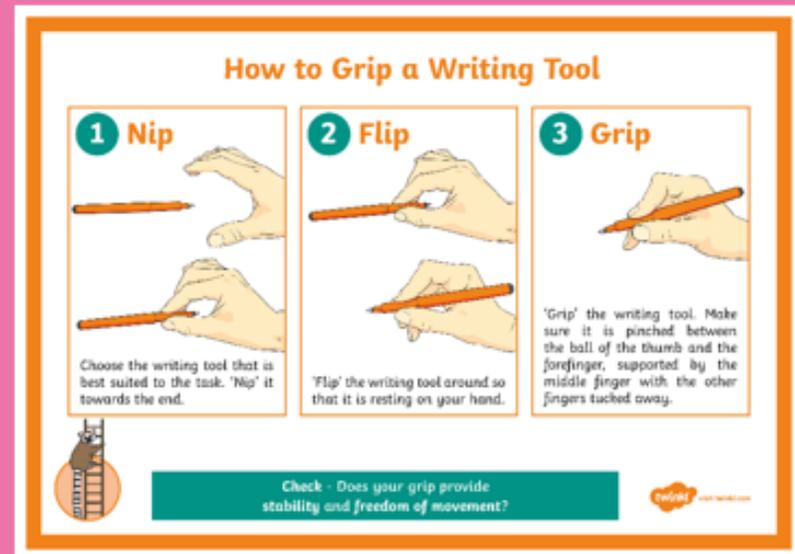
Left corners of paper are up.
Bottom right corner points toward your body.

Pencil Grip

How important is pen/pencil grip?

Children should not be made to hold a pen or pencil in a way that feels uncomfortable to them. Many children hold their pen or pencil in unconventional ways. However, so do many competent writers and there is no evidence to date to link poor pen or pencil grasp with poor handwriting (National Handwriting Association). However, the dynamic tripod grasp is recommended once the child is old enough to hold a writing implement. This grip minimises the risk of strain and offers the greatest control. This suggested grip is revisited within every lesson presentation and could also be reinforced through displaying the **'How to Grip a Writing Tool'** poster within your classroom.

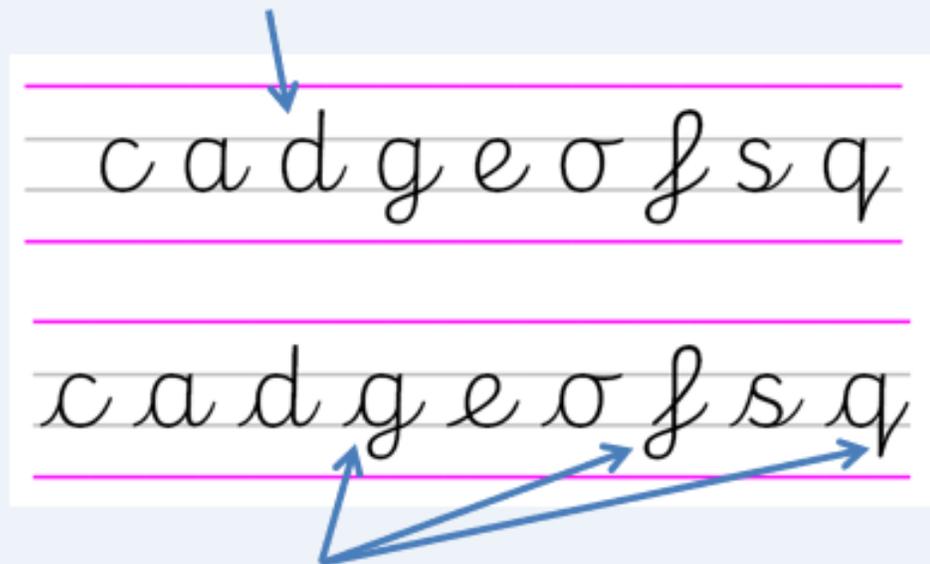
Pupils are encouraged to think about how to 'nip, flip and grip' their chosen writing implement.



Terminology

All children are taught to use the correct terminology in all handwriting lessons.

Ascenders – go above the high middle line to the top
They are: b, d, f, h, k, l, t



Descenders – go below the lowest middle line to the bottom
They are: f, g, j, p, q, y

Summary

- ▶ The purpose of good handwriting is that handwriting should not become a distraction to the writer or to the reader.
- ▶ In order to write effectively children need to build strength and dexterity in their shoulders, elbows, wrists and core. Large-scale physical play is important for achieving this.
- ▶ To get ready to write, children also need manual dexterity through their hand and wrist muscles. A wide range of fine motor activities are helpful for achieving this control. Encourage your child to be independent using cutlery, doing up their zip and tying their shoelaces.
- ▶ Most children will find a tripod grip effective. Think 'nip', 'flip', 'grip'.
- ▶ Avoid printing in block capitals.
- ▶ Support your child with using the same letter formation as they have been taught at school.
- ▶ Remember – all children learn at different rates. Be positive and celebrate success.

Spelling

- ▶ As for handwriting, the purpose of good spelling is clear and effective communication
- ▶ We want all our children to be confident and to feel successful
- ▶ Lacking confidence with spelling can be a distraction for the writer
- ▶ Incorrect spelling can be confusing for the reader
- ▶ Spellchecks don't always get it right!

How do we teach spelling?

Phonics

- ▶ In Nursery, the children are exposed to 'oral segmenting'
- ▶ In the Spring Term before starting school, the children start to be introduced to their first GPCs
- ▶ In Reception, the children revise the GPCs taught in Nursery and start to learn digraphs including sh, th, ch and the long vowel sounds
- ▶ In Years 1 and 2, the children learn alternative graphemes and gain confidence applying their phonics in multisyllabic words

- ▶ For more information, Mrs Paget and Mrs Baker are running a workshop exploring phonics in more depth.

Spelling rules

Towards the end of Y1 and in Y2 we also start to teach spelling rules

For example-

Double the consonant after a short vowel sound –
off, well, miss, buzz

We learn about prefixes and suffixes

jumped not jumpt
foxes not foxiz

How to learn spellings

Advice from the British Dyslexia Association

- ▶ Help your child to understand words are made up of syllables and each syllable has a vowel sound. Say a word and ask how many syllables there are. Help your child to spell each syllable at a time
- ▶ Write words in different coloured pens to make a rainbow or in shaving foam, flour or sand over and over again to help your child remember them
- ▶ Look with your child at the bits in the words which they find difficult - use colours to highlight just the tricky bit
- ▶ Look for the prefixes and suffixes in words, e.g. -tion, -ness and learn these chunks. Explore with your child how many words have the same chunks at the beginning or the end of words
- ▶ Use flashcards or play matching games to let your child see the words lots of times - the more times they see the word, the better they will be able to read and spell it

How to learn spellings

Advice from the British Dyslexia Association

- ▶ Use cut out or magnetic letters to build words together, then mix up the letters and rebuild the word together
- ▶ Use mnemonics - silly sentences where the first letter of each word makes up the word to be spelled
- ▶ Find smaller words in the bigger word, for example 'there is a hen in when'
- ▶ Go over the rules of spelling together, e.g. a 'q' is always followed by a 'u'. Ask your child's teacher for the rules they teach in class.

What to do if your child finds spelling tricky

- ▶ Chat to your child's class teacher
- ▶ Make it fun – play games
- ▶ Practise little and often
- ▶ Read, read, read!
- ▶ Build up memory and concentration through games like Kim's game, I went to the shops and bought, pairs etc
- ▶ Stay positive and focus on successes.