

## **Sprowston Infant School Handwriting Guidelines**

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. It is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity.

Handwriting should be neat, legible and fast. Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. composition, spelling and grammar.

Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling.

***It should be modelled by the teacher then supervised.*** Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly. It is better to have a few letters formed correctly rather than a line of incorrectly formed letters where the child is practising incorrect formation. Children can practise letter formation on mini-whiteboards but this does not give children the 'feedback' for the correct pressure when using a pencil and paper therefore, paper, handwriting sheets and handwriting books should also be used.

Handwriting is taught with a sequential and progressive approach. It should be taught alongside phonic and spelling knowledge at all stages. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are expected to model the handwriting style.

At Sprowston Infant School our aim is:

- To use an efficient pencil grip
- To teach correct letter formation and letter joins.
- To teach children to write to the best of their ability
- To assist children in taking pride with the presentation of their work.
- To instil in children the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.

In the early stages of handwriting development, children are introduced to activities to establish gross and fine motor skills through continuous provision. Patterning, drawing and colouring helps establish the feeling of continuous flow and teaches the hands the most frequently used movements. Multi- sensory experiences ensure that the techniques are not only fun to learn, but that the skill is learnt effectively by pupils with a variety of learning styles.

### **Suggestions**

- Finger gym activities, using one-handed tools such as tweezers and scissors
- Create patterns using a variety of tools e.g. felt tips, paint, chalk, glitter pens.
- Use playground chalks or water from squeeze bottles to create patterns on the ground.
- Finger painting, painting over pre-drawn spirals and wavy lines.
- Tracing patterns and letters with fingers over a light box.
- Use a variety of surfaces e.g. white boards, black boards, different coloured paper on a horizontal or vertical surface,
- Stimulate touch by using different materials such as textured boards made of velvet, carpet, sandpaper.
- Use trays containing sand, salt, shaving foam to practise patterns and letter formation
- Trace in the air or on other children's backs.
- Verbalise the movements with the children to encourage auditory and kinaesthetic links in memory.
- Encourage the children to produce big patterns. Large movements relax the hand and arm muscles and release a tense, tight grip. With practise movements can reduce in size.
- Develop physical strength and co-ordination by teaching finger rhymes and games.
- Use play-dough activities involving pulling, shaping and squeezing
- Strengthen pencil grip by tearing paper to create collages
- Develop confident pencil control through fun activities such as dot to dot, tracing, driving through mazes, drawing and colouring.
- Dough disco
- Squiggle while you Wiggle
- Roll 'n' Write (plastic letters with ball bearings)
- Brain gym exercises to cross the midline to warm up.
- Hairy letters on iPad

In addition there are many activities and opportunities, particularly outside, to develop gross motor control as well as PE lessons in Year 1 and 2.

### **Teaching Progression and Skill Development Year R**

*The Early Learning Goals for writing come from both literacy and physical development. They are:*

- *Writing - children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.*

- *Moving and handling - children show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.*

Children will be taught how to form letters correctly during phonics. Teachers will model how to form letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the correct place. Ditties to help children remember formation can be learnt.

Following this, children should have opportunities to practise the letters that have been taught. These can be large and small.

This can be done by having a writing table where children can form large rainbow letters with felt tips on A5/A4 large letters with a dot for the starting point and an arrow for direction. A3 paper can be used on an easel. Sand trays can be used. (Lots of ideas on <https://theimaginationtree.com/category/sensory-writing-tray/>) The IWB can also be used for large letter formation but this does not work as well as writing on paper.

Letter formation whiteboards are used for children to practise for letters and numbers.

Handwriting sheets with letters being taught should also be available where children can trace and copy.

Lined paper to be used for scribing stories so that adults can model how letters sit on a line. This will also help with sizing of letters and to understand how to represent writing on a page (left to right, top to bottom). If children are writing letters incorrectly they should be helped to correct these at the time of writing.

A variety of paper, lined and unlined should be available during continuous provision.

## **Year 1**

*The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching handwriting:*

*Year 1 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.*

## **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

*Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.*

*Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.;*

Teachers will practice letter formation during phonics lessons. Teaching Assistants should support children with correct letter formation.

Teachers should check that children are using an efficient pencil grip and should give reminders where necessary and help children with pencil grip aids or triangular pencils where appropriate

Teachers should revise lower case formation using letter families. Number formation can also be included.

Curly caterpillar letters: c a d g q e s f o and 0 6 8 9

Ladder letters: l i t j y u and 1

Bouncy Back letters, r b n h m k p

Zigzag letters, v w x z and 4 7

2 3 5

(Letter family formation sheets on the server

– staff only – handwriting 2018)



Children will be taught to sit letters on a line, introduce the terms ‘*ascenders*’ as tall letters, ‘*descenders*’ as letters with tails under the line, and *flicks*. When writing sentences capitals should be written in red to help children use capitals correctly.

Handwriting can be an activity during guided reading but it should be supervised by the Teacher or TA so that children practice correct formation.

Teachers should introduce digraphs with joins during phonics (modelled on flash cards/powerpoint slides) and make links with spelling

Use the handwriting books from October for **most** children. Some children needing more support should use handwriting sheets. (See also section about Write from the Start)

Writing opportunities should be integrated in continuous provision. There should be a writing table and this should include handwriting practice resources. Examples should be the starting point for each letter with a dot and arrow.

Use jolly phonics digraph cards backed with letter formation.

During scribed stories and when teaching writing with groups teachers/TAs should check letter formation and ask children to practise letters that are incorrect. Children should be reminded of these letters before completing their next piece of writing so that it is proactive rather than reactive. In addition, when children have completed independent writing adults should check letter formation.

## Year 2

*The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching 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*

### ***Notes and guidance (non-statutory)***

*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.*

Handwriting should be taught for 10 minutes 3 x week. Handwriting books should be used to teach children to form letters of the correct size relative to each other, and capitals. Children should be self/peer assessing, looking for consistency.

In addition, handwriting should be practised during phonics/spelling as this will help with handwriting and with the ‘muscle memory’ of spellings.

Teachers should revise lower case and upper case formation. Teachers/TAs will teach children to sit letters on a line, use the terms ‘*ascenders*’, ‘*descenders*’ and *flicks*.

If monitoring shows that children have difficulty with using capitals and full stops correctly they can use a red pen. Adults should check letter formation during and after writing and this should form part of marking and feedback.

Certificates for good improvement with handwriting can be awarded for good progress.

### **The Four Joins**

1. to letters without ascenders e.g. in, am,
2. to letters with ascenders e.g. ab, ch, il
3. horizontal joins e.g. o a, wo, og, wi
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. wh, ob, al

### **Left Handed children**

Left handed children can find writing more tiring. It takes more effort as children have to push their pencil rather than pull. **(for more information there is a document on the server.)** They can reverse letters at times. Left handed children should not sit on the right of a right-handed child. They should be encouraged to turn their paper slightly to the right.

### **SEN**

Children develop at different paces but some children will need writing interventions. There may be indications of dyslexia or dyspraxia. If children have difficulties with letter formation/fine motor control/gross motor control teaching should be differentiated to meet their needs. They may need a different type of pencil, a pencil grip, a writing slope, sandpaper if they press too hard, different coloured paper. They may need to stand up for

writing. It might be appropriate to use **Write from the Start** and some children will benefit from **Sensi-Circuit**. Any children having difficulties should be brought up in Pupil progress meetings and their progress should be tracked. Children should have time to practice at other times during the day eg. As a morning starter. Some children may also benefit from an intervention group if necessary but quality teaching should avoid this.

### Websites

Suitable websites are:

[www.teachhandwriting.co.uk](http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk)

<http://www.ictgames.com/writingRepeater/>

Espresso handwriting

### Expectations

- It is essential for teachers to set a good example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when providing written feedback, marking books. When text is displayed around the classroom if they are handwritten they also act as good models.
- Children are expected to present their work with care to the best of their ability. Children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by high quality presentation.
- All pupils should have opportunities to watch adults writing and have opportunities to write for themselves.
- To develop good handwriting in all curricular areas.
- When using the computer **Sassoon Font** is available and **HFW cursive**.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the role of the English Lead and Head Teacher to monitor the teaching and learning of handwriting throughout the school and school year. This can be done through regular work sampling, analysis of assessment pieces and lesson observations. Feedback from this monitoring is used to inform staff of necessary developments in order to raise standards.

Amanda Humphrey  
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### Efficient grips



Dynamic Tripod

Quadrupod/Static Tripod

Adapted Tripod

The most efficient grip is the dynamic tripod grip. The pencil is held between the thumb and index finger, with the pencil resting on the middle finger. The hand is open and relaxed to enable the thumb and forefinger to move.

Another functional, but less efficient, grip is the quadrupod/static tripod grip where the tip of the middle finger is on top for stability.

Adapted tripod grip is an efficient grip for those with weak hand muscles. The pencil is placed in the space between middle and index fingers, supported by the thumb, index and middle fingers.

### **Inefficient grips**

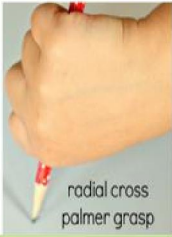



Thumb wrap, thumb tuck and inter-digital brace below







### **Progression in Pencil Grip**



## EARLY GRASP

| Radial Cross Palmer  | Palmer Supinate   |
|--|---|
| <p>0-2 years</p> <p>Pencil positioned across palm held with a fisted hand</p>  <p>radial cross palmer grasp</p> | <p>1-2 years</p> <p>Pencil held like a dagger.</p>   |
| Digital Pronate Grasp  | Four Finger Grasp   |
| <p>2-3 years</p> <p>All fingers hold the pencil and the palm faces down towards the page.</p>                   | <p>3-4 years</p> <p>Four fingers are held on the pencil beginning to form the arc between the thumb and index finger (web space).</p>  |

## INEFFICIENT GRASP

| Inter-Digital Brace  | Thumb Tuck Grasp  |
|--|---|
| <p>The pencil is held between the fingers of the hand.</p>   | <p>The thumb is tucked under the first three fingers or wrapped around them.</p>    |
| Key or Lateral Pinch Grasp   | Hyperextended Index Finger  |
| <p>This grasp has the thumb positioned across the index finger closing the web space between the fingers</p>  | <p>Tripod grasp where the index finger is extended too far at the DIP (distal interphalangeal joint) due to excessive pressure.</p>  |

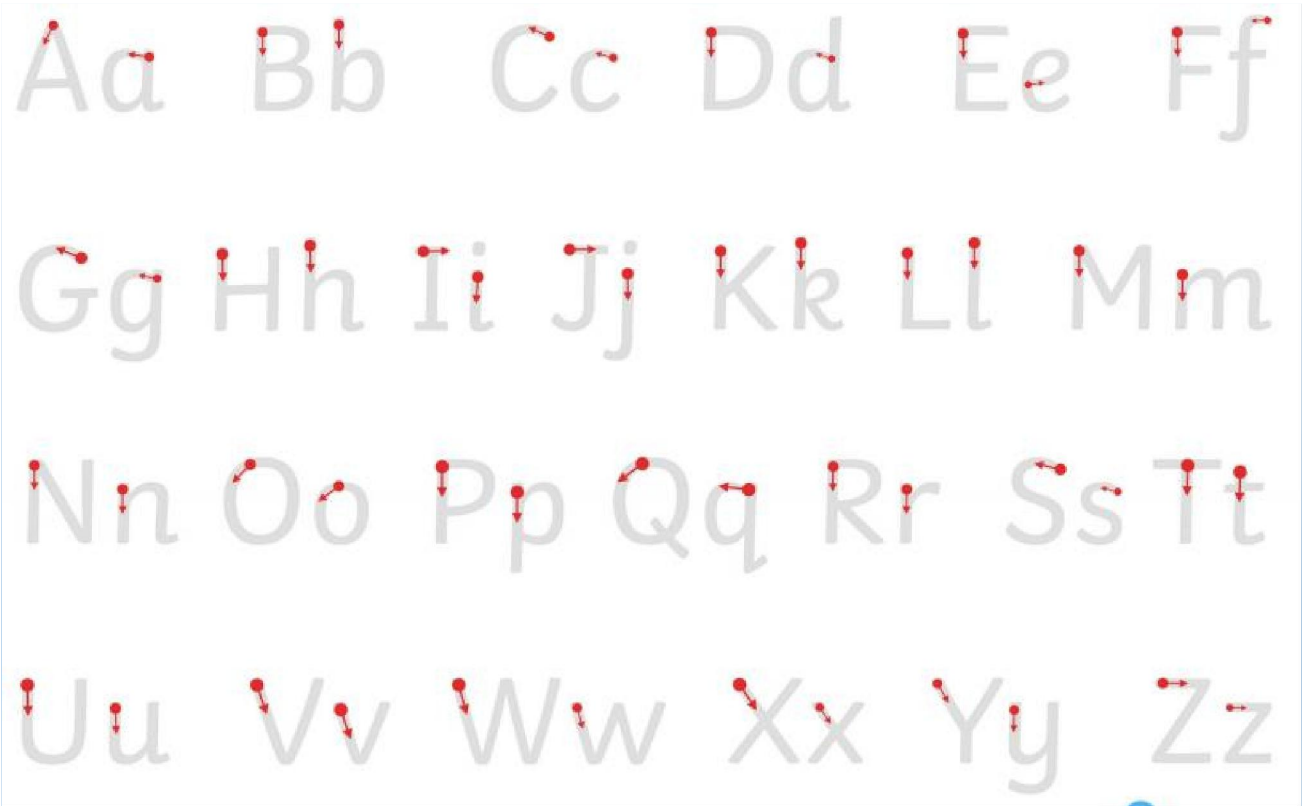


## Letter Formation

The letter formation that we use is the same as in Nelson Handwriting.

The following formation should be adhered to:

(Left handed children are likely to draw the horizontal lines right to left.)



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz