



## **Slyne-with-Hest St Luke's C of E Primary School.**

*'Listen, Learn, Love and Laugh as Part of God's Family'*

# **Handwriting Progression**

## **Reception**

- Regular and frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their mark making skills and begin to produce clear and legible letters.
- Physical skills – fine motor development.
- Explicit teaching on how to hold a pencil effectively (use of tripod grip in almost all cases)
- Explicit teaching of correct seating position.
- Daily instruction in, and opportunity to practise, letter formation as part of phonics teaching (Red Rose Phonics). This is then reinforced by playful letter forming activities using a wide variety of media and tools, such as in sand, in the air, chalk on the ground, paint brushes as well as with pencils. In line with DfE guidance (2021) and Ofsted guidance (2022), children are not taught to start every letter on the line with a 'lead in stroke' and resources must avoid this formation being modelled to children.
- Ensure that teachers are consistently modelling correct letter formation and misconceptions are highlighted and children correct letter formation. (NHA webpage: Development of Handwriting in the EYFS, concludes with the statement: 'Handwriting is predominantly a motor skill, so reversing the damage is difficult).
- Introduce handwriting families.
- Pupils should write with a sharp pencil.

## **Year 1**

- 10 minute daily lessons on handwriting focusing on progressing through the letter families. Ensure correct formation is modelled, practised and assessed. Address misconceptions immediately so that bad habits don't form.
- Teach children how to sit correctly at the table when writing and ensure this is reinforced in all lessons.
- Teach correct paper placement (consider left handers and right handers)
- Explicit teaching on how to hold a pencil effectively (use of tripod grip in almost all cases)
- Form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. b,d,h,k,l must reach the top of the line. t should be taller than the other letters but not reach the top of the line. All other letters should be consistently sized within the word/sentence, with descenders as needed.
- Form capital letters correctly and ensure they reach the top of the line.
- Form the digits 0-9 correctly and ensure they reach the top of the line.
- Understand which letters belong to which 'letter families' and practise these.
- Pupils should write with a sharp pencil.



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### Year 2

- 10-minute daily lessons on handwriting focusing on progressing through the letter families. Ensure correct formation is modelled, practised and assessed. Address misconceptions immediately so that bad habits don't form.
- Ensure children are sitting correctly, have their paper in the correct place and are holding their pencil effectively.
- Lead ins are not necessary at the start of words, but you must show how letters lead -out into the next letter.
- Ensure lower-case letters are the correct size relative to one another.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and lower-case letters.
- **Ensure that children are only taught to join their handwriting when they are secure in forming letters correctly.**
- If secure in printing letters pupils are taught to start to use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Pupils should write with a sharp pencil.

### Year 3/4

- At least three handwriting lessons per week using handwriting paper with extra lines to encourage regular sizing of letters.
- Ensure that children are forming their letters correctly. If not, go back to Year 1/Year 2 progression.
- When letter formation is correct, children will be increasingly encouraged to join their handwriting in order to help them write more fluently.
- If secure in printing letters pupils are taught to start to use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Ensure children are forming letters correctly and joining correctly in English and across the curriculum.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.
- Pupils should write with a sharp pencil or pen.

### Year 5/6

- Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.
- Pupils should choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and decide whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task.



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**Handwriting Script:**

**Lower case letters**

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

**Capitals**

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**Cursive Script**

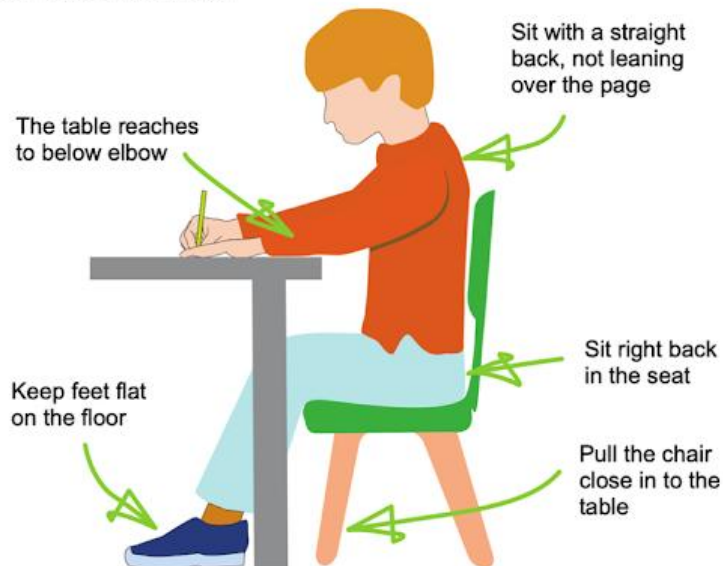
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

**Numbers**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**Sitting Position:**

**SITTING POSITION**

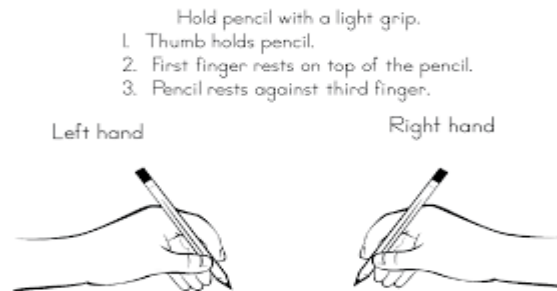




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**Pencil grip:** A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil



### **Paper placement:**

For 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.
- Use the left hand to steady the paper



For left handers:

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip but some children may need to grip a little further away from the tip so that the writing is not obscured by the thumb knuckle.
- The hand should be kept below the writing line although some pupils will find a 'hook' more comfortable.
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30° and pushed about 5cm away from the body to prevent 'hooking' of the hand which is caused by the left elbow 'locking' into the side of the body.
- Use the right hand to steady the paper.





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Things to consider when teaching left handed children to write:

- As a left hander has to push the pencil across the paper, more force can be achieved if the child sits on a slightly higher chair or has a supportive cushion to give extra height.
- Left handers should ideally have light coming over their left shoulders
- Left handed children can be taught to cross t's and possibly f's from right to left (pulling instead of pushing)
- NB It is very important that a right-handed child is NOT seated on the left-hand side of a left-handed child as their elbows will collide!
- A left-handed child should ideally sit at the left-hand end of a table.



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### Letter Formation Families



**Ladder letters (First family):** Start at the top - This is the **easiest group** for children to learn as it is the least complex. It includes the simple pre-writing shapes like vertical and horizontal lines.

**One armed robot letters (Second family):** Start at the top – no lifting. The important rule here is **not to lift the pencil**. These letters should be made in one movement. If children can be taught to start at the top and then create these letters in on continuous motion, this **improves fluency**.

**Curly caterpillar letters (Third family):** Starts like curly c - Most children learn 'curly c' quickly as it's half a circle. They can make this movement from three years of age. Some children need prompting to start on the right-hand side, rather in the centre. If children start in the centre, which is common for children who find it hard to cross their middle, they either don't join the top of the harder letters, or, they go across at the top and then back to make the side. This either leaves a gap at the top or adds an extra stroke, which decreases fluency.

**Zig zag letters (Fourth family):** Falling over (i.e. they are not straight) - These letters all contain oblique lines (/). These are the hardest pre-writing shapes to learn. Especially crossing them to make an 'x' and making the corner required for 'k'.



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### **Teaching Pupil to Join**

Pupils should be taught two basic joins: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

The diagonal join connects:

- letters from the line to small letters
- letters from the line to tall letters
- letters from the line to a, d, g, c, o, q (These letters need an extra stroke backwards across the top of a, d, g, c, o.)

The horizontal join connects:

- v, w, f, r to small letters
- v, w, f, r to tall letters
- v, w, f, r to a, d, g, c, o, q

**Break letters (letters that aren't joined from):** b g j p q x y z s

### **Possible teaching sequence:**

- 10-minute sessions.
- Model a letter or join 3 to 4 times – children do this the same amount of times and circle their best one.
- Using that letter/join model writing a word 3 or 4 times – children then write 3 or 4 times and circle their best one.
- Repeat with other words as needed.
- Using that word/those words, write a full sentence twice. Children write the sentence twice with teacher dictation to support and choose their best one.
- Throughout the session move around the classroom and give feedback.

### **Key to remember:**

- Handwriting must be valued and given a high status within the classroom.
- All handwriting lessons must include explicit modelling.
- Share great examples of handwriting to model high expectations.
- Remember that bad habits can form quickly as these are incredibly difficult to undo as the children move through school.
- Make sure you are highlighting to children when they have formed a letter incorrectly.
- Don't teach handwriting as a morning activity – children will not have the right modelling or right kind of feedback.
- Make sure that anything we are writing on the whiteboard reflects our high expectations for handwriting.