



Richard Taylor C of E Primary School

# Guide to Handwriting



## Introduction

Our handwriting scheme has been developed to ensure that all children leave our school being able to present their work with a consistent, legible and fluent handwriting style which will enable them to present their work to a standard which they are proud of across all curriculum subjects.

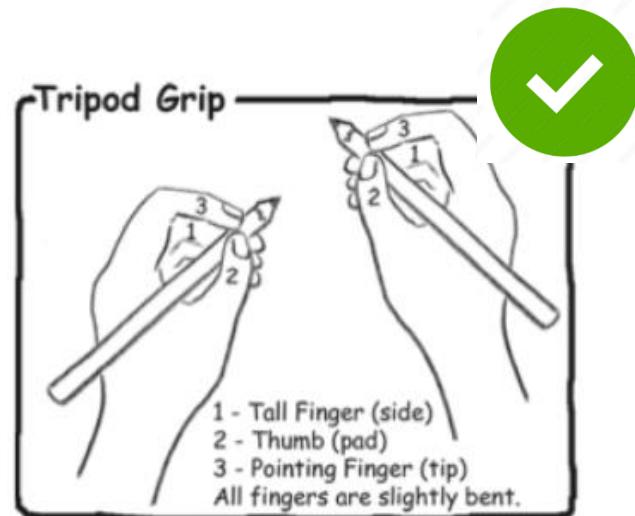
We have a consistent 'ready to write' approach throughout our school.

### **Seating Position**

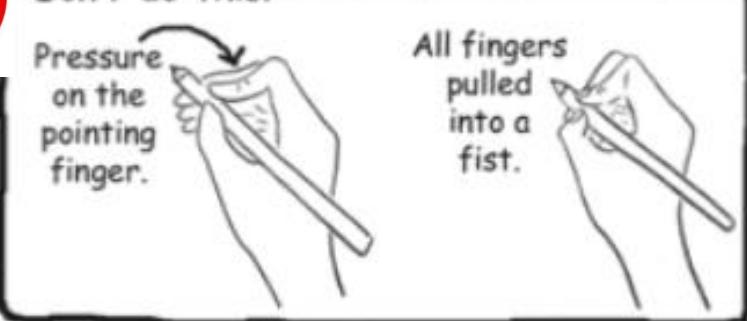
- Feet flat to the floor
- Bottom at the back of the chair
- Torso a fist distance from the table
- Shoulders down and relaxed
- Back leaning slightly forward
- One hand holding the page
- One hand holding pencil in tripod (snappy crocodile) grip.

### **Pencil Grip**

- **Nip** the end of the pencil (snappy crocodile)
- **Flip** into the curve of the thumb and forefinger
- **Grip** the pencil by supporting with the tall finger

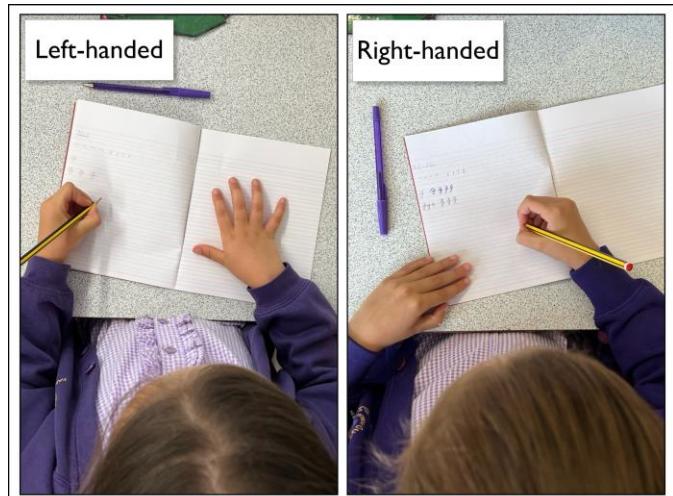


### **-Don't do this!**



## Organising the environment

Encourage children to have their book at the appropriate angle and that left-handed children sit with their writing hand towards open space to avoid being knocked by the adjacent pupil.



## Paper and books

EYFS children will use single wide lines to enable them to correctly write on a line. As they progress through into Year 1 upwards, more specific attention will be given to letter proportion using YPO guided handwriting lined books for practice.

## References

The lesson sequencing and progression is inspired by Martin Harvey & Debbie Watson's *Achieving Excellence in Handwriting*. The handwriting style is inspired by the *Sheffield Structured Handwriting Scheme*, which uses a fully cursive script starting and finishing on the line.

Some content has also been inspired by the *Rocket Phonics* scheme

Pencil grip graphic is taken from Marie Hablitzel and Kim Stitzer, the creators of *Draw Your World*

**Children are ready to start forming letters when they can draw the following shapes**



**Consistency in language is key to ensuring seamless progression.**

## Describing Letters

To ensure consistency and enable seamless progression, use the following language when describing letters. Letters are grouped by common characteristics.

Language: Describing Letters (EYFS)			
<b>Small</b>	Letters sit between the blue lines		a c e i m n o r s u v w x z
<b>Tall</b>	Letters reach up towards the top red line		d k l b h t
<b>Long</b>	Letters reach down towards the bottom red line		p g j q y f

Language: Describing Letters (KS1 & KS2)		
<b>Small</b>	Letters sit between the blue lines	a c e i m n o r s u v w x z
<b>Ascender</b>	Letters reach up towards the top red line	d k l b h t
<b>Descender</b>	Letters reach down towards the bottom red line	p g j q y

Language: Letter Families		
<b>Long Ladder</b>	Whoosh, up to the top, then down in a straight line	i l t j
<b>Curly Caterpillar</b>	Whoosh, then curve	c o a d g q s e f u y
<b>Robot Arm</b>	Whoosh, down to the line, then bridge over	n h m r b p k
<b>Zig-Zag</b>	Whoosh, up halfway, zig-zag down	v w z x

\***EYFS** should follow the Rocket Phonics mnemonics for individual letters

**YPO handwriting books:**

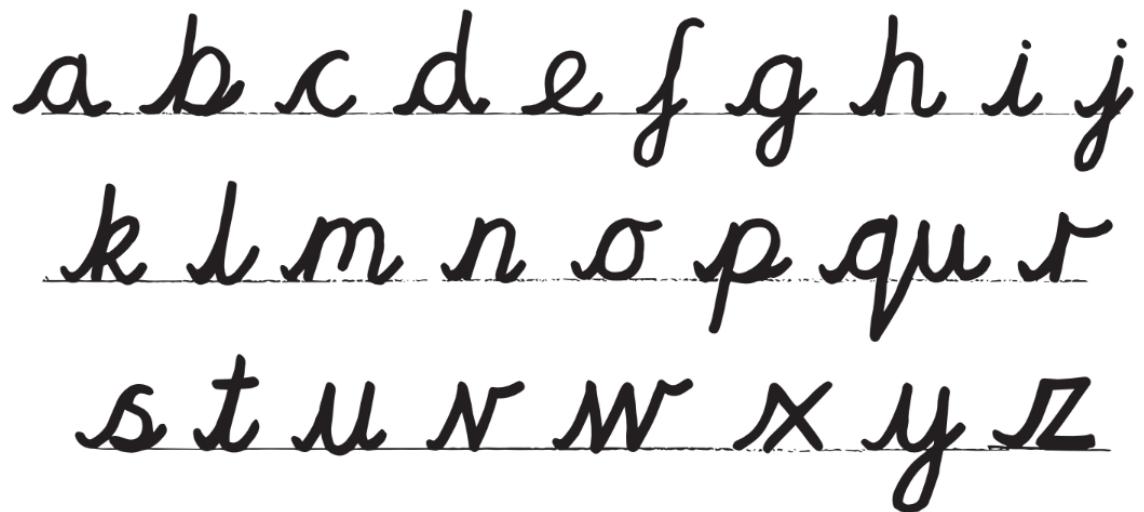
Top red line 

Top blue line 

Bottom blue line 

Bottom red line 

The Sheffield Structured Handwriting approach is adopted by RTS



The image shows the lowercase and uppercase letters of the English alphabet written in a cursive style on three-line handwriting paper. The letters are arranged in three rows: the first row contains 'a b c d e f g h i j', the second row contains 'k l m n o p q u r', and the third row contains 's t u N M X Y Z'. Each letter is formed with a single continuous stroke, starting on the top line and ending on the bottom line. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

**Key principles:**

- Lowercase letters always start on the line with an entry stroke (whoosh). Children in EYFS and Year 1 use a pre-cursive style (ie the same basic letter formation but without the 'whoosh' lead-in join).
- Ascending and descending letters stop just before the red line (to allow legibility between lines)
- Lower case letters finish with an exit stroke to signal the next join
- All lowercase letters are joined from Year 2 onwards.
- Capital letters do not join to lowercase letters
- There is no join through an apostrophe (e.g. don't)



## Long Ladder Letters

### Letter Formation: The Long Ladder Letters

These letters are based on a single vertical line. When modelling, we use *Whoosh, up to the top, then down in a straight line*. These letters stop just before the red lines to allow greater legibility.

i l t j

i i i l l

t l l t j j j



## Curly Caterpillar Letters

### Letter Formation: The Curly Caterpillar Letters

These letters begin with a curved shape, almost like a coat hanger or the letter 'c'. When modelling, we use the *Whoosh, curve up, then back round*. Any letters which ascend or descend stop just before the red lines to allow greater legibility. Please note that 'f' is a misfit letter in that it both ascends and descends.

c o a d g q s e f u y

c s x x o s s x o o

a s x o a d s x o d

g s x o g g q s x o q

s s x s s e s e

u i n u y i n y

f s f f



## Robot Arm Letters

### Letter Formation: The Robot Arm Letters

These letters all have a vertical stroke, followed by an arching movement to the right. When modelling, *Whoosh, down to the line, then bridge over*. Any letters which ascend or descend stop just before the red lines to allow greater legibility.

n h m r b p k

n a r n

h a t h

m a r n m

r a r r

b l h b

p i r p

k l t b k



## Zig Zag Letters

### Letter Formation: The Zig-Zag Letters

These letters all have a vertical stroke, followed by an arching movement to the right. When modelling, we use *Whoosh, up halfway, zig-zag down*. Any letters which ascend or descend stop just before the red lines to allow greater legibility.

**V W Z X**

N N N N

W W W W

Z Z Z Z

X X X X

### Letter Formation: Capital Letters

These letters all stop just before the top red line.

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

## **Lesson Guidance: EYFS**

### **Autumn 1 & 2**

**Monday-Thursday** - Teach a new letter each day

**Friday** - recap any letters pupils struggled with

- Follow Rocket Phonics letter sequence
- Children in EYFS will work with an adult in small groups following an input.
- Use the wider-lined handwriting books
- Perfect pencil = Nip, flip, grip - snappy crocodiles (pencils must be sharp)
- Warm up
- Air write using the mnemonic x 3. Teacher model x1 first. Children join in x2.
- Teacher models on the board twice using mnemonic
- Children have a go at x2
- In the air without the mnemonic saying just the sound x 3. Teacher model x1 first. Children join in x2.
- Teacher models on the board without mnemonic x 2
- Children have a go x2
- Reasonable adjustments for those who have poor motor control e.g. whiteboard and pen/ large paper and felt tip
- Teacher to go around the room supporting all children with pencil grip and formation (this could mean hand-over-hand or modelling in their book for children to copy)

### **Spring Onwards**

- Use the blue-and-red-lined handwriting books

## **Lesson Guidance: KS1**

**Monday-Thursday** - Teach two new letters each day (or new joins)

**Friday** - recap letters (or joins) for that week

- Warm up - straight lines, zig zags etc.
- Air write the letter
- Model the granular steps to forming the letter with TOL
- Then model the letter x1
- Children complete x1
- AfL check
- Model x3
- Children to complete x3
- AfL check

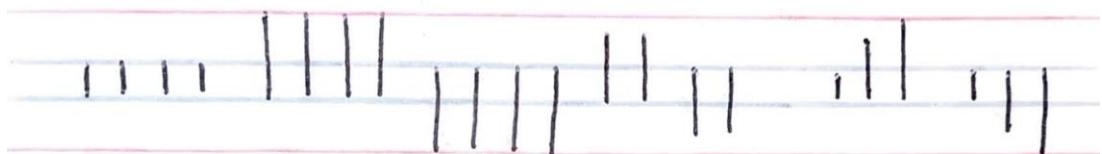
- Red pen to edit, re-teach if necessary, or move on to other letters within the lesson
- Children will begin to use cursive joins with lead in 'whoosh' from Year 2.
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**KS2 to use an abridged sequence (e.g. no air writing) weekly**

**Lesson Guidance: Warm Ups**

The warm-up exercises below are designed to encourage pupils to use the correct size for their letters but also practise the orientation of strokes. Please choose the appropriate warm up for the letters and joins you are teaching.

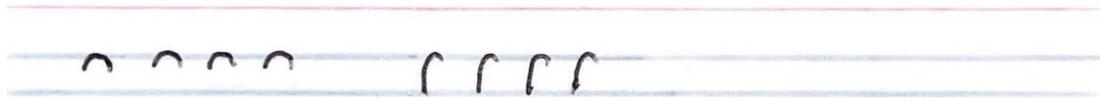
**Long Ladder**



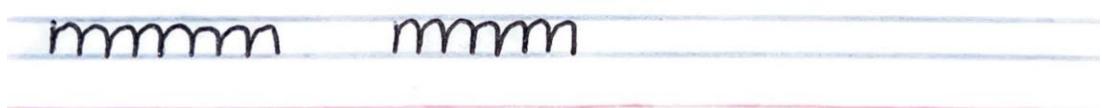
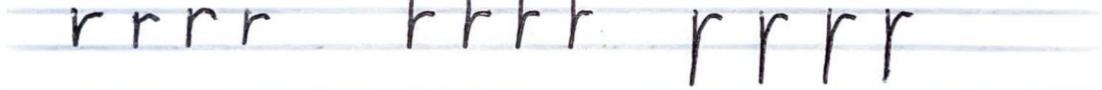
**Zig-Zag**



**Curly  
Caterpillar**



**Robot**



## Lesson Guidance: EYFS Sequence of Lessons

(Basic letter formation) Reference: Rocket Phonics

Individual Lowercase Letter Lessons												
1	s	6	n	11	c	16	r	21	l	26	w	
2	a	7	m	12	k	17	h	22	ll	27	x	
3	t	8	d	13	ck	18	b	23	ss	28	y	
4	i	9	g	14	e	19	f	24	j	29	z	
5	p	10	o	15	u	20	ff	25	v	30	zz	

31	qu	36	ee	41	or	46	air
32	ch	37	igh	42	ur	47	ure
33	sh	38	oa	43	ow	48	er
34	th	39	oo	44	oi		
35	ai	40	ar	45	ear		

## Lesson Guidance: KS1 Sequence of Lessons

(letter formation and proportion)

Individual Lowercase Letter Lessons			
1	i l	12	u y
2	i j	13	c e o
3	l t	14	ck (pre-cursive)
4	r n	15	a d
5	n h	16	g q

### Individual Lowercase Letter Lessons

6	n m	17	ng (pre-cursive)
7	b p	18	qu (pre-cursive)
8	b k	19	s
9	v w	20	f
10	wr (pre-cursive)	21	x
11	kn (pre-cursive)	22	z

### Individual Capital Letter Lessons

23	P B R D U	26	H K N
24	L E F M A	27	C G O Q S
25	T I J	28	X V W Y Z

### Letter Joining Lessons

29	al ab ia va	37	ki mi cl wl
30	ib ob lp mp	38	ky kn ok rk
31	ck cy nc oc	39	wm am ny en
32	de dr da nd	40	iq oq nq
33	em ke ej ej	41	us os
34	fo fa uf of	42	cu lt it up
35	ng dg qu	43	ev nv wo we
36	ht ha wh th	44	vy zi ze iz

## Lesson Guidance: KS2 Sequence of Lessons

Individual Lowercase & Capital Letter Lessons			
1	i l t j	8	x z
2	h n m	9	A B C D E
3	b p k r	10	F G H I J
4	c o a d	11	L M N O
5	g q qu e	12	P Q R S
6	v w u y	13	T U V W
7	s f	14	X Y Z

Letter Joining Lessons			
15	ac aw da oa ib ob	23	un wn or od vo ho
16	ck cy ec ve du dg	24	op rp qu nq oq rl
17	en ef me te fr fo	25	rs vr tr vs rk sn
18	if af ng og sh hu	26	lt ty ut ot ug uz
19	hi ch ib ip ki vi	27	du fu va ve ov iv
20	eg nk ky lk ok	28	wg we ow ew ex ix
21	ll wl cl al mb mp	29	ox xe vy cy oz ez
22	om im ms sm nt	30	ay ee ie oe ue

## Appendix I: KSI Letter Joins

de dr da nd	ig og ng
em ke ej oj	us os

al ab ia na	ki mi cl wl
ib ob ip mp	ky kn ok rk
ck cy nc oc	mm am ny en
de dr da nd	ig og ng

fo fa uf of	cu lt it up
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ng dg qu	er nr wo we
ht ha wh th	ny ri re iz

## Appendix 2: KS2 Letter Joins

en ef me te fr fo

if af ng og sh hu

hi ch ib ip ki ri

eg nk ky lk ok

ll wl cl al mb mp

om im ms sm nt

ac aw da oa ib ob

ck cy ec re du dg

du fu va ve or ir

ng we ow ew ex ix

ox xe ny cy oz ez

ay ee ie oe ue

un un or od no ho

op rp qu ng og rl

rs vr tr vs rk sn

ll ty ut ot ug wz

## Appendix 3: Our 5 Teaching Principles for Handwriting

- Clarity** – Teachers explain the focus of the lesson
- Recap and Recall** – Revisit letters, joins and families
- New Learning** is modelled in small steps
- Practice** – Children are given time to practise new learning
- Feedback** – Teachers use AfL to address misconceptions in the moment, giving appropriate post-lesson support.

