

# Ludham Primary School and Nursery



## Handwriting Policy

Updated November 2022

At Ludham Primary School and Nursery, our aim is to prepare children for life beyond primary school by ensuring they can write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. For an experienced writer, the hand movements required for writing are firmly established in movement memory. For this reason, we provide children with regular opportunities to practise handwriting movements correctly so these movements become automatic.

There is an expectation that handwriting, following the school's agreed letter formations, will be regularly modelled by all classroom staff. Alongside this, the majority of writing in the classroom (displays, presentations, worksheets) will feature the school's agreed font (See Appendix 1). To ensure consistency throughout the school, we use Nelson Handwriting resources to support the teaching of handwriting.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

In this stage, our focus is on movement and motor skill development. Opportunities for children to develop these skills through their play are planned every day in Nursery and Reception. For children who find these skills difficult, we use a pre-handwriting checklist (See Appendix 2) to identify which specific skills a child needs to develop in order to make progress. By the end of EYFS, the expectation is that 'every child uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.' In order to achieve this curriculum objective at Ludham we ensure that:

- ✓ Children have access to a range of mark making tools including chubby crayons, big chalk, paint brushes and thick triangular pencils.
- ✓ The environment provides a range of writing opportunities both indoors and outdoors, where children can practise and apply pre-writing skills.
- ✓ Children are taught the letters in their name when they are developmentally ready.
- ✓ In Reception, correct letter formation is taught alongside Read Write Inc phonics.
  - ✓ Children use thick triangular pencils to enable them to learn how to hold a pencil correctly.
  - ✓ Irregular letter forms starting in the correct place, with movement in the correct direction are encouraged over uniformly regular letters achieved through incorrect movements. This will support children develop their fluency as they progress through our school.
  - ✓ Close attention is paid to pencil grip, correct posture and the positioning of the paper to help children develop good handwriting habits for the future (See Appendix 3).

## Key Stage One (KS1)

The National Curriculum expectations for handwriting at KS1 are:

### Year 1

- Sit correctly at the 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 the digits 0 to 9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'family' (a group of letters that are formed in the same way).

### Year 2

- 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 are best left unjoined.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another.
- Use spacing between words that is appropriate for the size of the letters.

All children in Year 1 start their day by practising good writing posture at tables and writing in books. Letter formation is the focus, along with writing neatly on the line. In addition to this, each child has a discrete handwriting lesson each week, where they learn how to form all of the letters in our agreed school handwriting families (See Appendix 4). These handwriting families are displayed in each KS1 classroom. The teacher models the letter formation to the whole class and the children then have the opportunity to practise this new skill in a small group. Once a handwriting 'family' has been taught, any incorrect formation of letters within that family found in a child's work are identified, and the child is given the opportunity to correct these mistakes using a purple pen, in line with the school feedback and marking policy. Children will be taught to join when they begin to learn letter formation in Year 1.

When children begin Year 2, the expectation is that they can form all letters correctly. All Year 2 children have a discrete handwriting session each week, plus additional opportunities to practise their joining skills through independent writing and spelling activities. By the end of Year 2, all handwriting joins will have been taught and the expectation is that all children will be attempting to join their handwriting across the curriculum. This joined handwriting should increase the speed, rhythm and ease of their writing without reducing the legibility.

### **In KS1, children will:**

- ✓ Use thin pencils and be provided with a pencil grip if their grip is not yet developed (See Appendix 4)
- ✓ Use wide lined paper in exercise books in Year 1 and move onto narrow lines in Year 2
- ✓ Use their dominant hand to hold their writing tool and the other hand to steady the paper - leaning on the non-writing hand is discouraged
- ✓ Be encouraged to keep their writing hand below the line on their page so they can see what they are writing and maintain a comfortable pencil grip
- ✓ Have regular opportunities to watch classroom adults model correct letter formation
- ✓ Learn letter formation in a multi-sensory way. E.g. draw letters in the air, trace tactile letters, make letters with string on a felt board, use whiteboards and pegboards, trace letters on a partner's back

## Key Stage Two (KS2)

The National Curriculum expectations for handwriting at KS2 are:

### Year 3 and Year 4

- Continue to develop their joined-up handwriting
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting – for example, ensuring that downstrokes of letters are straight and parallel, not sloping.

### Year 5 and Year 6

- Write with increasing legibility, fluency and speed.
- Choose which shape of a letter to use, and decide whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Where needed, children in Key Stage 2 will have regular handwriting sessions in addition to regular, informal opportunities to develop their joined handwriting. As a school, we recognise the benefits of linking spelling and handwriting as both skills can be improved through muscle memory.

Where needed, children in KS2 will have a handwriting book to practise handwriting discretely but handwriting following the agreed style will be present in all books across the curriculum. We appreciate that 'best handwriting' is not always appropriate, for example, when children are drafting work or making notes, however, handwriting needs to be legible at all times. 'Best handwriting' can be saved for when there is a clear purpose for aesthetically pleasing work as this requires children to slow the pace of their writing, but children are always encouraged to maintain high standards of presentation.

Children write in pencil until the class teacher assesses that their writing has met the agreed Pen Licence criteria (see Appendix 5). Once the Pen Licence is gained, children will be expected to complete the majority of their work in pen, except for Mathematics and for creating diagrams and drawing. Classroom adults monitor Pen Licences and if children stop meeting the criteria, a strike is added to their licence with a target of how to get back on track. If children continue to produce high quality handwriting, they can gain a silver and then gold star on their licence.

### **In KS2, children will:**

- ✓ Use thin pencils until they have achieved their Pen Licence
  - ✓ Use exercise books with narrow lines and a margin
- ✓ Use their dominant hand to hold their writing tool and the other hand to steady the paper - leaning on the non-writing hand is discouraged
- ✓ Be encouraged to keep their writing hand below the line on their page so they can see what they are writing and maintain a comfortable pencil grip
- ✓ Have regular opportunities to watch classroom adults model correct letter formation and joins
- ✓ Be expected to correct any mistakes in letter formation and joins, in line with the school marking policy
- ✓ Be encouraged to develop their own variations on the school font as they reach upper KS2 to give their writing character, provided the writing is legible

## **Support for Left-Handed Children**

This begins in the early years with quality first teaching and lots of modelling from classroom adults. When supporting a left-handed child, adults model correct pencil grip and formation using their left hand. Many left-handed children develop a hooked pencil hold which can result in a tired grip and affect the quality of their writing. We recognise that it is very difficult to alter the way a child holds a pencil once this habit is learnt and confidence can easily be destroyed. To support children who have developed this habit, we encourage children to angle their paper 20 - 30 degrees to the left (the same as right-handed children) to relieve the pressure in their wrist. If a dynamic tripod grip has been established (See Appendix 4), left-handed children are encouraged to tilt their paper 20 - 30 degrees to the right and keep their hand below the writing line to enable the child to see what they are writing.

As left handers tend to cross f and t from right to left, it is easier for many left handers to leave the f unjoined.

### **In addition to the above, left-handed children are encouraged to:**

- ✓ Hold pens and pencils far enough away from the point so they can see what they are writing.
- ✓ Not over sharpen their pencil to enable it to run smoothly across the page as
  - ✓ they need to push the pencil, rather than pull like their right-handed peers
  - ✓ Use their right hand to steady the paper above the writing line.
- ✓ Sit on the left of their partners so their movements are not restricted.

### **Intervention**

In EYFS and KS1, additional gross or fine motor activities can be used to form intervention, as underdeveloped skills in these areas are likely to be the cause of handwriting difficulties (See Appendix 2). Children may also have additional handwriting sessions, or work in a smaller group or 1:1 with an adult to help transfer letter formation into muscle memory.

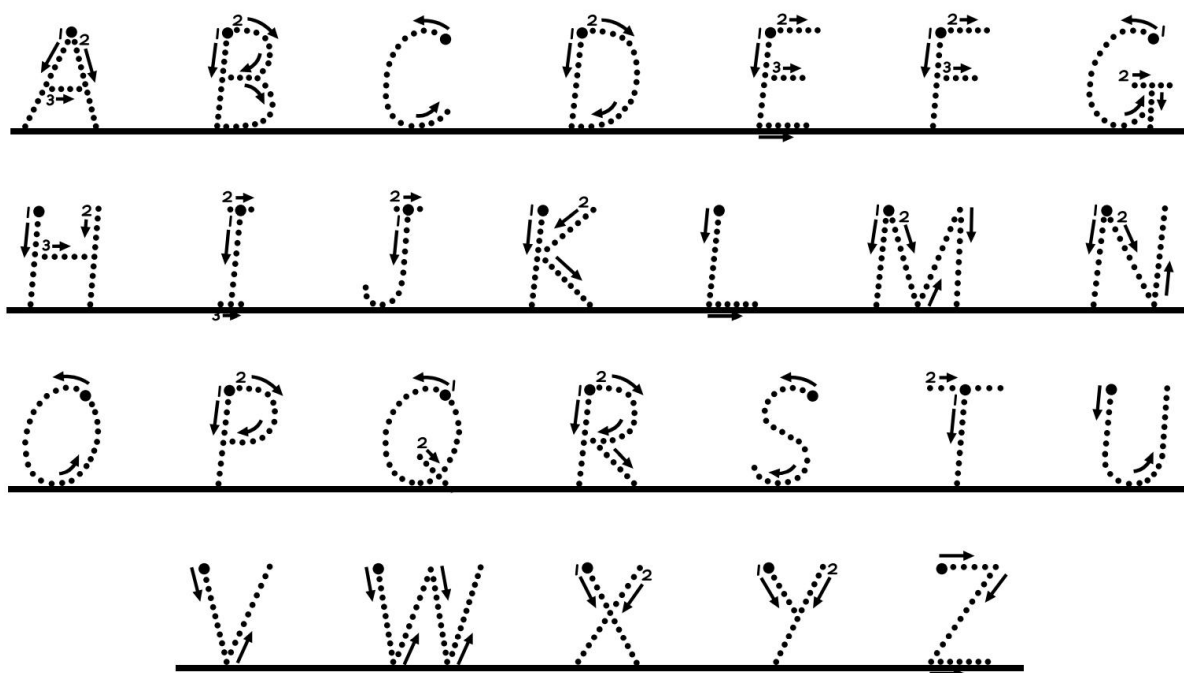
Where a pupil's handwriting is not at the expected standard for their age in KS2, it is expected that a 'Speed Up' intervention will be in place (See Appendix 6).

We have Nelson Handwriting resources available for each year group, which teachers can refer back to (See Appendix 7). These resources can be used in school or sent home with a child for additional practise.

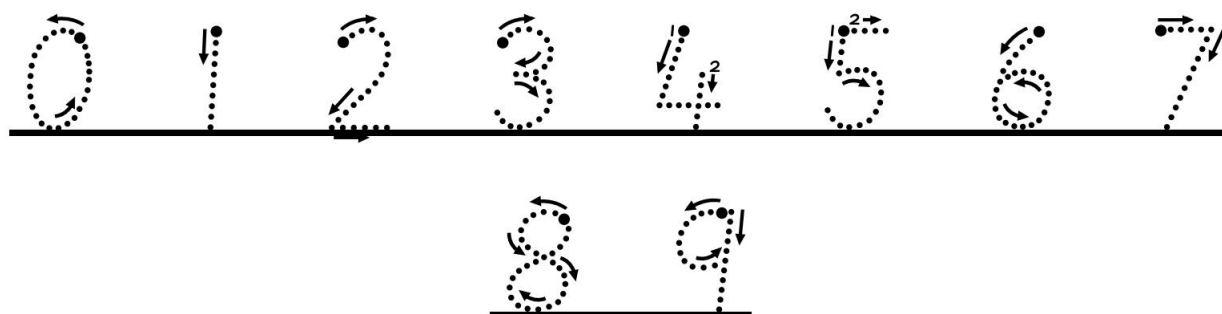
We also seek advice from [www.teachhandwriting.co.uk](http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk) and [www.nhahandwriting.org.uk](http://www.nhahandwriting.org.uk) when children are experiencing specific handwriting difficulties as they have up to date guidance based on best practice.

## Appendix 1: Font Used at Ludham Primary School and Nursery

### Capital Letters:



### Numerals:



**Lower Case Letters:**



**The Nelson Handwriting Joining Letter Set with Ludham Lead Ins**

**Letter Set 1: Twelve letters with exit flicks, plus s**

a c d e h i k l m n s t u

**Letter Set 2: Nineteen Letters which start at the baseline with lead-ins**

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s  
u v w x y

**Letter Set 3: Six Letters which start at the baseline**

b f h k l t

**Letter Set 4: Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height**

f o r v w

**Letter Set 5: Final eight letters with exit flicks**

b g j p q x y z



Ludham's Set of Joins informed by Nelson Handwriting

First Set of Joins: Diagonal join to letters with lead-ins

Examples:

in am ai ar un

Second Set of Joins: Diagonal join to letters with ascenders. Letter Set 1 to Set 3

Examples:

ab ch ul it

Third Set of Joins: Horizontal join to letters with lead-ins

Examples:

oa wo ou vi wi

Fourth Set of Joins: Horizontal join to letters with lead-ins and ascenders

Examples:

wh ob ol ot

The Joined Handwriting Style

The quick brown fox jumps over

the lazy dog.










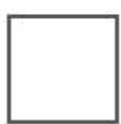
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## Appendix 2 - Pre-writing checklist



# PRE-WRITING SKILLS CHECKLIST








For Ages 1-6

Pre-Writing Line	Age Appropriate	Expectation	Age/Date Mastered
Scribbles 	1-2 Years Old	Random and spontaneous scribbles in vertical, horizontal, and circular motions.	
Vertical Line 	1-2 Years Old	Imitates a vertical line.	
Horizontal Line 	2.5 Years Old	Imitates a horizontal line.	
Circle Shape 	2.5 Years Old	Imitates a circle shape.	
Vertical Line 	3 Years Old	Copies a vertical line.	
Horizontal Line 	3 Years Old	Copies a horizontal line.	
Circle Shape 	3 Years Old	Copies a circle shape.	
Cross Shape 	3 - 3.5 Years Old	Imitates a cross shape.	
Cross Shape 	4 - 4.5 Years Old	Copies a cross shape.	
Square Shape 	4 - 4.5 Years Old	Imitates a square shape.	



# PRE-WRITING SKILLS CHECKLIST

For Ages 1-6

Pre-Writing Line	Age Appropriate	Expectation	Age/Date Mastered
Right/Left Diagonal Lines 	4.5 Years Old	Imitates right and left diagonal lines.	
Square Shape 	5 Years Old	Copies a square shape.	
Right/Left Diagonal Lines 	5 Years Old	Copies right and left diagonal lines.	
X Shape 	5 Years Old	Imitates X shape.	
Triangle Shape 	5 Years Old	Imitates triangle shape.	
Pencil Grasp	5 Years Old	Able to grasp a pencil in the writing position (tripod or quadrupod grasp).	
X Shape 	5.5 - 6 Years Old	Copies X shape.	
Triangle Shape 	5.5 - 6 Years Old	Copies triangle shape.	

Notes:

## Posture

### **Curl-ups (Core Strength)**

Ask the child to lie on their back with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

Get them to hold a bean bag or small fluffy toy between the knees to keep them together. Then to place their hands on their thighs.

Ask them to try to curl up so that their head and shoulders lift up from the floor and that their hands slide further up their legs towards their knees.

Make it clear they are only to lift as far as is comfortable and not to lift their feet off the floor.

- Can they do this quite easily?

### **Tightrope Walking (Balance and Stability)**

Lay a piece of rope 5 - 10 metres in length or chalk a line on a path.

Ask the child to walk along the line slowly.

If the child is under the age of 5, just walking is appropriate, if you have an older child and they can walk the line quite well, maintaining their balance, ask them to walk heel-to-toe (Pigeon Steps).

- Can they walk the rope and maintain their balance?

### **Stairs (Balance and Coordination)**

Ask the child to walk up and down the stairs.

- Can they manage independently?
- Are they using alternating feet?

## **Bilateral Co-ordination**

### **Hands and Knees (Mid-line)**

Ask the child to stand in front of you and to place their right hand on their left knee. Then ask them to place their left hand on their right knee. If necessary show them how to do this and then get them to try it on their own.

To vary the game you can ask them to raise the left knee as high as possible as the right hand comes across the body to touch the knee. Or get them to do this, but touching their toes not knees.

- Can they do both sides easily?
- Do they struggle with one side?

### **Simon Says (Left / Right Body Awareness)**

Play a game of Simon says focusing on encouraging the child to think about using the left and then right side of the body.

Get them to put their left hand in the air, and then down and then do the same with the right hand.

See if the child can touch their left knee with their left hand and then the same on their right side.

- Can they do this easily?
- Can they accurately point to the body parts mentioned in the game?

### **Ball Skills (Coordination)**

Use a medium sized soft ball.

Start by rolling the ball to the child.

- Can they stop / catch the ball?
- Can they roll the ball back to you fairly accurately?

If they have difficulty at this stage do not move to the throwing stage.

Throw the ball gently using an underarm throw.

- Can they catch the ball?
- Can they throw the ball back to you fairly accurately, preferably using an underarm throw?



## Sensory Perception

### Guess the Object (Tactile Perception)

Secretly place a familiar object into a bag or box that the child cannot see into.

Ask them to feel the object in the bag with both hands and tell you what they think it is. Try this a couple of times with different objects the child is familiar with. You go first to show how the game is played if they seem reluctant to try.

- Can they identify the object?
- Do the same activity again but this time ask the child to use one hand at a time to feel the object.
- Can they identify the object using the left and right hand?

To make the game more difficult put several objects into the bag. Ask them to find a specific item or just to identify all the objects.

- Did they find the second game more difficult?

### Tactile Play (Tactile Defensive)

Ask the child to touch and move their hands through finger paints, sand, dirt or corn flour mixed with water. Ask the child to draw patterns or retrieve items from materials. Try using more resistant materials such as plasticine, play dough, clay or play putty.

- Are they happy to play or touch the wet, cold, smooth, slimy textures?
- Are they happy to play or touch the larger more gritty, rough textures?
- Are they happy to touch and mould resistant modelling type materials?

### How Much Pressure (Tactile Perception - Pressure)

Place a large ball of modelling material such as play dough onto a flat surface and ask the child to use one finger at a time to push down into the dough gently.

- Can they make shallow indentations with the fingers from both hands?

Reshape the dough and ask them to press as hard as they can with each finger .

- Can they make deep indentations with the fingers from both hands?

## Hands and Fingers Muscles

### How Many Can You Hold? (In-hand Manipulation)

Use small objects such as pieces of lego, small marbles, beads or dried peas or pasta, so that a child can hold several in their hand at a time.

See how many they can pick up and hold in the same hand in one go without dropping them. Do this with each hand in turn.

- Can they hold one or two items in the palm of their right hand while picking up another piece with this hand?
- Can they hold one or two items in the palm of their left hand while picking up another piece with this hand?

### Finger Tap Dancing (Individual Finger Movements)

With their hands out in front of them ask the child to try to tap each finger in turn against their thumb, one hand at a time. To make this more fun try to change the speed, order and pressure so that it seems as if the fingers are tap dancing.

- Can they touch each finger to thumb on their right hand?
- Can they touch each finger to thumb on their left hand?
- Can they change speed, order and pressure?

### Shake the Dice (Arches of Hands & Grip Release)

The aim is to see if a child can shake the dice cupped inside two hands and release it. You may need to show them this first.

Watch carefully to see if they release the dice quickly from the shaking movement or do they stop shaking and seem over hesitant in releasing the dice.

- Can they cup their hands?
- Do they release the dice easily?

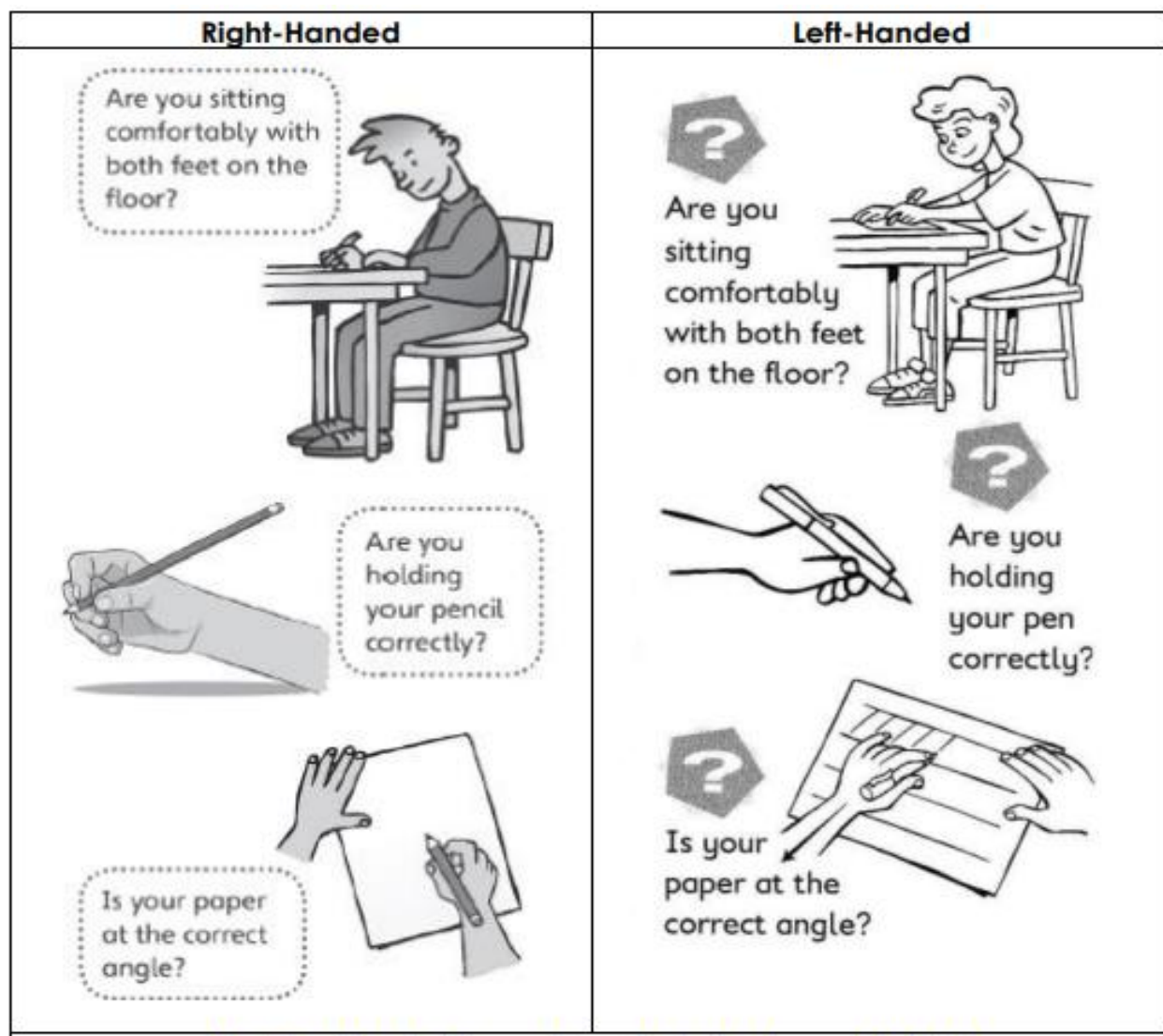
### Crazy Scissors (Hand Strength)

Use appropriately sized and handedness scissors if possible and scrap pieces of paper for this activity. Start with thin paper types such as newspaper and gradually move to thicker paper such as scrap pages from a magazine.

Ask the child to just cut into the paper or around a simple shape drawn on the paper or a simple picture already on the paper.

- Can they cut thin and thick paper?
- Can they cut fairly accurately around shape or picture?

### Appendix 3 - Posture and Pencil Grip



<https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/pencil-grip-development-ks1.html>



# Pencil grip development in Key Stage 1

## Key Stage 1 (5 - 7 year olds)

The Tripod Pencil Grip is considered the most appropriate grip for handwriting, for both right and left-handed writers, however not all children find this the easiest grip to learn.

It is important to hold a pencil correctly to allow the fingers and wrist to move freely without putting strain on the hand, helping to improve correct letter formation ability and making handwriting a more comfortable experience.

There are 5 Pencil Grip Developmental Stages on the way to developing a good tripod pencil grip for handwriting.

### Year 1 (5 - 6 year olds)

As children move from Foundation Stage (4 to 5 year olds) to Year 1 they may be at different pencil grip development stages, this is what we would normally expect:

- A few children will be at Stage 3
- Most will be at Stage 4 with some moving to Stage 5, but not confident in its use.
- A few will have reached, and be comfortable at, Stage 5.

### Year 2 (6 - 7 year olds)

As children move from Year 1 to Year 2 we would expect the majority of children to be at stage 5 in their pencil grip development.

## Stage 3 - Four finger and thumb grip



Holding the crayon/pencil between the thumb and four fingers with the crayon/pencil in a nearly vertical, upright position. Movement comes from the elbow and wrist.

## Stage 4 - Static quadruped or tripod grip



Holding the pencil in very nearly the correct position however the web space is narrower than it would be if held in a mature tripod grip. This means that the movement is coming from the wrist and large finger movements.

## Stage 5 - Mature / Dynamic tripod grip

### Right-Handed



This is traditionally considered the most appropriate handwriting pencil grip for both left and right-handed writers. Holding the pencil between the thumb and index finger with pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers.

### Left-Handed



#### Appendix 4 - Agreed Handwriting Families

Secret C - all start with a c then change and transform. They appear in 2 families.

c o a d g q

Boing - they all include a bounce. They appear in 2 families

b h k r n m p

These letters do not have ascenders or descenders

c o a e r n m u i v w  
x z s

These letters are all tall and have ascenders

b d h k f l t

These letters all have descenders

g q p j y

## Appendix 5 - Pen -Licence checklist

	I think...	My teacher thinks...
My descenders are neat. (Check tails on y, g, j, p and q)		
My ascenders are neat. (Check the uprights on b, d, h, k, l and t)		
My curves are smooth. (Check b, c, d, e, g, p and q)		
My letters sit on the line.		
My letters are a consistent size.		
Spaces between words are consistent.		
I am beginning to join my handwriting.		
My writing starts at the margin.		
All work has a date and title/WALT underlined with a ruler.		
I use one line to cross out mistakes.		











	Strike 1	Strike 2	Strike 3
What's going wrong?			

Silver Criteria	I think...	My teacher thinks...
I am joining my handwriting consistently.		
My letters lean in the same direction.		
Punctuation is the correct size.		
I write at a good pace.		
There is a clear difference between capital letters and lower case.		

Gold Criteria	I think...	My teacher thinks...
Presentation in all books is of an impeccable standard		

## Appendix 6 - Speed Up (examples)

10/23/2022

<p>Welcome to Speed up!</p> 	<p>What is speed up?</p> <p>Speed up is a programme which is here to help you with your handwriting and fluency.</p> <p>It is 8-10 weeks long and is based on activities instead of writing.</p> <p>Any Questions?</p> 	<p>Crayon a shape</p>  <p>Who can colour the shape without showing any white?</p> <p>Who can colour the shape the quickest?</p>	<p>Continuous scribble</p> 
<p>Speed Up</p> <p>Session 1</p>	<p>Today's Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. All about me</li> <li>3. Patterns on white boards</li> </ol> 	<p>Thank you!!</p> <p>This is the end of the session</p> <p>Homework:</p> <p>Please practice your handwriting by practicing your patterns and by taking your time in class to write neatly</p> 	<p>Speed Up</p> <p>Session 3</p>
<p>Warm Up</p>  <p>In a Circle do different stretches to warm up and awaken the brain and the body.</p>	<p>All about me</p> <p>You have been set the challenge to write for 10 minutes all about you!</p> <p>You could write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your family</li> <li>• Your friends</li> <li>• Pets</li> <li>• Holidays</li> <li>• School</li> <li>• hobbies</li> </ul> 	<p>Today's Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. Moving your arms without looking</li> <li>3. Skywriting</li> <li>4. Move to Music</li> <li>5. Change the pressure</li> </ol> 	<p>Warm Up</p>  <p>In a Circle do different stretches to warm up and awaken the brain and the body.</p>

## Appendix 7 - Nelson Handwriting Resources by Year Group

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ludham Approach</b>	<b>Nelson Resources to Support</b>
<b>Reception</b>	<b>4-5 years</b>	Follow RWI handwriting alongside Phonics	Workbooks 1-4
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>5-6 years</b>	Teach Ludham Letter Families before starting joins	Workbooks 5-6 Developing Skills Red
<b>Year 2</b>	<b>6-7 years</b>	Pick up from Year 1 joins using Nelson joined handwriting resources	Developing Skills Red Developing Skills Yellow
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>7-8 years</b>	Reinforce handwriting through spelling plus discrete handwriting session each week.	Developing Skills Book 1
<b>Year 4</b>	<b>8-9 years</b>	Reinforce handwriting through spelling plus discrete handwriting session each week.	Developing Skills Book 2
<b>Year 5</b>	<b>9-10 years</b>	Reinforce handwriting through spelling plus discrete handwriting session each week as required	Developing Skills Book 3
<b>Year 6</b>	<b>10-11 years</b>	Reinforce handwriting through spelling plus discrete handwriting session each week as required	Developing Skills Book 4