

Handwriting Policy

At Avondale Primary School, we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards as the pupils take pride in and have a sense of ownership of their work.

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the whole curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. In EYFS and Year 1 pupils are taught how to form letters accurately using the ELS handwriting rhymes and mnemonic (non-cursive) used in the ELS Phonics programme. From Year 2, children are taught cursive handwriting. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. It is taught with a sequential and progressive approach. Handwriting is taught regularly and teachers and TAs are expected to model the handwriting style taught in their year group.

Aim

Our aims in teaching handwriting are to teach children the correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly, and by the end of KS2 begin to develop a distinctive style. Each aim is considered equally important:

- To teach children to write with a flowing hand which is legible, swift and pleasant to look at, of which they can be proud.
- To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals.
- To teach correct letter formation.
- To establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills by displaying and rewarding work that meets the standard.
- To ensure all pupils and staff understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- To experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching of handwriting across the school.

Handwriting is taught regularly at the beginning of English lesson to ensure pupils have regular practice.

Staff should take care to use the correct script when writing on the board, when marking and when writing for display purposes. Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Teaching Sequence and Whole School Expectations:

Early Years Foundation Stage - RECEPTION

In the early stages of handwriting development, children are introduced to activities to establish fine motor skills. 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. Children experience a wide range of handwriting-related skills, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media. Coloured felt tip pens and pencils are used in conjunction with the handwriting exercise books. Pencil grips for correction of pencil hold are also used where appropriate.

EYFS Development Matters

Physical Development (Fine Motor Skills) Reception

- Develop their small motor skills so they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently e.g. pencil for drawing and writing
- Develop the foundation of a handwriting style which is fast accurate and efficient.

Physical Development (Fine Motor Skills) Early Learning Goal

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

Literacy (Writing) Reception

- Form lower-case letters correctly

Literacy (Writing) Early Learning Goal

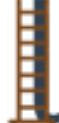
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

Autumn Term Physical development and Phonic Mnemonics taught through phonic sessions	Spring Term Physical Development Handwriting taught discretely	Summer Term Physical Development Handwriting taught discretely
Movement and strength Gross Motor Control Fine Motor Control Perceptual skills • Patterns • Pictures • Random scribbling • Scribble writing • Symbols that represent letters • Random letters or numerals • Letter strings (continuous string of letters, symbols or numerals) • Letter groups (groups of letters, symbols or numerals including spaces) • Environmental print Phonics alphabet mnemonics taught in a clear phonics progression to include the alphabet.	Movement and strength Gross Motor Control Fine Motor Control Perceptual skills • Patterns • Pictures • Random scribbling • Scribble writing • Symbols that represent letters • Random letters or numerals • Letter strings (continuous string of letters, symbols or numerals) • Letter groups (groups of letters, symbols or numerals including spaces) • Environmental print Make marks, drawings and symbols with increasing control Handwriting taught discretely in order of families. Form some lower case letters correctly, starting and finishing in the right place, going the right way round, correctly orientated. Form some capital letters correctly, including the initial letter of their name.	Movement and strength Gross Motor Control Fine Motor Control Perceptual skills Handwriting taught discretely in order of families. Hold writing tools and implements with a developing grip, using an appropriate amount of pressure. Write left to right and top to bottom. Begin to form clear ascenders and descenders to write recognisable letters. Form lower case letters with developing consistency. Hold paper in position and use preferred hand for writing, developing a comfortable pencil grip. Begin to write on the lines with some control of letter size.



In order to prepare the children to be successful hand writers, pupils are taught how to form letters using the ELS rhymes and mnemonics used in the ELS phonics programme. The basic letter formations are taught in this order:

- Ladder Letters: *i l t u y j*
- Robot Letters: *r n h b p k m*
- Curly Caterpillar: *c a g q d o s*
- Loop the Loop: Letters: *e f*
- Zig Zag Monster Letters: *v w*

	Swerve around the snake		Around the ostrich's body		Down the long ladder
	Around the head, down the body		Curl around the camel's back		Swoop down the tentacles and dot the head
	Down her body and cross her shoulders		Down the body, up the arm, down the leg		Down the tongue, up the tongue
	Down his body, around his face		Around the head and down the trunk		Hop to the top, land and hop, land and hop
	Down her body, spot her idea		Under the umbrella and down to the tip		Criss-cross the kiss
	Down the bird and over the nest		Down her body, up over the arm		Under the hull and down to the anchor
	Meerkat, mound, mound		From his head to his feet, up and over his back		Zig and zag
	Over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet		Down the person and around the wheel		Around the feather and down the pen
	Start at his ear, around the face and down the beard		Over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw		

EYFS AUTUMN TERM

LETTER FAMILIES for teaching letter formation	
Ladder Letters (Down and off in another direction)	<i>l i t j u y</i>
	Writing first name

EYFS SPRING TERM

LETTER FAMILIES for teaching letter formation	
Robot Letters (Down and retrace upwards)	<i>m n r b p h k</i>
Curly Caterpillar Letters (Anticlockwise round)	<i>c a d o q g s</i>
	Writing first name
Formation of numerals	<i>1 2 3 4 5</i>

EYFS SUMMER TERM

LETTER FAMILIES for teaching letter formation	
Loop the Loop Letters	<i>e f</i>
Zig-zag Monster Letters (zig-zag letters)	<i>w n x z</i>
	Writing surname
Formation of numerals	<i>6 7 8 9 0</i>

- Supported handwriting needs to take place regularly for those children who need it.
- Children continue to practice forming their letters and are given the opportunity to practice CVC and EYFS High Frequency Words.
- In EYFS handwriting or number formation will be practised during morning work and at the start of a focus write.
- Handwriting is taught once a week during an explicit handwriting session.
- Opportunities within continuous provision must support the development of fine motor skills and early writing

YEAR 1

- Handwriting practice is taught explicitly at the beginning of every English lesson for 10 minutes in English book.
- During the Autumn Term, Year 1 will have an explicit handwriting session once per week in replacement of extended writing in Extended Writing book.
- Extended Writing sessions commence Spring term to include writing simple sentences.
- Marking and Feedback within English and Writing books must address any misconceptions from focus letter formation.

National Curriculum Handwriting Programme of Study

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.

Pupils continue to consolidate the ELS handwriting style (non cursive). Pupils reinforce the formation of lowercase letters and are taught the formation of uppercase letters. Handwriting is taught in this order:

AUTUMN TERM – taught in letter families

• Teach formation of capital letters & reinforce lowercase • Continual reinforcement of tripod grip	
Ladder Letters (Down and off in another direction)	Week 1 - Name writing - Tripod grip
	Week 2 - Ll Ii Numeral - 1
	Week 3 - Tt Jj Numeral - 2
	Week 4 - Uu Yy Numeral - 3
Robot Letters (Down and retrace upwards)	Week 5 - Mm Nn Numeral - 4
	Week 6 - Rr Bb Numeral - 5
	Week 7 - Pp Hh Numeral - 6
	Week 8 - Kk / Cc Numeral - 7
Curly Caterpillar Letters (Anticlockwise round)	Week 9 - Aa Dd Numeral - 8
	Week 10 - Oo Qq Numeral - 9
	Week 11 - Gg Ss Numeral - 0
Loop the Loop Letters	Week 12 - Ee Ff Numerals - 1-5
Zig-zag Monster Letters (zig-zag letters)	Week 13 - Vv Ww Numerals - 6-0
	Week 14 - Xx Zz Numerals - 1-0

SPRING TERM – taught in alphabetical order

- Recap formation of capital letters & lowercase letters - Continual reinforcement of tripod grip		
Repeat letter formation in alphabetical order	Week 1 - Aa Bb	Numeral - 1
	Week 2 - Cc Dd	Numeral - 2
	Week 3 - Ee Ff	Numeral - 3
	Week 4 - Gg Hh	Numeral - 4
	Week 5 - Ii Jj	Numeral - 5
	Week 6 - Kk Ll	Numeral - 6
	Week 7 - Mm Nn	Numeral - 7
	Week 8 - Oo Pp	Numeral - 8
	Week 9 - Qq Rr	Numeral - 9
	Week 10 - Ss Tt	Numeral - 0
	Week 11 - Uu Vv Xx	Numerals - 1-5
	Week 12 - Yy Zz	Numerals - 6-0

SUMMER TERM – Ascenders and descenders

- Recap letter formation focusing on ascenders and descenders - Continual reinforcement of tripod grip	
SUMMER TERM 1 – Ascenders	Week 1 - Bb Dd
	Week 2 - Hh Kk
	Week 3 - Ll Tt
	Week 4 - Assess & recap
	Week 5 - Assess & recap
	Week 6 - Assess & recap
SUMMER TERM 2 Descenders	Week 1 - Ff Gg
	Week 2 - Jj Pp
	Week 3 - Qq Yy
	Week 4 - Assess & recap
	Week 5 - Assess & recap
	Week 6 - Assess & recap

Pupils are taught the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence for sounds as outlined in the Spelling Appendix in the National Curriculum. Children focus on a different vowel digraph or trigraph each day and practise s containing the focus sound. Where possible these will be linked to Year 1 spellings

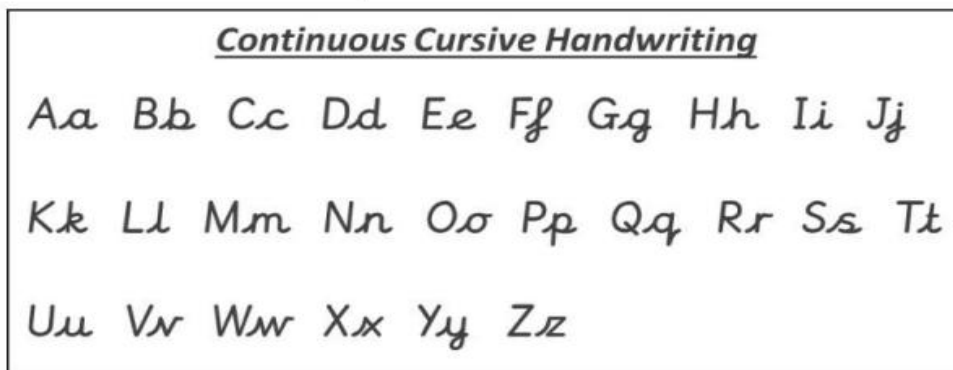
Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

CONTINUOUS CURSIVE STYLE KEY FEATURES (Year 2-6)

At Avondale (year 2-6) we use the style that is known as the 'continuous cursive' which means we use joined up writing where each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper, so each word is formed in one, flowing movement.

- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower-case letters.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed, spelling and fluency.
- The majority of letters start on the line with an 'approach stroke'.
- The majority of letters end on the line with a 'flick'.
- The pencil does not leave the paper until the word is complete.
- 'ts' and 'xs' are crossed and 'i's' are dotted when the whole word is complete.
- There are six basic joins that children are taught.
- Alphabet is organised into stroke-related letter groups for easy teaching.
- Children should be taught to use the handwriting lines efficiently to ensure that they cap height of letters and descenders and ascenders are formed correctly.

Continuous Cursive Handwriting



CONTINUOUS SCRIPT LETTER FAMILIES

LETTER FAMILIES for teaching letter formation	
Ladder Letters (Down and off in another direction)	l i t j u y
Robot Letters (Down and retrace upwards)	m n r b p h k
Curly Caterpillar Letters (Anticlockwise round)	c a d o q g s
Loop the Loop Letters	e f
Zig-zag Monster Letters (zig-zag letters)	v w x z

Year 2 & KS2 THE SIX BASIC JOINS

Joins taught in Year 2

Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders	ai ar au aw ae ea er ew ee ie ir ur ue air ear in an as us ss se
Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders	ch ll sh th ab ul it kn ed be de br
Diagonal joins to letters with descenders	ff ph qu igh ng squ fe ge pe
Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders	ou oe oi oo or ow oa ur ure vi ve wi we on or ere re ri
Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders	ol ot of ok od wh wl fl
Horizontal joins to letters with descenders	oy op og of

YEAR 2

- Handwriting practice is taught explicitly at the beginning of every English lesson for 10 minutes and must be evident in English book under the date.
- Marking and Feedback within English and Writing books must address any misconceptions from focus letter formation and joins.

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
- write capital letters of the correct size and orientation in relationship to one another, and to lower case letters
- write digits of the correct size and orientation in relationship to one another
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

During Year 2 the pupils are taught the 'continuous cursive' six joins and practice words with these joins.

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it
3. Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh
4. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi
5. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot
6. Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. oy, op, of

It is expected that all children are able to join consistently and correctly by the end of Year 2.

Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

AUTUMN TERM

- Teach formation of capital letters & lowercase letters using continuous cursive script where capital letters do not join to lower case letters - Continual reinforcement of tripod grip	
Reinforce letter formation – letters on the line	Week 1 – Aa Cc Ee
	Week 2 – Ii Mm Nn
	Week 3 – Oo Rr Ss
	Week 4 – Uu Vv Ww Zz
Reinforce letter formation – Ascenders	Week 5 – Bb Dd Hh Kk Ll Tt
Reinforce letter formation – Descenders	Week 6 – Ff Gg Jj Pp Qq Yy
Teaching Diagonal Joins These letters join diagonally to the next letter: a c d e h i k l m n u Some common diagonal joins: an co di ei hu im ka lima np ui	
Teach - Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders	Week 7 – ai ar au aw ae an as
	Week 8 – ea er ew ee ear
	Week 9 – ie ir in
	Week 10 – ss se
	Week 11 – ur ue us
Teach - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders	Week 12 – ch ll sh

SPRING TERM

Teaching Diagonal Joins These letters join diagonally to the next letter: a c d e h I k l m n u Some common diagonal joins: an co di ei hu im ka li ma np ui	
Teach - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders	Week 1 – th ab ul
	Week 2 – it kn ed
	Week 3 – be de br
Teach - Diagonal joins to letters with descenders	Week 4 – ff ph qu
	Week 5 – igh ng squ
	Week 6 – fe ge pe
Teaching horizontal joins These letters join horizontally to the next letter: v w o r Some common diagonal joins: vi wo ru wa oc ro wr ve re oe	
Teach - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders	Week 7 – ou oe oi
	Week 8 – oo or ow
	Week 9 – oa on ov
	Week 10 – vi ve wi we
	Week 11 – ur ure
	Week 12 – re ri

SUMMER TERM

- Teaching horizontal joins These letters join horizontally to the next letter: v w o r - Some common diagonal joins: vi wo ru wa oc ro wn ve re oe	
Teach - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders	Week 1 - ere re ri
Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders	Week 2 - ol ot
	Week 3 - of ok od
	Week 4 - wh wl fl
Horizontal joins to letters with descenders	Week 5 - op, oy og of
	Week 6 - op, oy og of
Assess and review	Week 7 - Assess and review
	Week 8 - Assess and review
	Week 9 - Assess and review
	Week 10 - Assess and review
	Week 11 - Assess and review
	Week 12 - Assess and review

KEY STAGE 2 OVERVIEW

- Pupils should enter KS2 with a clear understanding of all the cursive letter groups.
- Any children who have left KS1 unable to join, need to be quickly identified for a supported handwriting intervention. Progress needs to be monitored and assessed against the cursive handwriting joins
- Supported handwriting practice in Lower KS2 should take place three times a week.

Year 3

- Handwriting practice is taught explicitly at the beginning of every English lesson for 10 minutes and must be evident in English book under the date.
- Marking and Feedback within English and Writing books must address any misconceptions from focus letter formation and joins.

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, 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).

During Year 3 the pupils' recap and review the 'continuous cursive' six joins and practice words with these joins

Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

YEAR 3

AUTUMN TERM

Autumn Term 1-Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders	
Recap and review	ai ar au aw ae an as ea er ew ee ear ie in in ss se ur ue us
Autumn 2-Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders	
Recap and review	ch ll sh th ab ul it kn ed be de br

SPRING TERM

Spring Term 1- Diagonal joins to letters with descenders	
Recap and review	ff ph qu igh ng squ fe ge pe
Spring Term 2-Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders	
Recap and review	ou oe oi oo or ow oa on ov vi ve wi we ur ure re ri

SUMMER TERM

Summer Term 1- Horizontal joins with letters to ascenders	
Recap and review	ol ot of ok od wh wl fl
Summer Term 2-Horizontal joins to letters with decenders	
Recap and review	op oy og of op, oy og of

Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

YEAR 4

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, 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).

Handwriting practice is taught explicitly at the beginning of English lessons for 10 minutes x3 per week and must be evident in English book under the date.	
Marking and Feedback with English and Writing books must address any misconceptions from focus letter formation and joins.	
Recap and review	Assess and review as required • letter formation • joins • writing words related to weekly spellings

Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

Year 5

Pupils should be taught to:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

Handwriting practice is taught explicitly at the beginning of English lessons for 10 minutes x3 per week and must be evident in English book under the date.

Marking and Feedback with English and Writing books must address any misconceptions from focus letter formation and joins.

Recap and review

Assess and review as required

- *letter formation*
- *joins*
- *writing words related to weekly spellings*

To use fluent joined up writing for all writing except where other special form as are required.

Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

YEAR 6

Handwriting practice is taught explicitly at the beginning of English lessons for 10 minutes x3 per week and must be evident in English book under the date.

Marking and Feedback with English and Writing books must address any misconceptions from focus letter formation and joins.

Recap and review

Assess and review as required

- *letter formation*
- *joins*
- *writing words related to weekly spellings*

Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

To use fluent joined up writing for all writing except where other special form as are required.

Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

PEN LICENCE

- As children become confident in their joined-up writing, children begin to work towards their 'Pen Licence'. The 'Pen Licence' is a certificate awarded to each child by the Headteacher, granting them the permission to use a pen during all lessons (except mathematics). Pupils who successfully achieve their pen licence will have it presented to them during a Celebration Assembly.
- The pen licence is to be awarded once a pupil has achieved the criteria on the handwriting checklist.
- It is at the teacher's discretion when to award a child with the 'Pen Licence', but all children should have achieved the award by the time they leave Year 4. In year 3 and 4, once awarded their pen licence will use blue handwriting pen. In year 5 and 6 children will use blue biro.
- There could be a display in classrooms celebrating children who have been awarded pen licences.

PEN LICENCE CHECKLIST –

To earn a Pen Licence, all handwriting (not just in handwriting book) must show the following:

• All letters are correctly formed	
• All 'x-height' letters are consistent in size	
• All ascenders and descenders are the correct height/length	
• All letters are joined correctly	
❖ Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us	
❖ Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi	
❖ Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it	
❖ Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot	
❖ Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh	
❖ Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy	
• Capital letters are larger than lower case letters	
• Spaces between letters are the right size (not too squashed or stretched)	
• Spaces between words are the right size (not too small or big)	
• Date and Title/enquiry question underlined with a ruler	
• Work looks neat	

Supporting correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

SITTING POSITION



THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.



Provision for left-handed children:

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to right automatically.
- Children should be encouraged to have the correct sitting posture for good handwriting e.g. the bottom of the back to go into the back of the chair

INCLUSION

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, will be given additional support. Additional resources may also be used (i.e. a writing slant).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Equality of opportunity is a high priority and reference to the School's Equal Opportunity and Racial Equality Policies will provide examples of how this is achieved. Inclusion: The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this within the class or through an IEP. Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited, by problems with fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child.

Useful websites & resources

- <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-difficulties.html>

Last reviewed: June 2026