



## HANDWRITING POLICY



**An Exceptional Education for All**

**REACH** for your future

***Respect Enterprise Ambition Confidence  
Happiness***

Autumn 2025

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# Handwriting


Handwriting is a life skill that allows children to respond to their experiences and express themselves in print. It is more than putting letters on a page; it is a whole-body skill that involves fine motor control, coordination and memory.

Handwriting is a complex process and the system of symbols that must be explicitly taught. It supports learning by:

- Boosting brain activity and engagement
- Building independence
- Improving reading and spelling

Handwriting is the physical act of forming letters. It is not the same as writing, which includes composing ideas. As children become fluent, handwriting becomes more automatic, freeing up working memory to help them to think and be creative.

## Aims and Objectives

 **Intent:** Handwriting provides the foundation for success across the whole curriculum. We aim to develop confident, motivated handwriters who can express themselves in print. All learners should:

- Develop a positive attitude towards handwriting and the writing process
- Become resilient and confident in their handwriting journey, whatever their starting point
- Feel supported and encouraged at every stage of development

Handwriting is taught in small, cumulative steps and is grounded in evidence-based practice.

 **Implementation:** Handwriting is delivered through:

- The Nelson Handwriting Scheme, which aligns with the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
- Well-trained staff who have the knowledge and skills to model and support high-quality handwriting
- A learning environment that promotes effective posture, pen grip, and presentation skills
- Use of high-quality, carefully selected resources
- Ongoing assessment to identify misconceptions early and provide timely feedback
- Targeted interventions and access to specialist support where required

 **Impact:** The impact of our consistent and high-quality approach to handwriting is seen in:

- Improved outcomes in writing across the curriculum
- Pupils who are confident, fluent, and legible writers
- Children who show pride in their work, take ownership of their writing
- Learners who are well-prepared for the demands of writing in secondary education and their future

# Nelson's Handwriting Scheme



The school follows the Nelson's handwriting scheme to teach handwriting from Reception to Year 6. There are many different styles of handwriting. Nelson's is a simple modern cursive.

*Children are first taught the letters without an entry stroke.*

*Then, once letter formation and positioning is secure they are taught to join.*

The quick brown fox  
jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox  
jumps over the lazy dog

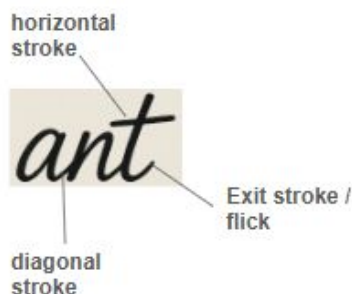
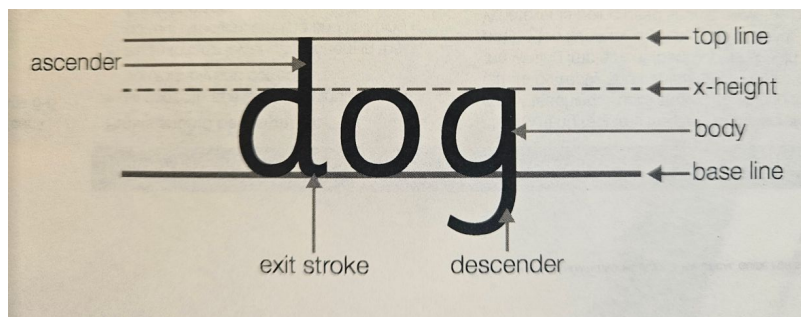
Some 'break' letters are left unjoined (*b, g, j, p, q, x, y, z*). For more information on the progression in joining see page number 18

Sometimes children may join the school from a different setting and having been taught in a different style. In these instances, teachers will take a child centred approach in order to best support confidence in handwriting.

## Language and Terminology

<b>Capital and lowercase</b>	Aa Bb Cc Dd
<b>Ascenders</b>	b d f h l k t
<b>Descenders</b>	g j p q y
<b>Short letters</b>	a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z
<b>Tall letters</b>	b d h k l t f
<b>Body</b>	'body' of the letter
<b>Arches</b>	n m h p
<b>Diagonal stroke</b>	Joins letters to each other when writing words eg a to n
<b>Horizontal stroke</b>	As seen in capital letters E F H or lowercase t or f
<b>Exit stroke or flick</b>	Finishing movement that moves the pen away from the body of the letter

Children will learn a range of language of letter formation, including developing a range of positional language. It is important that this language is consistently used to support clarity of practice and automaticity when forming letters.

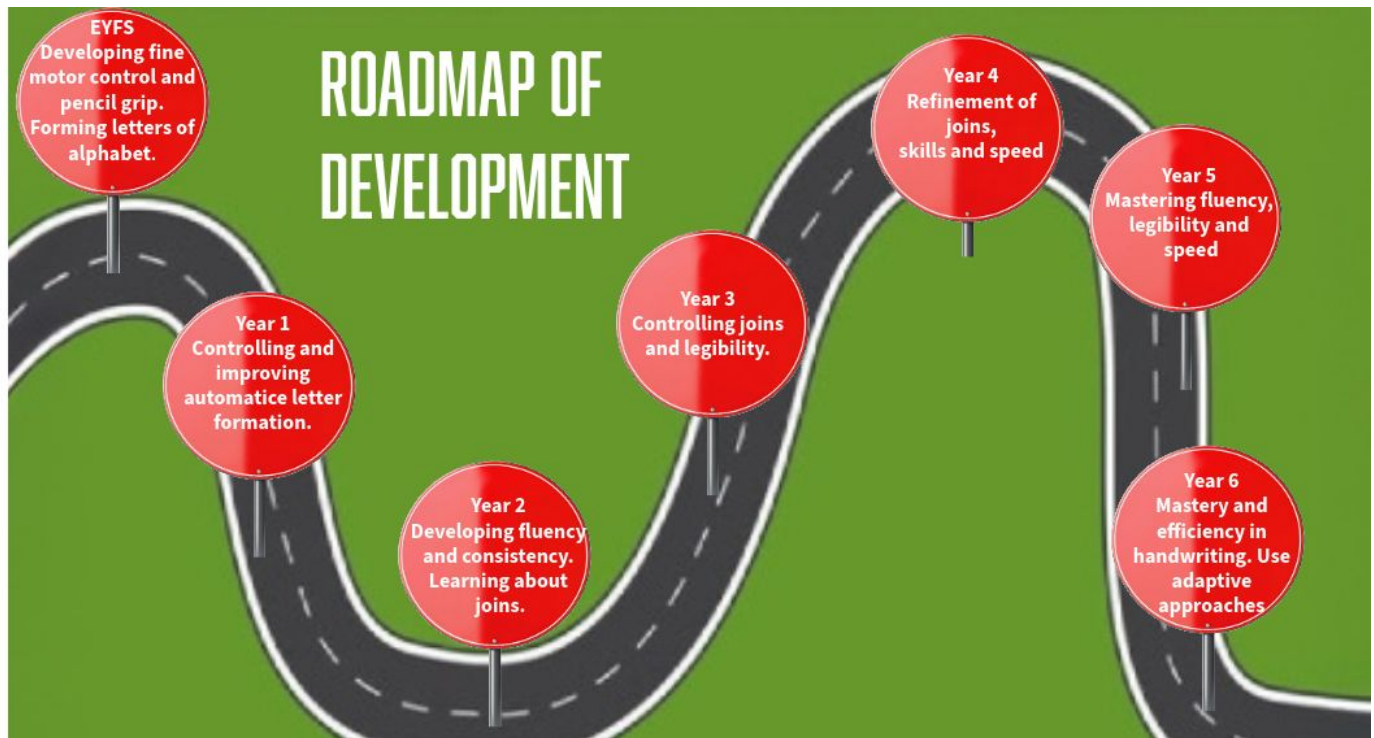


Read the guide / see appendix for individual letter descriptors to support formation.

# Progression in Handwriting

During primary school, children learn the two main components of writing; transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating and structuring ideas in writing). Both of these skills are co dependent and children need to develop competency in both.

The Early Years Statutory Guidance, Development Matters and the National Curriculum all provide guidance on how handwriting is taught. See page 15 for individual year group learning goals



## Handwriting Skills

Handwriting is a whole body skill and involves the development of a wide range of skills. Many children will naturally develop many of these skills. For some, more explicit practice will need to take place. It is important to reflect on the complexity of these skills when supporting learners.

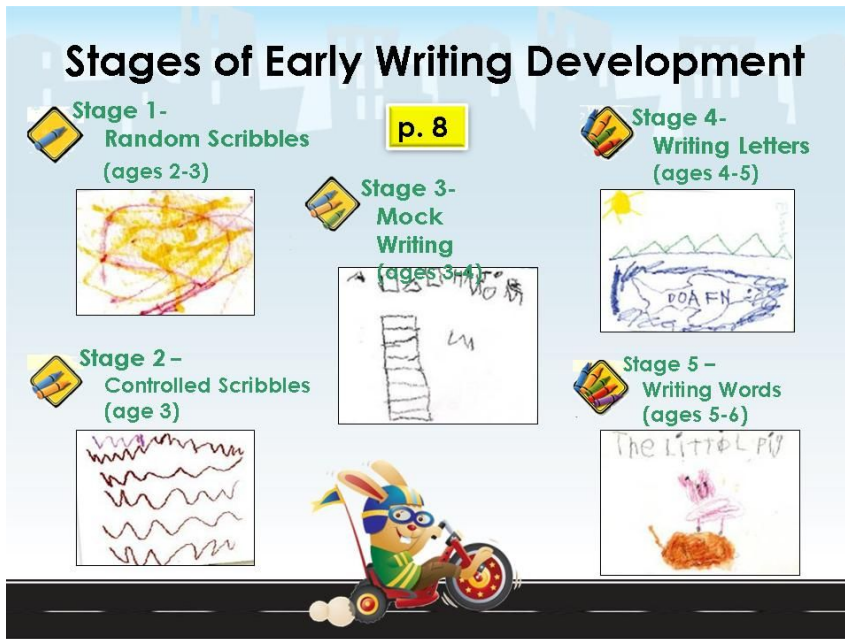
- Gross motor (core strength, control and postural stability)
- Fine motor (wrist and hand function, finger dexterity)
- Motor planning skills (ability of brain to plan and execute movements)
- Development of a consistent hand preference
- Coordination of both sides of the body (bilateral coordination)
- Crossing the midline eg grabbing object on opposite side of body
- Pincer grip and functional grip on the pencil
- Visual memory
- Integration of visual perceptual skills with gross and fine motor movements
- Attentional skills
- Communication and language development
- Prepositional language
- Motivation and engagement



# Early Years Development

Children in the early years respond to their learning and communicate their ideas through a growing knowledge of print. They move from recognising that symbols or logos can represent sounds and ideas, to writing letters and words. Meaningful, early teaching of mark making, can provide the firm foundations for a positive attitude towards handwriting.

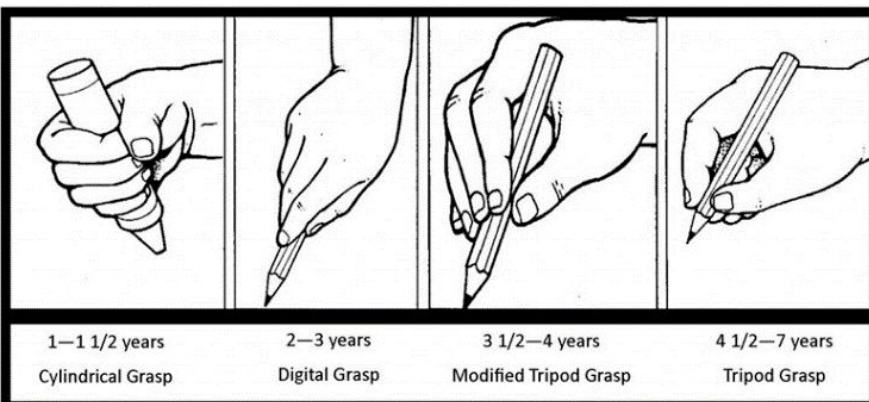
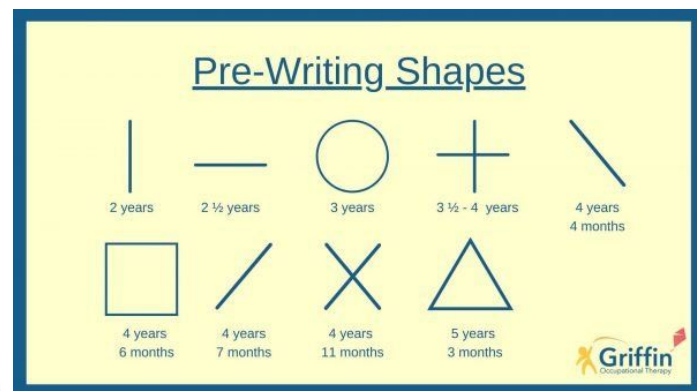
Handwriting skills are developed in many different areas of learning: *Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy and Expressive Arts and Design*. As such, children are supported in their development through activities such as the development of positional language, of fine /gross/ motor and sensory skills, drawing and painting, music (dancing and movement) as well as perseverance and self motivation.



Children are supported to develop pre writing shapes to support handwriting development. They help to develop hand eye coordination and fine motor skills that support letter formation.

When children join the foundation stage, we use a child centred approach that recognises their developmental readiness. This is supported by skilled observations.

Children often learn to write their names first and may use capital letters as part of this initial process. Here is an useful image of what the early stage of development may look like:



Pencil grip develops over the course of the Foundation Stage. Children may be at different stages of development. See page 10 for information on using the pencil grip.

By the end of the early years, children will have learnt how to form the lower case letters of the alphabet. It is important that they learn the correct starting points and movements from the start of their writing development.

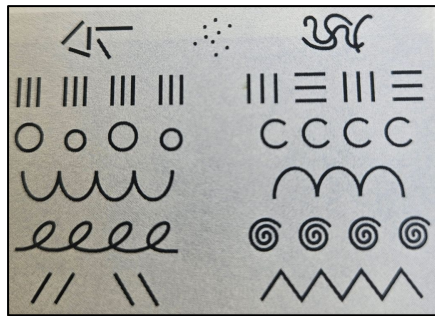
# How handwriting is taught

Handwriting is used across the curriculum and teachers have the same expectations for presentation across all subjects.

The discrete teaching of handwriting will happen 3 to 4 times a week for approximately 15 - 20 minutes. Little and often has a greater impact on development. For younger children, more sessions for shorter times may be beneficial. Children should practice their letter formation whilst sat at a table.



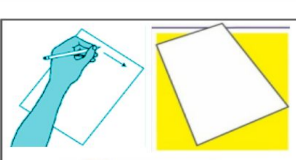

**A typical session may look like this:**

<b>2-3 minutes</b>	Prepare for handwriting with fine and gross motor activities
<b>2 minutes</b>	Pattern practice to support letter formation
<b>3 -5 minutes</b>	Introduction of new letter / join using the Nelsons app to assist Discrete modelling by the teacher, using the language of the scheme Modelling of the letter / join within words / phrases
<b>5-7 minutes</b>	Independent practice of the taught letter / join Children have the opportunity for <b>self generated letter formation</b> ; the 'tracing' of letters should be time limited Children are encouraged to reflect on their letter formation Adult roams the room / sits with identified children to ensure correct formation A dictated sentence to form part of this session during the week



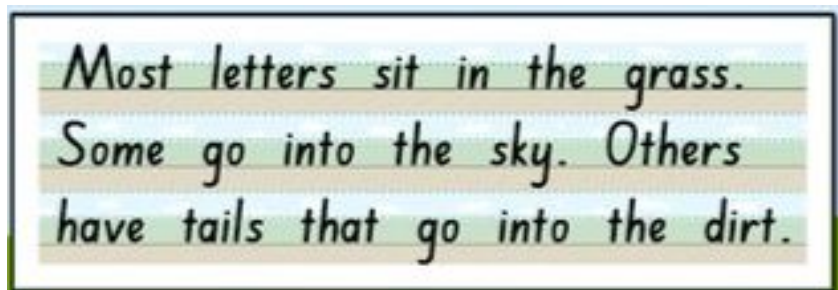
Patterns are an important part of encouraging children to develop pencil control. They also help children to see shapes within letters and to develop directional control.

During the lessons, the use the 4 P's will be encouraged to ensure correct handwriting techniques. This 'poster' will be on display in the class and explicitly referred to during the sessions. The correct paper tilt will be demonstrated for both right and left handed children.

 <p><b>Posture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feet flat on the floor</li> <li>• Body one fist from the table</li> <li>• Back and hips pressed against the chair</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Pencil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tripod grip</li> <li>• Wrist resting on the table below the line</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Paper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tilt the paper</li> <li>• Check seating position supports tilt</li> <li>• Non writing hand on the paper</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Pressure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm up your shoulders, wrist and fingers</li> <li>• Check your pencil hold</li> <li>• Think about 'gliding' across the page</li> </ul>
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Children are offered a range of writing tools and ergonomic equipment in line with their individual developmental needs. During Year 3, children may move towards using a pen as appropriate. We do not offer a 'pen licence' to children in order to foster an inclusive approach for all. For some children, a pencil may continue to offer sensory feedback that supports letter formation.

For a while, children may benefit from the opportunity to use double lines to guide their practice. This can be particularly appropriate during Year 2 (see examples below). Children will be offered adequate line spacing that is appropriate for their understanding.



- To begin, children first learn the **shape** of letters.
- Next they understand that **space** need to be left between the words. Lolly sticks can support this development. N.B spacing can be difficult for left handed children.
- They learn about the **size** of letters ie ascenders/descenders. This can be supported by the use of double lines.
- Children learn to **sit** letters on the 'base' line.
- Once accurate formation of individual letters is achieved, the **stringing** (joining) of letters is introduced. Children also learn which letters are not joined together. Once they learn to join they should use this for all writing to develop automaticity.
- For right handed writers, a slightly forward leaning **slant** may be encouraged / developed to improve fluency and speed
- Increasing **speed** can affect handwriting. Writers need to be able to write with speed and be legible. Gradual building of words, then phrases, then sentences can support this process.
- Finally children are taught to develop a **style** of writing that suits them. The also learn that different tasks may require a different 'quality' and adapt accordingly ie note taking versus job applications.

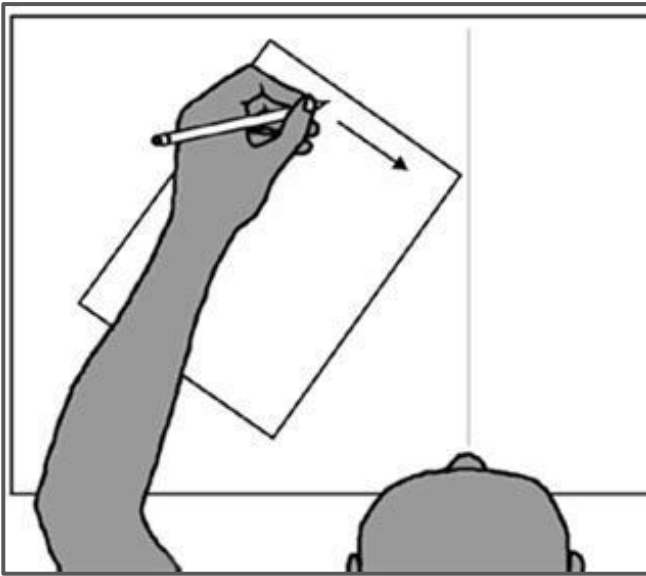


When supporting children in class who may be experiencing difficulties with their handwriting, it is important to consider where they are on their 'S' factor journey. This can help to provide in class support or additional intervention (see intervention and pages 19-20 for more information).



# Left handed Writers

Children who write with their left hand need a different, practical approach to handwriting. They 'push' a pencil across the page as opposed to a 'pull' technique in right handed writers. Sometimes they can face challenges 'seeing' what they are writing due to their hand position. They may be more likely to 'smudge' their work. Simple, practical strategies can help them to succeed in their writing development. Not all will be appropriate to all children; each child is unique in their needs and requirements.



- A higher seat may sometimes help
- A sloped writing surface
- Sit on left side of right handed writers so their elbows do not 'bump'
- Paper tilted clockwise in the left handed writing position
- Investigation of arm / hand / pen hold positions to find one that suits
- An exploration of letter formation and joining to suit individual development
- Good lighting so their hand does not cast shadows

# Hybrid Writers

We live in a world where the use of technology is a day to day form of communication and learning. Children need to learn to be proficient in writing using both paper and pen as well as a keyboard. We discuss with the children the benefits and purpose of both of these approaches.

Children at the school will also be taught how to touch type using the QWERTY keyboard and to develop speed as they progress through the school.

For some children the use of a keyboard may be a more appropriate approach to support their written communication. This will be determined by the SENDCO in collaboration with class teachers. Typing may not always be a 'magic cure' for handwriting difficulties as some children may experience difficulties with both. A child centred approach will be vital in determining this support.



# Pencil Grip

The dynamic tripod grip is effective in supporting comfortable handwriting for children.

To achieve this, children need to:

- Ensure their wrist is supported on a writing surface
- Their wrist is positioned below the writing line
- Pencils need to be held around 2 cms from the tip
- Have the grip modelled and explicitly taught

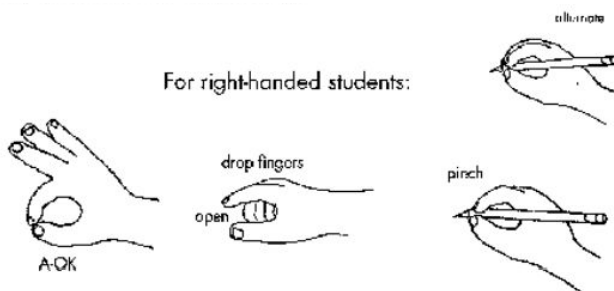


There are many different approaches to teaching the correct position for the dynamic pencil grip. Below are a few common ones. Take a child centred approach to finding a strategy that works

## A-OK

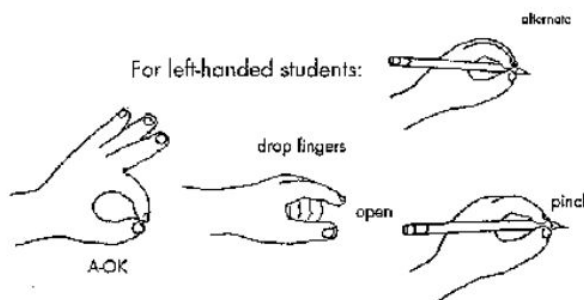
Teach children how to hold the pencil correctly. This is the A-OK way to help children.

1. Make the A-OK sign.
2. Drop the fingers.  
Open the A-OK.
3. Pinch the pencil.



The pencil is pinched between the thumb pad and the index finger pad. The pencil rests on the middle finger.

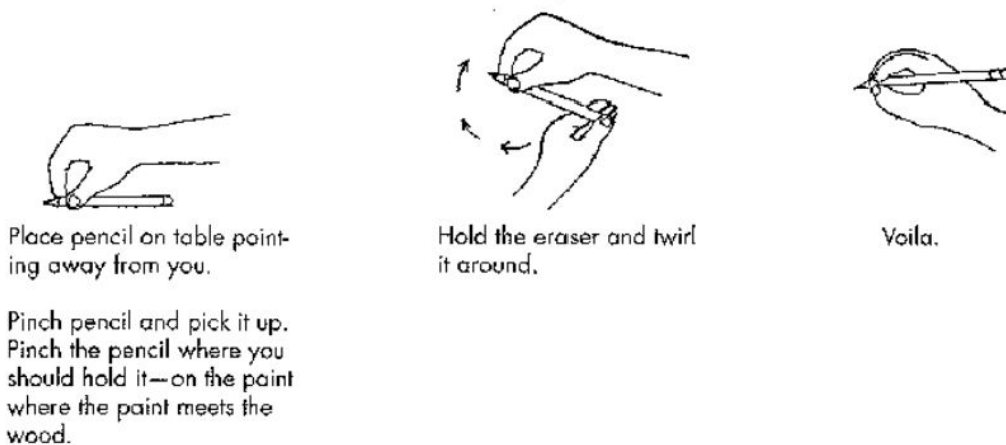
A good alternate grip is a pinch with the thumb and two fingers. The pencil rests on the ring finger.



## Flip the Pencil Trick

Here is another way. It is a trick that someone (in Buffalo, I think) showed me and I've found it so effective and so much fun I've been sharing it ever since. Children like to do it and it puts the pencil in the correct position.

Illustrated for right-handed students



Not all children may achieve the same grip after support. After years of using a grip, around the age of 7, it may become difficult to alter or change a grip. Consider if it causes pain, discomfort, fatigues or affects legibility?

In some circumstances, in consultation with the SENDCO or specialist teachers, it may be advisable to leave the child to use what they have learnt.

# Equipment

There is a huge variation in children's physical height as well as their development. Consider the seating arrangements in the class that best support correct posture and position when writing.

Children will be offered a wide range of writing instruments from Nursery to Year 6. Not all writing instruments will suit all children so some exploring may need to take place. Choice allows the children to find the shape and style that works best for them. Gel pens that dry quickly may be of benefit to left handed writers. Some children may need the support of pencil grips or adaptive equipment that facilitates comfort, paper position and the tripod grip.



# Assessment

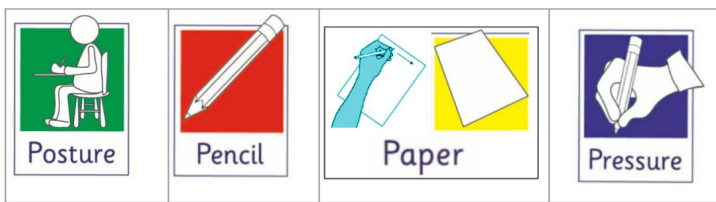
We formatively assess children's handwriting in all written activities during the school day.

At the start of each year we also carry out an assessment of each child's individual understanding of letter formation/ sizing and speed.

Key Stage 1: individual letter formation for upper / lower case letters and numbers. In Year 2 this will also accompany the writing of the sentence:

The quick brown fox  
jumps over the lazy dog

Key Stage 2: The same sentence to be repeated to as many times as they can in 2 minutes to assess understanding of joining letters and speed of writing.



Children's understanding and progress against the 'S' and 'P' factors will also be considered in these assessments.



Occasionally, a more specialised assessment may be required.

This will be provided in consultation with the SENDCO, class teachers and specialist teachers at the school. Eyesight difficulties may also need to be considered or checked.

# Supporting Handwriting Difficulties

Up to approximately 27% of children may experience handwriting difficulties during their time at school; the need for support is not always a cause for concern. It is also worth considering in the Early Years if children are 'chronologically younger' than others. When working with children who require additional support it is vital that the effort of the child is celebrated and that success for them is not dependent on 'neatness' or 'speed'. Our daily conversations with these children is fundamental in maintaining a positive experience; **every interaction can be an intervention.**

## Specialist

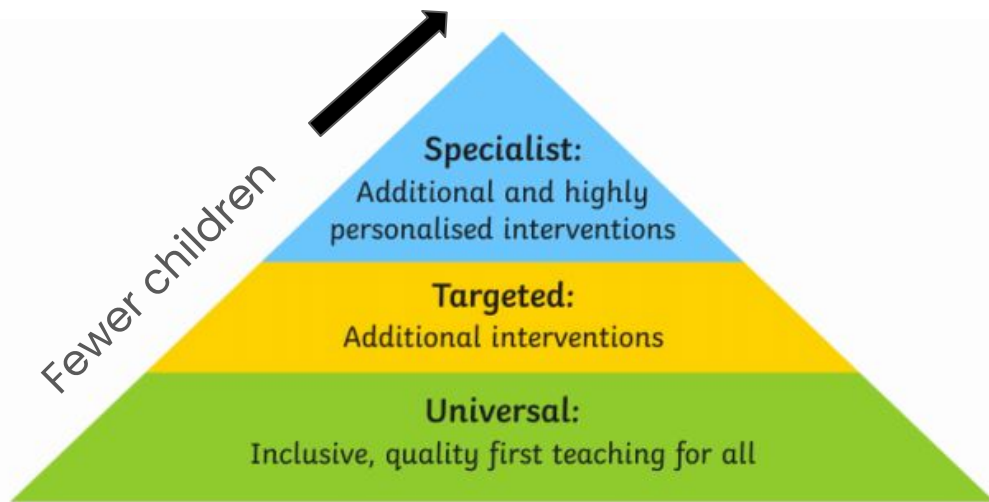
- Blocks of 1:1 support
- Use of evidence informed approaches
- Practice, practice, practice
- Explicit teaching
- Collaboration with parents and a range of specialists

## Targeted

- Teacher 'check ins'
- Choice/autonomy
- Celebrating effort
- Interventions that work on skill development / increased participation

## Universal

- Physical activities
- Choice of tools and resources
- Additional opportunities within the day to complete work
- Creative ways to inspire writing



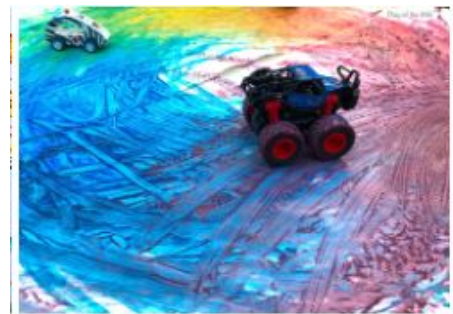
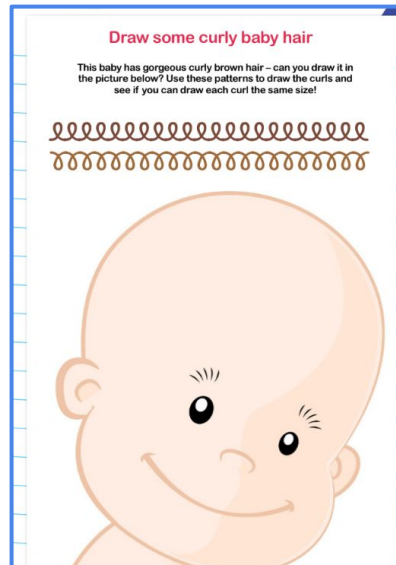
Intervention sessions offered for children should be

- Include a specific focus upon an identified area of development. The use of the 'S' factors can help to determine developmental next steps.
- Allow children the opportunity to form letters themselves to strengthen neural pathways; tracing can be limited in creating independent letter formation.
- Provide specialist tools as appropriate.
- Be goal oriented eg number formation, capital letters, letters in name, correct formation of ascender letters.



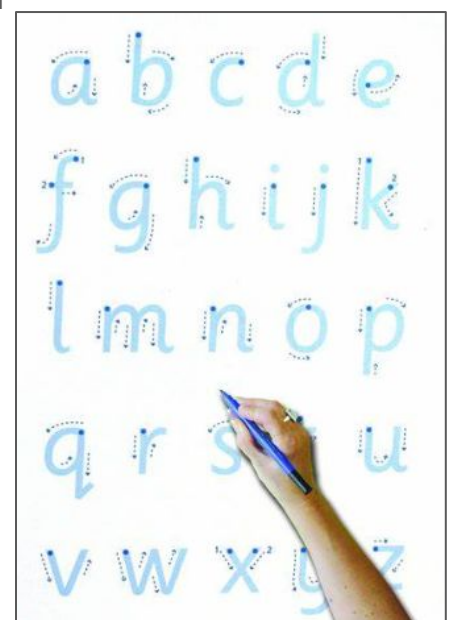
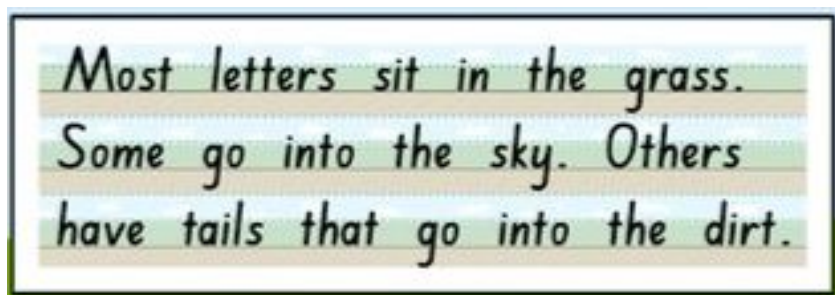
# Supporting handwriting at home

Young children need the opportunity to experiment with marks and patterns in multisensory, fun ways. Offer a variety of tools and surfaces to work on. Be prepared to get messy and creative to help foster a positive attitude towards communicating in print!



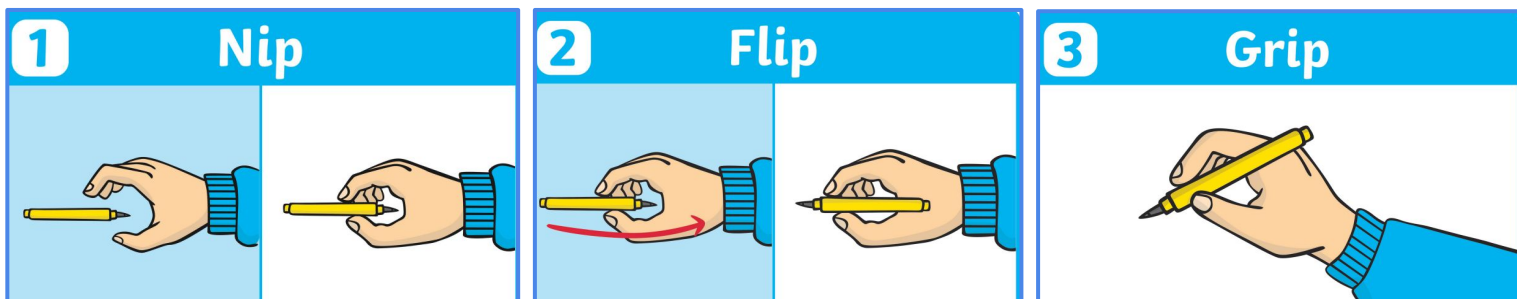
Use everyday experiences to encourage meaningful writing opportunities such as writing shopping lists, diaries, schedules, to do lists / memos.

For more 'deliberate' practice of skills, consider where your child is on the 'S' factor journey and support them with this. Support them in the correct formation of the letters in their name first, then the alphabet and number formation. Double lined paper can help to support their understanding of sizing.

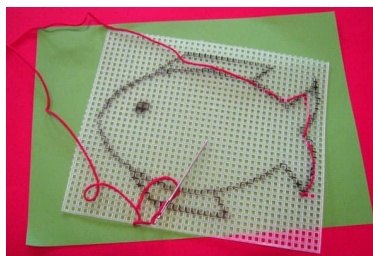




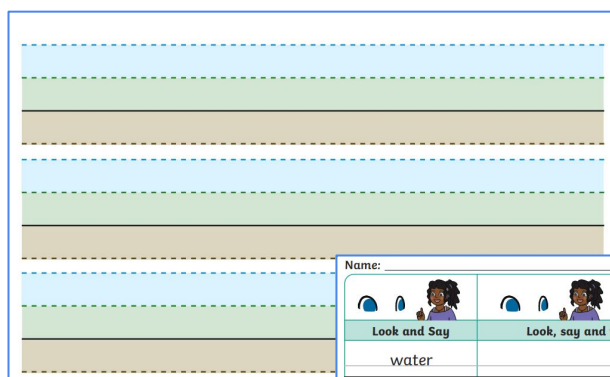
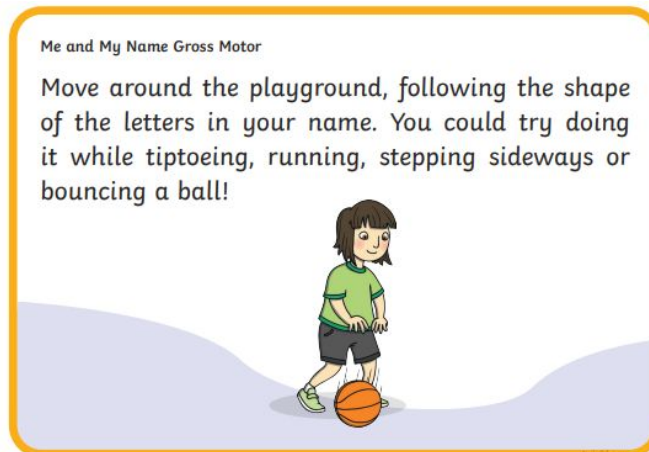
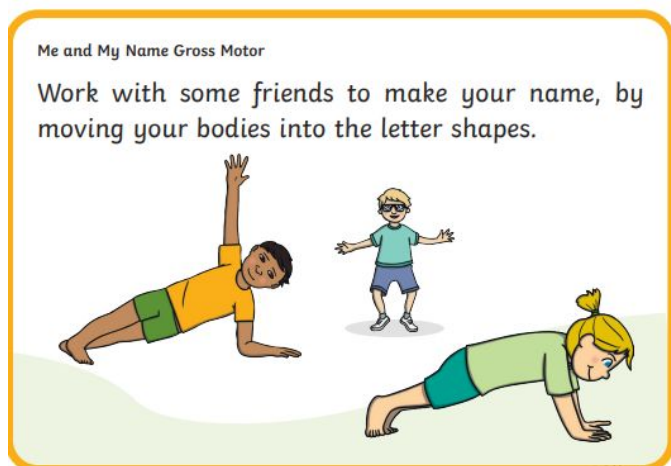
## Supporting Tripod grip



Fine motor skills activities can help to develop readiness to 'grip' a pencil eg threading, sewing, lego, tweezers, button fastening and zips.



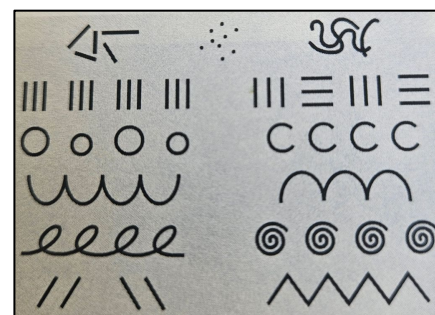
Remember that the development of handwriting skills is dependent upon having good physical control of your body. Develop strength, balance and coordination with gross motor games. You could combine this with practicing letter shapes.



Guided handwriting paper can help with shape and sizing. Combine spelling and handwriting practice.

Name: _____		Date: _____
Look and Say	Look, say and write	Cover and write
water		
away		
good		
want		
over		
how		
did		
man		

Practice patterns and look for these shapes in letters.



Use lolly sticks to help children with spacing between words.



# Appendix

Year Group	Handwriting Expectations in the Early Years Statutory Framework and The National Curriculum
<b>EYFS (Reception)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</li> <li>- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</li> <li>- Show accuracy and care when drawing. (ELG: Writing &amp; Physical Development – fine motor skills)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.</li> <li>- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.</li> <li>- Form capital letters.</li> <li>- Form digits 0–9.</li> <li>- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ and practice these.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.</li> <li>- Start using diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters and understand which letters are best left unjoined.</li> <li>- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size and orientation.</li> <li>- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters.</li> <li>- Increase legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to improve legibility, consistency and quality.</li> <li>- Ensure writing is neat, joined, and appropriate for the task.</li> <li>- Use joined handwriting consistently in independent writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed:</li> <li>- Choose letter shapes and joins appropriately.</li> <li>- Select suitable writing implements.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.</li> <li>- Write fluently and confidently in a consistent style.</li> <li>- Use appropriate presentation and style for different tasks.</li> </ul>

# TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING LETTER FORMATION

- Provide demonstrations when introducing and teaching letter shapes. The *Nelson Handwriting* online teaching software is useful for this; you can also use whiteboards or flipcharts.
- Observe individuals as much as possible while they practise. This enables the teacher to recognise and correct bad habits as they arise.
- Talk the children through the process using appropriate language.
- Encourage children to verbalise what they are doing from time to time. This gives a window into the thought processes they are using as they write.
- Writing involves visual and motor skills. Use the following ideas to reinforce the teaching of letter shapes:
  - Encourage children to form letters by drawing them in the air.
  - Finger trace over tactile letters, on desk or table tops.
  - Write over dotted or 'shadow' writing.
  - Draw round templates.
  - Write in sand with a finger or stick.
  - Write with chalk on a chalkboard.
  - Write letters boldly with a wax candle and then apply a colour wash.
  - Form letters with pegs on a pegboard or with beads in Plasticine.
  - Finger trace the outline of a letter on the back of the person in front of you.
  - Form letters with fingers and/or bodies, individually and in groups.
- Draw attention to the connection between letters and the related writing patterns. Encouraging children to use the basic handwriting patterns both for practice and for decorative purposes is a valuable technique for fostering fluency and rhythmic movement.

## THE LANGUAGE OF LETTER FORMATION

It is helpful if all staff and parents use a clear, consistent set of instructions for describing the correct letter formation. Some schools will have developed their own set of instructions and will feel comfortable using them. A suggested set of instructions is given below. These instructions are used on the teaching software for Starter Level and Book 1A and 1B, and on the flashcards.

Letter/number	Audio
0	Start at the top and go round.
1	Start at the top and go down.
2	Start at the top, curve round and down, and across.
3	Start at the top. Go round, and round.
4	Start at the top. Go down, across, lift your pencil and go down.
5	Start at the top. Go down, and round. Lift your pencil up to the top, and across.
6	Start at the top right. Curve down, up, and in till you touch.
7	Start at the top, across, and diagonally down.
8	Start at the top, go round, and curve back the other way, and up, cross, and up till you touch.
9	Start near the top. Go round, up and down.
a	Start at the top. Go all the way round, up to the top, down and flick.
A	Down, lift, down, lift and across.
b	Start at the top. Go straight down, back up, and all the way round.
B	Down, lift, and round till you stop, and round till you stop.
c	Start at the top, and go round.
C	Round.
d	Start at the middle. Go all the way round, all the way up to the top, straight down, and flick.
D	Down, lift, and round.



e	Start near the bottom. Go up, around, and down.
E	Down, and across, lift, across at the top, lift, across in the middle.
f (print)	Start at the top. Go round, and straight down. Lift your pencil, and cross the 'f' in the middle.
F	Down, lift, across at the top, lift, across in the middle.
f (cursive)	Start at the top. Go round, straight down, and round. Lift your pencil, and cross the 'f' in the middle.
g	Start at the top. Go all the way round, up to the top, straight down, and round.
G	Round, up, and down.
h	Start at the top. Go straight down, up and over, down, and flick.
H	Down, lift, down, lift and across in the middle.
i	Start at the top. Go straight down, and flick. Lift your pencil and put a dot at the top.
I	Down.
j	Start at the top. Go straight down, and round. Lift your pencil and put a dot at the top.
J	Down, and round.
k (print)	Start at the top, and go straight down. Lift your pencil and place it next to the middle. Go into the middle, out from the middle, and flick.
K	Down, lift, out from the middle up, lift, out from the middle down.
k (cursive)	Start at the top. Go straight down, back up, over and round, down and flick.
l	Start at the top. Go straight down, and flick.
L	Down, and across.
m	Start at the top. Go down, up and over, down, up and over, down, and flick.
M	Down, lift, down and across, up and across, and down.
n	Start at the top. Go down, up and over, down and flick.
N	Down, lift, down and across, and up.
o	Start at the top, and go all the way round.
O	Round.
p	Start at the top. Go straight down, up to the top, and all the way round.
P	Down, lift, and round till you stop.
q	Start at the top. Go all the way round, up to the top, straight down, and flick.
Q	All the way round, lift, and down.
r	Start at the top. Go straight down, back up and over, and flick.
R	Down, lift, and round till you stop, out from the middle, and down.
s	Start at the top. Go round, down, and back round.
S	Round, and back round.
t	Start at the top. Go straight down, and round. Lift your pencil, and cross the 't'.
T	Down, lift, and across.
u	Start at the top. Go down, round, back up to the top, down, and flick.
U	Down, round, and up.
v	Start at the top. Go down, and back up to the top.
V	Down, and up.
w	Start at the top. Go down, back up to the top, down, and back up to the top.
W	Down, up, down, and up.
x	Start at the top. Go down to the bottom. Lift your pencil to the top, and down across the other way.
X	Down and across, lift, down and across.
y	Start at the top. Go down and round, back up to the top, then straight down, and round.
Y	Down and across, lift, and all the way down and across.
z	Start at the top. Go straight across, diagonally to the bottom, and across.
Z	Straight across, down and across, and straight across.

## The joins

Joins between letters increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility. In *Nelson Handwriting*, the 26 lower case letters have been divided into five groups according to the nature of the joins they require. There are four types of join and a set of 'break' letters, after which joins are never made. (See page 9 for details of these sets of letters.) The joins are taught in Pupil Book 1A and 1B and practice is provided in all subsequent books.

## Joining

Joining letters is introduced midway through year one, and/or once children can confidently form and write letters correctly. This helps with spelling, as research tells us that seeing words as a whole, rather than a series of isolated letters, helps us memorise and spell words correctly. Joined writing also helps pupils write more, increasing the speed of writing and fluency.

## The first join

The join from any member of Set 1 to any member of Set 2 is made with exactly the same movement as the upswing in the swings pattern.

- When the first diagonal join is introduced, from the bottom of a small letter to the top of the next, we teach the diagonal join to Set 1 letters first (e.g. ed, eg, ac, as).
- This is followed by the diagonal join to Set 2 letters (e.g. iu, ig, iy).
- Then, diagonal joins to Set 3 letters (e.g. ar, an, am, ap).
- Finally, diagonal join to Set 4 letters (e.g. aw, ew, ex, u, x).

## The second join

The join from any member of Set 1 to any member of Set 3 is the same as the first join except that the join meets the ascender halfway up the letter and then continues to the top of the ascender.

Teaching the second handwriting join is linked to letter families too:

- The second join, a diagonal join from the bottom of a small letter to the top of an ascender, is taught using Set 1 letters first, then Set 2, 3 and 4.
- For example, to Set 1 letters *if, ef, uf*; to Set 2 letters *il, it*; Set 3 letters *ck, ch*.

## The third join

The join from any member of Set 4 to any member of Set 2 is a shallow horizontal curve because the join is from x-height of one letter to the x-height of the next.

Teaching the third join, the horizontal join from the top of one letter, across and to the top of the next, is also taught using letter families

- The third join to Set 1 letters (e.g. wa, wo, fo); to Set 2 letters (on, om); Set 3 letters (or, re, om).



## The fourth join

The join from any member of Set 4 to any member of Set 3 is the same as the first join except that it goes from the x-height of one letter to the top of the ascender of the next.

The fourth join is the join from the top of a small letter to the top of an ascender.

- To Set 1 letters (e.g. of, ff); to set 2 (e.g. wl, rl, ok); Set 3 (e.g. ob, oh, ok).

## The break letters

Joins are never made after the letters in this set. No join is ever made to or from the letter z. A small space should be left after each break letter so that it is spaced as evenly as the joined letters.

The letters e and s have slightly varying forms because their shapes depend on the nature of the preceding join. Attention is drawn to these special cases in Pupil Books 1A, 1B and 2.

As the size of writing decreases, children should be encouraged to decrease the space between words. By the time children are using Pupil Book 1A this space should be the width of a lower case letter a, and the space between two lines of writing should be about twice the height of this letter.

## Teaching the joined style

- In the early stages the correct movements are more important than the appearance of the writing. Children should be discouraged from forming writing with incorrect movements, even if they manage to achieve results that appear satisfactory. However, in later stages a more individual style based around *Nelson Handwriting* is encouraged
- As joined handwriting is a movement skill, it is essential for teachers to provide demonstrations. The *Nelson Handwriting* online teaching software is useful for this; you can also use whiteboards or flipcharts.
- Observe individuals as much as possible while they practise. This enables the teacher to recognise and correct bad habits as they arise.
- Talk the children through the process, using appropriate language.
- Encourage children to verbalise what they are doing from time to time. This gives a window into the thought processes they are using as they write.
- Most children will need extra practice with making the joins. The Pupil Books and Resources and Assessment books provide ample material for this.
- Encouraging children to use the basic handwriting patterns both for practice and for decorative purposes is a valuable technique.

## Part 2 'S' Factors as a CHECKLIST FOR QUICK EVALUATION of handwriting by a student or teacher (see also Part 1)

### Notes

This is an effective way of giving older students (Y5+) the knowledge of elements of good handwriting and so enable them to make improvements in their own writing.

A good way to begin is for the students to write a few lines or a pangram (a sentence that contains all 26 letters) e.g.

**The five boxing wizards jump quickly.**

### Test

The students look carefully at their writing, and consider each 'S' factor in turn by answering the question. They give themselves a grade for each 'S' Factor separately.

### Action

The students, with the guidance of the teacher, might:

- Repeat the sentence, trying to improve their score for that particular 'S'.
- Set up some practice activities, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to improve the 'S' that needs attention. To be effective, these are best practised in short, frequent sessions.
- Gradually use the improvement in regular school writing. See also *Tips For Teaching: Helping the Older Student*

### Sitting on the line

#### Q Do all the letters 'sit' on the writing line?

##### Notes

This is a good 'S' to start with as it is simple for students to understand and many can improve their performance fairly easily. Success can boost confidence and facilitate tackling perhaps more challenging questions.

~~paranets and roads were~~ A large fawn jumped quickly

This boy improved his writing immediately when he concentrated on sitting the letters on the line.

### Size

#### Q1 Are the letters written at the correct size and position?

##### Notes (see the 'Size' section in Part 1)

Many children who understand the rules write particular letters too large or small; common faults being k and s written too large and letters at the end of a word written too small.

##### Test

Draw a line along the top of the small letters to show the evenness of size:

captured and there canoe went on

#### Q2 Is the writing a suitable size?

##### Notes

Some children write minutely small, some write too large for the space so the ascenders and descenders of the letters touch the writing above and below and become less legible. Most students, given encouragement and flexible resources, e.g. paper with different line spacing, can develop an acceptable size.

The Five boxing wizards jump quickly A large fawn jumped quickly over boxes. In school we have maths, French and

This was written by the same boy on the same type of paper after encouragement to write smaller.

### Space

#### Q1 Are letters spaced evenly without bumping together?

**Notes** Letters that touch each other are difficult to read (see below). Irregularly spaced writing does not look good.

I'm so glad I found you  
I'm not gonna lose you

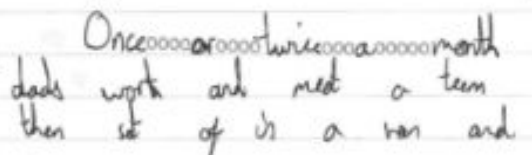
## Space cont, Q2 Is the space between words consistent?

### Notes

Too little or too much space between words can make reading more difficult. A simple rule that works for any age and both left and right-handed writers is to leave enough space for 1 or 2 letter 'o' s between words.

### Test

Children can test the evenness and size of their spacing by using a contrasting colour to draw in as many o's as will fit between words. (see right)



## Shape

### Q Are all the letters legible and formed correctly?

### Notes

As writing matures some letters can lose their legibility e.g. a, g, d, o are not closed

### Test

Students sometimes find it easier to spot illegible letters in someone else's writing - perhaps anonymously.

### Action

Work out the ideal way to form the difficult letter, then practise it in strings - dddd - and then in words, before attempting to use the new forms in normal work.

## Stringing together

### Q Are most of the letters joined?

### Notes

It is helpful for a student to become confident in writing in a simple joined style before making any adaptations. (see 'Stringing' and 'Style' in Part 1)

### Action

Writing patterns made from single letters or pairs of joined letters can be effective ways of practising.

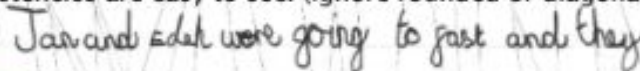


## Slant

### Q Is the writing slanting/sloping in a consistent direction?

### Test

Use a coloured pen to make all the down lines longer so inconsistencies are easy to see. (Ignore rounded or diagonal letters)



### Action

Practise writing small words using letters l, h, b, i, u, y: hill, little etc. and concentrate on parallel down strokes.

## Speed

### Q Is the writing fast enough for the student's needs?

### Notes

Trying to speed up poor writing can create real problems. It is therefore advisable to address the first six 'S' Factors and achieve as high as standard as possible before attempting to speed up the writing. (see 'Speed' in Part 1)

### Test

Students can time themselves for 1 or 2 minutes or longer when writing words or phrases.

### Action

Increasing the speed of functional, legible writing requires regular practice. (See 'Speed' in Part 1) Other ideas can be found in *Tips for Teaching: Speeding Up*.

## Style

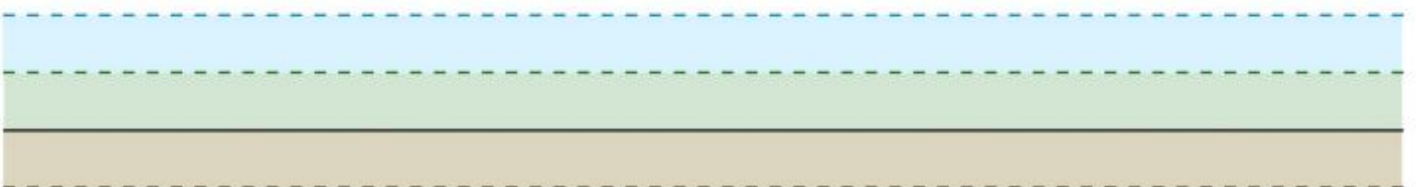
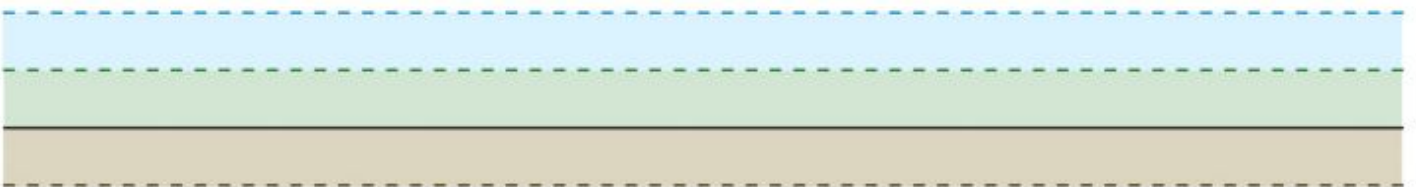
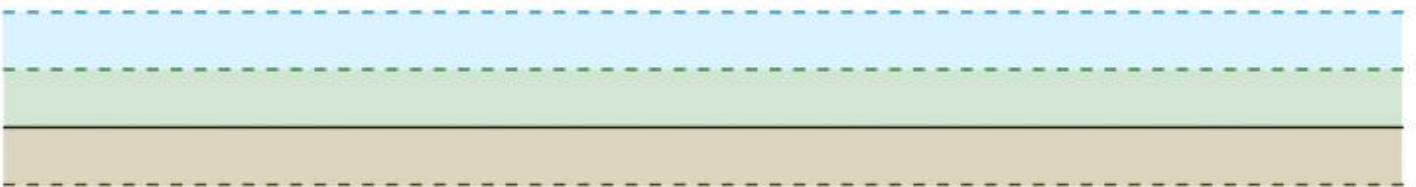
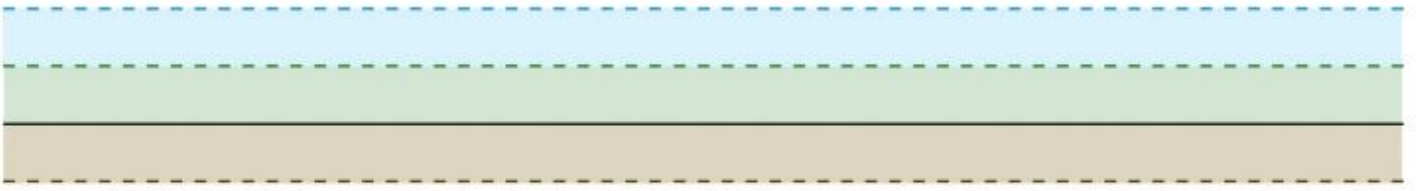
### Q Is the writing consistent and fluent? (See Style in Part 1)

Other *Tips for Teaching* that might be of use: 'P' Checks, Above Year 4, Basic Steps, Speeding Up, Helping the Older Student, Patterns

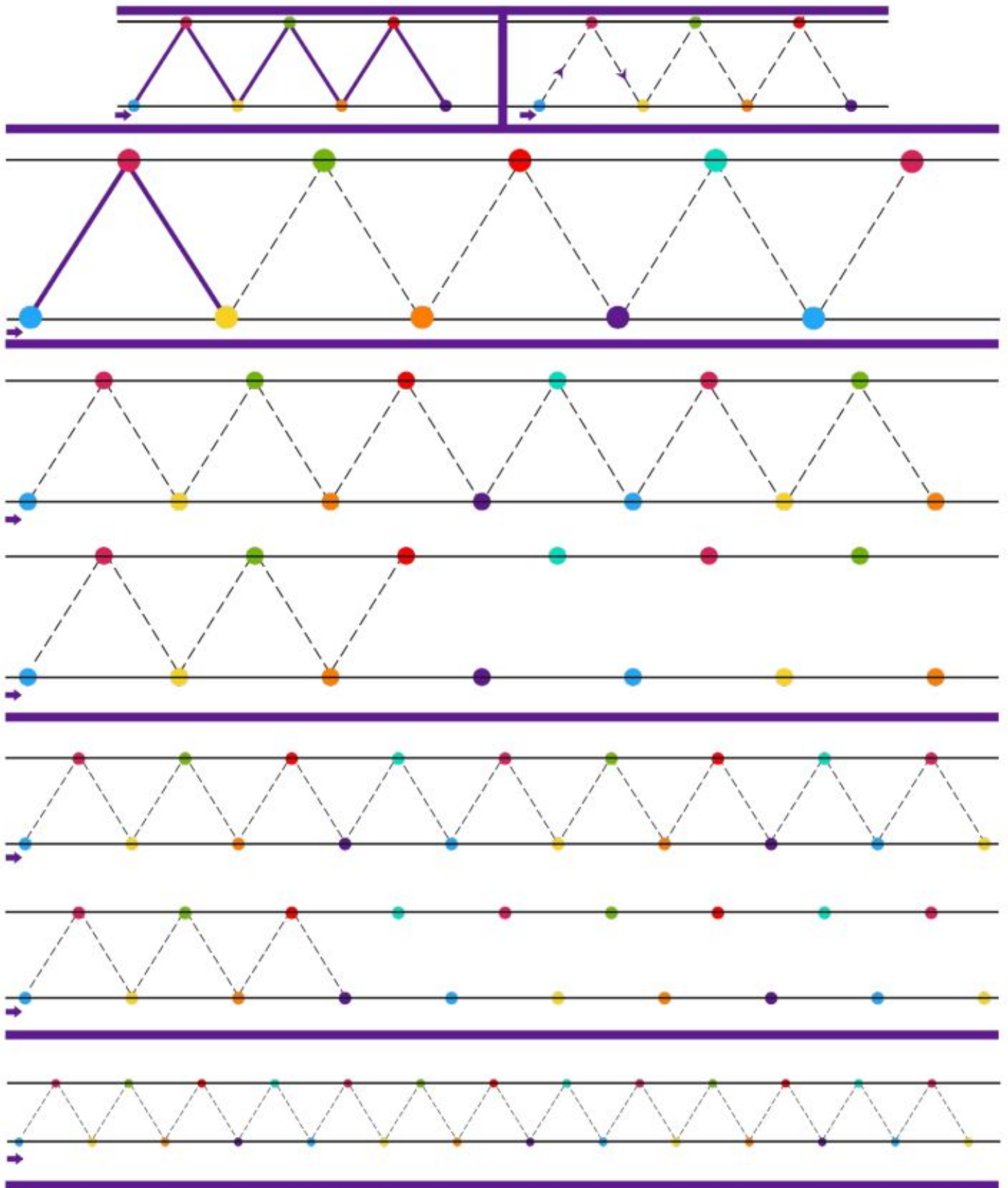
Revised by Gwen Dornan From *Tips for Teaching: 'S' Rules* and articles in *Handwriting Today*, the journal of the National Handwriting Association, by members of the Association.



# Resources to support handwriting at home

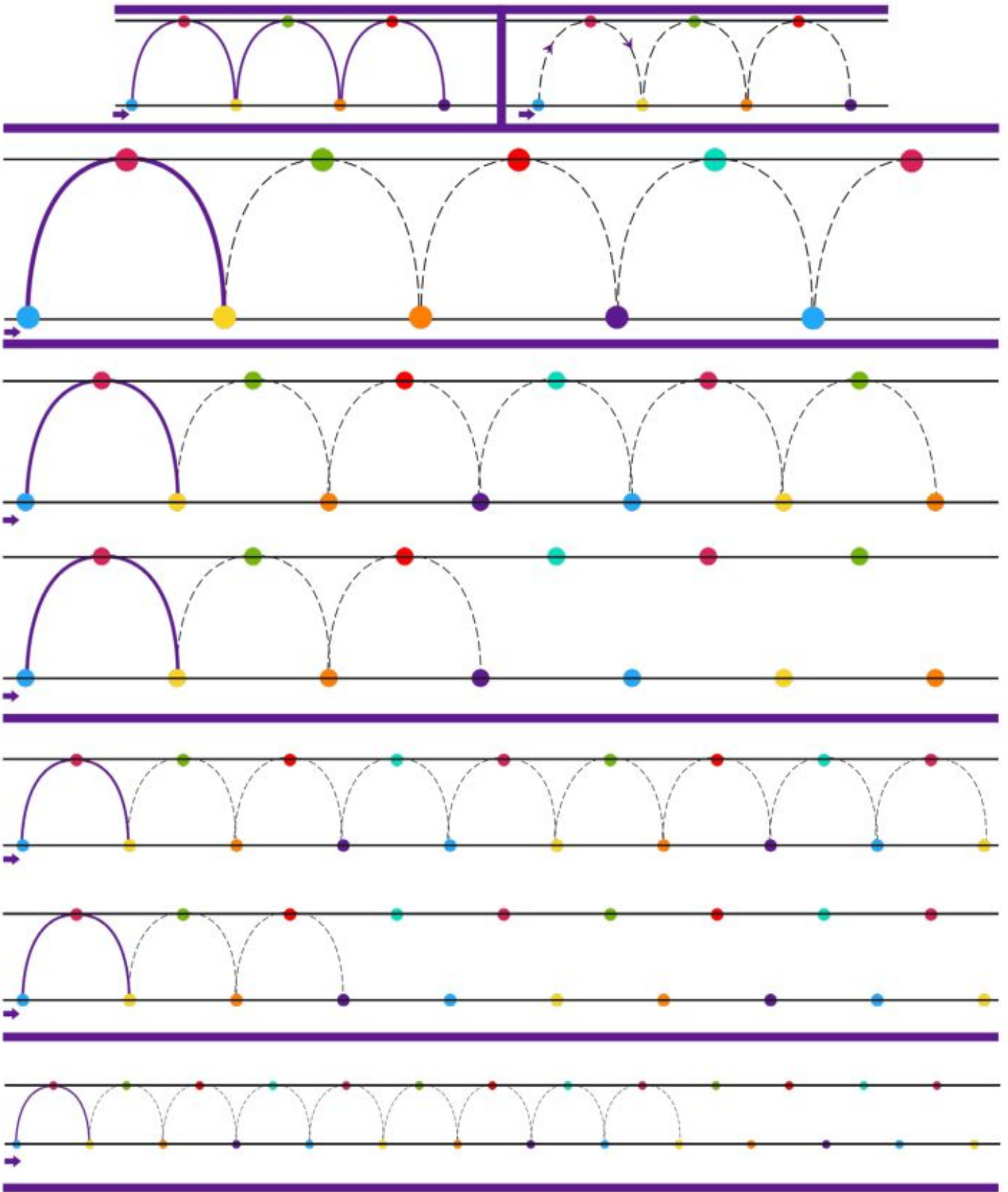


# Practicing Pencil Control

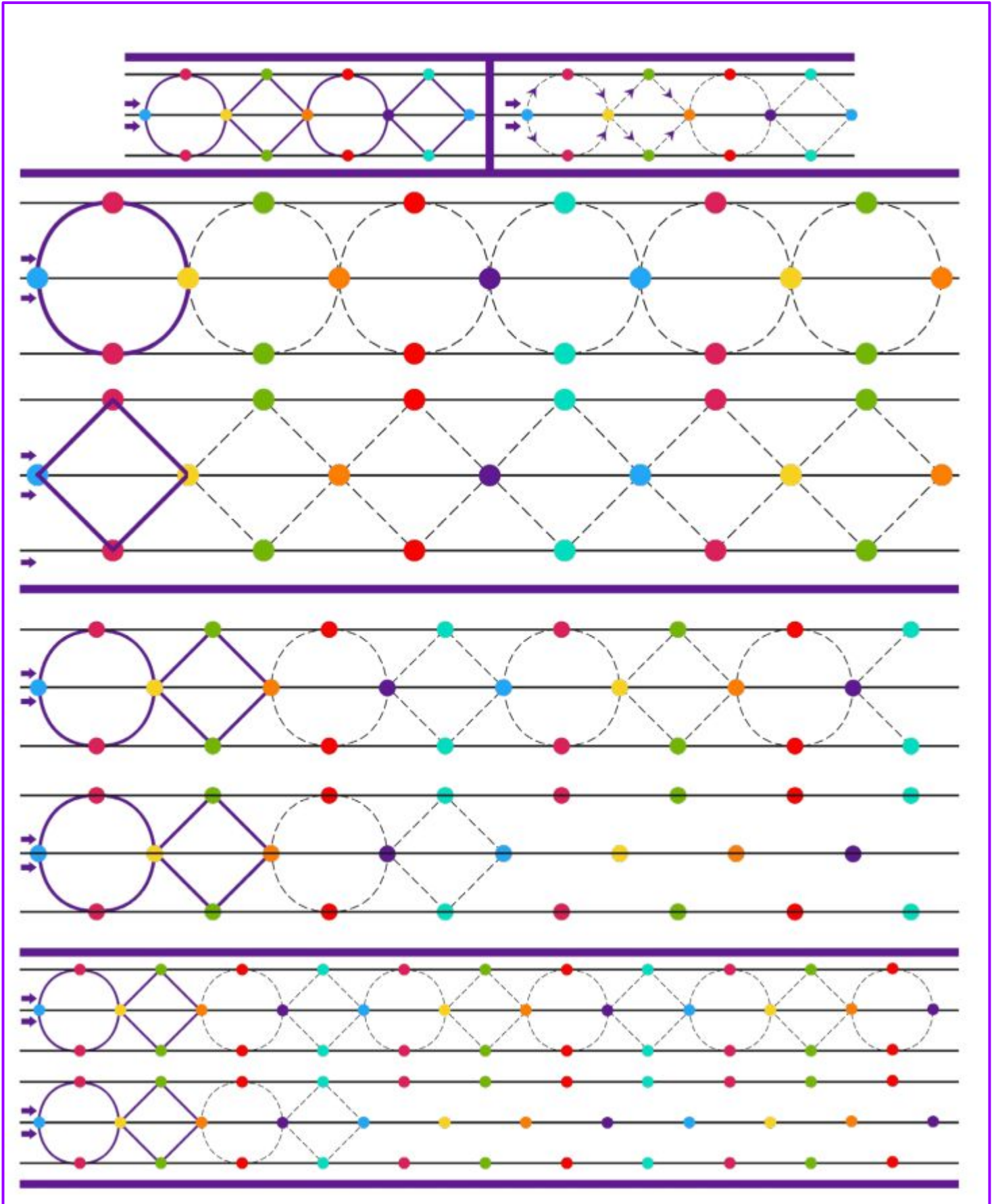




# Practicing Pencil Control



# Practicing Pencil Control



0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8

9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff

Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt

Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



# TIPS FOR TEACHING

National Handwriting Association   
Promoting good practice

## Key-boarding

### Touch-typing and Effective Use of Keyboards in Class

Digital communication is so important in 21C that the effective use of a keyboard is an essential educational tool for all children. For those with SEND or handwriting difficulties typing can provide an alternative to handwriting. Evidence suggests that to be able to type effectively all children should receive explicit keyboard instruction from the start.

#### The benefits of keyboarding:

- Provides consistency
- Produces legible script
- May be easier to learn than handwriting for those with handwriting difficulties
- Is a necessary skill for any student.

#### The advantages of touch-typing over other methods of keyboarding:

- Touch-typing uses all the fingers, whilst looking at the screen or speaker (creative), or visual source (copying). Touch-typists never look at the keyboard.
- Reduces burden on working memory allowing brain to process higher-order writing skills (such as composing).
- Reduces likelihood of physical discomfort (such as head or neck aches due to changing position).
- Produces faster speeds than other typing methods.
- Spotting spelling errors is easier as the typist looks at the screen.

#### When is the best time to learn?

Below 8 years old	The child is likely to be physically and emotionally immature
8 – 9 years old	Still a little early but useful for those with severe handwriting problems or other SEND issues.
10 - 11 years old	The best time from a motor learning point of view. It also prepares a child for secondary school when keyboards are used more frequently and where bad habits could hinder the development of speed.



