



# SMART Handwriting Approach

July 2022

Guidelines for staff and pupils to ensure consistent approach to handwriting across school.

## Structure of Lesson

### How often should I teach handwriting?

Handwriting should be taught daily at the beginning of each writing lesson and should last around 10 minutes. Teachers must model handwriting and observe children practising their handwriting to address any errors.

### Warm Up

All handwriting lessons should begin with a warm up to build hand and wrist strength, upper body strength and to improve co-ordination. [Handwriting Warm Up Videos](#)

### Writing Position

The correct seating position and the positioning of children's book on their table can make a noticeable difference to the quality of their handwriting. During handwriting lessons, children should be taught how to sit correctly. This should be reinforced throughout all lessons.

- Both feet should be flat on the floor
- Elbows should resting off the edge of the table
- Their bottom should be at the back of the chair
- Their head and shoulders should lean slightly forward
- They should keep their knees bent

### Pen/Pencil Grip

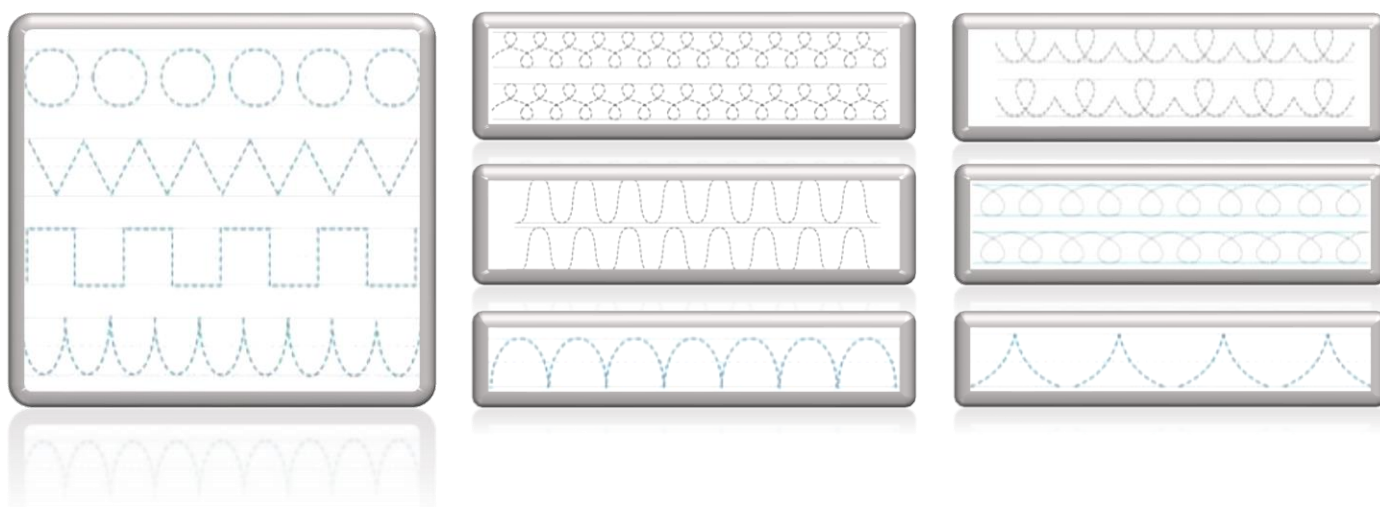
In all handwriting lessons, children should be reminded how to hold their pen/pencil correctly. Try to encourage children to use the tripod grasp. If children can't hold their pen/pencil try using a pencil grip. This should be reinforced throughout all lessons.



Left handed children should be reminded of the best positioning of their paper to allow them to view their writing. Encourage them to tilt their paper to the right. It may also be useful for them to hold their pen/pencil slightly higher (about 2cm from the tip) so they can see their writing. Try to ensure that left handed children sit on the left side of a table so their elbows don't collide with a right handed child.

## Handwriting Patterns

Handwriting is a fine motor skill. This is why children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often. Children should regularly practise handwriting patterns in order to achieve a fluent, speedy and legible handwriting style.



## Letter Formation

Teachers must model how to form the focus letter/s for the lesson using the RWI letter rhyme. When modelling, it is good practice to either use a goose neck and lined paper or flipchart paper rather than using the IWB. Explain to children where you start writing to ensure that they all start in the correct place.

Children should be taught how to form letters in letter families:

- The Ladder Family (l, I, u, t, y, j)
- The One-Armed Robot Family (n, m, h, k, b, p, r)
- The Curly Caterpillar Family (c, a, d, e, s, g, f, q, o)
- The Zigzag Monster Family (z, v, w, x)

The focus letter/s should be written in children's books so they can see WAGOLL. This way they can see the letter exactly the way it should be written. For example if your focus letters are z, v, w and x then these should be written perfectly, at the beginning of a separate line each, for the children to see. Children should practise writing 3-4 of each of letter.

z

v

w

x

Once a child is secure forming a letter accurately, there is no expectation for staff to write it in their book prior to the lesson.

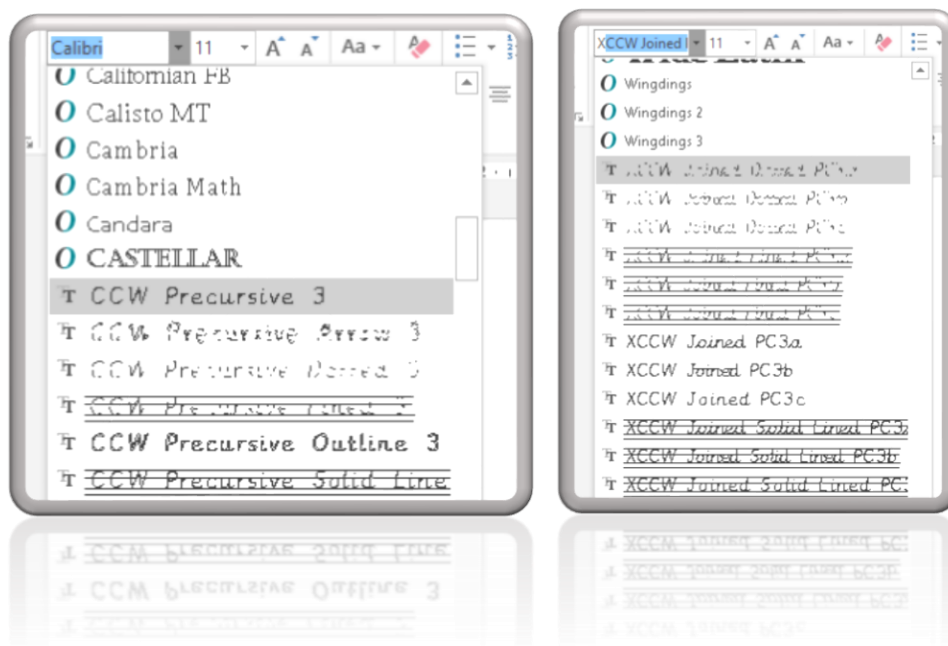
During the lesson, staff need to check children's work and address any errors. **All letter formation errors must be acknowledged.** These should then be practised again underneath either within the lesson or at the beginning of the next lesson.

## Letter Formation Rhymes

<p><b>The Ladder Family</b></p> <p>l – down the long leg i – down the body and dot for the head u – down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle t – down the tower, across the tower y – down a horn, up a horn and under head j – down his body, curl, dot for his head</p>	<p><b>The One-Armed Robot Family</b></p> <p>n – down Nobby and over his net m – down Maisie, mountain, mountain h – down the head, to his hooves and over his back k – down the kangaroo's body tail and leg b – down the laces to the heel and around the toe p – down the pirates plait and around his face r – down the robots back and curl over his arm</p>
<p><b>The Curly Caterpillar Family</b></p> <p>c – curl around the caterpillar a – around the apple and down the leaf d – around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet e – lift off the top and scoop out the egg s – slither down the snake g – around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl f – down the stem and draw the leaves q – round her head, up past her earring, down her hair and flick o – all around the orange</p>	<p><b>The Zigzag Monster Family</b></p> <p>z – zig-zag-zig v – down a wing, up a wing w – down, up, down, up x – down the arm and leg, repeat the other side</p>

## Handwriting Font

Any typed work should use the CCW Precursive 3 font as this models how to form all letters in line with the school policy. When appropriate, the joined version of the font can be used to model expectations. All these fonts can be downloaded and installed. [Handwriting Fonts](#)



## Progression in Handwriting

### Step 1

Children practise forming individual letters in letter families. These must be written in children's books prior to the lesson until children can accurately form letters from memory. Children only need to practise writing the letter 3-4 times.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y  
Z

### Step 2

Children practise forming groups of letters which are regularly seen together. These are set 1 special friends, set 2 and set 3 sounds such as *ng*, *sh*, *th*, *ay*, *igh*, *er* and *are* and suffixes such as *ed*, *est* and *ing*. These should be written in children's books prior to the lesson so children can see how letters should look in relation to one another.

ay

igh

er

### Step 3

Children practise joining letters. These need to be written in children's books initially to ensure they are forming them correctly and accurately joining.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

<b>Diagonal Joins</b>  Formed from the bottom of the letter.	Used to join:  a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u, z	To these letters:  b, e, f, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	And to these tricky letters: a, c, d, g, o, q, s  The letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement.
<b>Horizontal Joins</b>  Formed from the top of the letter.	Used to join:  f, o, r, v, w	To these letters:  b, e, f, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z	And to these tricky letters: a, c, d, g, o, q, s  The letter is formed in an anticlockwise movement.
<b>Unjoined Letters</b>	b, g, j, p, q, s, x, y		

Children be taught diagonal joins first and be secure with all of these before moving onto horizontal joins. When practising joins, focus on letters which are commonly put together such as set 2 and 3 sounds, prefixes, suffixes (e.g. ing, ed, le etc.)

#### Step 4

Children practise writing words with joins, ensuring all letters are formed correctly. The words should be modelled by the teacher so children do not need to think about how to spell the word as the focus of the lesson is handwriting.

#### Handwriting Assessment

At the start of the year children will complete a handwriting assessment and then at the end of each term they will complete it again.

Children will either write down all letters in RWI order or write the following sentence:

*The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.*

Teacher judgement should be used to decide which assessment children need to complete. The assessment is based on stage of their handwriting not based on age.

Children will then repeat this assessment at the end of Autumn, Spring and Summer term. This document is to be kept in a folder to monitor progression. Throughout the year we should be able to see a progression of letter formation and joins. Presentation should improve throughout the year following the handwriting sessions.

#### Handwriting Rewards

We must have high expectations of handwriting not only at the start of the year but throughout. We will be celebrating successful writing in assemblies and with a handwriting display board. We will be encouraging high standards for handwriting and presentation across the school in the following ways:

##### Field View Golden Pencil KS1

There are 5 ways to earn a golden pencil:

1. Capital letters
2. Finger Spaces
3. Full stops/punctuation
4. Writing on the line
5. Formation of letters correctly

Once children have these skills embedded, they can be rewarded with a HB golden pencil and a certificate.

##### Field View Pen Licence KS2

Children will be only awarded a pen licence when they can form all letters correctly and join letters consistently. This needs to be not only in handwriting lessons but all books they work in. If children cannot join, they need to write with a pencil. When children produce a piece of work with the 5 points from below consistently, teachers should give them a handwriting sticker. Once children have received 4 handwriting stickers, inform the handwriting lead. The handwriting lead will then decide if the child can be awarded their pen licence. This will be celebrated through Marvellous Me/Assembly etc.

To get a pen license children must demonstrate all these things:

1. Letters are formed correctly
2. Ascenders and descenders are clear
3. All letters joined throughout the piece
4. Capital letters are bigger than lower case
5. Crossing out is done with a pencil and ruler.

If standards of handwriting start to slip then the handwriting pen will be relinquished until children's work is back to a high standards.