



Handwriting Policy and guidance

Adopted : September 2022

Review : September 2024



Pen Licence

Children in year 4 can earn their pen licence at some point throughout the summer term. Children must show a sustained standard of handwriting, comparable to the examples provided (see appendix), over at least 3 pieces of writing. A few children with specific, identified difficulties will struggle to meet this requirement, in spite of practise and effort on their part. These children can achieve their pen licence at the teacher's discretion based on progress and/ or needs of the child

Teaching Handwriting- Consistency at Heymann

Nursery and Reception:

In Nursery, children are encouraged to make marks on paper in appropriate play situations.

Appropriate handwriting activities are taught with groups of children in reception and handwriting is taught in specific handwriting lessons from years 1 to 4,

In years 5 and 6 handwriting Skills will be taught at the start of the week and the children given time to practise throughout the week, ensuring the children are self-assessing their writing as they go. Each year at the beginning of September every class will have a short refresher handwriting session each day for 2 weeks.

Children who require extra support with handwriting will receive small group support and will be given practise activities for homework when it is felt to be necessary.

When teaching handwriting, as with any other lesson, children should be taught using different methods. These can include but are not limited to: rhymes to help them remember letter formation (see Little Wandle formation phrases) ; teacher modelling and demonstration; independent practice and application and peer and self-assessment.

Children should be given the skills and resources they need to allow them to reach their full potential. This includes ensuring all children have the correct resources (either a sharp pencil or a pen); the correct seated position; pencil grip and book orientation.

Best practice, does not allow children to just copy letters and words from the board and means letters and joins should be modelled to the children with vocalisation explaining how to complete their own formation of letters and joins. The use of pre-cursive patterns can allow Early Years children to practise their pencil control.

Parental Involvement

At the reception parents' curriculum meeting in the term in which a child begins full time school parents will be given a copy of 'Helping your child with their handwriting'. A copy of the preparatory Cursive Alphabet and advice on letter formation will be given to all children as they enter KS1. (Initially this will also be made available to all KS1 children and years 3,4 and 5 from Spring term 2022)

Handwriting Progression through Heymann

By the end of Key Stage 1

Children should form letters of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters. They also need to use spacing that reflects the size of the letters. To achieve greater depth (GDS), children need to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some letters.

By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting. The aim is to make handwriting an automatic process. By doing this, cognitive capacity is freed up to allow children to become creative and think more about the content and composition of their writing instead of the transcription.

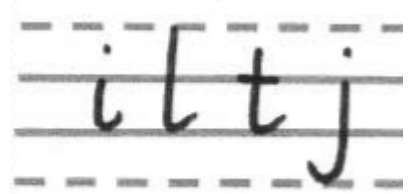
It is paramount that high expectations for presentation are maintained and children take pride in their work in all subjects. To support these high expectations the progression document outlines the expected standard for handwriting at the end of each year and what should be taught. This is in line with the 2014 National Curriculum:

Nursery	Reception Stage	Year 1	Year 2
<p>Pupils will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of mark making media • Activities to develop pre writing shapes • Visualising and match the pre writing shapes (eg using body, cards, construction) • Copy prewriting shapes independently • Draw shapes independently 	<p>Pupils will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • spaces being used between words. • writing on the line. 	<p>Pupils will be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • define ascenders and descenders. 	<p>Pupils will be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another • write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters • use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. • start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Pupils will be taught and introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant. 	<p>Pupils will be taught to work with increased independence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant. 	<p>Pupils will be taught and introduced to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Pupils will be taught to work with increased independence to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

Teaching handwriting in letter families

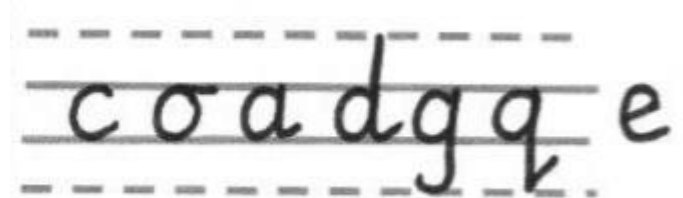
Straight Line Family

The letters i and j begin at the top solid line. The letter l begins at the top broken line. The tail on the j goes down to the bottom broken line and ends with a gentle curve,



Coat-hanger Family

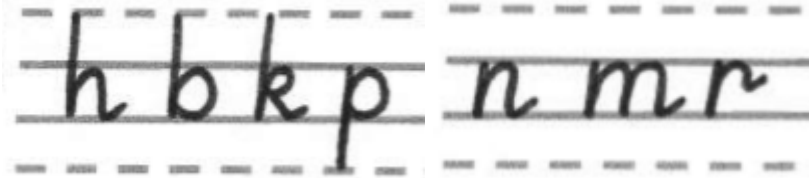
These letters are oval, rather than circular. The letters all begin with a 'coat hanger' shape. Begin just below the top solid line, push up and bump your head, curve your back and bump your bottom.



Letter e, like its distant cousin (Coathanger family), it doesn't start with a hook. Begin at the mid-point between the two solid lines and move upwards, curving back and around to the bottom solid line.

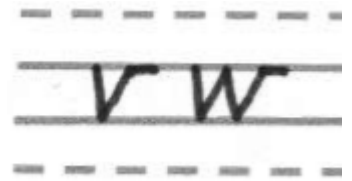
Bridge Family

These letters begin with standing up straight like a soldier, then drive back up and make a triangle. Bump your head on the top solid line and make a narrow bridge, two straight lines and finish with a joining stroke.



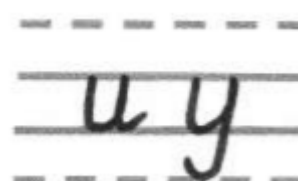
Zig Zag Family

Both v and w start on the top solid line, have a diagonal downward stroke and have a join that sits on the top solid line.



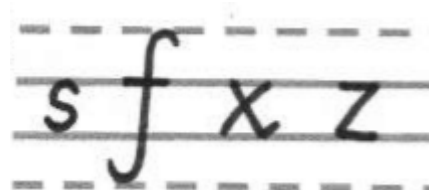
Smile Family

Both start on top solid line and begin with a downward stroke, curve back up to the top solid line and then down to the bottom solid line.



The Misfits!

The s and f both begin with an 'up and over' movement, in the same way as the 'Coathangers'. The f is crossed like the t and is special as it is a tall and tail letter. The s, x and z should be the same width at the top and the bottom of the letter.



Join family language

- Diagonal joins to short and tall letters eg a-i, u-l
- Diagonal joins to c, a, d, g, q, s, f, emphasising closing the tops of the letters (a movement quite difficult for left-handers)
- Horizontal joins to short letters and tall letters eg. o-i, w-h

Joins: "up-over-stop-reverse"

la *la la la*

co *co co co*

ac *ac ac ac*

ng *ng ng ng*

eq *eq eq eq*

us *us us us*

Join across the top:

fi *fi fi fi*

on *on on on*

wa *wa wa wa*

vy *vy vy vy*

Diagonal joins which trace the line of the second letter:

ab *ab ab ab*

if *if if if*

th *th th th*

il *il il il*

ck *ck ck ck*

Double 'f'

ff *ff ff*

Joining b, p, s:

br bi be

pa pi pe

st se si

Alternative letter groups?

br bi be

pa pi pe

st se si

Long ladder letters



↓ l i u t y

Curly caterpillar letters



↪ c a d g q o e s f

One-armed robot letters



↪ r n m h b k p

Zig zag monster letters



































↪ z x v w y k

•

Appendix 1:

Letter formation phrases linked to Little Wandle

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 s	 snake	Show your teeth and and let the s hiss out ssssss ssssss	Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
 a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the a sound at the back of your mouth a a a	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
 t	 tiger	Open your lips; put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press t t t	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.
 p	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say p p p	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
 i	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the i sound at the back of your mouth i i i	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.
 n	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the nnnnn sound nnnnn	Down the stick, up and over the net.
 m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the mmmm sound mmmm	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say j j j	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.
 	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing vvvvv vvvvv	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say w w w	From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.
 	 box	Mouth open, then push the cs/x sound through as you close your mouth cs cs cs (x x x)	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.
 	 yo-yo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say y without opening your mouth yyy	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.
 	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the z sound zzzzz zzzzz	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.

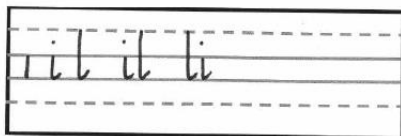
Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.

Appendix 2: suggested program of lessons

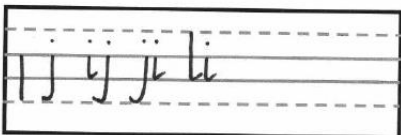
Lessons on Individual letters.

Below are line guide exercises to ensure children fully understand the correct size of small letters, tall letters and tail letters. They are exercises that can be used regularly as a warm up to a handwriting lesson. The three straight lines are referred to as small, tall and tail lines.

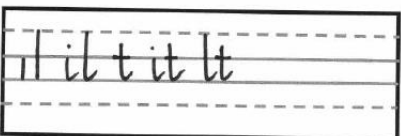
1 i l il li



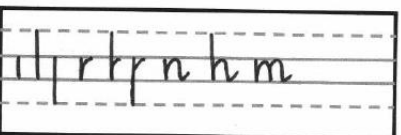
2 j ij li



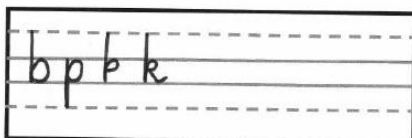
3 il it lt



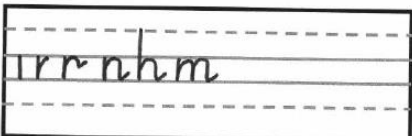
4 r rn hm



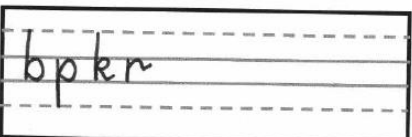
5 b p k



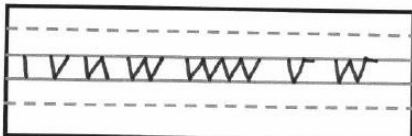
6 r rn hm reinforcement



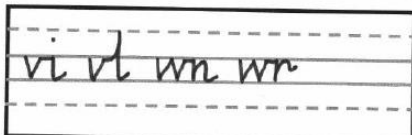
7 b p k reinforcement



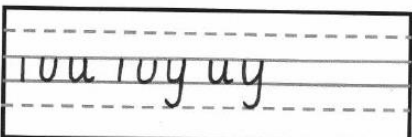
8 v v w w



9 vi vl wn wr



10 u u y y



11 ^ c o ou oy

^ c o o ou oy

12 a d g q

a d g q

13 - o e

- o e

14 Reinforcement of c family.

15 ov ow on or

ov ow on or

16 cca e eeq

c cca e e eeq

17 ^ s i r i s k k s

^ s i r i r i s k k s

18 ^ f f fi fr

^ f f f fi fr

19 x e ex a ax

x e ex a a ax

20 z i iz a az

- z z i i iz a a az

Upper case letters

1 PBRDU

IPBRDU

2 LEFMA

LEFMA

3 TIJHKN

TIJHKN

4 CGOQS

CGOQS

5 XVWYZ

XVWYZ

Joining from year 2-

1 al ab ia va

al ab ia va

2 ib ob lp mp

ib ob lp mp

3 ck cy nc oc

ck cy nc oc

4 de dr da nd

de dr da nd

5 em ke ej oj

em ke ej oj

6 fo fa uf of

fo fa uf of

7 ng dg iq oq

ng dg iq oq

8 ht ha wh th

ht ha wh th

9 ki mi cl wl

ki mi cl wl

10 ky kn ok rk

ky kn ok rk

11 wm am ny en

wm am ny en

12 qu nq us os

qu nq us os

13 lt it lit cu up

lt it lit cu up

14 ev nv wo we

ev nv wo we

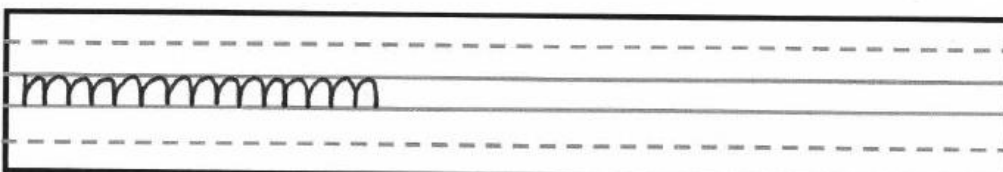
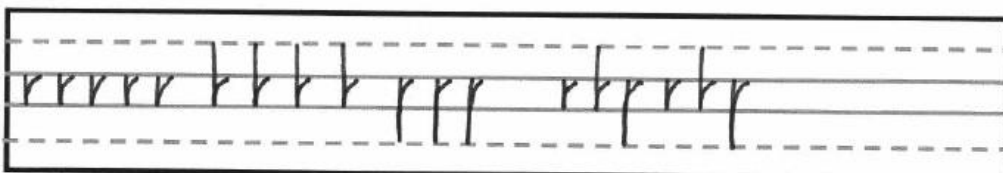
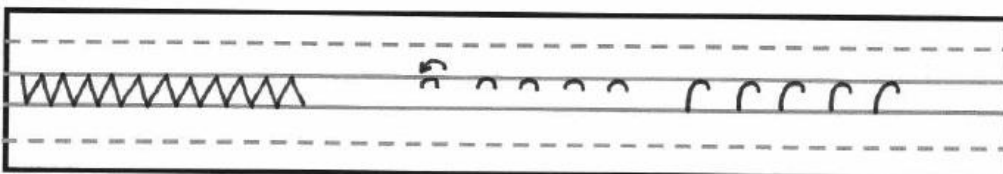
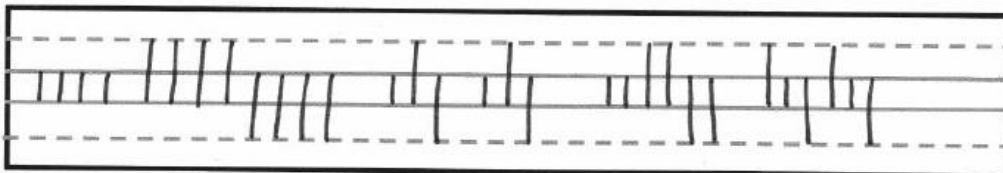
15 vy zi ze iz

vy zi ze iz

KS2 program of lessons

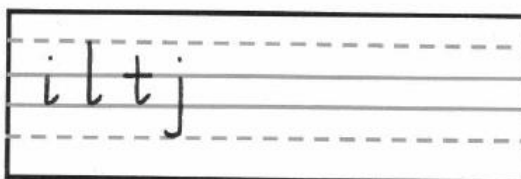
Warm up exercises

Below are line guide exercises to ensure children fully understand the correct size of small letters, tall letters and tail letters. They are exercises that can be used regularly as a warm up to a handwriting lesson. The three straight lines are referred to as short, tall and tail lines.

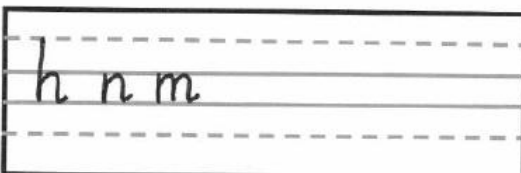


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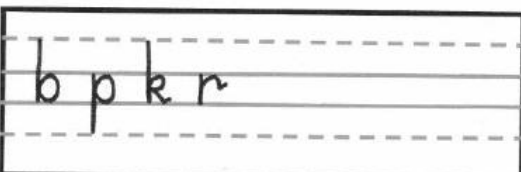
1 i l t j



2 h n m



3 b p k r



5 r c o a d

r c o a d

6 g q e l e

g q e l e

7 v w u y

v w u y

8 s f x z

s f x z

9 Reinforcement

10 A B C D E F

A B C D E F

11 G H I K J L

G H I K J L

12 M N O P Q R S

M N O P Q R S

13 T U V W X Y Z

T U V W X Y Z

Suggested Lessons On Joining Letters

In the lessons on letter joins, there are examples for each letter, on how to join from the preceding letter. The joins include just two letters. After working through the intensive programme of lessons, three letter joins could be practiced in the weekly handwriting lesson.

1 ac aw da oa
ib ob

ac aw da oa ib ob

2 ck cy ec vc du
dg

ck cy ec vc du dg

3 en ef me te fr
fo

en ef me te fr fo

4 if af ng og hs
hu

if af ng og hs hu

5 lh ch ib ip ki
vi

lh ch ib ip ki vi

6 ej nj ky kl mk
ok

ej nj ky kl mk ok

7 ll lw cl al mb
mp

ll lw cl al mb mp

8 om im mf ms
ng nt

om im mf ms ng nt

9 un wn or od
vo ho

un wn or od vo ho

10 op rp qu nq
oq rl

op rp qu nq oq rl

11 rs vr tr vs fs
ns

rs vr tr vs fs ns

12 tl ty ut ot ug
uz

tl ty ut ot ug uz

13 du fu va ve
ov iv

du fu va ve ov iv

14 wg we ow ew
ex ix

wg we ow ew ex ix

15 xh xe vy cy
oz ez

xh xe vy cy oz ez

Appendix 3: Key Handwriting Theory:

Handwriting is a very complex task.

Moving a pencil to make letters is primarily a **motor skill**. However, recognising letters is a **visual and memory skill**. Knowing letter names and sounds relies on **hearing, memory and language**. Writing words and sentences requires the ability to combine all of these skills.

At its core, writing letters correctly on the page is a motor skill. It requires pencil control, knowledge of the formation pattern and the ability to visually perceive distances. Motor skills require practice to become proficient.

Handwriting is learnt

Handwriting is not a skill that humans are innately born to do. Walking, we naturally learn. General fine motor skills are learnt through play. Anyone who has watched two and three years-olds play know that they are forever repeating skills. They open, close, fill, empty and constantly explore with their hands. This repetition improves their skills.

When toddlers pick up a crayon they explore. It then becomes more refined. They draw shapes, they draw people and they draw things. Then, they are taught to write their name.

Handwriting should be taught

The new policy guidance from the National Handwriting Association [NHA] (2019 p. 31) recommends that 'handwriting skills need to be taught both as a timetabled discrete subject and through ongoing reinforcement of skills in everyday written language activities.' They suggest that lessons should be focussed, short and at regular intervals, but will be influenced by the age of the children and the class profile. A daily session of ten minutes is recommended for young children learning letter formations. For older children, three sessions of 15 – 20 minutes per week may work better.

Early on, there should be a strong focus on letter formations. Sassoon (1995) highlighted that 'unless the correct point of entry and direction of stroke for each letter is taught, understood and used from the start, it is progressively difficult to alter the wrong movement pattern that is practised and becomes habitual.'

Incorrect formation patterns can make handwriting illegible. They can slow a child down as they won't automatically finish a letter on the right side to start the next. It also makes progressing to joined-up writing more difficult. So, it makes sense to teach correct formations right from the start.

Pre writing stage

Before you start – is the child ready to learn to write?

Before handwriting is taught, it is important to **check their readiness**. Can the child sit up in their chair? Do they have sufficient shoulder stability. Can they hold a pencil? Have they had experiences with colouring and drawing? Can they recognise their letters?

Pre-writing activities at Heymann:

- Messy play is a great way to help with hand awareness. We do this through: Sand, shaving foam and finger paint, mud kitchen
- Playdough and Dough Disco
- Finger songs to improve the fine motor skills of younger children.
- We use the song 'Crocodile Snap,' which was written to help children to find their 'crocodile fingers,' or the fingers they need to use on their pencil.
- Construction toys, such as Duplo, Sticklebrix and Popoids,
- Scissors and craft

- A wide range of pretend play toys, e.g. doctor sets, dolls houses, trucks and cars, which encourage fine motor skills.

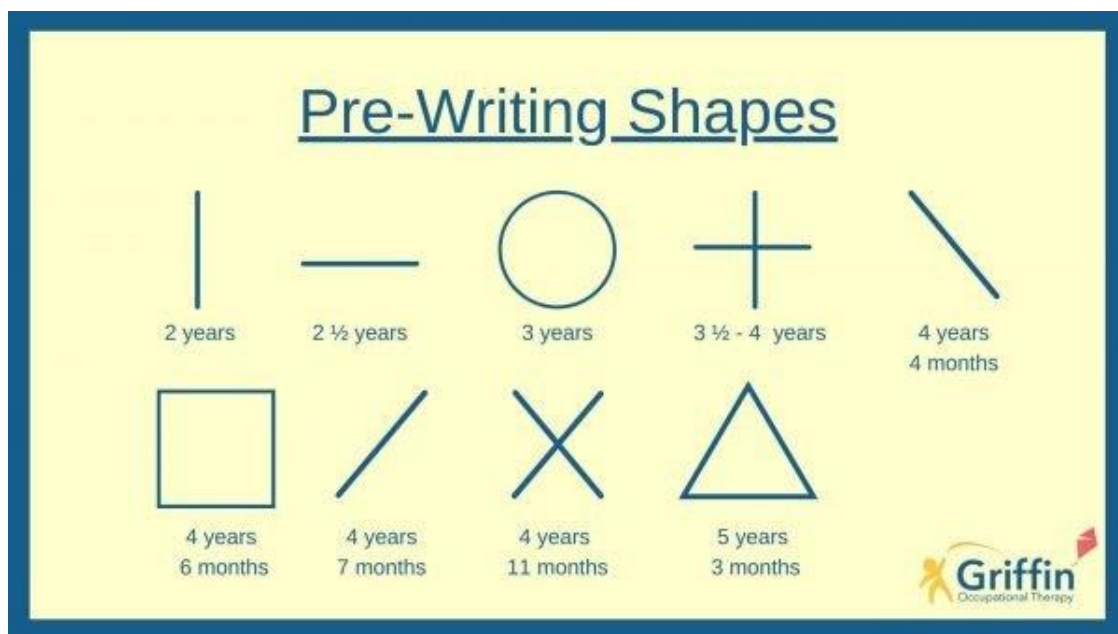
Teaching handwriting – pencil control

Pencil control is an essential part of writing letters. **Colouring**, drawing and pencil worksheets all give children an **opportunity to improve their pencil control**. Whilst there is some evidence that pencil grasp does not impact long term outcomes, as child's grasp matures, so does their pencil control. If you need more information on pencil grasp development you can read this post – [What does a good pencil grasp look like?](#)



Pre-writing skills

Prior to writing, children need to be able to make their pre-writing shapes. **Pre-writing shapes** are all of the **shapes that form letters**. They include the directional movements a child needs to make, like diagonal lines and curves. There are many worksheets that practice these. It is also important to focus on squares and triangles as the ability to create corners is an important developmental step.



These are the pre-writing shapes in order of difficulty: | – o + / square \ x triangle.

Letters are made up of combinations of vertical, horizontal, oblique and curved shapes. Oblique lines (\ /) are much harder to write than straight lines. The age at which half of children can draw an oblique line is four years and six months (Beery, 2010).

The age where half of children can intersect both oblique lines to form an 'x' it is approximately four years and 11 months. This means that several capital letters and lower-case letters 'k, v, w, x' are actually outside of the expected age norms for many reception children. **These norms should be considered**, especially for children who have names including letters containing oblique lines.

The Correct Seated Position



Children should be sat comfortably but also correctly. They should:

- have feet flat on the floor
- be sat right back in the seat
- be sat with a straight back not leaning over the paper
- have the chair pulled in close to the table
- ensure that the table reaches just below the elbow

The Correct Pen/Pencil Grip

Children should use the tripod pencil grip which will allow the pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movement. This consists of:

- gripping the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away
- using the middle finger to support the underside of the pencil

Book Orientation

For right-handed children, the book/paper should be tilted slightly towards the left hand. For left-handed pupils, the book/paper should be tilted slightly towards the right hand (ensure children are sat so that left-handed children are not bumping hands with right-handed children and vice versa).

Inclusion

Children who may find their presentation is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children and children with additional needs should be given 1:1 or small group tuition to allow them to reach their full potential. Some children may need a modified handwriting style to support their needs.

Left Handed Pupils

Left-handed pupils may find it challenging to follow a right-handed teacher (and vice-versa). Best practice will see a teacher demonstrating left-handed children individually or in a group setting as per the needs of the child. It is important that teachers are aware who their left-handed children are to ensure that the correct provision is put in place. This should include:

- Children to sit on the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Children should hold the pencil further away from the tip to ensure that the line of sight is not interrupted.
- Children should be given additional opportunities to practise left to right exercises if required.