

Handwriting Guidelines

Early Level

As I play and learn I enjoy exploring interesting materials for writing and different ways of recording my experiences and feelings, ideas and information. LIT 0-21b

Nursery/Primary 1

Handwriting patterns using a multi-sensory approach including lots of opportunities to develop fine motor control: small construction toys, peg boards, jigsaws, cutting out, drawing patterns etc

Jack and Jill	
Humpty Dumpty	
Hickory, Dickory, Dock	
Baa, Baa, Woolly Sheep	
Polly Put the Kettle On	
Three Blind Mice	
Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star	

Primary 1

Letters to be introduced using multi-sensory approach alongside NL phonics programme:

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Letters should then be practised in letter groups using blank paper then broad lines:

Group 1	
Group 2	
Group 3	
Group 4	
Group 5	

Note:

At this stage, handwriting should be **taught as a whole class with the teacher demonstrating correct formation at least once a week**. Multi-sensory approach to be continued including lots of opportunities to develop fine motor control: small construction toys, peg boards, jigsaws, cutting out, drawing patterns etc.

The formation of the letters should be taught at a brisk pace, aiming for all the lower case letters and numbers being introduced.

First Level

I can present my writing in a way that will make it legible and attractive for my reader, combining words, images and other features. LIT 1 -24a

Primary 2

Lower case letters should continue to be practised using multi-sensory approach, blank paper and then broad lines.

In addition capital letters should be taught in the following order:

No Lifts	
One Lift	
More than one lift	

Note:

At this stage, handwriting should still be **taught as a whole class with the teacher demonstrating correct formation at least once a week** with additional activities for any children experiencing difficulties. It is especially important that these pupils be given activities to develop fine motor control as described in the Primary 1 section.

Primary 3

Lower case and capital letters should be consolidated.

In addition the following joins should be taught:

Note:

At this stage, handwriting should still be **taught as a whole class with the teacher demonstrating correct formation once a week** with additional activities for any children experiencing difficulties. It is especially important that these pupils be given activities to develop fine motor control as described in the Primary 1 section.

Primary 4

This stage will benefit from **regular teacher-led handwriting lessons** to reinforce previous learning.

Pupils should be encouraged to transfer their joined script to all areas of the curriculum.

Second Level

I can consider the impact that layout and presentation will have and can combine lettering and graphics and other features to engage my reader. LIT 2-24a

Primary 5

By this stage the expectation should be that pupils *consistently* use joined script in all areas of the curriculum. However they may need to **revisit and consolidate previous learning (joins in particular) through teacher-led lessons.**

Primary 6 and 7

By this stage it is very difficult for pupils to change their handwriting habits. Rather than class/ individual writing lessons it is better to encourage pupils to use a fluent, legible style demonstrating consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing in all their writing.

Note:

- Staff must act as role models of appropriate script on the whiteboard, labels, marking, displays etc.
- Opportunities for developing keyboard skills should be actively planned for at all stages to equip all learners with the skills needed for the 21st century.

Appendix 1

The Letter forms

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

The Capital letters

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

The Numerals

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The joining sets

Set 1
a c d e h i k l m
n s t u
Twelve letters with exit flicks plus s.

Set 2
a c d e g i j m n o
p q r s u v w x y
Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height.

Set 3
b f h k l t
Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.

Set 4
f o r v w
Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height.

The break letters
b g j p q x y z
Eight letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.

Nelson defines the joins between letters using these sets.
Only four types of join are needed.

Basic join	Set 1 → Set 2	in ma ki
Second join	Set 1 → Set 3	ab if co
Third join	Set 4 → Set 2	oa fo we
Fourth join	Set 4 → Set 3	ob fl wh

Set 5	Lower case letters after which no join is ever made.	bgjpsxyz No join is made to z either.
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Nelson Joined Script

With the telephone, fax machine and e-mail is handwriting now outdated? By no means! The need to be able to write well and quickly is greater today than it ever was. This article looks versatile and creative - getting you inspired and to hold its place as a key skill in the primary school curriculum, allowing children to express themselves and reaching all areas

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The quick brown fox
jumps over the lazy
dog.

Appendix 2

Left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. The following points should be considered to support left-handed children particularly:

- Children should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt their line of vision.
- Left-handed children should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space, and so that their elbows don't bump.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before children write left-to-right automatically.
- Letters which have a cross-stroke such as T, t and f will be formed slightly differently by left-handers, where the cross is formed right to left rather than left to right.
- Teachers should be alert to the fact that it can be difficult for left-handed children to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. It may help for teachers to demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if their resulting writing is not as neat.

Appendix 3

Activities to encourage development of fine motor skills:

Children should be encouraged to experience writing through using different materials - pens, pencils, paints, chalks, sand, dough and messy play. Thick, tripod pencils can be used until fine motor skills are developed.

Initial handwriting skills will be taught by developing fine motor control to enable the children to strengthen the muscles needed to hold a pencil effectively. This is done through:

- Using resources which develop a pincer movement e.g. using tweezers, threading beads, peg boards and handling chopsticks.
- Using large equipment to make marks with e.g. chunky chalks and painting and drawing on the playground.
- Completing puzzles which require a small and controlled grip.
- Ensuring that there are a wide variety of resources for the children to access independently, both indoors and outdoors, which encourage the children to experiment with mark-making

Multi-sensory Activities:

- Finger in the air, finger on table, finger on backs
- Marble runs
- Finger in the sand/other tactile materials
- Children's own whiteboards
- Rub out trays
- Tracing
- Copying

Resources:

- Nelson Handwriting:
Teacher's Book, Resources and Assessment, Red Level Yellow Level, Books 1,2,3,4
- Apps for iPads e.g. Letter School, Hairy Letters,
- IWB resources e.g.
www.topmarks.co.uk (letters and sounds, English Alphabet)
www.ictgames.co.uk (Writing Repeater)
www.ictgames.co.uk (Sky Writer)
- Additional support with motor skills/ handwriting:
Write from the Start - Ion Teodorescu & Lois Addy
Speed Up! - Lois Addy

