Ready Steady Handwrite

Home Support Booklet

Many of you ask how you can support your child's handwriting at home.
This booklet explains the Ready Steady Handwrite programme we use in school and how you can reinforce the same movements, routines and language at home.
Short, positive practice can help your child build confidence and secure these skills.

How to support at home

Ready Steady Handwrite is a structured programme that teaches children how to form letters clearly, accurately and efficiently.

Handwriting and spelling are important building blocks for writing. As handwriting becomes more automatic, children can focus less on forming each letter and more on spelling, building sentences and expressing their ideas.

Why do we teach handwriting?



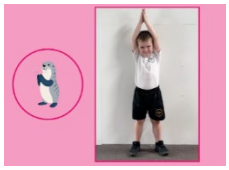
Develops independence

Helps children write without having to concentrate excessively on how to form each letter.



Builds confidence

Develops handwriting that children feel proud of and can use across the curriculum.



Develops physical skills

Strengths the coordination and control needed for comfortable writing.



Supports writing fluency

Allows children to concentrate more on their ideas and less on the physical process of writing.

Developing Early Skills.

Developing core skills such as core strength, fine and gross motor control, coordination and balance provides the foundations for handwriting. These skills help children to sit comfortably, control their movements and develop the strength and coordination needed to hold and move a pencil effectively. Building these skills supports children to develop comfortable, controlled and fluent handwriting.

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Ways you can help your child develop these.

Supporting your child's core skills at home

Developing core strength, fine and gross motor control, coordination and balance helps your child build the physical skills they need for handwriting. Here are some simple and enjoyable ways you can support these skills at home.

Core strength

A strong core helps your child sit comfortably and maintain good posture for writing.

- Encourage activities like ball games, swimming, yoga or bike riding.
- Try simple exercises such as tummy time, planks or crawling games.
- Encourage active play and time outdoors.



Planks and tummy time build core strength.

Fine motor control

Good fine motor control helps your child hold a pencil and make small, controlled movements.

- Encourage activities such as playing with playdough, threading beads, using tweezers or pegs.
- Try puzzles, building bricks or picking up small objects with fingers.
- Practice using scissors and drawing or colouring.



Threading beads helps develop finger control.

Gross motor control

Good gross motor control helps with balance, coordination and larger movements, all of which support handwriting.

- Encourage running, jumping, climbing and ball skills.
- Try obstacle courses or outdoor play.
- Activities such as skipping, dancing or cycling are also great for coordination.



Jumping and balancing build coordination.

Coordination

Coordination helps your child use both sides of their body together and control their movements smoothly.

- Try clapping games, throwing and catching a ball or riding a scooter.
- Encourage activities that involve both hands, such as building, threading or arts and crafts.



Catching and throwing builds hand-eye coordination.

Balance

Good balance helps your child sit well, move with control and stay steady while writing.

- Encourage activities such as standing on one leg, walking along a line or using a balance bike or beam.
- Try yoga or simple balance games at home.



Balancing helps build stability and body control.

Small steps at home can make a big difference!

Our Handwriting Journey

EYFS – Getting ready to write

Developing hand strength, coordination, pencil control and early letter formation.

Year 1 – Forming letters

Learning to form letters correctly, consistently and with increasing confidence.

Year 2 and 3 – Developing joins

Building on correct letter formation and beginning to learn appropriate letter joins.

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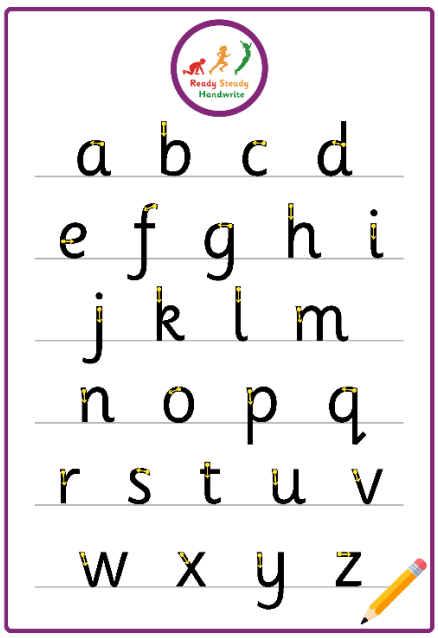
Year 4 – Developing fluency

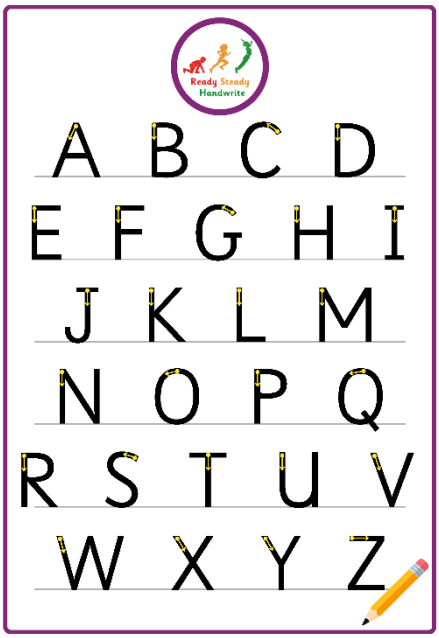
Consolidating joins, improving consistency and developing speed and control.

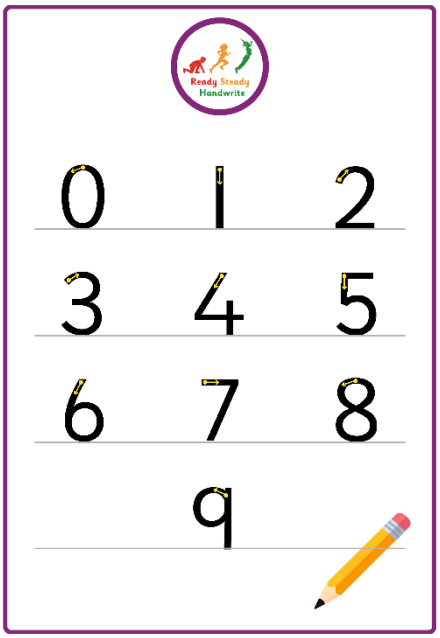
Years 5 and 6 – Handwriting for independence

Consolidating joins and developing fluent, legible and increasingly automatic handwriting across different writing tasks.

How the letters and numbers are formed.







How can I help my child?

Core strength and posture



- Building dens or crawling through tunnels.
- Playing on climbing frames.
- Swimming, cycling or dancing.
- Playing animal walks (bear walks, crab walks or frog jumps).
- Doing simple yoga poses.

Fine motor skills and finger strength



- Playing with playdough – squeezing, rolling and pinching.
- Threading beads or pasta onto string.
- Using tweezers to pick up small objects.
- Building with LEGO or other construction toys.
- Using pegs to hang up washing or make patterns.
- Cutting and sticking activities.
- Completing jigsaws.

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Gross motor skills and coordination



- Throwing and catching a ball.
- Playing with balloons.
- Skipping, hopping and jumping.
- Drawing large shapes in the air.
- Playing with bats and balls.
- Making obstacle courses.

Pencil control and early writing skills



- Drawing, colouring and painting.
- Using chalk outdoors.
- Tracing patterns in sand, flour or shaving foam.
- Drawing shapes and patterns on large paper.
- Using paintbrushes, crayons and chunky pencils.
- Writing or drawing on a vertical surface, such as a chalkboard or easel.

Everyday opportunities to write



- Writing shopping lists.
- Making birthday cards.
- Labelling pictures or drawings.
- Writing messages to family members.
- Keeping a simple diary.
- Helping to write recipes or instructions.

If they are writing more formally, consider the following:

Posture – are they sitting comfortably with both feet flat on the floor and their bottom towards the back of the chair and shoulders relaxed?
Pencil grip (if at an appropriate age) – are they holding the pencil comfortably and being able to control its movements with their fingers?
Paper Position – is the paper in a comfortable position, slightly tilted to the right (if right handers) or left (if lefthanders)? Are they using their other hand to keep it stead?
Pencil pressure – are they pressing too hard or too lightly? It should be firm enough to make marks without gripping too tightly or pressing too hard.

Remember: Short, fun activities are more beneficial than lots of handwriting practice.

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Left Handers:

Left-handed children may need slightly different positioning when writing. Here are some simple ways you can help your child develop comfortable and controlled handwriting.

-  **Paper position**: Encourage your child to angle their paper slightly clockwise and position it towards their left-hand side.
-  **Pencil grip**: Encourage a relaxed grip, holding the pencil slightly further away from the tip so they can see what they are writing.
-  **Hand position**: Encourage your child to keep their wrist relatively straight and their hand below the writing line, rather than curling it around the page.
-  **Comfortable seating**: Ensure your child has enough space to move their writing arm freely.
-  **Writing equipment**: Ensure the writing equipment is suitable, your school may suggest/provide specific writing implements to support the left handers.
-  **Encouragement**: Allow your child to find a comfortable writing position without forcing a particular grip or hand position.

Please Remember:

- Correct letter formation comes before joining.
- Comfortable writing is more important than a rigid pencil grip.
- Short, enjoyable practice is more beneficial than long repetitive tasks.
- Praise effort, progress and confidence, not just neatness.
- **If you are concerned about your child's handwriting, ask the teacher.**

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Ascender	The part of a lowercase letter that extends above the half way height between the lines e.g. b, d, h, k l.
Descender	The part of a letter that extends below the line e.g. g, j, p, q, y.
Legibility	How easy handwriting is to read.
Letter Formation	The way individual letters are shaped and written.
Letter Families	Groups of letters that are formed in a similar way e.g. c, a, o, e, d, g.
Pencil Grip/Tripod Grip	The way a pencil is held. A tripod grip is commonly recommended.
Pen Pressure	The amount of force applied to the writing tool.
Posture	Body position while writing.
Position/Positioning	The position/angle of the paper when writing.
Spacing	The distance between letters, words, and lines of text.
Speed (Writing Fluency)	The rate at which someone writes while maintaining legibility.
Slant	The angle at which letters lean.
Size	The height and width of letters.
Stroke	A single movement used to create part or all of a letter.
Controlled closure	Accurately joining the beginning and end of a letter stroke, ensuring closed letters e.g. o, a, d, g, are formed correctly.
Gross Motor Skills	Movements that use the body's large muscles (arms, legs, and trunk) to support posture, stability, and coordination, providing the foundation for controlled handwriting.
Fine Motor Skills	Small muscle movements of the fingers and hands needed for precise writing tasks.
Consistency	Maintaining similar size, spacing, slant, and formation.
Hand Dominance	The preferred writing hand.
Cursive	Joined handwriting.
Tracing	Reproducing text from a model.
Fatigue	Tiredness or discomfort during writing.
Air writing	Writing letters, words, or symbols by moving your finger or hand through the air instead of writing on a physical surface.

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