

Spires Federation

OPENING
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MINDS

Transcription Policy

Date : October 2025

Review Date: October 2027

What is transcription?

Transcription (handwriting and spelling) is a key element of the Simple View of Writing.

It refers to the skills needed to transfer what the writer wants to say into symbols on the page. For skilled writers, transcription is mainly automatic and unconscious, but novice writers need to expend considerable attention and effort on it.

The EEF says:

‘If children have to concentrate to ensure their handwriting and spelling is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing...’

Gaining automaticity with both requires explicit teaching, extensive practice and effective feedback.

Handwriting

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. We aim by the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking, following EEF guidance around how pupils that need to consider what they are transcribing (in terms of the joins etc) have that thought process impact on the actual content as it interrupts the flow of ideas.

We aim

- To develop a neat, legible and speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Expectations for adults

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the cursive style in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils’ books. Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Gross and Fine Motor

Gross Motor

Building physical manoeuvrability and strength underpins handwriting and concentration. This bodily knowledge informs the working positions that children use for writing and the strengthening targets they work on. Developing the ability to navigate our bodies on a grand scale directly correlates to eventually developing fine motor skills.

Suggested exercises to build gross motor skills.

Activities to improve core strength:

- Crab walk

Ask the child to sit on the ground with their hands and feet on the floor, fingers pointing behind them, raise their bottom off the floor to make a table shape. In this position get them to walk backwards, like a crab, to a destination and back again. Put a beanbag or soft toy on their tummy- make sure they keep their bottom up otherwise the toy will fall off.

- Tummy skittles

Get the child to lie on their stomach, lift their head up and then lift their arms above their head. Throw the ball at the skittles, then lower the body gently back to the floor, ready to throw again.

Activities to improve balance and coordination:

- Step ups

Ask the child to face the step and then step up first with the left foot followed by the right foot. Still facing the same way ask them to step down first with the left foot followed by the right foot. Repeat this a couple of times and then ask them to start with the right foot followed by the left. To help them to remember their left and right you could tie a ribbon or place a sticker on their right or left hand to help. Introduce side steps to pupils asking them to step to the left and close their feet together and then step the right and close their feet together, Repeat this process up to 10 times per session.

- Maze lines

Draw a mixture of straight and curved lines with chalk and ask the child to march along the line. Slowly at first so that they focus on marching skills and then this can be turned into a time trial, setting rules about how high the knees have to be raised in the march. Remember when marching the opposite arm should swing forward to the raised knee, so left arm and right knee together. Set out cones in a line spaced at an equal distance apart and ask pupils to move in and out of them.

- Chair push ups

Put your hands on either side of your chair and push until your bottom raises off the chair. Hold for a count of five. Ask the child to copy you. If this is too easy ask the child to lift their feet off the floor and hold them off while raising their bottom and hold for a count of five.

- Simon says games

Play the game asking the child to touch, point or move different parts of the body. As they become confident in this game try adding in phrases that relate to left and right, such as 'Simon says touch your left knee with your right hand.

- Cross pass ball

Ask the child to hold the ball out in front of them with both hands. The aim of the activity is to move the ball from one side to the other so that both hands cross the mid-line.

- Mazes

Make a maze out of series of toys, using the language for placement and direction, talk through how you are moving the toy. Then either give instructions or ask the child to give you instructions on how to get to a location in the maze. Only give one instruction at a time where possible and increase the number of instructions as their ability and confidence grows.

Activities to improve sensory processing skills:

- Messy play

If the child is fearful of any material have them play with it in a less threatening way. For example, they can use your hands to start touching it, they can put objects in or out of the "messy" materials, or they can push

toy cars or plastic animals through it etc. After they begin to feel safe, slowly encourage them to try other fun ways which you model, for example splatting it, poking, pulling, rolling etc. Eventually encourage the use of the whole hand (including palm).

- **Cooking**

Try a simple recipe that requires mixing with hands and kneading such as those that need pastry, pizza dough or bread making. Or if you have no cooking facilities try salt dough.

- **Tracing**

This can also help build a child's understanding of how much pressure is required. Using tracing paper ask the child to trace a simple shape or picture. Then turn the tracing paper over onto another piece of paper. Draw over the lines that show through the tracing paper, quite a bit of pressure is needed for this. When the tracing paper is lifted a copy of the shape or picture will be left on the paper. If the child is pressing too hard and tearing the tracing paper try doubling it over, you will however have to use quite a bold coloured shape or picture underneath for them to be able to see it. As the child's ability to use the correct pressure to achieve the best results for the task improves, reduce the thickness of the tracing paper.

Fine Motor

The different components of writing are mastered initially through fine motor activities before being used to form letters and legible script. In learning to manipulate items on a continually decreasing scale pupils can mimic and master the movements necessary to develop a clear and consistent handwriting script.

Developing dexterity

Dexterity primarily involves fine motor skills, which are developed through repeated use and practice of small muscle movements. Precise movements of the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes are essential for everyday tasks such as picking up small objects using a pincer grasp, buttoning clothes, using scissors and writing with care. Sustained writing tasks are supported by strong hand and finger muscles.

Isolated finger movements, such as those used in finger play, playing the piano or typing, help develop greater control and dexterity by encouraging the use of individual fingers independently.

Developing coordination

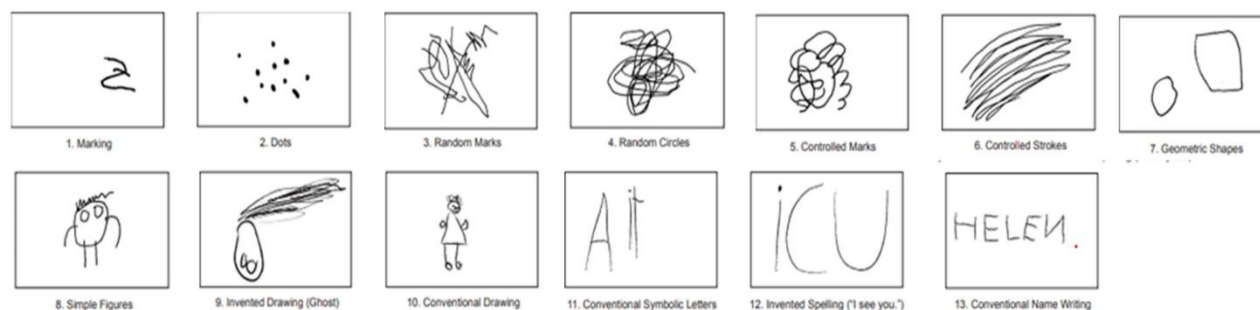
Dexterity often requires coordinated use of both hands, such as stabilising paper with one hand while writing with the other. This bilateral coordination develops with practice. A key part of developing coordination is learning to control how and when to release objects. This skill helps children refine their motor control, enabling them to perform tasks that require accuracy and precision in daily life. Developing fine motor skills requires good hand-eye coordination, muscle strength and control. These abilities allow children to manipulate objects with accuracy and perform detailed tasks independently.

Progressive activities for developing fine motor control could include:

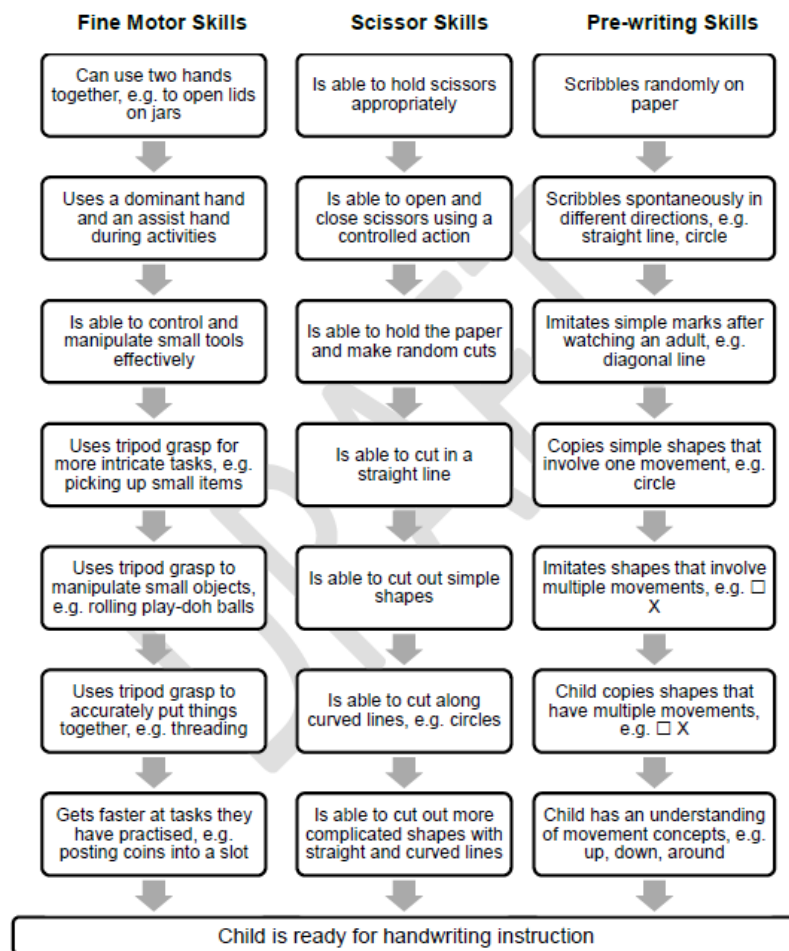
Early skills	Picking up small objects (beads, buttons) with fingers or tweezers	Hand-eye coordination, pincer grasp
	Finger painting	Finger movement, sensory exploration
	Modelling clay manipulation (rolling, squeezing or pinching)	Hand strength, dexterity
	Threading large beads onto a shoelace or a pipe cleaner, moving on to threading small beads onto a pipe cleaner	Coordination, grasp control
Developing skills	Cutting with scissors (straight and curved lines)	Hand strength, control, bilateral coordination
	Buttoning and zipping up clothes on dolls or themselves	Finger dexterity, independence
	Lacing cards with shoelaces	Precision, hand-eye coordination
	Using tweezers of different sizes to pick up and sort small objects (pom-poms, seeds), starting with larger tweezers and moving onto smaller tweezers with more resistance	Fine motor precision, concentration
	Cutting round simple lines on paper to following curly lines	Hand strength, control, fine motor precision, concentration
Advanced skills	Writing and drawing letters, shapes and simple drawings	Pencil grip, control, handwriting readiness
	Using small tools (screwdrivers, pliers or tongs)	Dexterity, tool manipulation skills
	Bead weaving or jewellery making with smaller beads	Precision, fine motor coordination
	Origami or paper folding crafts	Sequencing, precision, bilateral hand use
	Opening a box with keys to practise wrist action and clockwise movement	Dexterity, tool manipulation skills

Pre handwriting

Before children can begin forming letters, they must first develop the ability to draw pre-writing lines in a specific developmental sequence – vertical, horizontal, circular, diagonal, and intersecting strokes – which serve as the foundational components of all letters and numbers.



Pre-Handwriting – Developmental Continuum



Pencil Grip

Children need to learn how to hold their pencil correctly from the outset, as grip affects the flow, speed and overall quality of handwriting. Without a proper grip, children's hands can tire more quickly, their writing can become harder to read and they may struggle to write for extended periods – an essential skill as they progress through school.

Young children need to develop the muscles in their hands to build the strength required for a proper pencil grip. For some, this will take longer and require additional practice. Children initially start to hold the pencil within their fist (age 1–1.5 years), progress to holding the pencil shaft with all their fingers (2–3 years) and then move on to a static, then dynamic tripod grasp. Children typically progress through a series of grasp patterns before developing a tripod grip.

Stage 1 - Palmer-supinate grasp



Holds the crayon/pencil in fist (whole hand) like a dagger. They use whole arm movements from the shoulder to mark-make. Due to this whole arm movement they prefer to work on a vertical surface.

Stage 2 - Palmer or digital-pronate grasp



Holds a crayon/pencil with the palm of the hand facing down towards the paper. The crayon/pencil is held by all the fingers and the thumb. The movement comes from the shoulder and elbow. Again due to the way the arm moves a vertical surface is preferred.

Stage 3 - Four finger and thumb grip



Holding the crayon/pencil between the thumb and four fingers with the crayon/pencil in a nearly vertical, upright position. Movement comes from the elbow and wrist.

Stage 4 - Static quadruped or tripod grip



Holding the pencil in very nearly in the correct position however the web space is narrower than it would be if held in a mature tripod grip. This means that the movement is coming from the wrist and large finger movements.

Stage 5 - Mature / Dynamic tripod grip

Right-Handed



This is traditionally considered the most appropriate handwriting pencil grip for both left and right-handed writers. Holding the pencil between the thumb and index finger with pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers.

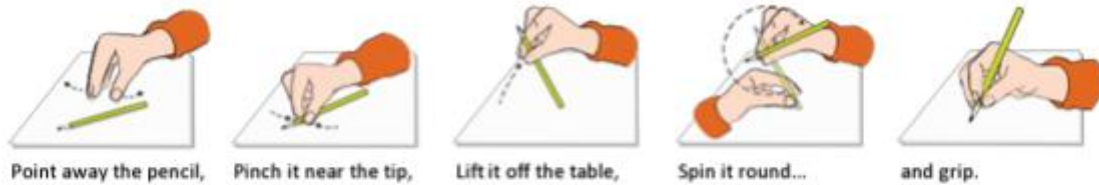
Left-Handed



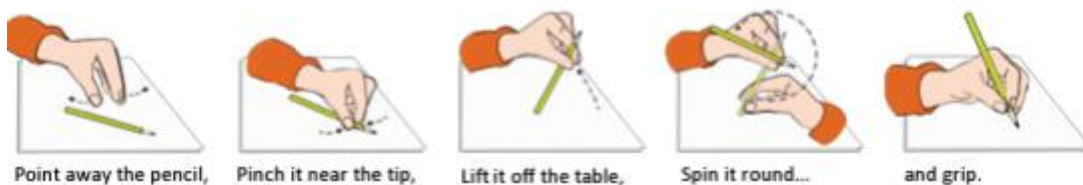
The tripod grip is typically the easiest for children to learn. It can be modelled by showing how to pinch the pencil between the ball of the thumb and index finger – about a finger's width from the pencil tip – while resting the middle finger underneath for support, and the other fingers tucked into the hand. Using a small sticker to mark the correct grip position can be a helpful visual aid. The ideal location of the fingers is about 3cm from the pencil tip

Correct pencil hold is taught as soon as the tri-pod grip is developmentally appropriate for their fine motor ability, however, pupils with specific physical needs and therefore for whom it is more appropriate, adapted pen holds are supported.

Right-handed pencil grip



Left-handed pencil grip



How do we teach handwriting?

Each handwriting lesson should be delivered by a teacher or trained teaching assistant. The children should not be left to practise without supervision from a trained adult who will monitor the children's work and pick up on incorrect pencil grip and letter formation. Strong modelling of starting points for letters and the correct orientation is essential. When forming the letters, the Little Wandle formation phrases should be used. You can make reference to the sound of the letters but the focus of the lesson must remain clearly on handwriting.

The handwriting lessons are designed to be short and focused, involve recall from the previous day, with direct, explicit teaching through strong modelling. This is followed by repeated practice, accompanied by precise feedback, to embed the learning in the long-term memory and ensure it becomes automatic.

Early years foundation stage

The emphasis throughout nursery and reception is on movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (beginning at the correct entry point and then moving in the correct direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility.

To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Adults are vigilant to ensure bad habits do not become ingrained and that specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs or disabilities are met.

Prior to children developing the skills they need to write independently, teachers often scribe children's ideas for them. Scribing for children is an opportunity to model constructive posture for writing, pencil grip and letter formation; all of which help develop children's awareness of all these aspects of the writing process. In the pre-communicative stage, pupils play with writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the pupil's understanding that marks on paper convey meaning. Pupils are given the

opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand.

In Reception, the first few weeks of teaching focus on patterns to provide the opportunity for children to practise correct grip of the pencil, pressure on the page and flow of handwriting. Lessons then move on to letter families. Letters are taught in families rather than following the order of the Little Wandle phonics progression because this enables the children to practise letters that have the same direction, thereby reducing the cognitive load.

Key stage one

Building on the early years foundation stage, pupils in key stage one develop a legible style and begin to use fully cursive handwriting in year two by starting to join their handwriting. This is dependent on ability and not the age of the pupils. They should only move on to joined handwriting once they can form unjoined letters correctly and consistently.

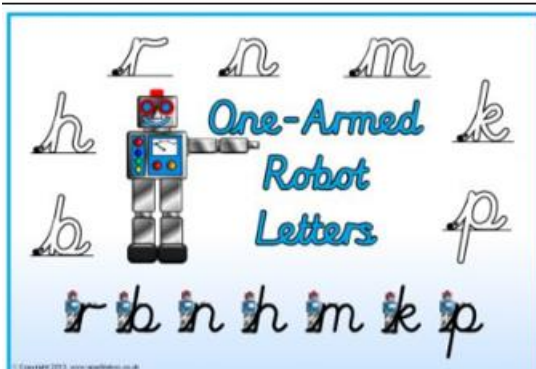
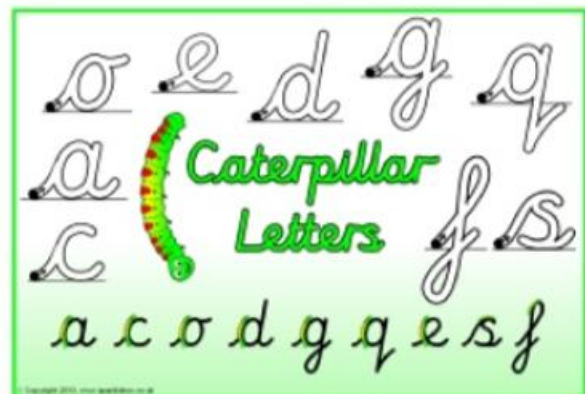
Labels	All labels are to be written in join it cursive writing
Photocopied Sheets	Can be a mixture of types of font but at least some must contain cursive writing.
Letter Line	Letter line should be displayed in every room in KS 1 and KS 2 including the cursive font. The language showing up we go off we go should also be used.
Display	Each classroom displays should contain some cursive writing including a handwritten model. Some evidence of cursive lettering for display titles.
Teachers Writing	When modelling any writing to the children in Year2 and KS 2 teachers must use a cursive style. Teacher's comment/stickers in children's books must also be in a cursive form.
Teaching cursive progression	Reception start by learning letter formation in line with the Little Wandle phonics. Letters to be taught in letter families from year 1 as stated in the policy but using the Little Wandle letter formation phrases. 1.Caterpillar letters 2. ladder letters 3.one armed robot letters 4.zigzag letters.

Year 1 letter formation

Ss 	Aa 	Tt 	Pp 	Ii 	Nn 	Mm 
Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leg) at the top.	Down the stick, up and over the net.	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.
Dd 	Gg 	Oo 	Cc 	Kk 	Ee 	Uu 
Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.	Round the goat's face, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin.	All around the octopus.	Curl around the cat.	Down the kite, up and round, down to the corner.	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.
Rr 	Hh 	Bb 	Ff 	Ll 	Jj 	Vv 
From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.	Down, up and over the helicopter.	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.	All the way down the lollipop.	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
Ww 	Xx 	Yy 	Zz 	Qq 		
From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. Quick, it's the queen!		

Year 2 Letter formation

Lower case



Capital Letters

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.

Autumn Term 1						
Handwriting						
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Year 1 Use Little Wandle sayings	Curly Caterpillar letters. 	Curly Caterpillar letters. 	Curly Caterpillar letters. 	Recap all Curly Caterpillar letters.		Ladder letters 
Year 2 Use Little Wandle sayings, including up we go and off we go. (Cursive)	Curly Caterpillar letters. 	Curly Caterpillar letters. 	Curly Caterpillar letters. 	Recap all Curly Caterpillar letters.		Ladder letters 

Autumn Term 2						
Handwriting						
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Year 1 Use Little Wandle sayings.	Ladder letters 	Recap all Ladder letters	One armed robot letters 	One armed robot letters 	One armed robot letters P	
Year 2 Use Little Wandle sayings, including up we go and off we go. (Cursive)	Ladder letters 	Handwriting Sprints cursive One sentence only including letters taught. Recap all Ladder letters	Handwriting Sprints cursive One sentence only One armed robot letters 	Handwriting Sprints cursive Up to two sentences One armed robot letters 	Recall a letters. Handwriting Sprints cursive Up to two sentences Recap all letters.	Handwriting Sprints cursive Up to two sentences Recap all letters.

These are guidelines your class may move quicker through the handwriting if they have the correct formation. Use group or 1:1 intervention to support children as needed.

Year 1 Handwriting Expectations

These are the four-letter families and the order that they are taught:

Long letters	Curly letters	One armed robot letters	Zig-Zag letters
l, t, i, u, j, y	c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s	r, n, m, p, h, b, d	v, w, x, k, z

Autumn 1	Spring 1	Summer 1
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Digits 0-9 Use and apply in writing activities	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Write surname independently
Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Digits 0-9 Use and apply in writing activities	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Digits 0-9 Learn to write surname independently Use and apply in writing activities	Show more control and accuracy when writing correctly formed lower-case letters and capital letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Use and apply in writing activities with independence

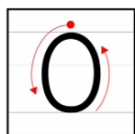
Year 2 Handwriting Expectations

These are the four main joins and these are the order in which they should be taught:

Diagonal join, no ascender	Diagonal joins to ascender	Horizontal join, no ascender	Horizontal join, to ascender
Examples: ai, ar, un, am, ear, aw, ir, hu, ti, ki, du, up, ag, fe, fu.	Examples: ab, ul, it, ib, if, ub, th, ck, ch, it, ft, fl.	Examples: ou, vi, wi, op, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re.	Examples: ob, ol, wh, it, of, rt, rk.

Autumn 1	Spring 1	Summer 1
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Digits 0-9 Use and apply in writing activities	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Write surname independently
Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Digits 0-9 Use and apply in writing activities	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Digits 0-9 Learn to write surname independently Use and apply in writing activities	Show more control and accuracy when writing correctly formed lower-case letters and capital letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Use and apply in writing activities with independence
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Digits 0-9 Use and apply in writing activities	Integrate the teaching of capital letters (A to Z) alongside the lower-case letters Long letters: l, t, i, u, j, y Curly letters: c, a, g, q, o, e, f, s Bouncing ball letters: r, n, m, p, h, b, d Zig-Zag letters: v, w, x, k, z Write surname independently

Number formation is also taught from Recpetition and errors will continued to be modelled and corrected .
The sayings below are used to support in rembering the correct formation.



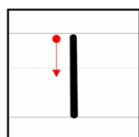
Around and
around we go
when we get
back to the start
we have a zero!



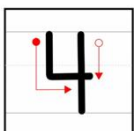
Around the tree
and around the
tree. That is
how we make
three!



Down we go
and make a
loop. Number
six makes a
hoop!



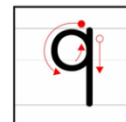
One is like a
stick. A straight
line from the
top to the
bottom.



Down and over,
down once
more. That is
how we make
four!



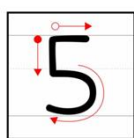
Across the sky
and down from
heaven, that's
the way to
make seven.



A loop and a
line, that makes
nine!



Around and
back on the
train track, two
two!



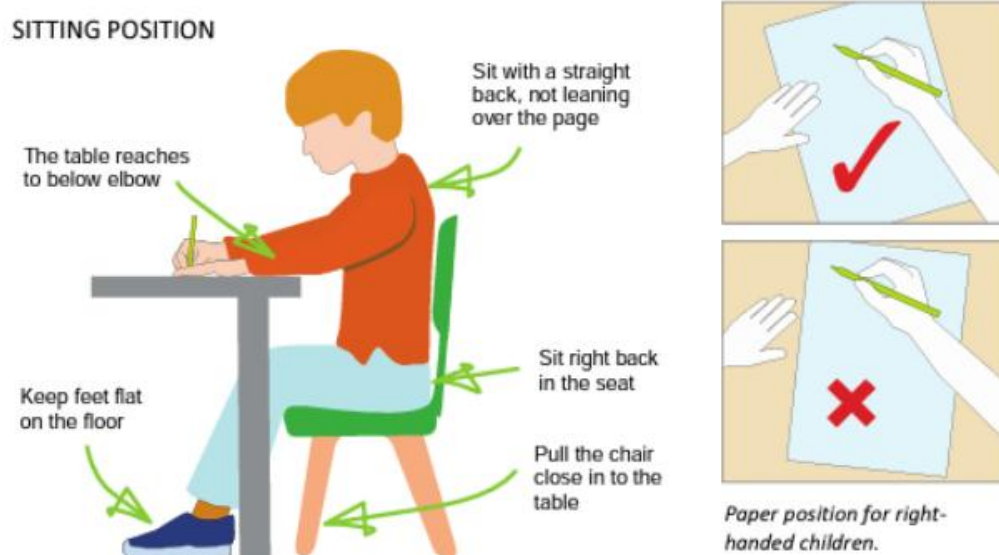
Go down and
around then
stop! To finish
the five put a
line on top.



Make a 's' and
do not wait!
back to the start
makes eight.

Posture

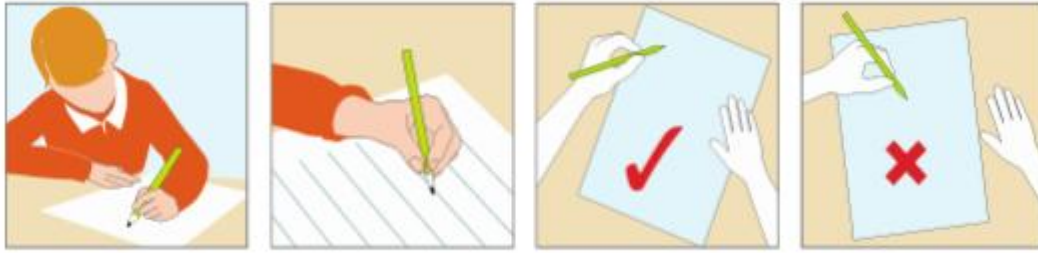
If children have a poor posture when writing, it can result in pain and fatigue, causing poor presentation, handwriting that is difficult to read, slow speed and lack of motivation to write. By modelling, monitoring and reinforcing good posture from the beginning, poor habits can be prevented from developing and children can be supported in building the stamina and speed needed for fluent writing.



- Feet are flat on the floor or supported on a wide, stable raised surface.
- Knees form a 90 degrees angle, with about two fingers' space behind the knees to prevent pressure on the lower thighs.
- Hips are positioned at approximately 90 degrees, with the back fully supported by the chair.
- Seat position with the back against the chair maintaining a small gap (about the width of a fist) between the stomach and the table, so there is sufficient space to breathe comfortably.
- Table and chair height should allow the forearms to rest comfortably on the surface – without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders (too high).
- Work surface must be clean, smooth and clear of clutter to promote proper hand and arm placement and allow arms to move freely to write.

Left-handed pupils may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers will demonstrate to left-handed pupils on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown below.
- grip the pencil at a slightly higher point so they can see around their fingers
- use softer pencils that require less pressure
- do not hold the pencil too tightly or press down too hard
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically



Paper position for left-handed children.

Hand Exercises

Choose four of these exercises for the start of each lesson – try to include a variety each week.

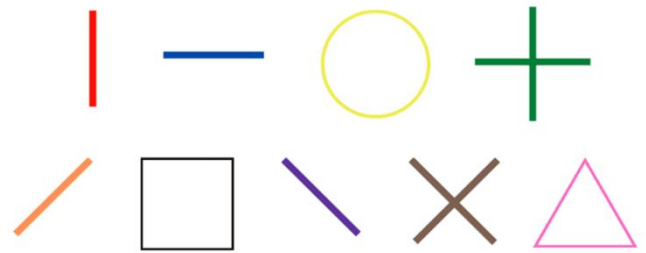
1. Rub hands together- Rub hands together until they feel warm. Move them up and down, or in circular motions to stimulate blood flow.
2. Push palms together- Push the palms firmly together and hold for five seconds. Repeat a few times.
3. Finger stretches- Open hands wide, stretching fingers as far apart as you can. Then make a tight fist, hiding fingers away inside the palm.
4. Drumming fingers- Drum fingers on the table, one finger at a time. This can be extended to tapping a rhythm.
5. Squeeze forearms and hands- Use the left hand to squeeze the right forearm and hand firmly, applying gentle pressure to stimulate the muscles and increase awareness. Swap hands.
6. Pulling fingers (like taking off a glove)- With one hand, grasp each finger of the other hand in turn and gently pull downward, as if- taking off a glove. Repeat for the other hand.
7. Oppose thumb to each fingertip- Touch the thumb to each fingertip of the same hand in turn. For more challenge, this can be done with both hands at the same time, or with your eyes closed.
8. Finger circle tug- Form a circle with the thumb and index finger. Then form another circle with the other hand, within that circle, and try to pull them apart.

Nursery

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical line
- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.
- The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder.
- In Spring term 2, children will be given a blank page book and to carry out fun and engaging tasks encouraging prewriting mark making including the marks below. One focus mark per week.

Pre-Writing Skills...



EYFS

EYFS will teach handwriting in the same order as the phonics teaching. Handwriting will be taught separately and not at the same time as phonics. Children will be sat at a table with the correct posture and grip encouraged.

Lesson Organisation

Option 1

Handwriting is taught in a small group of approximately six children of similar ability at a table, with a teacher or teaching assistant who has been fully trained, enabling close monitoring and intervention to ensure the children develop the correct habits right from the start. Suggested time: 15 minutes at tables.

Option 2

The 'Revisit and review' and 'Teach and practise' parts of the lesson are taught to half the class, with the children sitting at tables. The teacher circulates to support the children during the 'Practise and apply' part of the lesson. Suggested time: 15 minutes at tables.

Option 3

The 'Revisit and review' and 'Teach and practise' parts of the lesson are taught to the whole class. The teacher then works with one group at a time, seated at the table, revisiting the modelling and guiding the children in the 'Practise and apply' part of the lesson, while closely observing and providing support as needed. Suggested time: 10 minutes on the carpet; 5 minutes for each group at tables.

Option 4

A whole-class lesson with children seated at tables, supported where possible by a teaching assistant or additional adult to help correct pencil grip and letter formation as needed. Suggested time: 15 minutes at tables.

- Larger pencils or handwriting grips need to be available and used to promote the correct grip
- Teachers to review and identify children for pencil grip using the 5 stages of grip and model correct grip for children. (see above)
- Teacher to assess stages of mark making and pre- handwriting developmental curriculum (see above).
- Daily sessions of formal handwriting. This includes – warm up exercises including gross and fine motor before formal writing.
- Handwriting phrases used from Little Wandle to introduce letters.
- Letters are to be taught in reception in line with phonics learning.
- Children will also be taught correct number formation

Year 1/2

Each lesson must start with a handwriting focus. This is non-negotiable to ensure that pupils leave Key Stage 1 forming all letters correctly, while also spacing and sizing them appropriately. To avoid children practising and reinforcing incorrect letter formation, teaching should be consolidated before moving on. *DfE – The Writing Framework, July 2025*

- The handwriting input must be completed **daily** for approximately 15 minutes. This should be completed at the front of pupils' English books and prepared prior to the lesson, based children's needs. It should include the letter, grapheme, join, and word that pupils will be learning to form accurately. While this handbook outlines a suggested progression, pupils should be taught to form the letters in line with your school's handwriting scheme.
- The handwriting expectations for Year 1 and Year 2 differ. Year 1 will focus on forming all individual letters (including capital letters and numbers 0-9) correctly and confidently. Year 2 will revise and practise correct letter formation frequently across individual letters, groups of letters and words. Once formed accurately, they should rehearse relative sizing and appropriate spacing between letters. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.
- Research has found that the most effective way to teach letter formation is by showing children a model of the letter with numbered arrows, so they know the order and direction of each stroke. To join letters easily and legibly, pupils first need to form the shape of each letter correctly, starting and finishing each one at the correct point and ensuring that its size is properly related to other letters in the same family. Joined handwriting should not be taught until pupils can form these unjoined letters (print forms) correctly and consistently. *DfE – The Writing Framework, July 2025*
- It is not a good idea to make the children practice the same letter repeatedly in one go. Instead, after introducing a new letter, children should practice it carefully for a short time (5-6 attempts should be sufficient) with some brief teacher feedback. They should check how well they did (by circling their best attempts). Letters can be reviewed and practised again in future lessons as needed.

The handwriting lesson must be broken down into three sections:

Model: (5 minutes) The adult must explicitly model the formation of the letter the children are practising in the session. This should include the starting and finishing point for each letter, the correct direction, when to take their pencil off and whether there are elements should as a flick. Teachers should talk through their modelling, so the children are hearing the teacher's thought process.

Practise: (8 minutes) Children spend time practising the formation of the letter. This will be pre-prepared in the children's English books. Your role is to closely monitor pupils and provide instant feedback. Help them to see where they have made a mistake and where they have been successful. Intervene promptly for children who require additional support. Maintain expectations throughout encouraging a *gold standard* of formation consistently applied.

Reflect: (2 minutes) Children self-reflect when they have written a letter several times, ask them to decide which looks the best and why. They can then use that as a model for future writing.

Year 1 and 2 will teach handwriting in letter family order. Handwriting will be taught separately and not at the same time as phonics. Children will be sat at a table with the correct posture and pencil grip.

- In year 1 letters are taught in letter families (see above)

- All Year 1 children to be recording handwritten session in their phonics or writing book.
- Children in year 1 should be writing the day of the week at the start of the session from Spring 1.
- Children should not be expected to be cursive letters at this stage.
- Year 1 children do need to be taught the *k* not k formation.
- Children in Year 1 will start handwriting sprints and self-regulation (see below) at the end of the Spring 1 term once letter formation is correct and with only one sentence initially.
- Use large lines with grey section (Grammarsaurus handwriting sheets) and store together in a folder – ensure sheet has child's name and date.
- Children in Year 1 will start handwriting sprints and self-regulation (see below) at the end of the Spring 1 term once letter formation is correct and with only one sentence initially.

Year 3/4

- Children will be encouraged to use a continuous cursive style at all times.
- Little Wandle phonics formation phrase to be used along with the language of up we go off we go (at the start and end of the letter) to be used to encourage correct cursive letter formation.
- Children will also be taught correct letter formation of capital letters.
- Children will write the full date at the start of each handwriting session.
- Children will again work towards achieving a pen licence. This will be granted by the teacher when they are consistently joining within and out of handwriting sessions.
- Pen licence certificates will be given in shine collective worship.
- All children to be recording handwriting session in a handwriting book.
- Children should be given opportunities to join age related common exception and high frequency words.
- Dictation of simple sentences will help to develop handwriting stamina when writing.
- Children will start handwriting sprints and self-regulation (see below) in Autumn term
- 1:1 Intervention will be given to children who need support with particular letter formation.
- Three weekly sessions of formal handwriting totalling 30 minutes from the autumn 1.
- Marking and feedback to be done live with children.
- Draw a line under work and continue the same page for next session if space.
- Daily handwriting sprints focusing on correct formation will begin in term 1.
- Intervention will take place for children regarding correct number formation as necessary.

Year 5/6

- Children will be encouraged to use a continuous cursive style at all times.
- Little Wandle phonics formation phrase to be used along with the language of up we go off we go (at the start and end of the letter) to be used to encourage correct cursive letter formation.
- Children will also be taught correct letter formation of capital letters.
- Children will write the full date at the start of each handwriting session.
- Children will start handwriting sprints and self-regulation (see below) in Autumn term
- Children will again work towards achieving a pen licence. This will be granted by the teacher when they are consistently joining within and out of handwriting sessions.
- Pen licence certificates will be given in shine collective worship.
- All children to be recording handwriting session in a handwriting book.
- Children should be given opportunities to join age related common exception and high frequency words.
- Dictation of simple sentences will help to develop handwriting stamina when writing. Opportunities taken to link to grammar.
- 1:1 or small group (no more than 4) Intervention will be given to children who need support with particular letter formation.
- Two weekly sessions of formal handwriting totalling 20 to 30 minutes from the autumn 1.
- Marking and feedback to be done live with children.
- Draw a line under work and continue the same page for next session if space.
- Daily handwriting sprints focusing on correct formation will begin in term 1.
- Intervention will take place for children regarding correct number formation as necessary.

Adaptions

Pupils who struggle with handwriting may not be motivated to undertake writing tasks and use avoidance strategies. It is therefore particularly important to provide regular daily practice and routines to help pupils to establish motor patterns of letter formation in memory. When a pupil embeds the correct handwriting style this will free up his / her working memory to focus on the composition and produce a piece of written work. A pupil with literacy difficulties will benefit from being taught a cursive style script from the first point of learning so that the muscle memory develops automaticity.

Impact On Writing	Recommendation for Reasonable Adjustments
The pupil may have poor fine motor skills	Provide opportunities for the pupil to develop skills by: Squeezing a stress ball Manipulating Play-Doh Cutting with scissors Stringing pasta on to wool Building with small block
The pupil may have an inappropriate or insufficient pencil grip	The pupil could use a spray bottle or use tweezers to grab and hold small items to develop his / her pincer grip Provide a 'tripod' grip for the pupil's pencil Provide triangular pencils
Pupil displays inappropriate seating position and posture	Ensure the pupil's seat and table are at an appropriate height for them to be able to sit with their hips, feet and ankles bent at 90 degrees, with the desk 2.5-5cm higher than the pupil's bent elbows Try providing a writing slope to encourage correct posture

He / she has poor letter formation	Use a multisensory approach when introducing new cursive joins: Move from big movements 'sky writing'- forming large letters in the air using a finger, or using chalk in the playground Reduce in size to writing in a sand tray / using a marker on a whiteboard and then to tracing over the letter on paper Finally forming the letter independently on paper It can be helpful to introduce related letters in groups according to the stroke patterns, with related visuals: The "magic 'c' letters" include: 'c', 'a', 'd', 'g', 'o', and 'q' and all begin with a letter 'c' stroke The 'diver letters' include: 'b', 'h', 'r', 'n', 'm', and 'p' and all begin with a line down and then 'swim up and over' strokes
The pupil may struggle to implement taught cursive	Provide lined paper with a choice of widths so the pupil can experiment (a wider line may be helpful initially): A highlighter line could be drawn to provide the pupil with a reference point for correctly sizing 'small' and 'tall' letters This can progress to a pencil line drawn above the writing line Encourage the pupil to think of sky, grass and soil in three layers to help focus on size and placement of ascenders and descenders in relation to the line Model a sentence using the cursive script Ensure through repetition and consolidation that the letter formation is secure in memory Correct any errors immediately to avoid wrong practice developing
The pupil may write with inappropriate pressure (too light)	Provide the pupil with a light-up pen, as these will only illuminate if sufficient pressure is applied Assist the pupil to use carbon paper and to see how many layers he / she has written through
The pupil may write with inappropriate pencil (too heavy)	Provide a mechanical pencil (the lead will break if heavy pressure is used) Practice writing on paper placed on top of a foam sheet (the pencil will poke through if the pressure is too hard)
The pupil may struggle with positioning of paper	On the desk, the paper the pupil is writing on should be slightly angled. The right side of the paper should be slightly higher for a right-handed pupil. For a left-handed pupil, the left side should be higher. The non-dominant hand is used to stabilise the page.
The pupil begins writing in the middle of the line	Place a small dot on the writing line to guide the pupil where to begin

Spelling

EYFS and Year 1

At Spires Federation we use Little Wandle which has spelling built into the programme. We teach spelling as soon as possible in Reception. Once we get going, we spell in every lesson! Spelling is taught and practised in every lesson in Year 1. We help children segment the sounds in words, work out which graphemes make those sounds and then write them down. We use the correct spelling whenever we model writing. Even if the children have not met the GPC needed to spell a word, we show the correct spelling in your writing. Using this simple script as we write the spelling (we're using the example 'head').

head h-e-d

write 'h'

write 'ea', Say: in this word we use this spelling for /e/

write 'd'

Year 2- Year 6

Spelling Shed programme is used to support children as they build their use of vocabulary (Years 2-6). Children need to learn spelling patterns and rules, statutory words, common exceptions and personal spellings and the Spelling Shed programme allows us to do this in a little but often structure, allowing the children to revisit and review their learning, as well as learning new strategies to apply in their writing. We chose this scheme, as it gives 100% coverage of the National Curriculum for Spelling and ensure that we actively teach the children how to spell rather than test them.

The EEF [Improving Literacy In Key Stage 2 Guidance Report](#) says:

“Fast and accurate spelling of an extensive vocabulary is a key component of writing fluency. Many of the skills that support word reading will also support spelling, but spelling demands great specificity and has different motor demands. There is limited high quality evidence about how to teach spelling, but it is clear that spelling should be actively taught rather than simply tested.

Phonics provides a foundation for effective spelling, which can be applied alongside other strategies such as focusing on morphemes. By analysing the types of spelling errors pupils make it is possible to provide support specific to their needs. The report goes on to identify the most common spelling errors as being phonological, orthographical or morphological.

“Orthography is how patterns of letters are used to make certain spoken sounds in a language.”

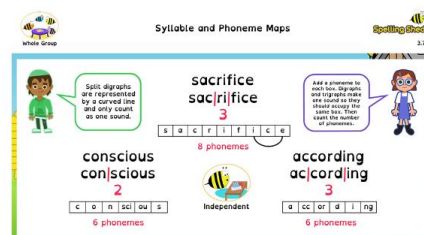
In spelling lessons, our children continue to build on the firm foundations built whilst studying phonics in their early years of education. They continue to break down spellings into the smallest units of sound and cluster them into syllables in order to read and write words efficiently.

Orthography

“Orthography is how patterns of letters are used to make certain spoken sounds in a language.”

In the new Spelling Shed lessons, students will continue to build on the firm foundations built whilst studying phonics in their early years of education. They will continue to break down spellings into the smallest units of sound and cluster them into syllables in order to read and write words efficiently.

Through adult-led discussion and investigation children will become more secure in their knowledge of English orthography based on the frequency and position of the sounds within words.



“Morphology describes how words are structured into subcomponents to give meaning.”

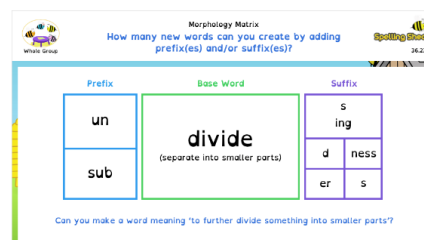
Children study words; word parts; their meanings and how this affects spelling.

Morphology

“Morphology describes how words are structured into subcomponents to give meaning.”

Children will study words; word parts; their meanings and how this affects spelling.

There are lessons throughout the scheme that consolidate children's knowledge of common morphemes such as root formations, prefixes and suffixes.



“Etymology describes the origins of words, which can lead to certain patterns of spelling.”

Most lessons in the Spelling Shed scheme include an etymology element that enables children to learn about the origin of the words that they are learning about. Children are able to see how the English language has, over time, borrowed and integrated words and spellings from a range of source languages.

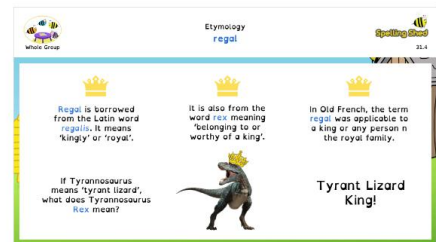
Spelling Shed also provides a wealth of online games which can be accessed both in school and at home to further embed spelling patterns and rules covered within spelling lessons.



“Etymology describes the origins of words, which can lead to certain patterns of spelling.”

Most lessons in the scheme include an etymology element that allows educators to teach the children about the origin of the words that they are learning about.

Children will be able to see how the English language has, over time, borrowed and integrated words and spellings from a range of source languages. For example, the latinate verbs which follow Latin prepositions in English words such as: -act (do), -pute (think) or -opt (choose).



Implementation

Each lesson has a main objective from the National Curriculum appendix for spelling. This may be split across multiple bullet points.

At our Federation, each class has a standalone spelling lesson of at least 30 minutes a week and an additional spelling warm-up activity further in the week to consolidate their learning. The Spelling Shed scheme is flexible to fit our timetables and is closely linked to Little Wandle phonics.

In EYFS and Year 1 spelling is taught through the Little Wandle phonics program.

Each Spelling Shed lesson...

- a set of words is provided, these words are examples of the spelling patterns
- has main teaching inputs, which can then be followed up with additional activities that can be carried out immediately after the input during an extended session or revisited throughout the week to consolidate the learning further.
- contains a revision section which should last approximately 5 minutes. Children will revisit sounds and spelling patterns from earlier weeks in the scheme.
- has elements of the key areas below embedded in its core.

Children will make good progress from their own personal starting points. They will leave Spires Federation with the tools required to write confidently without spelling being barrier. They will be able to apply what they have learnt about orthography, morphology and etymology to access and use high quality vocabulary in their own writing.

Adaptions

Ensure that spelling is taught through drawing on all the spelling skills in a repertoire, rather than waiting until children have “mastered” phonics, before trying to use morphology.

Use the slides to pre-teach up to the objective. As the PPTs are editable, look at the other year groups objectives and see if any match, or build up to the objective from the year group you are trying to teach.

Make sure the focus is on the pattern being taught, not necessarily the words that are on the list (the exceptions to this would be the Y3/4 and Y5/6 challenge word lists because these are the statutory words for those years). For example, if you have the Y3 pattern 'Words ending in al' still teach the lesson as normal and use different word lists for independent activities or practice. For example the Y2 'Words ending in al' list might be a good start for those slightly behind, or even if you needed to strip it back to words like pal, real, deal, goal.

Linking to children's interests where possible also helps with motivation, for example, a child who likes football may be more interested in spelling the word goal than one from the list. Use this to build up to the original list. Teaching the pattern is important, not the words, it doesn't have to be 10 words or any specific number of words. The aim is for the child to understand the pattern, so sometimes exposure to more or less words will help cement the pattern.

Dictation for spelling and Handwriting

Dictation in the classroom refers to a trained adult reading a sentence aloud so that pupils can write down, word for word, what is being said. Pupils might then check their own writing against the original sentence and correct any errors. It integrates listening, spelling and reading.

We use dictation as a way for pupils to practise transcription without overloading their working memory and to help them write more automatically. This enables pupils to 'apply and practise their spelling'.

It is used as a tool to help children with their writing. During dictation, the teachers will either have sentences already in mind or they will discuss and decide on a sentence with the children.

Dictation also can allow for children to watch as an adult models using different writing skills effectively. Together we practise letter formation, spacing between words, spelling, where and when to use punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. Teachers also model how to listen to sounds in words and write the corresponding letters.

Forms of Dictation we use

Full/Traditional Dictation:

The most straightforward form, where the adult reads sentences or a passage at a normal pace, and the learners write down every word.

Partial/Gapped Dictation:

Learners write down words or phrases, but with blanks or gaps in the text they are given, or where they are only expected to write specific words or phrases.

Dicto-Comp/Dicto gloss:

A collaborative activity where children listen to a short text, then in pairs, they reconstruct it from memory, focusing on meaning and structure rather than exact words.

Paired Dictation

In this activity, children work in pairs. One student reads a passage aloud while the other writes it down. Then, they switch roles. This promotes teamwork and peer learning, giving children the chance to practise both their reading and writing skills.

Story Dictation

Read a short story aloud and have children write it down. Afterwards, ask them to continue the story by writing their own creative endings. This helps with writing fluency, creativity, and comprehension.

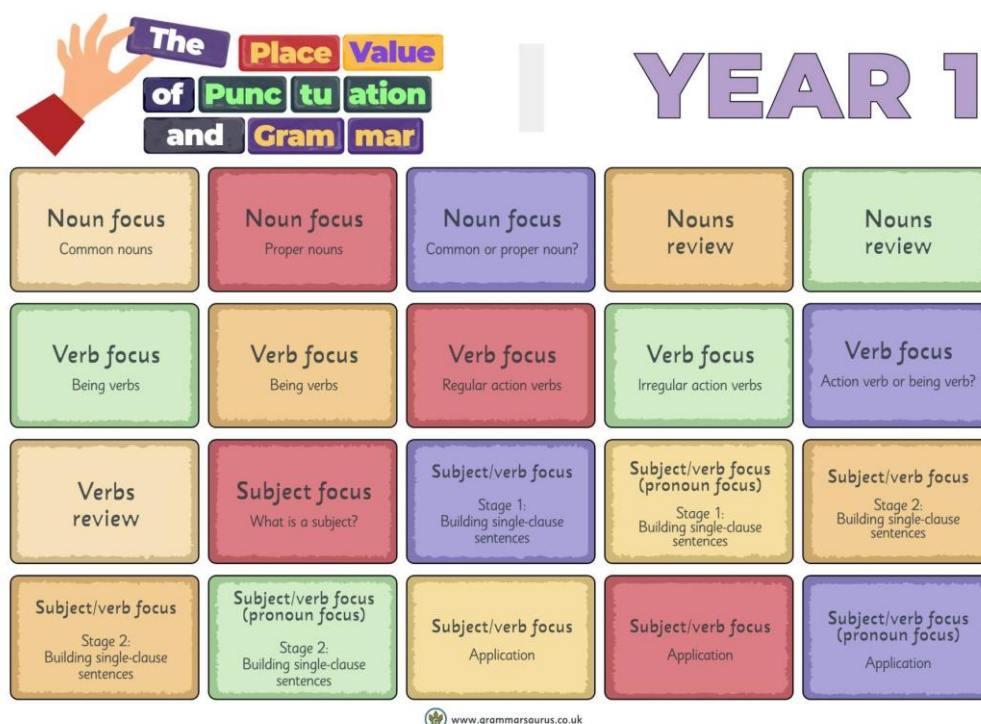
In additional to transcription in order to develop a fluent writer.

Place Value Grammar and Punctuation

Spelling, punctuation and grammar work hand in hand in our English lessons, and across the curriculum. Strong knowledge of grammar gives us more control and choice in our use of language. We weave the teaching of grammar throughout our teaching of speaking, reading and writing. We do this by modelling the correct use of language, looking closely at the written word and understanding how to improve our writing through our grammar choices. Good use of grammar brings our writing to life, makes our speech more powerful and engaging and increases our understanding and enjoyment when reading. Texts used in English lessons and as class reads are carefully chosen to allow us to explore grammar in detail.



To support explicit teaching of grammar, we use Grammarsaurus resources. We focus on the foundations of accurate grammar, and each year group will begin the year with lessons dedicated to the understanding of nouns, verbs and subjects, so vital in the structure of sentences. Other resources which may be used to consolidate learning are Nelson Grammar and the Natural Curriculum. These lessons enable pupils to learn and understand grammatical terms and to practice their use. Our grammar progression allows for learning from earlier year groups to be frequently revisited, consolidating knowledge and building a secure understanding and a foundation for use of increasingly complex language. These cover all of the statements in the National Curriculum Statutory Guidance (2014).





YEAR 2

Noun focus Common nouns	Noun focus Proper nouns	Noun focus Common or proper noun?	Nouns review	Verb focus Being verbs
Verb focus Regular action verbs	Verb focus Action verb or being verb?	Verb focus Irregular action verbs & verb phrases	Verbs review	Subject focus What is a subject?
Subject/verb focus Stage 1: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus (pronoun focus) Stage 1: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Stage 2: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus (pronoun focus) Stage 2: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Stage 3: Building single-clause sentences
Subject/verb focus (pronoun focus) Stage 3: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Application	Subject/verb focus (pronoun focus) Application	Subject/verb focus Co-ordinating conjunctions to join clauses	Subject/verb focus Co-ordinating conjunctions to join clauses and compound subjects

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Y3 Y4

Noun focus Common and proper nouns	Noun focus Collective/partitive nouns	Noun focus Collective/partitive nouns	Nouns review	Verb focus Being verbs + 'to have'
Verb focus Regular action verbs & verb phrases	Verb focus Regular action verbs (doubling the consonant) & verb phrases	Verb focus Irregular action verbs & verb phrases	Verbs review	Subject focus What is a subject?
Subject/verb focus Stage 1: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus (pronouns) Stage 1: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Stage 2: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus (pronouns) Stage 2: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Stage 3: Building single-clause sentences
Subject/verb focus (pronouns) Stage 3: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Application	Subject/verb focus Application	Subject/verb focus Co-ordinating conjunctions to join clauses	Subject/verb focus Co-ordinating conjunctions to join clauses and compound subjects

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Y5 Y6

Noun focus Common and proper nouns	Noun focus Collective/partitive nouns	Noun focus Abstract nouns	Nouns review	Verb focus Being verbs + 'to have'
Verb focus Regular action verbs & verb phrases	Verb focus Regular action verbs (doubling the consonant) & verb phrases	Verb focus Irregular action verbs & verb phrases	Verb focus Phrasal verbs	Verbs review
Subject focus What is a subject?	Subject/verb focus Stage 1: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus (pronouns) Stage 1: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Stage 2: Building single-clause sentences	Subject/verb focus Stage 3: Building single-clause sentences
Subject/verb focus Application	Subject/verb focus Co-ordinating conjunctions to join clauses	Subject/verb focus Compound subjects and dummy subjects	Subject/verb focus Gerunds	Subject/verb focus Application

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Overview of Irregular Verbs

R	say, make, go, see, get, drink, run, build, eat, do
Y1	come, sing, meet, sit, speak, draw, swim, cut, dig, put
Y2	take, give, find, tell, hold, write, grow, send, break, show
Y3	know, think, show, keep, hear, read, blow, fly, hide, stink, throw
Y4	become, leave, feel, bring, begin, spend, wear, sell, send, win
Y5	sink, stand, mean, pay, lose, fall, ring, buy, choose, dream, fight, tear
Y6	lie, lead, understand, rise, drive, forbid, ride, forget, know, leave, teach

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