

Handwriting - a guide for parents

Handwriting in the Foundation Stage

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Foundation Stage should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- 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 lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters - Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

Our children are encouraged to gain skill and confidence in:

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.

Handwriting in Year One and Two

Year 1 pupils should be taught to:

- 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

Year 2 pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- 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 not joined
- 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

Supporting individual children:

- Children should be encouraged to use the correct pencil grip and sit with a good posture.
- Left handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their writing arms from bumping each other. The angle of the paper depends on the handedness of the pupil. Left-handers should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right and right handed children should sit with the paper slightly slanted to the left. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents left handed children from smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. A left-hander may also benefit from holding the pencil higher up.
- Some children with specific difficulties may benefit from using a sloping surface and special equipment e.g. a pencil grip support.
- It is important to use appropriate writing materials at each stage of writing development.
- A sharp pencil is essential for all early handwriting activities.
- Children need to see good examples of handwriting in classroom displays.
- Handwriting should be taught frequently, in small groups and in the child's writing book.

Letter Families

We have four letter families which all follow a pattern in their formation:

Curly caterpillar letters

c o a d g e f s q

Pattern followed



One armed robot letters

b h m n p r

Patterned followed



Ladder letters

u l t y j

Patterned followed



Zig Zag monster letters

k v w x

Pattern followed



Z - no special pattern

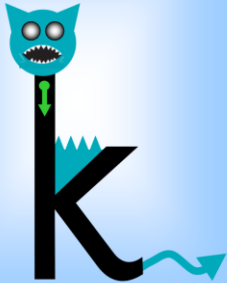
K - | | | | | | | |

By practising the patterns above with children, it not only encourages a flow of movement when writing but also prepares them for when they are ready to use joined handwriting.

Letter family cards

Zig Zag Monsters

Watch out for the zigzag monster!



Watch out for the zigzag monster!



Watch out for the zigzag monster!



Watch out for the zigzag monster!




Watch out for the zigzag monster!




Curly Caterpillars


Follow the curly caterpillar




Follow the curly caterpillar




Follow the curly caterpillar




Follow the curly caterpillar




Follow the curly caterpillar




Follow the curly caterpillar




Follow the curly caterpillar



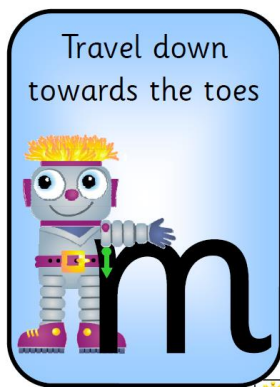
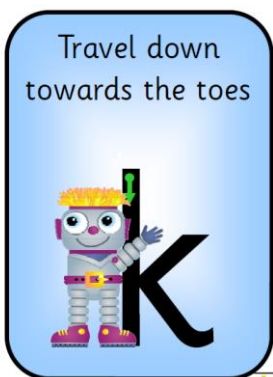
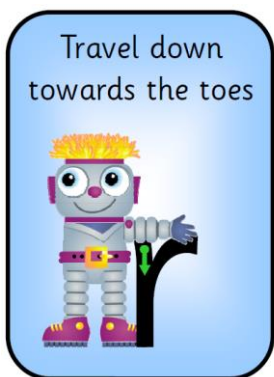
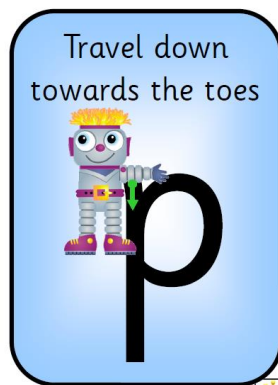
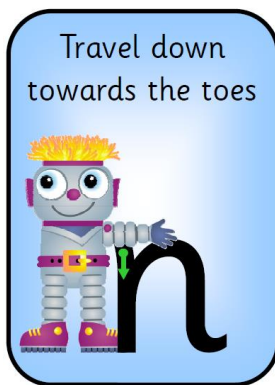
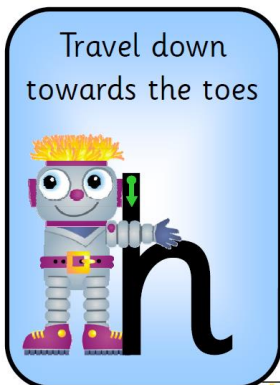
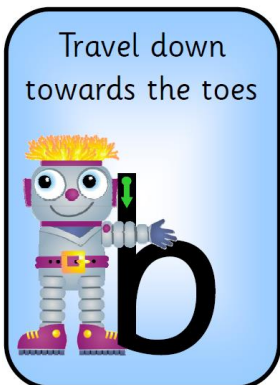
Follow the curly caterpillar



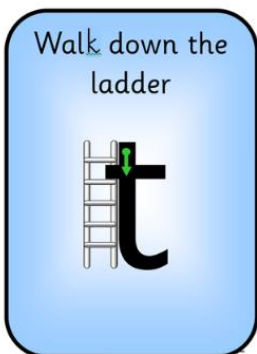
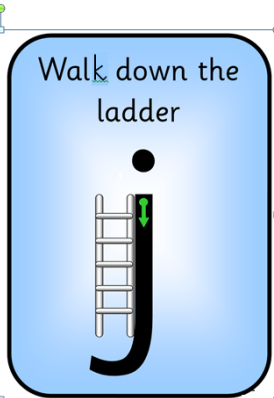
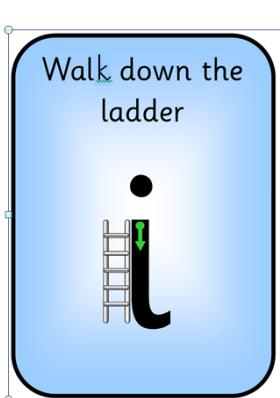
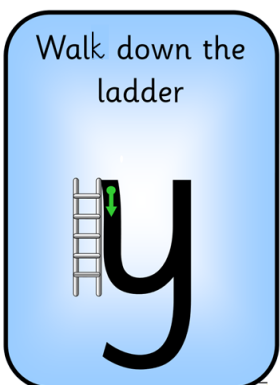
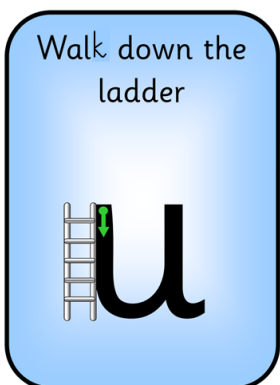
Follow the curly caterpillar



One Armed Robots



Ladder Letters



Handwriting Joins- Year Two Only

Top letter and bottom letter joins

Bottom letter joins



The exit kick is extended slightly into the next letter.

A longer extension is required when the join occurs at the start point of a letter – aw, sk.



Bottom to "c" shapes joins not only have to be extended but curved up and over to what would be the normal start point of the letter if it was not to be joined.

Bottom letter joins to the letter e



A more diagonal angled exit stroke is needed when joining a bottom exit kick letter to "e".

Top letter joins



The exit line is extended across to the normal start point of "curves to start" – caterpillar family.

The exit line is extended to join with the following letter which is then formed from this point, such as – wh, oh, on.

Top letter joins to the letter e



A downward diagonally curved exit stroke is needed to join a top exit letter to "e".

Letters left unjoined.

z x f