Welcome to Hamstel Infant School and Nursery

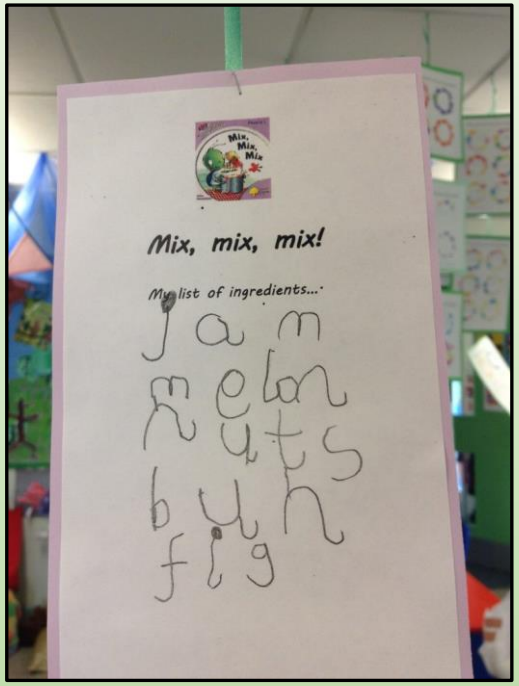
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INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Reception Handwriting Workshop

October 2026

What is handwriting?

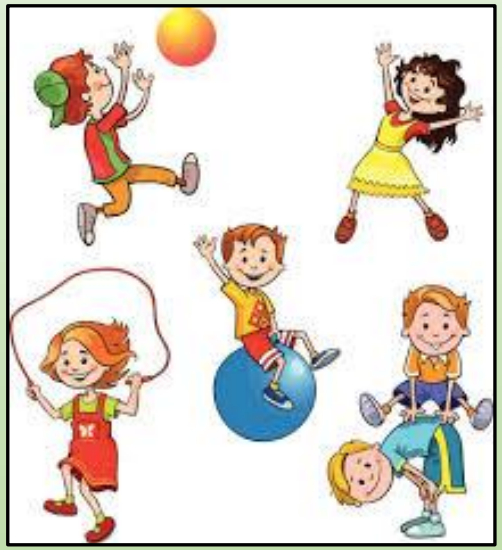
- An efficient **form of written communication.**
- The recording of thought, through language on paper/ other media – **Language by hand.**
- A highly **complex** skill involving the integration of many factors.
- A **taught** skills, which requires careful and consistent instruction with regular opportunities for practice.



Key strengths needed for handwriting

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- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Eye Tracking Ability
- Spatial Awareness
- Motor Memory
- Visual Memory



Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills will develop and strengthen the muscles in the body that are needed for handwriting.

- Playing on playground equipment
- Climbing and crawling
- Balancing – Twister
- Jumping – trampoline
- Dancing
- Football
- Swimming, gymnastics
- Playdough





Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills will help strengthen your child's hand muscles and help to develop an efficient tripod grasp.

- Pegboards
- Lacing and threading
- Using tweezers to bring up small objects
- Craft activities
- Puzzles

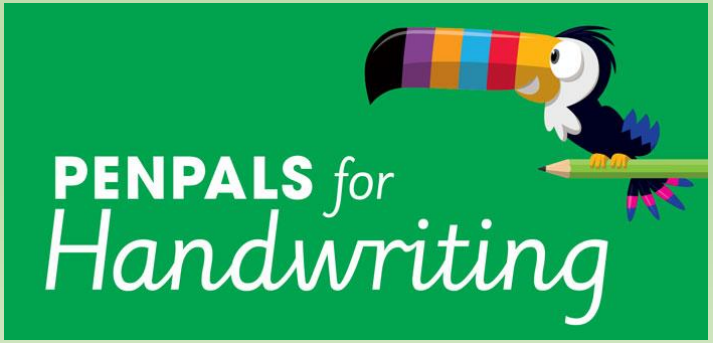


- Lego and other construction toys
- Weaving
- Finger painting
- Dressing up using clothes with buttons, press-studs, zips and shoelaces
- Playdough
- Mixing ingredients
- Cutting



How we teach Handwriting at Hamstel

- Gross and fine motor skills.
- PenPals
- Daily handwriting lessons in reception.
- Teach letters in their letter families.



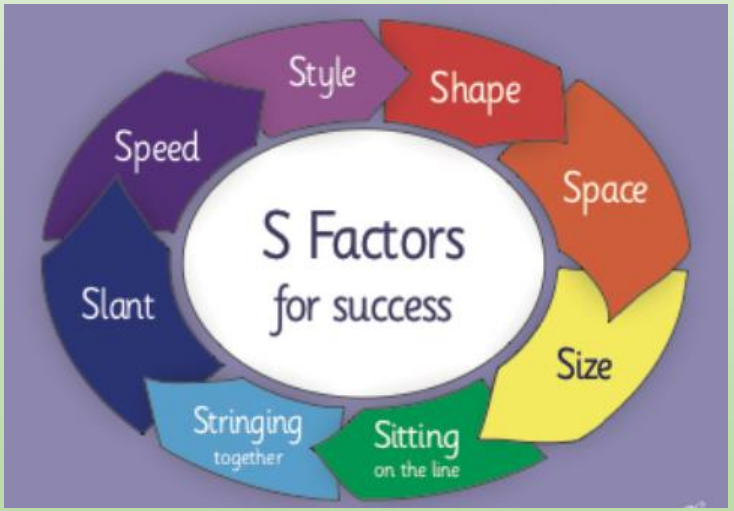
Effective handwriting practice has two dimensions

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Preparation: The P checks



The Teaching Steps: The S Factors



Setting up to succeed: The P checks



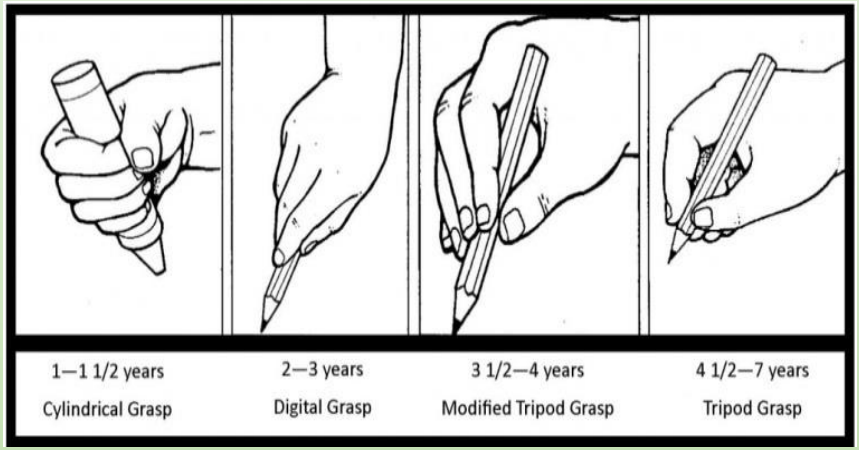
- The preparation we need to put in in order to go on our journey.
- The P checks set us up to succeed in handwriting.



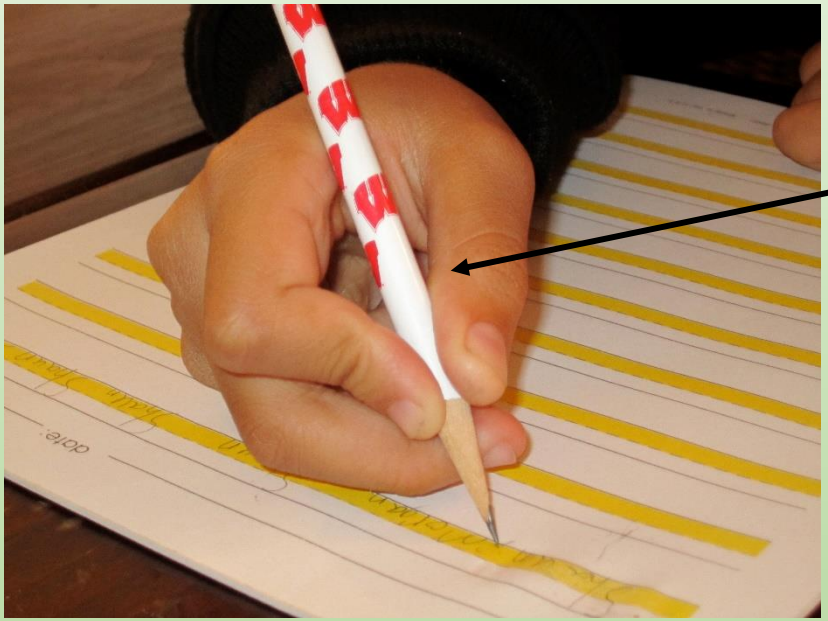
The Importance of Pencil Grip

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- Children need to develop a functional pencil grip.
- It needs to be relaxed but allow efficient control of the pencil.
- The pencil should be controlled by the fingers not the wrists.



Dynamic Tripod Grip



The importance of web space

Pencil – some tips

- Pencils should be held about 2 cm from the tip.
- Left handed writers may like to go a little higher.
- A twisted loom band can help keep fingers from creeping down.
- The same pencil or pen will not suit everyone.
- Pencils and pens need to be looked after!
- **Handwriting should not hurt!**

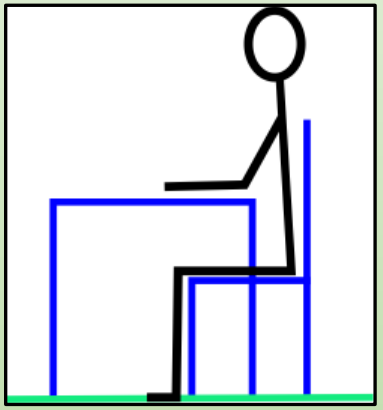




Posture for handwriting

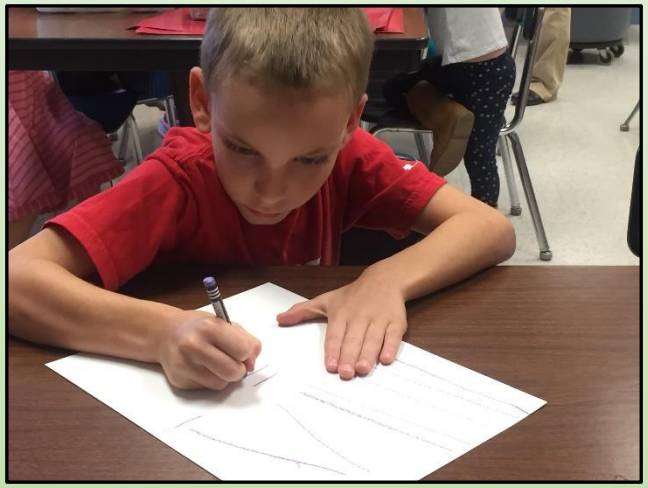
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- Tables and chairs
- Feet flat on the floor (or supported by a step)
- Arms resting comfortably on the table.
- Tummy – a fist's distance from the table.
- Other hand used to stabilise paper.
- Head up straight.



Paper

- Check that your other hand is holding the paper steady.
- Gradually move the book upwards as the writing moves down the page.
- Single sheets of paper need to be clipped to card.
- If your writing is looking squashed, try using wider lines.





Pressure

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Too much pressure on the pencil causes a tight grip which is very tiring.
Too little pressure makes your writing very pale and hard to read.



Practise using just the right amount of pressure.

Do warm ups before you start.

A different pencil can make a big difference.

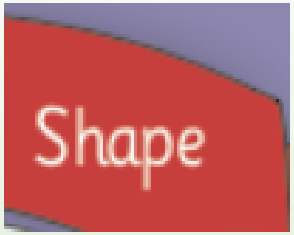
Try a harder or softer pencil.

Handwriting step by step: the s factors



In Years 5 and 6: Speed and Style

It is important that young children are taught to form each letter shape correctly before beginning to join.



How letterforms are learnt

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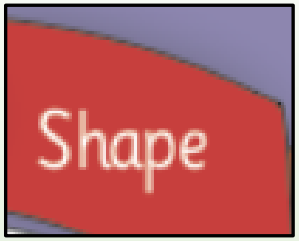
The Logic

- Teach letters in formation families – not in alphabetical order.
- Adding an exit flick gives the letters a forward movement and the potential to join.
- When the child is ready, they can be shown how to join letters.

The Practice

- Correct letter formation must be modelled at all times.
- Letter formation should be practised in a variety of ways

Paper and pencil practice is the final stage of learning and after the child can air write the letter shapes with eyes closed.



Letters belong in families

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Letters can be put into groups according to the movement needed to make them.

When children learn to write a new letter, the lead letter of its team will help them start.

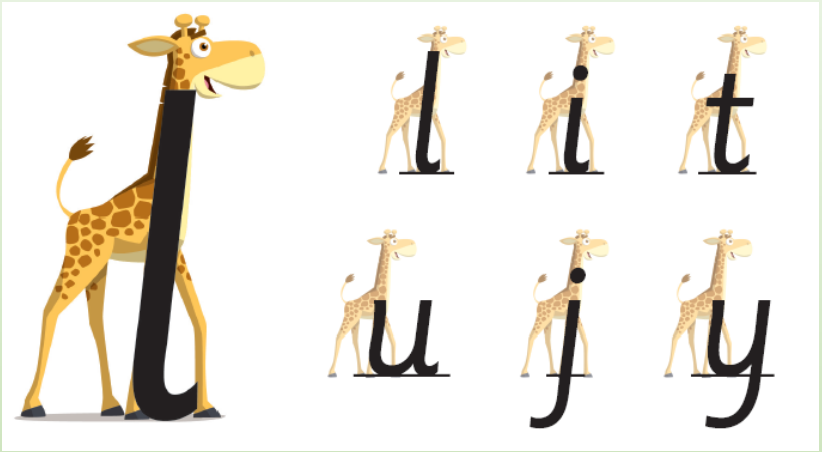


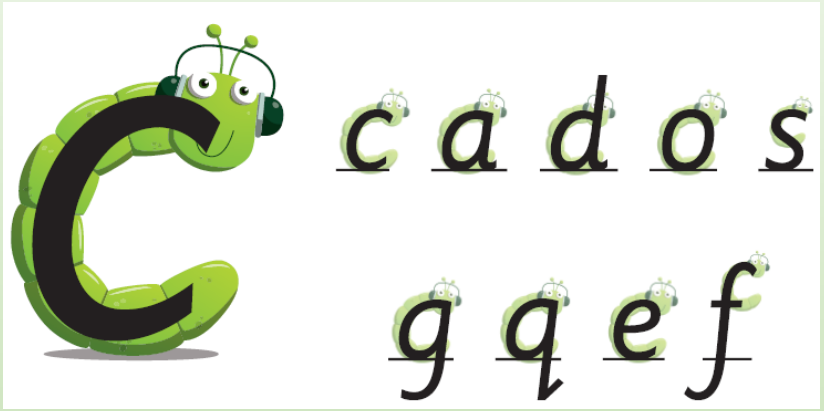


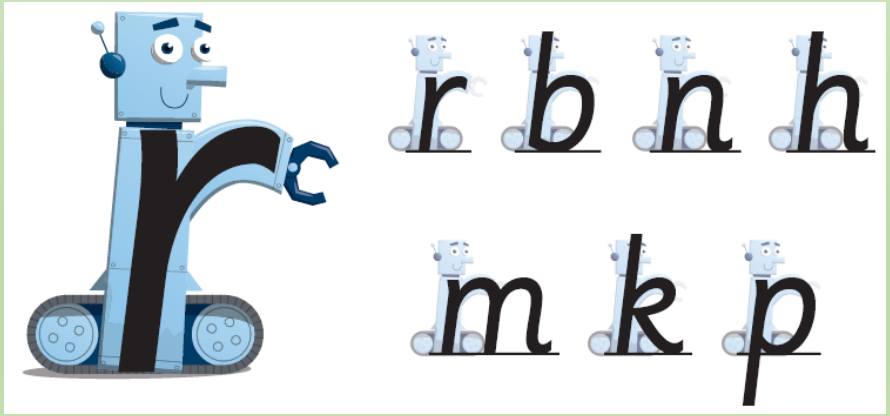




The four letter families









Shape

Two important starting points!

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Always start at **1 on the clock**. Curl around the caterpillar.



Activate the robot down his body, back up and over his arm.

Shape

Some letters have exit flicks

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Letters which end on the base line have a rounded exit flick.

This helps with spacing and joining.

a d h l i m n u





Space

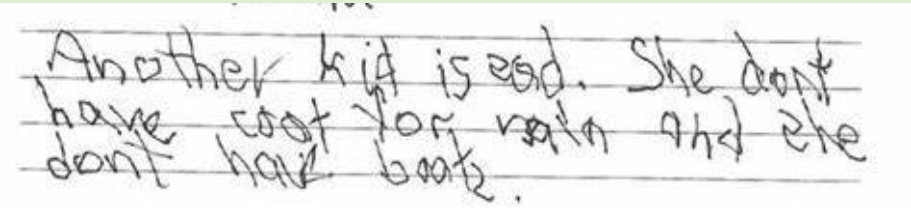
- The spaces should be even and match the size of the writing.
- They should be about the same size as an o or oo.
- You need to gradually visualise a good sized space.
- Until then – a lolly stick or coffee stirrer can help.
- Using 'Finger Spaces' isn't helpful in the long run – *fingers grow bigger and writing gets smaller!*



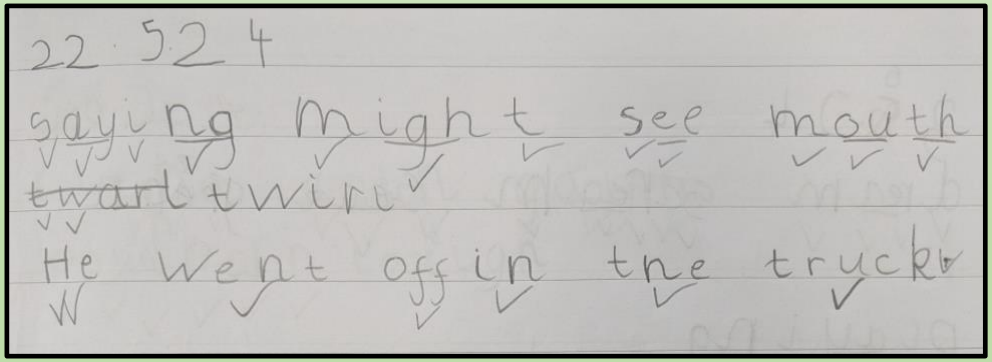
Sitting on the line

Writing sits on the baseline

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Sitting on the baseline helps with legibility.



Once children are secure in forming letters correctly, they need to know where to position them in relation to the baseline.

EYFS curriculum

Fine Motor Skills– ELG Expected

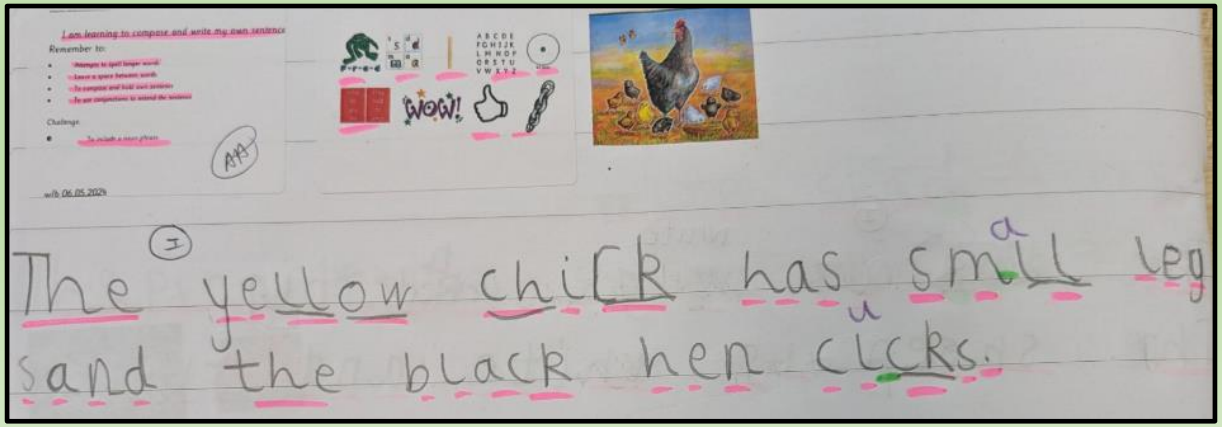
Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Writing – ELG Expected

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by and to others



How to help at home

Gross Motor Activities

- Go to the park
- Play ball games
- Go swimming

Fine Motor Activities

- Getting dressed
- Lego
- Puzzles
- Playdough
- Threading





Handwriting Practice

- Make it fun
- Practise in the air first
- Practise letters in their letter families
- Show you child how to form the letter correctly. Talk about what you are doing. Use a light coloured pen or pencil so your child can trace over.
- Be positive but correct some mistakes. We don't want these to become habits!