

Handwriting

Handwriting is a complex skill which becomes very personal over time. It can also be very difficult to change once the skill has been developed.

Featured on curriculum

Children are shown the 'frog method' of holding a pencil from reception (and sometimes even earlier). Mark-making is an important part of early-years framework, as is developing the essential gross and fine motor skills needed to write. This is a feature on the curriculum throughout compulsory schooling.

Cursive (joined-up) handwriting is currently the most popular taught in schools. It reinforces the muscle memory of words and can improve spelling.

What to do

Encourage a strong frame before writing starts; feet on the floor, back straight and paper at an angle. Encourage the frog-grip for younger learners.

Always use lined paper for long writes, use non-smudge pens, and provide writing guides for left-handed students. Allow opportunities for learners to write without being neat.

Allow 'drafting' to show learners the difference between quickly getting the information down, and producing a final piece of work.

When to raise a concern

Raise a concern if handwriting causes the learner pain. If lettering is unevenly spaced and sized even after handwriting intervention, if there's a disparity between what the learner can handwrite compared to what they can type, or if the writing is illegible, you should also raise a concern.

For years 5 and above, if handwriting continues to be a barrier, it would be beneficial to learn to touch-type as well as handwrite.

How to assess

It's best to consult your SENCo, but having a variety of examples of the learner's handwriting would be useful.