# Creating Cuddington Writers (Handwriting)

The skills needed for good handwriting.



Handwriting is a complex skill to learn and starts well before a child is ready to pick up a pencil and make marks on paper.

To develop good handwriting, you need to:

| Key Strength Areas                              |               |  |   |                                     |
|---|---------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Fine Motor                                      | Gross Motor   | Fine & Gross Motor                                 | Visual & Motor  | Spatial Awareness                   |
| Skills  | Skills        | Skills   | Memory Skills   | & Eye Tracking                      |
| Hold a pencil appropriately  Control the pencil | Sit correctly | Have good whole-<br>body strength and<br>dexterity | Remember and recall how to form the different shapes of the letters | position                            |
|   |               |  |   | Tilt and move the paper on the desk |
| Refine letter formation and position            |               |  |   |                                     |
| Join the letters to form words                  |               |  |   |                                     |

All these skills and strengths are learnt and developed in stages as a child grows. A weakness in any of the Key Strengths areas affect a child's handwriting skills. Therefore, incorporating games to build gross and fine motor control skills is important.

# Gross Motor Skills (GMS)

Good hand strength and agility is a combination of three skills; dexterity of the hands and fingers-allowing the fingers to grip the pencil freely; in-hand manipulation-allowing the pencil to be held in the hand freely; strong arches of the hand - allowing the pencil to be rested and moved on the hand.

# Posture base games

For good posture, the large muscle groups that support the pelvis, trunk, shoulders and arms need to work in a coordinated way (gross motor skills). Posture base games will help strengthen these muscles, ensuring they can sit correctly, helping to improve handwriting and making handwriting more comfortable.

# Bilateral Coordination games

Good bilateral coordination allows the body to move in an easy and well-coordinated way as both the left and right-hand sides of the body are working in unison. They reinforce their body

awareness and help them to move their writing arm comfortably across their body, helping to improve handwriting.

### Sensory perception games.

Sensory perception is the ability to send accurate messages to the brain when holding and touching objects. It is important as it enables children to identify objects and textures through touch as well as being able to judge the appropriate pressure required to hold and release them safely, key skills needed for good handwriting.

### Eye tracking games and activities

Poor eye tracking skills can make handwriting very difficult, causing letter formation, spacing and positioning problems, leading to poor presentation. Often words are missed out or repeated, causing composition and legibility issues.

### Spatial awareness games and activities

Poor spatial awareness skills make handwriting difficult as it affects the ability to understand and produce the directional pushes and pulls required to form letters; as well as difficulties with spacing and positioning. Combined, these difficulties can cause poor presentation and possible legibility issues. Spatial awareness skills are also developed through some of the bilateral coordination games.

### Motor memory games and activities

Poor motor memory skills can make handwriting difficult as shapes and letter formation movements are often forgotten, causing letter reversals and incorrectly formed letter shapes, which can make joining a very slow process to learn. A poor and often slow handwriting style can develop as font styles are mixed and capital letters are used inappropriately. Combined, these difficulties can cause poor presentation, spelling and legibility issues. Often motor memory skills are affected by poor visual memory abilities and many activities and games that develop motor memory skills will also support visual memory development.

# Visual memory games and activities

Poor visual memory skills make handwriting difficult as the ability to recall how letters look and reproduce them with appropriate spacing and positioning is partially or completely lost. This leads to poor letter formation skills, letter reversal along with spelling and presentation difficulties. Due to the nature of our visual memory, and how we store that information, difficulties in this area also impact on motor memory skills. Many activities and games that develop visual memory also support motor memory skills.

Teach Handwriting includes fantastic ideas, activities and information on the above areas: The following website has many games and activities to improve handwriting.

https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/parents.htm

# Handwriting in Reception

### Fine Motor Skills ELG

Children at the expected level of development in order to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1 will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing-using the tripod grip (Stage 4/5) in almost all cases
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing

### Writing ELG

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

### Autumn 1...

During the transition into their new Reception class, each child will have the opportunity to write their own name. An assessment of pencil grip can then take place.



Stage 1: 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: Holds the 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: 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: Holding the pencil in very nearly the correct position. However, the web space is narrower than it would be if held in a mature tripod grid. This means that the movement is coming from the wrist and large finger movements.



Stage 5: 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.

Before teaching children the correct pencil grip and posture for writing, of how to use a knife and fork and how to cut with scissors, at Cuddington Primary School, we:

- Check that a child has developed their **upper arm and shoulder strength sufficiently**: they don't need to move their shoulders as they move their hands and fingers.
- Check that a child can move and rotate their lower arms and wrists independently.
- Help a child to develop the **core strength and stability** they need to support their small motor skills.
- Encourage and model core strength activities including, tummy-crawling, crawling on all fours, climbing, pulling themselves up on a rope and hanging on monkey bars. Our outdoor provision encourages our young people to develop this necessary core strength and stability.

## In outdoor provision you will see:

Learning of the directional pulls, pushes and changes in direction through:









Skipping, 'sledging', climbing, 'tight-rope' walking, painting and so much more...

# In provision you will see:

Learning of the directional pulls, pushes and changes in direction through playing with cars and trains, building in construction, manipulating playdough and 'cooking', working in the 'workstation' on skills such as cutting, manipulating paper and joining, completing jigsaws ...





In addition, there will be mark making and simple drawings including finger painting, writing in the sand, and painting with different brushes on **vertical and horizontal surfaces** as well as threading and sorting.

How we correctly form our letters in Reception...

### Stage 1: Pre-handwriting patterns

Learning pre-handwriting patterns is the important first step in handwriting. Pre-handwriting patterns help a child to learn the shapes and directional pushes and pulls of the writing tools required to form letters. All letters are a combination of these shapes and lines. At Cuddington Primary School, it is not through worksheets but through planned, purposeful activities in which the adult is encouraging the pre-handwriting patterns below:

Straight pre-handwriting patterns:



Curve pre-handwriting patterns:



Tunnel pre-handwriting patterns:



Diagonal pre-handwriting patterns:



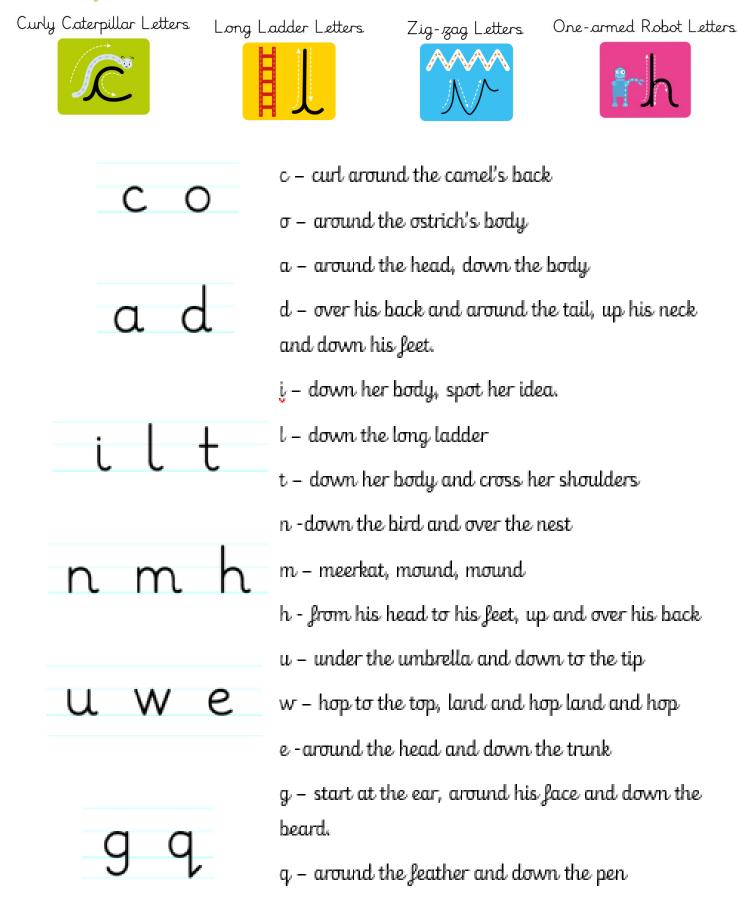
# Stage 2: Single letter and number formation:

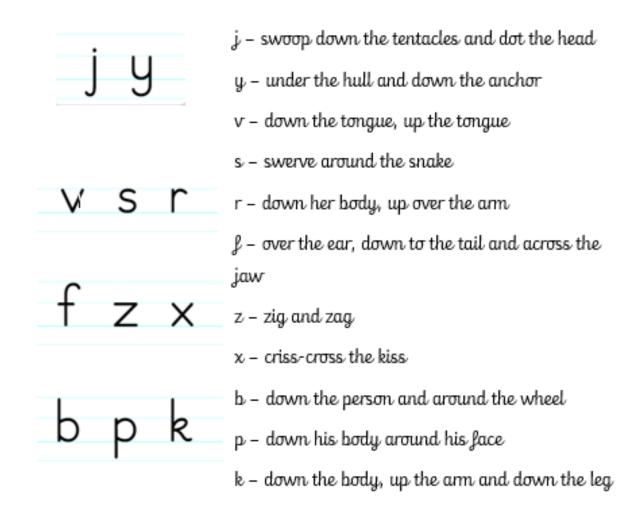
#### Model

In Reception, the important thing is to model and explain how to make the letter shapes with the correct start point, directional flow of the tool, or hand, and finish point. The following letter formation rhymes are used to teach the letters. Teaching letters in groups and families can also help to limit letter reversals such as 'b' and 'd'. To begin with, learning to write letters

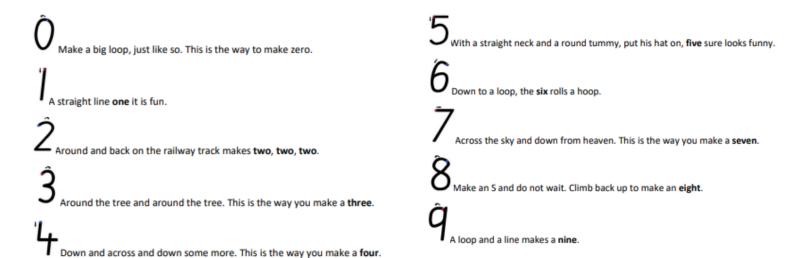
or numbers is about learning to move a pencil in the correct directional sequence of movements; size is not important at this stage, big is beautiful. The font is known as print.

### Letter families:





The following number formation rhymes are taught to teach the number digits:



Once ready to start a more focused formal approach to learning how to form single letters or numbers it is important that the child sits correctly at a table, their pencil grip

is appropriate for their developmental stage and age and that the paper is positioned correctly.













By now, they will usually have a preferred hand preference, being left or right handed. If a child is swapping hands through a handwriting task, then they may need a little help in developing their hand dominance. It is important to learn how to form letters correctly to begin with as this makes the transition from single letter formation to joined letter handwriting much easier. The National Handwriting Association is in agreement. They state that 'teaching simple individual letters as a first step, and then showing how they can be joined to form a flowing script means that the teaching is tailored to the maturation of the individual child.'

# Handwriting in Year 1

"Pupils' writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn How to organise their ideas in writing."

National Curriculum - English

At Cuddington Primary, children will be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- 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 practise these.





#### Right handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.

#### Left handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.

### Model

Like in Reception, the important thing is to model and explain how to make the letter shapes with the correct start point, directional flow of the tool, or hand, and finish point. Year 1 colleagues will continue to provide the opportunities for the children to develop the physical skill needed for handwriting by continuing to develop the core strength and stability they need to support their small motor skills. Therefore, it is an expectation that the games and activities outlined earlier will be planned in to the school day/week so that the physical skills a child needs for handwriting and many other everyday activities are implemented.

These physical skills are:

- Gross Motor Skills (Posture Base & Bilateral Coordination)
- Fine Motor Skills (Sensory Perception & Hand and Finger Muscles)
- Eye Tracking Ability
- Spatial Awareness
- Motor Memory
- Visual Memory

As their gross and fine motor skills develop so does their pencil grip and ability to draw and write at a small scale, moving more from the elbow and wrist.

In Year 1, the children are explicitly taught to form CAPITAL LETTERS.



As a child's fine motor skills develop it enables them to form smaller more refined versions of the letters and it is more appropriate to use lined paper. Once a child has mastered and is able to form lower-case letter of a consistent size, and have them correctly positioned in relation to one another, they are ready to learn how to join their handwriting. At this stage, the focus is on the cursive exit stroke 'and off we go'. The font is known as cursive.



### End of Year 1 handwriting, working at the expected standard.

### Statutory requirements

### Handwriting

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.

### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

# Handwriting in Year 2...

Year 2 colleagues will continue to provide the opportunities for the children to develop the physical skill needed for handwriting by continuing to develop the core strength and stability they need to support their small motor skills. Therefore it is an expectation that the games and activities outlined earlier will be planned in to the school day/week so that the physical skills a child needs for handwriting and many other everyday activities are implemented.

These physical skills are:

- Gross Motor Skills (Posture Base & Bilateral Coordination)
- Fine Motor Skills (Sensory Perception & Hand and Finger Muscles)
- Eye Tracking Ability
- Spatial Awareness
- Motor Memory
- Visual Memory

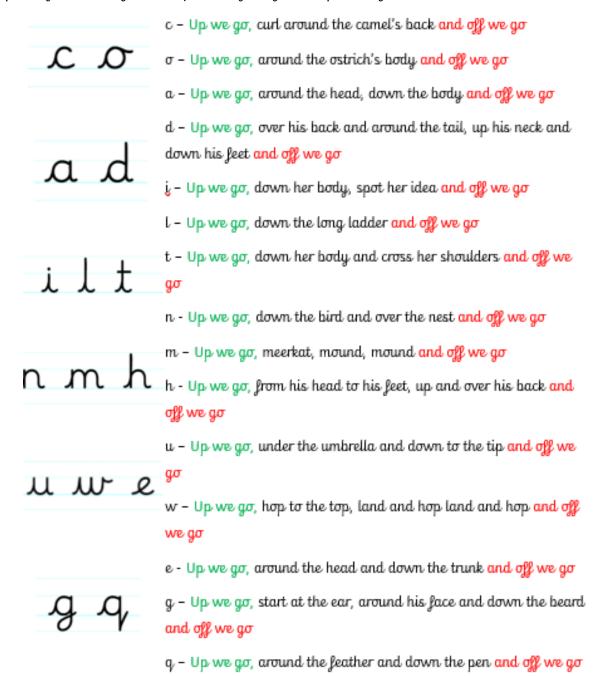
Once a child has mastered and is able to form lower-case letter of a consistent size with the cursive exit stroke (and off we go) they will be shown and taught the cursive entry stroke 'up we go'. The cursive letter font stylewhich allows all the lower-case letters to join- are best for

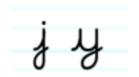
children as they make their handwriting fluent and quick, by reducing the strain on their hand, wrist and fingers. The bottom to "c" shape joins can be tricky at first but soon mastered.

### Children will 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 letter,
- When adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined (x, r)
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lowercase letter
- Know not to join a capital letter to a lower-case letter
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

The 'join' handwriting patterns will help a child to learn the shapes and directional pushes and pulls of the writing tools required to form joined up writing.





j - Up we go, swoop down the tentacles and dot the head and off we go

y - Up we go, under the hull and down the anchor and off we go

v - Up we go, down the tongue, up the tongue and off we go



s – Up we go, swerve around the snake and off we go

r - Up we go, down her body, up over the arm and off we go

f - Up we go, over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw and off we go



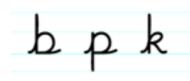




z - Up we go, zig and zag and off we go

x - Up we go, criss-cross the kiss and off we go

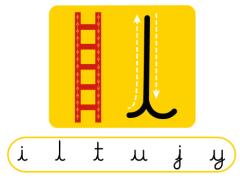
b - Up we go, down the person and around the wheel and off we go



p - Up we go, down his body around his face and off we go

k - Up we go, down the body, up the arm and down the leg and off we go

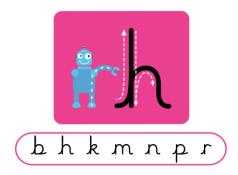
# Long Ladder Letters



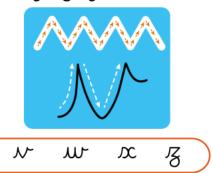
# Curly Caterpillar Letters



# One-armed Robot Letters



# Zig-zag Letters



Teacher Assessment exemplification: end of Key Stage 1 working at the expected standard

things. One day Fred Said to his mum I'm boad. 60 Into The Attic! Said his mum. And so he did. Fred When't into the attic. It was really darck in the attic and there were werry deep holes in the soon. I ust then some thing caught his eye. It was some boxes ontop are one was fat and the the other was long and one was fat and the the other was a silver case. Fred took took them all down stais. I First he opened the selver one which had wires in it. It is a had opened all as shown.

Capital letters are mostly of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters. Importantly, this handwriting is well-formed. The relationship across the lower-case letters is excellent in loves, mum, was, some, put, all.

The diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some letters are very clear. To add emphasis, the pupil seems to have deliberately chosen not to join the letters where Fred's mum shouts, 'Go Into ThE Attic!'

The spacing between words reflects the size of the letters.

[T]

# Handwriting in Lower Key Stage 2

By now, our children should have learnt to:

- form all the lower-case letters correctly
- form letters that are of a consistent and suitable size
- form letters with a cursive entry and cursive exit stroke
- position letters appropriately on the writing line as well as in relation to one another

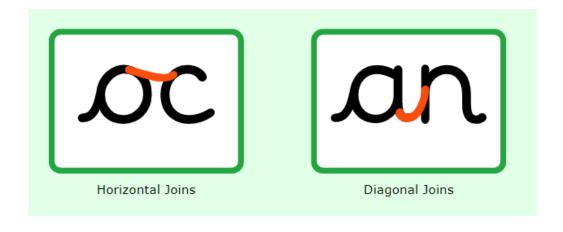
If a child is struggling to attain the above, then it is imperative that colleagues continue to provide the opportunities for the children to develop the physical skill needed for handwriting by continuing to develop the core strength and stability they need to support their small motor skills. Therefore, it is an expectation that the games and activities outlined earlier will be planned in to the school day/week as a reasonable adjustment so that the physical skills a child needs for handwriting and many other everyday activities are implemented.

### Children will be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders do not touch. The writing is legible and it helps in the editing process.

### Moving from Cursive Single Letters to Joining

There are seven join strokes to be taught. Most children will find the bottom joins the easiest to achieve, as it only requires the extension of the exit stroke they already put on the letters.



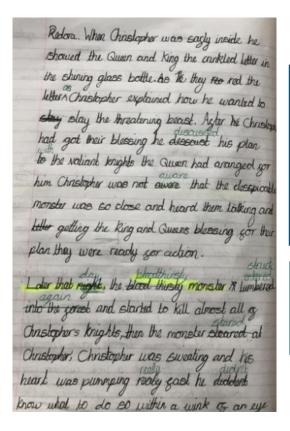
### **Cuddington Writers:**

All children across school have the opportunity to write in pen during the publishing process of their writing.

In Year three, children continue to learn and practise writing in pencil during formal lessons and practise. We continue to support the children in developing their pace, stamina and presentation of their individual letters and joins. During the Spring and Summer term in Year 3, when we feel the child is confident, we will provide them with a pen.

Pupils in Year 4 and beyond write in pen across their curriculum. This, we believe, allows each child to view themselves as a writer and gives everyone an equal chance of writing with increased confidence, independence and style.

End of Lower Key Stage 2 handwriting, working at the expected standard



#### Statutory requirements

#### Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by
  ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of
  writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not
  touch].

#### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

# Handwriting and presentation in Upper Key Stage 2

By now, our children should have learnt to:

- form all the lower-case letters correctly
- form letters that are of a consistent and suitable size
- form letters with a cursive entry and cursive exit stroke
- position letters appropriately on the writing line as well as in relation to one another

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders do not touch).
- Miss a line so that writing is legible and it helps in the editing process
- Use print when labelling a diagram

If a child is struggling to attain the above, then it is imperative that colleagues continue to provide the opportunities for the children to develop the physical skill needed for handwriting by continuing to develop the core strength and stability they need to support their small motor skills. Therefore it is an expectation that the games and activities outlined earlier will be planned in to the school day/week so that the physical skills a child needs for handwriting

### The pupil can:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders do not touch).

### Children will be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for the task

Teacher Assessment exemplification: end of Key Stage 2 working at the expected standard

The pupils can maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed

Another dimension

In 1621 on the planet Zorda, a woung but poor bory conscully succed his droid, which which thought only source or income he had but. Whilet his moder was but. It would there on the or must stable that from constantly that down tubout over in the middle or a gome. Phase rox historial pools with care, "his mother beogral." And when you've sinished take it to be market to be sold, "she cried." Yes mother, he prooped and radded as he said it. Thickley, Jack picked up the board-new looking droid and raced out the droi before he was showled at again. Soon, you within a raw minutes he was already at the an at the allux way where are woll come, with that droid bring a sked the curious and man. "Titund to kell it at the market fir," Jack said, seling distrupted from his walk.

## Handwriting expectations: Lesson structure (Teaching & Learning)





### Handwriting

#### What?

EEF Recommendations for Handwriting lessons Year 2 and beyond:

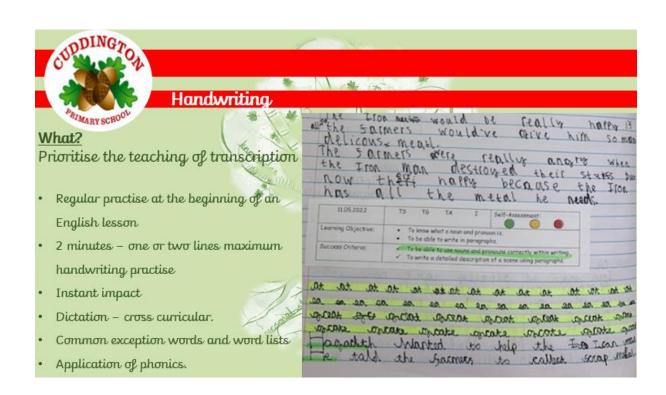
- Large amount of regular practice is required to achieve fluency in these skills.
- Pupils need to be motivated and fully engaged in improving their writing.
- Ensure practice is purposeful by targeting letters which are frequently formed inaccurately.
- Practice should be supported by effective feedback.



### Handwriting

## Planning a handwriting session

- Regular short bursts (x3, 10 mins per week) formal teaching of handwriting
- A clear learning focus for the lesson, linking to patterns where possible in KS2
- Start with a warm up
- Clear modelling show/ model support with letter height
- Guided groups to support children who are struggling
- Practice in literacy books on appropriate lines



# Useful links

Letter-join (Whole school handwriting scheme)

Letter-join whole school handwriting scheme (letterjoin.co.uk)







Teach Handwriting (Parents Section)

https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/parents.html



### Good Practice for Handwriting

good-practice-for-handwriting---a-toolkit-for-teachers 1.pdf (nha-handwriting.org.uk)

