

The Marlborough Handwriting Pedagogy



Learners will be informally assessed in each of the sections below. Teaching will begin with what the child already knows and will progress sequentially and systematically through the described stages. Where a learner has a specific physical limitation or difficulty, this will be discussed with members of the leadership team and an appropriate course of action will be decided upon based on the needs of the individual.

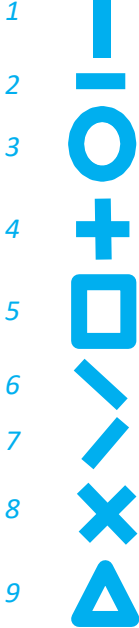
Section 1: Pre-requisite handwriting skills

In order to be successful at handwriting, the following skills are needed:	Ways to support the development of these skills are:
Body and spatial awareness.	• See O/T plans to support the unique child. • Consider BEAM exercises to support with gross motor control and bodily awareness.
Visual perception skills. These are needed to recognise letters/words and position words on the paper.	• Ensure clear picture discrimination skills with symbols as well as photographs. VPMTS strand of VBMAPP can be used to support and track this. • Complete fine motor control activities requiring hand/eye coordination.
Postural stability. Pupils need this in order to ensure that they do not slump or lean on to the desk, keep their heads too close to the paper or need to sit on their feet in order to gain stability.	• Feet flat on the floor. • Knees at a right angle. • Sit on chair with hips positioned at approximately 90° and back supported. • Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table • Table height adjusted to ensure forearms rest on top without leaning forward (too low) or raising arms (too high) • Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered
Hand strength and dexterity. Eye/hand coordination.	• Use of FIZZY and Clever Hands programmes in a clearly progressive structured, planned and tracked manner. • 'Hand Gym' boxes to be used daily (eg bubble wrap, velcro, squeeze toys, lego, pegs, tongs, pasta/ beads to string, bulldog clips, paper clips, nuts and bolts, jars with screw lids, a hole punch or playdough).
Sensory integration Pupils require an ability to feel the pencil, know how tightly to hold it, how much pressure to apply etc.	• Mark making in modelling clay or wet sand. • Magnatab boards for pupils to gain sensory feedback through feeling/hearing as they "write" or "draw" • Mark making on a range of textures eg sandpaper, wood etc.

Section 2: Mark making progression

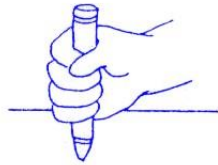
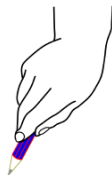
Completing warm up exercises before undertaking any mark making activity will help pupils to be properly prepared to begin the activities. Simple ideas for these include: arm circles; chair push ups; clenching and opening fists; touching finger tips to thumb.

Sensory based mark making activities	<i>Using first hands and the fingers to make marks in wet sand, paint, shaving foam etc.</i>
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Marks made at random using different strokes with a mark making tool.	<i>Using chalks, paintbrushes, felt tips etc to make marks on a range of surfaces.</i> <i>Start off using chunky equipment that doesn't require too much pressure to make marks eg oil pastels/marker pens. Develop towards using pens and pencils which require more pressure to make marks.</i> <i>Experiment with using pencils of different hardness grades in order to support with applying the correct amount of pressure.</i>
Imitating drawing different shapes using mark making tools. Start off on a large scale against a vertical surface and then begin to refine movements down to make smaller, more controlled shapes on a writing slope and finally horizontal surface. Until a child is able to replicate all of the shapes on the right, they are not ready to complete the movements required for formal letter formation.	
Learning to form letters Pupils should be taught the correct movements required to form letters. These can be grouped as shown into those which require the same type of initial movement. Staff should be consistent and concise with the language used to describe these movements when teaching them. Hand over hand and large scale versions of movements and letters shapes should be a natural starting point. Pupils should then move to independent movement/formation on a smaller scale.	The 'l' team l i u t y j The 'c' team c a d g q o e s f The 'r' team r n m h b k p The 'zig-zag' team z x v w y k <i>NB Letter formation should be taught using the font above with "flicks" to show exit strokes in readiness for a cursive style to be introduced later where appropriate.</i>
Learning to print words Pupils who are able to form individual letter shapes should then learn the principles of: • Positioning on the line • Sizing in relation to other letters • Spacing	<u>Position</u> <i>Pupils should first be taught to sit their letters on a single line. There should be sufficient space between lines to accommodate the pupil's current handwriting size. This will be different for different pupils.</i> <u>Sizing</u> <i>Pupils should then learn to position the three different groups of letters as follows. Use of two lines to support sizing is preferable to old fashioned 4 line handwriting paper. Again, the size of the lines will be personal to the individual learner.</i>

	l u c a o e s r n m v w x z l t d f b h k j y g f q p A B C D <u>Spacing</u> For pupils who struggle with positioning letters next to each other to form words, squared paper can be used to support. Pupils who are confidently writing words will need to learn to add a space between words. Lolly sticks, coffee stirrers or finger spacers can be used as physical prompts to support this.
Cursive handwriting Pupils should be taught to use three basic joins as detailed. Use of felt tips pens in order to aid fluency can help to make this a smoother process. Teachers should build in regular practise of the letter joins starting with joining just two letters and aiming to make learning as fun and diverse as possible. For example, pupils could use felt tips pens and “colour in” areas of a picture using chains of joined up letters etc.	<u>Diagonal join</u> Used to join “l team” letters as below: cu il <u>Horizontal join</u> Used to join letters from o,v,w as below: ou wh <u>Diagonal join with return around same stroke</u> Used to join letters from the “c team” as below: uc nd

Section 3: Pencil grip progression

Palmar/cylindrical grasp The movement in this grasp comes mainly from the shoulder. It supports learning to apply the pressure needed to make marks effectively.	
Pronate digital grasp The movement in this grasp comes mainly from the shoulder and the elbow. It allows a greater level of control when using smaller mark making equipment.	
Static tripod grasp This is a static grasp, as the fingers do not yet move independently and movement usually comes from the wrist.	
Dynamic tripod grasp The movement now comes mainly from the fingers which are free to move independently. This allows for more precise drawing and writing.	