

This document sets out National Curriculum handwriting requirements for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, as amended in September 2021. The Framework document makes the following statements about the outcomes that must be achieved by teachers:

- Handwriting requires frequent and discrete direct teaching.
- Handwriting is about helping children to develop and refine the physical movements they need to create letters sequences of letters.
- Ensuring all pupils write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition. ("Writing" p16)
- Pupils who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently are, in every sense, disenfranchised. ("Purpose of Study" p14)
- Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. ("6.3 Language and literacy - Reading and Writing" p11)
- Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. ("Programmes of study and attainment targets - Aims of English" p16)

References

Statutory framework for the early years' foundation stage - effective September 2021 - DfE
 Early Years Foundation Stage Handbook 2015 – Standards & Testing Agency 2014
 EYFS profile exemplification – Physical development – ELG 04 – S&TA 2014
 Early Years Foundation Stage – exceeding description
 National Curriculum – Framework documents 2014 and Primary Curriculum 2015
 2017-2018 national curriculum assessments - Key stage 1 and 2: Teacher assessment frameworks at the end of KS1 & KS2

Statutory requirements	Non-statutory requirements
Early Years Foundation Stage	
Activities and experiences in areas of learning	Early Learning Goals (ELGs) 'Expected' level of development
Prime area: Physical development • gross and fine motor experiences to develop strength, coordination and positional awareness through tummy time crawling and play movement. • adults can support children to develop core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. • fine motor control and precision helps with hand eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Specific area: Literacy • writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting).	ELG • Gross motor skills Demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination when playing ELG • Fine motor skills Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing-using the tripod grip in almost all cases. ELG • Writing Write recognisable letters, most of

Statutory requirements	Guidance
Key stage 1 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.	
Pupils should be taught to:	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
• 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; • write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher	
Year 2	
In writing, pupils at the beginning of year 2 should be able to compose individual sentences orally and then write them down, and to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.	
Pupils should be taught to:	Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.
• 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 un-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.	
Lower key stage 2 Years 3-4	
Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.	
Pupils should be taught to:	Pupils should be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation.
• 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, e.g. by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.	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.
Upper key stage 2 Years 5-6	
Children should be able to write down their ideas quickly. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing should be sufficiently fluent and effortless to manage the general demands of the curriculum in Year 7.	
Pupils should be taught to:	Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an un-joined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form).
• 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 a task.	