



Barrowford

Primary School

Learn to Love, Love to Learn

Handwriting Policy

At Barrowford School although we recognise the importance of being able to be computer literate we still also recognise that handwriting remains an essential literacy skill. An effective hand writer allows a writer to concentrate on structure, content, clarity, consistent, varied vocabulary, grammar and spelling. Handwriting is a movement skill. It is best taught through demonstrations, explanation and practice.

Aims

To provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting

For all pupils to hold a writing tool with an appropriate grip

To form numbers, lower and upper case letters correctly

To form letters that are consistent in size and shape

To space letters and words appropriately and to join letters using the correct joins

To recognise the importance of producing clear and neat learning in order to communicate successfully

For our children to take pride and respect in their presentation and equate handwriting with a sense of achievement

To write quickly in order to express themselves fluently

To understand that handwriting should not physically hurt.

Progression

Pre-Writing Skills

Children who are not ready to write need to be provided with a range of pre-writing activities

Gross motor

Children use their whole bodies when writing. Along with coordinated movements for fingers, thumbs, wrist and elbow, children need to develop stabilisation of the hip, trunk, shoulder girdle and neck. In addition to whole body strength a key skill is also the ability to pass the pencil from left to right over the page (crossing the midline). The midline is an imaginary line dividing the left and right side of the body. Activities should be planned that develop a child's ability to strength muscles in shoulders, wrists; whole body and crossing the midline (see Appendix 1 for suggested activities).

Proprioception

This is the sense of the orientation of one's limbs in space; this is distinct from the sense of balance. Children need to be able to identify the pressure they are applying on the page with the writing tool. Activities should be planned to develop a child's proprioception (see Appendix 2)

Visual Perception

Good visual perception enables children to identify changes in position, shape, size and characteristics of letters. Children who have weak visual perception may not draw ascenders and descenders, they may reverse letters, letters may rise across the line, margins may drift across the page, they may write capitals in the middle of sentences, use inappropriate spacing and produce proper punctuation. Activities should be planned to develop a child's visual perception (see Appendix 3). You can identify if a child has poor visual perception by asking them to copy the shapes used on Appendix 4.

Fine motor

Children need fine motor skills to carry out small movements, especially with their hands. Some children may display a tight, or a weak, grip and may complain of pain when writing. They should be encouraged to develop their fine motor skills using practical exercises (see Appendix 5)

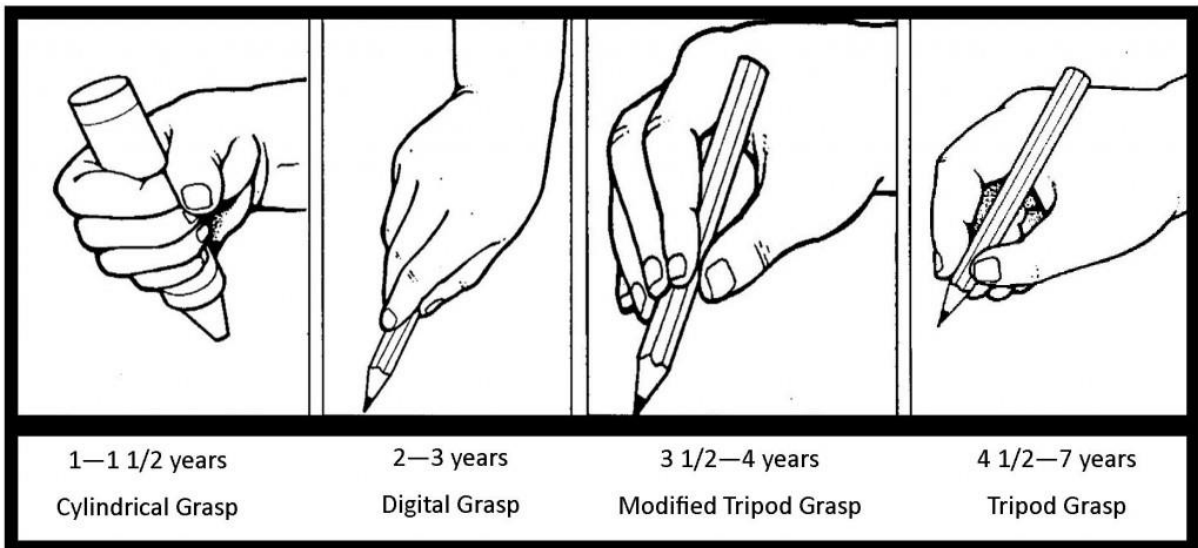
Patterning

Pattern making is getting children confident with making marks on paper. This is best done using lots of multisensory materials and at a variety of positions and angles. Patterning exercises should focus on the following things

- Dots
- Vertical and horizontal lines
- Curves
- Zigzags
- Anticlockwise and clockwise loops
- Increasing / decreasing circles
- Increasing/ decreasing spirals

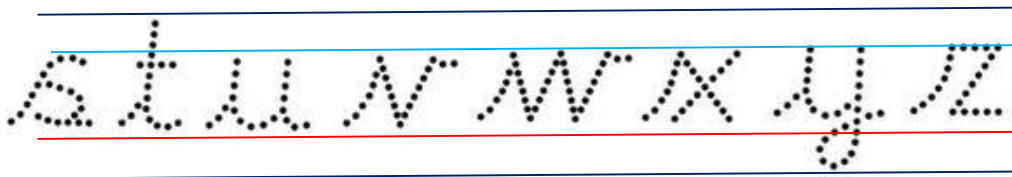
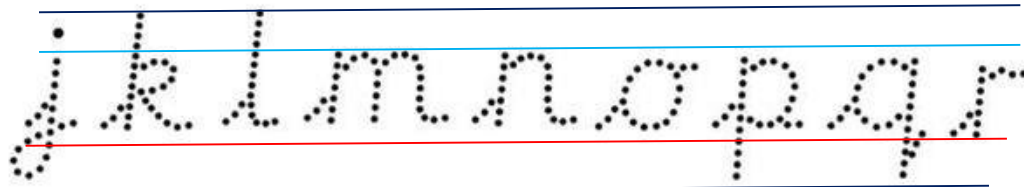
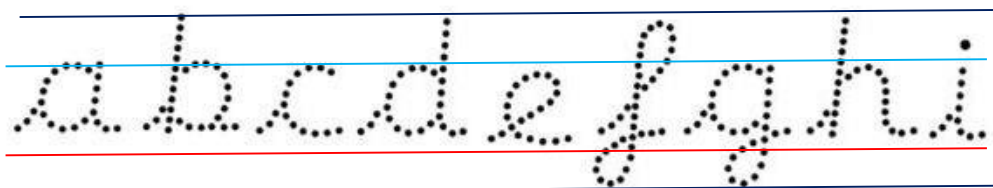
Pencil hold

Many children start with an established grip, what ever grip is used, you should be aware of the child's whole hand. Check that their wrist does not rise, or twist; that their hand rests on their work and is not too flattened or on its edge. These may indicate weaker motor or visual perceptual skills, causing issues later.



Printing

Lower Case Letters



The letters should be taught in terms of how they are formed using the following guidelines:

Set 1: a c d e f g o q s (start on line and go up to 1 clock then go anticlockwise and round – e and f being the exception)

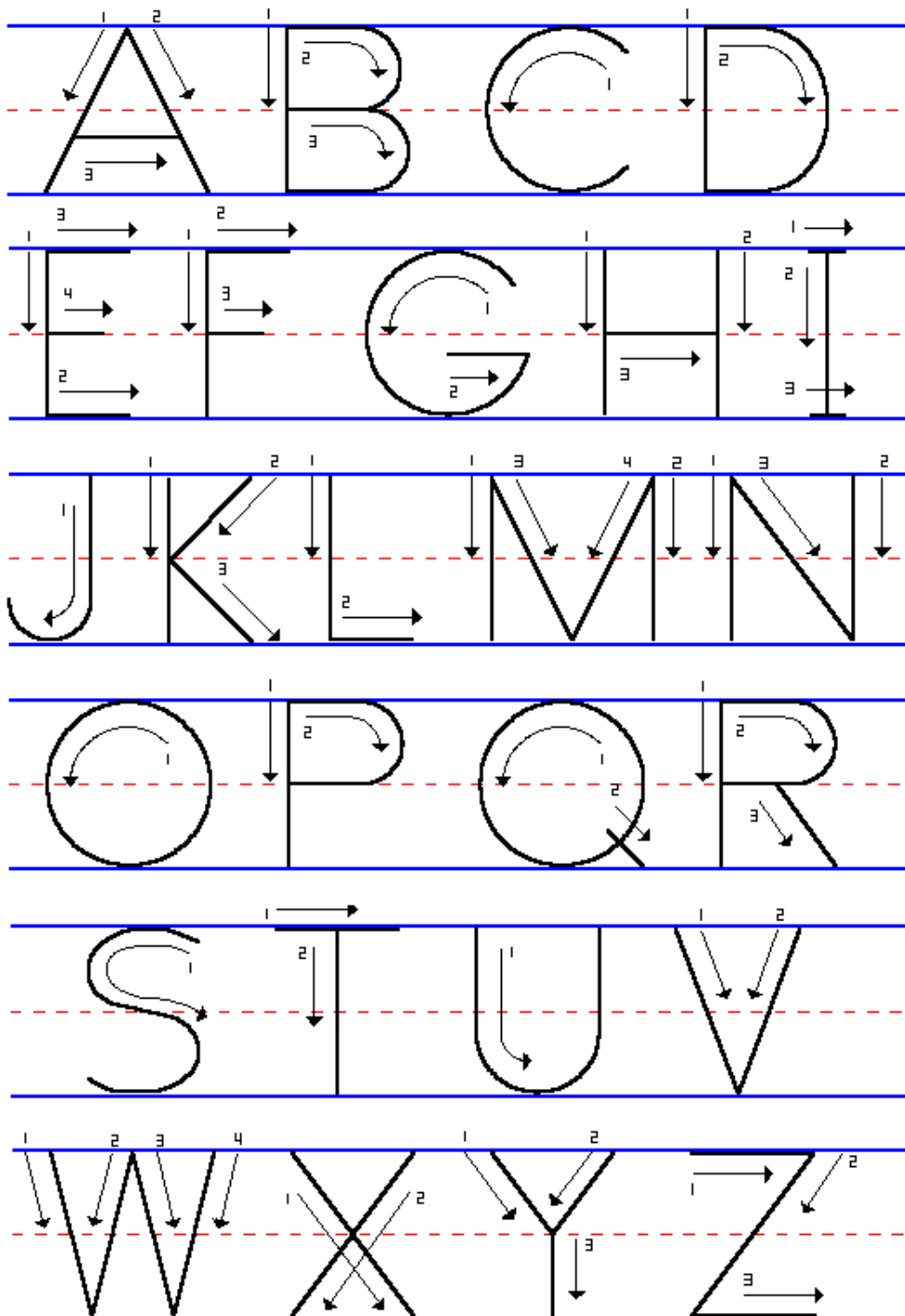
Set 2: i l t j (start on line and go vertically up and retrace vertical line)

Set 3: b h k m n p r (start on line and go vertically up, retrace vertical line to the writing line then go up same vertical line and over)

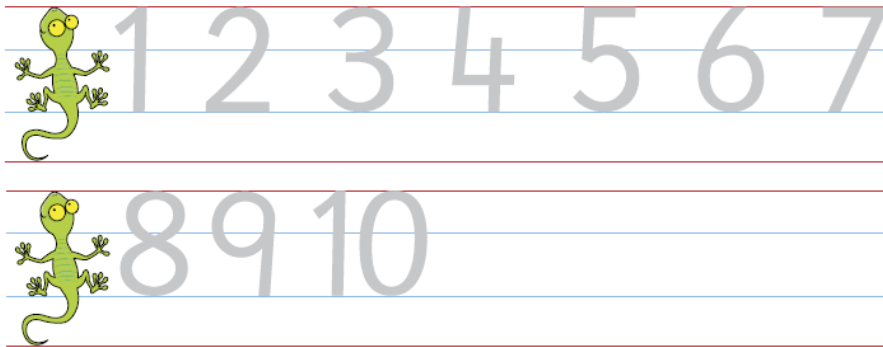
Set 4: u y (start on the line go up vertically to top body line and then go round and up and retrace the same vertical line down)

Set 5: v w x z (start on the line and ensure diagonal straight lines are used)

Capital Letters







Numbers






Joining

Children should be taught to join as soon as letter formation is established. Some children with weaker motor skills may not be able to join and all effort should be taken towards building up motor strength before introducing joining. Teach the children that the concept of joining means moving their pencil, on the paper, from where one letter ends to the beginning of the next letter.

Join type

Join type	Letters		Explanation	What it looks like
	From	To		
end-low diagonal joins	a b c d e f g h l j k l m n p q s t u x y z	b h i j k l m n p r t u v w x y z	When finishing on the writing line, or below, start the next by forming a diagonal join	
end-low drop on joins	a b c d e f g h l j k l m n p q s t u x y z	a c d e f g o q s	When finishing on the writing line, or below, start the next by letting your pen go up and over. Then drop on to the start of the next letter before going backwards in the anticlockwise movement	
end-high horizontal joins	o r v w	l j m n p r u v w x y z	End-high horizontal joins go straight across to the start of the next letter.	
end-high diagonal joins	o r v w	b h k l t	End-high diagonal joins only occur from end high letters to ascenders. These	

			join curves upwards.	
end-high drop on joins	o r v w	a c d e f g o q s	End-high joins go straight across and drop on to the start of the next letter before going backwards in the anti-clockwise movement.	
End high to 'e'	oe, re		ensure that children do not form the 'e' too high (above the top body line)	
Tricky joins	ss, ff, ee, zz, ll			

Refining handwriting

Developing own style

Children will have learned and practised all the joins they need. They will have developed a style that should be consistent in size, angle of slope and spacing yet will show individual differences in their writing. You can encourage children to develop with different styles e.g. in italics, a note-taking style, a speedy style, their best style (for presentation) or looping certain letters.

Experimenting with big and small writing

There will be some variation in personal sizing of handwriting. Children should experiment with changing the size of their handwriting so that they can adapt it to suit a variety of circumstances.

Punctuation

Punctuation can be easily overlooked in relation to developing fluent handwriting. Make sure children don't overstate the punctuation e.g. use large full stops, make commas look like number 9's etc.

Speed, fluency and endurance

One of the main reasons for learning joined script is to enable quick, efficient and fluent handwriting. Pangrams are useful for developing this skill as they are sentences that use every letter of the alphabet at least once. You could choose a pangram a week and ask the children to write it out each day and time it. This can then be analysed by the handwriting check list (see Appendix 8). High frequency words are also useful practice for this. The average speed for children aged 9 is 38

letters per minute, aged 10 is 46 letters per minute and aged 11 this is 52 letters per minute.

What it looks like in the classroom

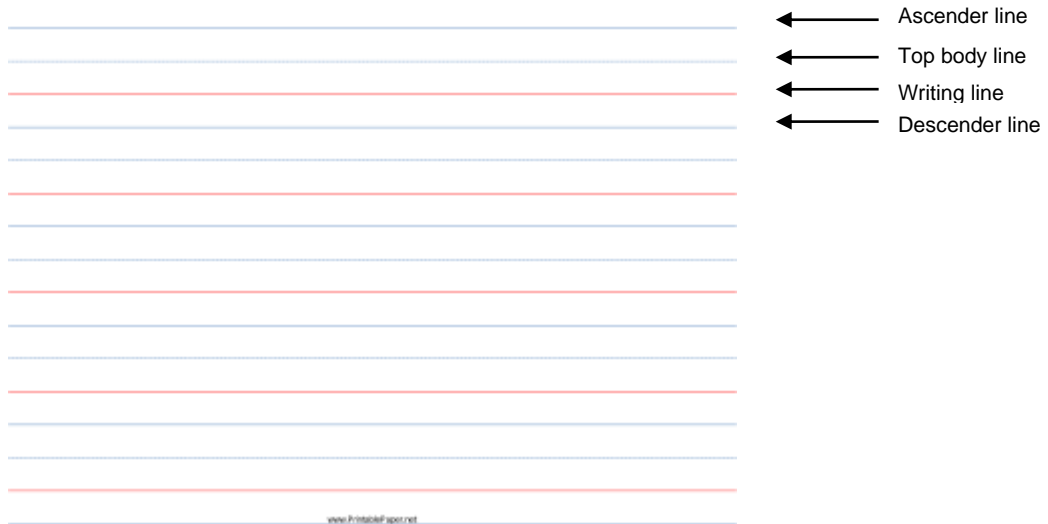
Encourage children to have feet flat on the floor. Arms should be resting on the forearms with the shoulders being forced upwards. The back should be almost straight (but slightly leaning forward). Head should be positioned upright without the neck poking forwards and the weight should be evenly distributed between feet and forearms.

The non-writing hand should support the work at the top corner away from the writing hand. Right-handed writers should position the paper towards their right side within their body range, not too far or too close. (see Figure 1 and 2). Left-handers should be sat to the left of right handed pupils to ensure that their elbows don't bump together.

Children should be able to look at the board without having to crane their heads awkwardly

Writing equipment – time needs to be allocated for children to select the most appropriate writing tool. Children choose what whatever stage they are at to select the most favourable writing tool to them. These selections need to be range of styles, thickness and shape e.g. round, fat, thin, triangular, including fountain pens. Children should be encouraged to find a writing tool that suits them and stick to them for an entire piece of learning.

Handwriting should not be an independent activity, without prior direct and explicit instruction. Taught handwriting sessions should always be done on paper with the tramlines. This will help children use the correct size and shape for the individual letters. Depending on the child's ability this should be differentiated in terms of line size. If plain paper is being used then line guides should be used when appropriate



In a phonics session you should always model to the children what the print and cursive letters looks like. Always use the correct letter name and identify the sound it makes.

You might like to do some warm up exercises to prepare your children for a taught handwriting session. Encourage children to use these before they write or mid write. Suggestions for activities can be found in Appendix 6. You might like to do peer hand massage as a session before handwriting.

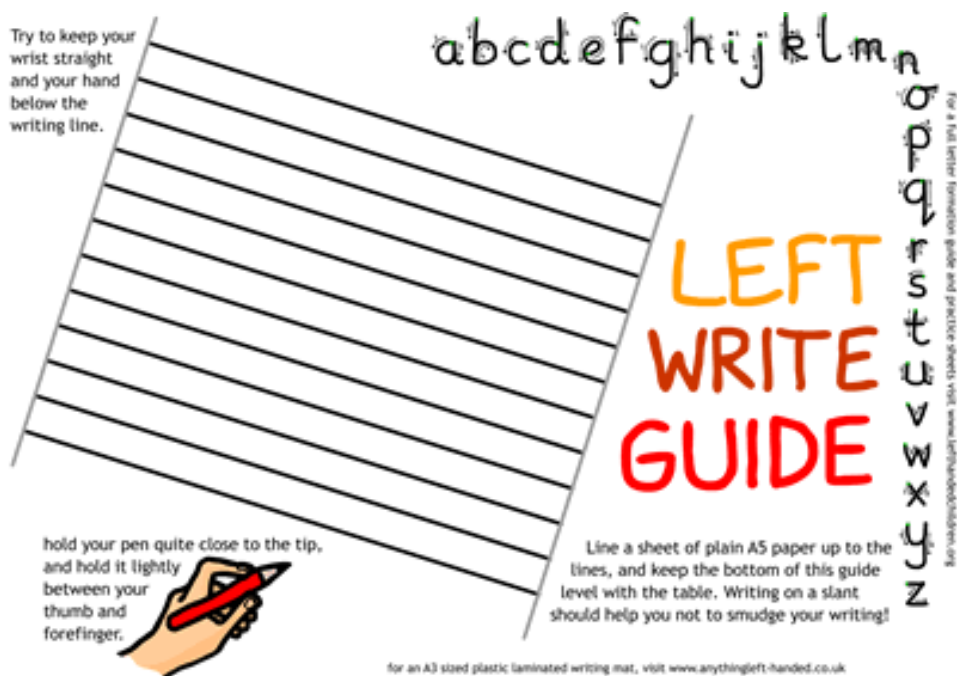


Figure 1

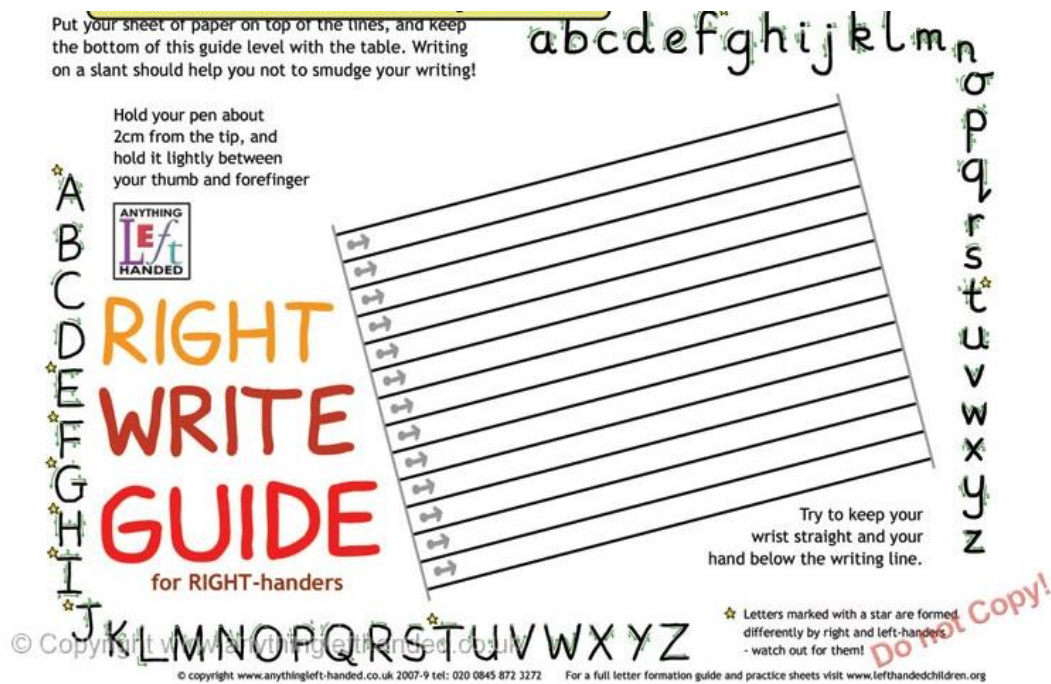


Figure 2

Displays in classroom

Model any writing on a line. All adults in classroom to model the appropriate handwriting for the year group they are working with. Staff handwriting should be clearly printed with entry and exit strokes.

Written feedback in journals done by whichever adult in the classroom should be written using the appropriate writing style for that year group. This will be scrutinised by your Phase Leader when learning journals are monitored and when observations are taking place.

There should be a variety of fonts and texts in classroom displays to make sure that children are familiar with a range of cursive and print fonts.

Assessment

You need to determine where each child in your class is in terms of handwriting. The progression document clearly tracks pupils' stages in handwriting development (see Appendix 7). There should be evidence that the children in your class are showing signs of progress due to your direct teaching.

Katie Fletcher

Appendix 1

Gross motor activities

Activities

Shoulder and/or wrists

- 'Donkey kicks' – kneel on all fours and kick legs backwards at a time
- Press ups against a wall
- Pouring from one cup to another
- Egg and spoon races
- Any activities where the wrist is in contact with a surface when fingers are active
- Wheelbarrow walking- one child supports another child's legs while they walk
- Push ups
- Left weights when on all fours

Whole- body activities

- Running
- Climbing on frames, swinging on monkey bars
- Racket and ball games
- Throwing and catching
- Swimming
- Rowing
- Skipping
- Hopscotch
- Movements in dance and drama
- Playing on a seesaw
- Tug of war
- Using dance streamers
- Using cheerleader pompoms
- Keeping a large balloon in the air
- Parachute activities
- Opening jar or boxes
- Pumping up balloons

Hip activities

- Kicking a ball
- Jumping and hopping
- Wheelbarrow races
- Crab walking

Midline Activities

- Target throwing at objects placed to right or left (keeping feet still)
- The game of 'Twister'
- Large drawings that encourage the hand to sweep across the body (on the floor, walls, desk, blackboard, whiteboard or easel)
- Simon Says – using actions that cross the midline such as right hand to left ear
- Clapping hands- diagonal clapping, crossing arms, changing sequence
- Turning book pages
- Tying shoelaces, putting on socks (crossing midline)
- Getting dressed using right hand to put on left sleeve and vice versa
- Using one hand to reach for objects position on the other side of the body midline.
- Art- large sweeping strokes when painting. Using a hammer, mallet or sawing
- Music- practise playing instruments such as drums, xylophone or piano

Appendix 2

Proprioception

Pushing and pulling games

- Tug of war – kneeling or standing
- Hanging from a bar
- Using a trike or a go cart or scooter
- Moving PE equipment or classroom furniture
- Playing football
- Climbing ladders, wall bars or ropes
- Sitting back to back and pushing against a partner
- 'Push me over' while sitting
- Mat rides
- Stretching activities
- Magic room – pretend to push over imaginary walls
- Kite flying
- Ring a roses

Weight bearing activities

- Wheelbarrow walking
- Jumping like a frog/kangaroo, bunny hopping, crab walking
- Doing big jigsaws or puzzles on all four or lying on tummy
- Pushing ball with head while crawling
- Trampolining
- Press ups on walls
- Jumping into cushions/beanbags
- Playing on a see-saw

Heavy-work activities

- Carrying a pile of books
- Carrying loaded resources baskets
- Gardening
- Playing skittles with a heavy ball
- Throwing weighted objects
- Balancing and walking with a book or beanbag on head

Appendix 3

Visual Perception

Practical activities

- Encourage children to colour in within boundaries. Make thick boundaries with PVA glue to help less dextrous writers keep within the lines
- Provide age appropriate puzzles and jigsaws for the children to complete
- Supply paper based mazes and encourage children to complete them
- Play spot the difference, word searches, picture dominoes and odd-one-out activities
- Find objects such as circles or squares that are part of a total picture, or use books such as *Where's Wally*
- Cope a sequence of beads, multilink or Lego
- Sort and match objects according to colour, material, size and shape
- Playing building game such as Jenga

Speaking and listening activities

- Use boxes to represent the height and size of letters and ask the children to work out what the word is based on two options. This will get them recognising ascenders and descenders e.g. is the following dog or cat?



- Encourage the children to play chess to verbalise what they are doing and where they are placing their piece
- Verbalise differences and similarities between objects using language such as long/short, thick/thin, straight/round, tall/short
- Ask the children to verbalise distances between objects e.g. the door is 10 jumps in front. Encourage the use of positional words.

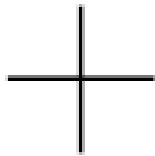
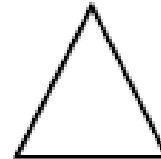
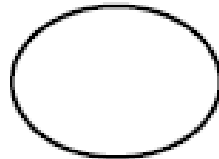
Also useful

- *Write from the start* by Ion Teodorescu
- *Pegs to Paper* programme written by Angela Webb
- Mobile phone apps and puzzle games that involve visual perception
- 'Moziblox'- 3D puzzle game
- 'Time Shock'- fit the shapes into the correct holes within the time

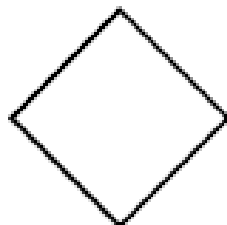
Motor skills

Shape tracking

- Copy these shapes in the spaces underneath.



- Do not move the worksheet and keep your pencil on the paper when you copy these shapes.



Appendix 5

Fine motor exercises

General pincer exercises

Encourage the children to do a range of activities using pincer fingers. They should move only the thumb and index finger with the other three fingers raised out of the way.

- Threading or lacing
- Moving small beads from one pot to another
- Clipping clothes pegs from one pot to another, copying the colour sequence
- Picking up objects with tweezers
- Using finger puppets
- Using a peg boards- put 100 pegs in and then remove them
- Peeling sticker off and re-sticking
- Tearing cloakroom tickets out of the book
- Eating with Chinese chop sticks
- Using play dough to make snakes, strips
- Break rings with one hand
- Playing with sticky tape
- Playing with Lego or building blocks
- Turning cards over
- Winding up wind-up toys
- Popping bubble wrap
- Spinning tops
- Board games such as chequers and '4 in a row'
- Paper tearing and crumpling
- Posting coins in a money box

These exercises should be done using the whole hand

- Using scissors
- Tying shoelaces
- Drawing finger patterns in sand, clay or steamy windows
- Using one hand to remove a pen top and finger walking round the pen to place the lid on the other end. Repeat to replace the top back on the pen
- Sorting coins in one hand into denomination or size order (do not use or rest the hand on the table, against body or use the other hand)
- Using dials on toy telephones
- Using a computer keyboard
- Bandage scrunching- walk the fingers long the bandage and gather it into the hand
- 'Elastic Band escape' – wind a band around a child's four fingers and challenge them to wiggle the fingers free
- Pegs to Paper programme written by Angela Webb

Appendix 6

Warm up activities

Fingers

- Clench fists – using both hands, clench your fists, and then open your fingers. Repeat this ten times, first thumb outside and then inside the fist
- Wiggle fingers- start with your hands on your lap. Wiggle your fingers and thumb as you bring your arms up high, stretching them above your head
- Incy Wincy Spider- with your thumbs on the opposite index fingers twists to meet opposite thumb and index finger. Repeat
- Finger bends- have your hand palm up, fingers pointing away from you. Using the opposite hand, bend each finger back and down gently
- Palm to palm- place your hands together (palm to palm) and push them together to the count of four, then relax. Repeat four times
- Hooking fingers- place one hand palm up and other hand palm down. Hook your fingers together and pull apart. Then relax and repeat four times
- Stress balls - squeeze stress balls with one hand four times and then swap.

Hands and arms

- Wash your hands- rub your hand together and pretending to wash your hands- remembering in between your fingers
- One potato, two potato- hold clenched fists out straight in front of you and play 'one potato, two potato, three potato more'.
- Stretch – stretch your fingers and arms out and hold for three seconds. Repeat five times (variation stretch your arms straight above your head)
- Lazy eights- draw lazy eights in the air with your arm out stretched until you feel tired, then swap your hands
- Stamp and stomp – sit down with your hands on your knees and then stamp and stomp your feet. Repeat four times
- Arm stretching – place your right arm straight out in front of you. Take your left hand under your right arm and hold outside of your elbow. Gently pull your right arm straight across your body. Repeat with the other arm.

Appendix 7
Handwriting Checklist

Practising speed

Handwriting checklist

- Here is a useful list to help you check your handwriting.

Size Is the writing a good size for the page and width of lines? Are the letters the correct size? Do the letters hit the top or bottom of the body, head and tail line correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Shape Are the letters the correct shapes? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Straight down – 'i', 'j', 'l', 't', 'u', 'y'• Down, up and over – 'b', 'h', 'k', 'm', 'n', 'p', 'r'• Up, backwards and around – 'a', 'c', 'd', 'e', 'f', 'g', 'o', 'q', 's'• Zooming – 'v', 'w', 'x', 'z'	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Position Are the letters sitting on the writing line?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word and letter spaces Are the spaces correct? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Between words• Between letters	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Slant Is the writing slanting in the same direction?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joining Is the writing joined correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed Was the writing written fast enough? Can it still be read?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Legibility Are any mistakes crossed out neatly?	<input type="checkbox"/>

