

## Writing guide

### Overview of this booklet

This writing guide aims to provide information about the stages of writing and how it is taught at Sound. This guide also includes information about how we teach handwriting.

### The stages of writing

During the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children begin to explore writing through making marks such as lines, circles and patterns. Scribbling is an important aspect of mark making as children begin to explore the shape and patterns that they have created. Mark making is a vital part of developing writing skills; it is important that children's efforts are praised and encouraged. It is also beneficial to allow children to explain their mark making and to share what they have created.

Gradually, children begin to develop these shapes, circles and lines into making recognisable drawings and letters. Children begin to copy the letters from their name and will memorise the order in which the letters are written, Alongside writing is the physical skill of holding pencils effectively. We support children to develop their fine motor skills and using tools including pencils.

Closely linked to the letters and sounds that are taught in reading, children begin to 'sound out' words. The first set of letters and sounds taught are:

s a t p i n

With each new letter, children need to be able to match the sound with the written letter (grapheme). For example, children need to be able to know how to write 's' when the sound is spoken aloud.


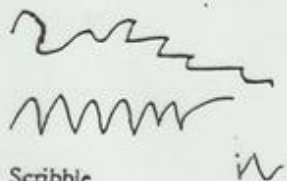
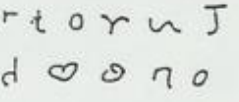
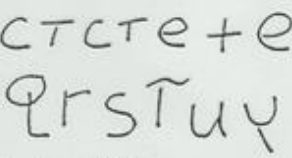
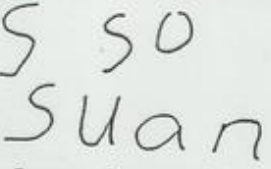
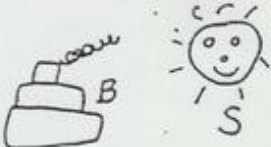
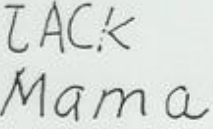
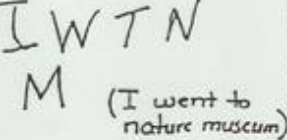

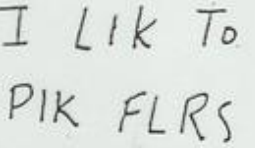

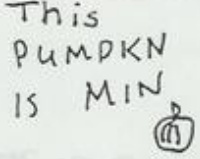
We then begin to work with children to write CVC words such as 'sat', 'sit', 'pan'. CVC words have three letters which are consonant-vowel-consonant words such as 'cat' and 'dog'. We help children to 'sound out' the word by asking which sound they hear first and help them to match the letter with the sound. Knowing the letters and sounds is an important part of early writing so that children know which letter matches each sound. Once CVC words are written securely, we will work on children to sound out longer words such as 2 syllable words such as 'rabbit'.

In time, children will use 'finger spaces' between each word when they begin to form phrases. We stress that finger spaces come between each word rather than in between each letter. Children will write phrases and captions such as 'cat in a hat'. Phrases that children write are based on the letters and sounds that they have been taught.

Once finger spaces are well established between each word, we help children to use full stops at the end of each sentence and then work on adding capital letters. We also teach children to write common irregular words such as 'the' and 'was'. These words (known to the children as 'tricky words' are taught in both reading and writing activities.

## Stages of developing early writing

The table below provides an overview to show the stages of developing early writing.

 <p>1. Scribble Stage (Starting point any place on the page)</p>	 <p>2. Scribble (Left to right progression)</p>	 <p>3. Mock Letters (Can be personal or conventional)</p>
 <p>4. Letter Strings (Left to right and progressively downward)</p>	 <p>5. Groups of letters with space in between to resemble words</p>	 <p>6. Picture Labeling (Matching beginning letter to sound)</p>
 <p>7. Copies Environmental Print</p>	 <p>8. Uses first letter of a word to represent the word</p>	 <p>9. Uses beginning letter and ending letter to represent the word</p>
 <p>10. Hears medial sounds (Writes word with beginning, medial and ending letters)</p>	 <p>11. Phrase writing</p>	 <p>12. Whole sentence writing.</p>

## Developing fine motor skills

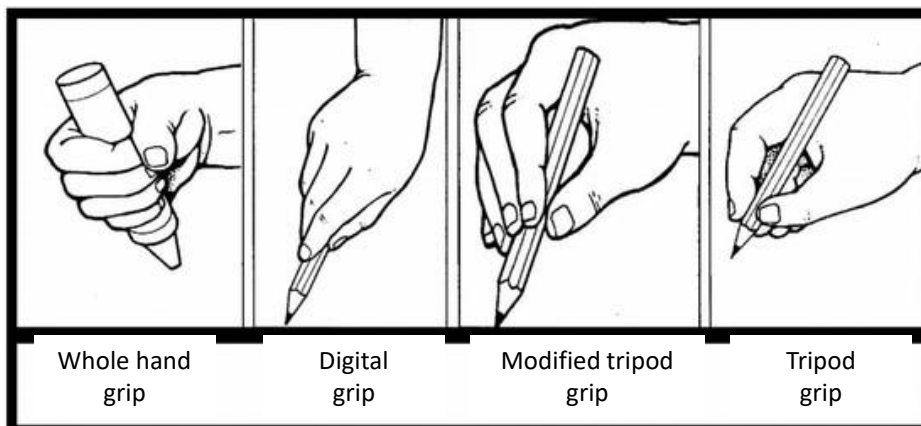
Developing the pencil grip, referred to as a tripod grip, also takes time. Children need to develop the strength in their hands, fingers and wrists. They need to be able to move their fingers separately, to use a pincer grip (using their thumb and index finger). Their wrists and thumb need to be strong. Children also need to learn to rest their wrist on a table and to use their non-dominant hand to hold the paper still when needed.

In school, children take part in 'finger gym' and 'dough disco' activities to help to develop these fine motor skills to develop the strength in their fingers.

Activities include:

- Playdough—pinching, squeezing, with thumb and forefinger, poking, rolling to make a snake (Dough Disco - these skills along to music!).
- Threading—beads, pasta straws. Making necklaces.
- Picking up small objects using the thumb and index finger, learning to use tweezers and pipettes.
- Water play—using spray toys and spray bottles.

Once children make recognisable letters, we also work with them on their letter formation. We work with children to develop the tripod grip. The images below detail the stages that children usually take when learning to use and hold pencils effectively. Again, it is important to encourage efforts during their process of handling tools for writing.



## Handwriting at Sound

At Sound and District Primary School, we use a cursive script when handwriting. Within the cursive script, every letter begins on the line and 'kicks' up into the letter. At the end of the letter forms a 'flick'.

In time, this will make handwriting easier to be joined. Children will begin to join handwriting formally in Year One and Two.

Below shows the formation of letters that we will be teaching. It would be very beneficial if you could support your child and encourage them to use this style of handwriting in their work.

In school, staff use this cursive script but we endeavour to share a range of styles of writing with children (including print and typed writing). This is so that children become used to seeing different handwriting styles.

a b c d e f g h.

i j k l m n o p q

r s t u v w x y z



## Things to do to encourage mark making and writing

When supporting children to write it is important to use a range of tools to develop these movements. For example, we use paintbrushes to 'paint' fences with water. Making letters in the sand is another good way to encourage writing. The list below shows a selection of ways in which adults can encourage mark making:

- Using pencils and pens to create patterns, words and pictures
- Paint using an easel and large brushes
- Paint paving stones/ fences with water
- Draw shapes in the air
- Dance with a ribbon in your writing hand
- Chalk on boards or on sugar paper
- Draw/ form letters in the sand
- Finger paint on the table with cold water paste and powder paints
- Make rubbings on rough surfaces
- Draw in cornflour 'slime'
- Make a tactile display with objects and materials that your child can change or move
- Use tactile natural materials for example wood, suede, hessian, fur, twigs, shells, moss, leaves, flowers, pebbles, feathers etc.
- Novelty pens and resources such as feather pens are also a good way to encourage mark making
- Provide a range of writing materials - such as envelopes, shopping lists, colouring pages, scrap books to encourage writing

A key way to encourage children's writing is to show them that writing is an enjoyable experience and activity! It is important for children to see adults write and to understand the purpose for writing. For example, children could help with identifying items on the shopping list as the adult scribes.

At Sound, we aim for children to become enthusiastic and confident writers who are happy to 'have a go'. It is important that we encourage, praise and celebrate their achievements!