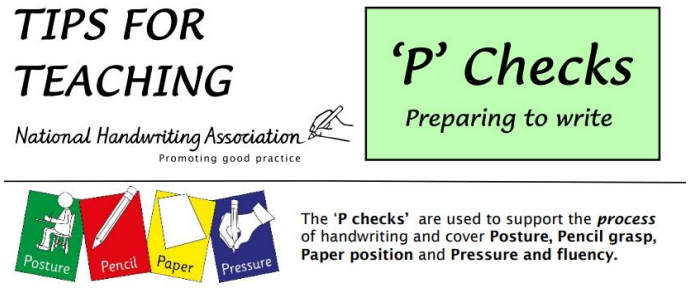
Sparhawk Handwriting Policy

At Sparhawk we teach handwriting daily for 10 minutes. Handwriting is taught at a separate time to our phonics lessons, but we continue to model and reinforce the correct handwriting within all our lessons. Within these sessions the adult models the letter formation on the board alongside the rhyme from Supersonic Phonics Handwriting Scheme. During this session adults monitor handwriting meticulously to ensure that letters are formed correctly. The adults will give feedback on the spot and highlight good practice through underlining or a heart symbol. This allows children to see successful formation and encourages children to keep up that standard. Adults will also correct any children who are not forming their letters correctly through re-modelling on the board or modelling individually within the children's handwriting books.





POSTURE GUIDELINES

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface
- Knees at a right angle with 2-fingers space behind the knee to avoid compression
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90˚ with the back supported
- Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table

AND

- Table height adjusted so that forearms rest on the top without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders/arms (too high)
- Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered



PENCIL GRASP GUIDELINES:

- Check the child is developmentally ready before asking them to write.
- A dynamic tripod pencil grasp is the most efficient and is expected by end of Year 1.
- Address an inappropriate grasp in the early learning stages and later if it is causing discomfort or impacting speed.
- Consider corrective action using adaptive grips or specialist writing tools, but always trial several options to find the most appropriate.
- Encourage a 2 cm gap between finger tip and pencil point – and slightly greater for left-handers.



PAPER GUIDELINES:

- Tilt and offset the paper according to the writing hand.
- Move the paper up or down to facilitate a comfortable reach and keep it in place with the non-writing hand.
- Consider glare from paper and overhead lighting.
- Consider a specialist vision assessment if visual stress continues.



PRESSURE GUIDELINES:

- The just-right pressure eases writing across the page, which is important for fluency and reducing the risk of pain during handwriting.
- Use teaching tools such as carbon paper, mechanical pencils, 'light-up' and 'squiggle' pens to demonstrate appropriate pressure.
- Try some gross and fine motor warm ups before and during the handwriting task. Actions which include squeezing and deep pressure, resistance and/or vibration will increase body awareness.
- Check that posture/issues with postural control are not the causative factor here.

supersonic
Phonic Friends

Sparhawk
Infant and Nursery
Nurture • Grow • Shine

'S' Factors
for success

Shape

EYFS: Reception
NC: KS1

Once a child is ready to write, the first important task is to learn how to form the letters correctly – best taught as a motor skill. (This will save many problems at later stages.)

Children learn best by:

1 Watching the letters being made and hearing a simple patter.
2 Making the letters themselves in developmentally appropriate ways using just fingers – sand, paint, sandpaper, air-writing etc.– before pencils.

Space

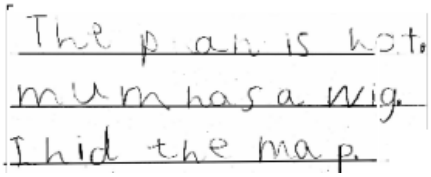
NC: KS1

Children need to understand that spaces need to be left between words so they can be easily read.

Gradually, they need to learn to leave an appropriately-sized space – about the size of 1 or 2 letter **'o**'s. Lolly sticks make good spacers for beginner writers, followed by coffee stirrers if necessary later. These work much better than the traditional finger-spacing. (Fingers grow bigger while writing becomes smaller so are ineffective when the child is older. Finger spacing is also difficult for left-handers to use).

Sitting on the line

Once children are secure in forming letters correctly they need to know where to position them in relation to the base line.



Writing on a single base-line

Size

NC: KS1

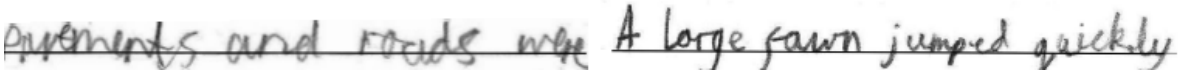
… and also to their relative sizes:

Small/halfway letters/x-height letters e.g. **a, e, o, s**
Tall letters/letters with ascenders e.g. **h, l, b, k** (plus all capitals)
Tailed letters/letters with descenders e.g. **p, g, y, j**

Sitting on the line

Q Do all the letters 'sit' on the writing line?

Notes
This is a good 'S' to start with as it is simple for students to understand and many can improve their performance fairly easily. Success can boost confidence and facilitate tackling perhaps more challenging questions.



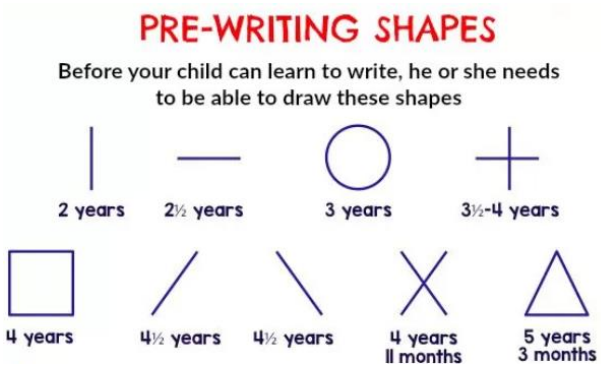
Size

Q1 Are the letters written at the correct size and position?

Notes (see the 'Size' section in Part 1)
Many children who understand the rules write particular letters too large or small; common faults being **k** and **s** written too large and letters at the end of a word written too small.

Early Years (Nursery)

Within Nursery there are fine motor activities daily. As the year progresses the children will begin to do guided drawing activities which will be planned to include anti-clockwise, vertical and horizontal movements. The Nursery teacher uses the pre-writing shapes and teaches these to prepare the children for letter writing. Within the guided drawing sessions the initial focus is on the pre-writing shapes 2-3 ½ years. The remaining shapes may be introduced if it is felt the children are ready.



Early Years (Reception)

While teaching Basics 2, teachers model letter formation within phonics and reinforce this within the lesson. Once all initial sounds are taught, teachers will follow the Supersonic Phonic Handwriting scheme ensuring they allow children to implement it in their handwriting books and within continuous provision this will occur every day.

Len's Ladder letters 1- l, t, i, u, y, j
Curly Cals Letters- c, o, a, d, g, q, e, f, s
Len's Ladder Letters 2- r, n, m, h, b, p, k
Zippy's zigzag letters- v, w, x, z

Year 1

Handwriting practise occurs daily following the Supersonic Scheme this involves capital letters and ensuring numbers are of correct orientation and size too. Ensure high expectations of how children sit, and presentation is embedded. Teachers reinforce children ensuring their letters bounce on the line. Teachers model using sticks and flicks within their writing to encourage children to use them within their writing. Within the Spring Term children practice a capital letter and the lower case letter. In Summer Term children apply their letter formation to a word as well as practicing the letter.

Year 2

Daily handwriting slots involve practising diagonal and horizontal strokes ready for joining. Again, high expectations are continued. Teachers ensure that children begin to think about their spacing between words and that these are of appropriate size. Within handwriting sessions, teachers ensure that children are practicing the letter within a word and a sentence.

Pencil Passports

In each year group there are 3 levels for handwriting to obtain a bronze, silver and gold certificate. We assess the children's handwriting using these.

Blue Stage
Bronze – Effective pencil grip.
Silver – Write name independently.
Gold – Form all letters correctly in their name. +

Green Stage
Bronze – Form all letters correctly for Len's Ladders 1 and Curly Cals.
Silver – Form all letters correctly for Len's Ladders 2 and Zippy's zig zag.
Gold – All ascenders and descenders are formed correctly. Begin to form some capital letters correctly.

Red Stage
Bronze- Form all letters correctly with the correct height.
Silver – Sticks and flicks are consistently used within their writing.
Gold – Begin to join some letters.

The passports are displayed in the children's classrooms and are referred to regularly. When reaching gold, the children are celebrated and praised in praise assembly.