



Shipston-on-Stour
Primary School

Handwriting Policy



DEFINITION OF HANDWRITING:

Handwriting is writing done with the hand using a pencil, pen, digital stylus or other marking instrument. Handwriting involves using a recognised system of symbols to express and communicate language.

1. AIM

Our aim is for all children to learn and practise appropriate handwriting skills at each stage of development, working towards comfortable handwriting which is legible, fluent and fast.

This policy has been written using the latest research and guidance into best practice. Early handwriting instruction shapes a life-long skill. Handwriting is an important skill that supports effective learning and evidence points to underpinning principles for a coherent curriculum. The early years is a time to cultivate motivation and joy in writing. Handwriting instruction should prevent the development of long-term misconceptions (See Appendix 1).

How?

INTENT:

- By providing a carefully designed handwriting curriculum which is coherently planned and based on evidence-based practice to cumulatively develop children's knowledge and skills.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Handwriting teaching is delivered by a confident and skilled teaching staff who have a good knowledge of the development of handwriting skills.
- The school creates an environment that optimises learning within handwriting and quickly identifies those children who need further support and delivers support in a timely fashion.
- Children will be taught to form letters correctly using the simple modern cursive style from Reception and then learn to join when they display control over formation. They will join all letters apart from capital letters.

IMPACT:

- Learners develop handwriting skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well, meeting the statutory requirements expected at the end of KS1 and KS2.
- They produce legible, fluent and fast handwriting which enables them to express their thoughts and ideas and communicate with others effectively.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Successful practice in handwriting is based on **consistency** and **continuity** across the whole school community. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by all school adults is vital. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning.

A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned throughout the school. We use the Read Write Inc. scheme for teaching letter formation, which links to our phonics teaching. We have developed our own shared vocabulary which is shown in the appendix. Teaching the

correct formation of the letters should be given the highest priority and this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining. (See paragraph 11).

It is important to bear in mind that 'handwriting' lessons include developing motor skills and that 'practice' should be adapted to the developmental needs of individual children.

The children will:

- Learn to form upper and lower-case letters and numbers correctly from their Reception year.
- Learn and practise handwriting during dedicated handwriting lessons, with links made to the phonics and spelling programme.
- Sit correctly at a table, holding their pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Be encouraged to use neat, appropriately joined handwriting for all subjects as appropriate to the task and according to the ability of each individual.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' and will practise these.
- Choose appropriate writing tools.

The teachers and teaching assistants will:

- Provide direct teaching and accurate modelling of handwriting.
- Have high expectations of the presentation of children's writing.
- Ensure that children adopt good writing posture and position.
- Observe individual children's handwriting to ensure correct formation is adhered to, monitor progress and determine targets for development.
- Quickly identify children who have difficulty mastering handwriting and build in appropriate support.

3. TEACHING TIME

It should be frequent, discrete and direct teaching. There should be a minimum of 4 x 10 minute 'handwriting' lessons each week in Reception from Spring term and Key Stage 1. Opportunities for fine and gross motor development are included within continuous provision. In Key Stage 2, 2 x 15 minute or 3 x 10 minute handwriting lessons each week are taught. More opportunities will need to be provided for children across the school who still have difficulties to improve their skills and confidence in letter formation.

Adults should act as models when writing in front of children.

4. STRUCTURE OF A LESSON

Begin your lesson with a fine or gross motor activity to get the children warmed up for a handwriting lesson.

Identify the type of letter shape and join. Handwriting to be correctly joined by the end of Year 2 (see Appendix 1).

Trace and/or write the letter, or spelling pattern, on the whiteboard or through the visualiser ensuring you demonstrate best practice to the children. Use talk to describe the actions (see Appendix 1).

Provide opportunities for deliberate practice.

5. ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 need to have their progress towards legible, joined handwriting monitored very carefully. Studies have shown that incorrect letter formation early on is a significant contributor to handwriting difficulties later on.

Phase Leaders, in team meetings, and Core Leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books at least termly, or more often if required.

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene immediately. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters / numbers reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?

Key Development Milestones

- Children will be taught to correctly form capitals by the end of Year 1
- As soon as children are ready, they will be taught to join letters.
- All children are expected to be able to join legibly by the end of Year 2.
- All children can write with fluent, joined, legible handwriting by the end of Year 6.

6. IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO NEED FURTHER SUPPORT:

Handwriting is a complex skill to master, one that involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be coordinated into an integrated fashion. As a result, some children may have difficulty mastering it. These children need to be identified quickly and have additional support put in place.

To provide the most appropriate support, a teacher must first identify which area of handwriting is the main area of concern:

- Legibility: can the words be read out of context?
- Neatness: is the handwriting messy or poorly controlled?
- Comfort: does the child experience pain, strain or discomfort when writing?

- Pressure: is the child pressing too hard or not hard enough, or is the pressure within one piece of writing variable?
- Speed: is the child writing very slowly, producing too little writing, or too fast, becoming inaccurate?
- Motivation / enjoyment: is the child reluctant to write or gives up too easily?

7. RESOURCES TO SUPPORT HANDWRITING DEVELOPMENT:

Equipment:

- Soft pencil grips to help reduce fatigue caused by writing pressure.
- Slope boards to reduce the stresses and strains caused by working on flat surfaces.
- Softer lead pencils to improve legibility for children with light pressure (e.g. 2B).
- Wide-lined exercise books and maths books with larger squares for children developing control of size.

Small Group and Individual Interventions:

These will be organised by individual class teachers under guidance from the SENDCO.

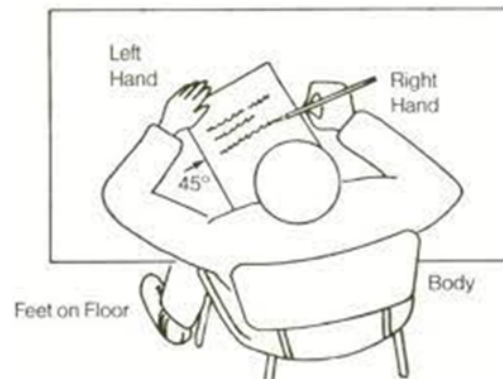
- Write from the Start: Unique Programme to Develop Fine Motor and Perceptual Skills Necessary for Effective Handwriting (hard copy available in the staff library).
- Speed Up: A Kinaesthetic Programme to Develop Fluent Handwriting (hard copy available in the staff library).
- Handwriting Development Activities developed by Warwickshire NHS Occupational Therapy Team (available on the Shared Drive under English - Handwriting).

8. POSTURE

- Feet - flat on the floor.
- Arms - resting on the forearms without the shoulders being forced upwards. Forearms should ideally be positioned 45 degrees to the table edge away from the body in order to support the shoulder girdle.
- Back - should be almost straight (but slightly leaning forwards).
- Head - upright without the neck poking forwards.
- Weight - evenly distributed between feet and forearms.
- Non-writing hand - should support the work at the top corner furthest away from the writing hand. This allows the forearm to support the body enabling the writing arm to move lightly across the page.
- Left-handers should have the same posture as right-handers but may wish to use a sloping board to raise their work slightly or use a seat wedge to raise their bodies to allow them to see over their hand.
- Children should be seated so that a left-handed child sits on the left-hand side of a table if next to a right-handed child.

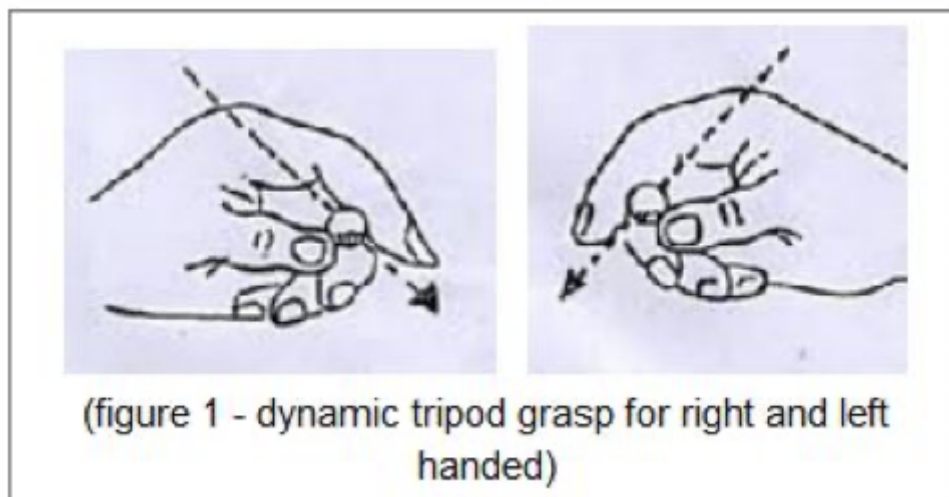
9. PAPER POSITION

Right-handers should position the paper towards their right side and left-handers should position the paper towards their left side, within their body range, not too far and not too close. As they move down the page, right-handers should move the paper up in the same line using their left hand and left-handers should move the paper up in the same line using their right hand, to maintain the correct body posture.



10. PENCIL GRIP

Children need to hold a pen or pencil with an appropriate grip; these need to be explained and modelled. The dynamic tripod grip offers the greatest control and allows the precise movements needed to form letters:



However, this grip does not suit all children. Comfort and ease of movement are more important. As a child grows older, if the grip is not causing pain, discomfort or fatigue, and it is not seriously affecting legibility, it should be left alone.

11. CORRECT FORMATION BEFORE JOINING

Teaching the correct formation of the letters should be given the highest priority and this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining.

12. CHILDREN NEW TO THE SCHOOL

Children who join the school with established fluent joined handwriting should be allowed to continue with their current style of handwriting.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Children are shown how to sit correctly and how to hold writing tools comfortably. They are also shown how to position paper correctly. Adaptations will be made for right and left handed children, and resources which need to be copied will be in a position to ensure comfort of view.

14. TYPE OF WRITING TOOLS TO BE USED

- School will provide a range of pencils and pens.
- From Reception, children will practise using a sharp pencil.
- When Reception and Key Stage 1 teachers decide that children are ready, children are to practise using a pen.
- From Year 3, all children will practise using a pen.
- All children should be writing using a pen by the end of Year 4.
- From Year 5, children (under guidance from class teachers) may choose to write using a quality fountain pen which they must supply themselves.
- Children may choose to bring their own pen to write with if that is the more comfortable pen for them to write successfully with.
- All children's pens must use blue ink.
- Left handed children may choose a blue gel pen if that reduces smudging.
- In Reception and Key Stage 1, individual children's A4 whiteboards should have a lined side and a blank side and use the side appropriate to their stage of development.

15. REWARDING PROGRESS

Superstar Writer - in Reception and Key Stage 1 children can be awarded a Superstar Writer pencil to reward them for the effort they are making with their mark-making or handwriting. There is no limit as to the amount of times a child can be awarded this.

In line with the school's Positive Behaviour, Relationships and Wellbeing Policy, all children should receive praise for effort and high personal achievement.

We do not award pen licences. We aim to develop a sense of pride in producing high quality writing where children understand that neat, legible handwriting is a skill which helps us to achieve that, not the end result of writing.

There are a range of rewards available across the school which can be used to reward the effort children put into developing their handwriting. (See Positive Behaviour, Relationships and Wellbeing Policy).

APPENDIX 1: AN OVERVIEW OF TEACHING HANDWRITING FROM RECEPTION

In Reception, our baseline for writing is children writing their name and drawing a picture of their family.

Product and Process

The finished product (a letter) can look correct but be formed using a flawed process. A flawed process hinders fast, fluent transcription (see the diagram below). Embedded handwriting problems often come from process misconceptions. We address this from the start with a focus on the correct start point and movement pattern of each letter. The [National Handwriting Association \(NHA\)](#) suggests that print letters are easier to learn. Fewer strokes place less pressure on working memory.

Box 7: The product and the process of handwriting

It is important to monitor both the product and process of children's handwriting. For the letters above, the product is good in both cases, but the inefficient process of forming the letters on the left will hinder the development of a fluent handwriting style.







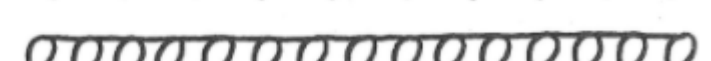
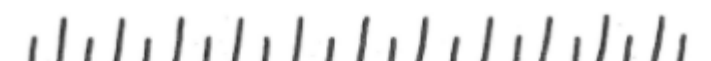
Pencil grip

For children ready for a tripod grip, we say, **froggy legs sitting on a log**. Here is the longer narrative but the above is the quick version as a reminder!

Put **froggy legs** (thumb and forefinger) on the bottom part of the painted part of the pencil, pencil across frog's back (back of hand) and then put the log under the frog so he is **sitting on a log** (middle finger supporting the pencil to complete the tripod grip).

Pre-writing patterns.

We teach these patterns in early handwriting to aid the development of fine-motor control and the later formation of certain letter shapes.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 

Letter families

Letters	EYFS Terminology
i u y l t j	long-legged giraffe
r n m h b p k	One-armed robot
c o a d g q e s f	curly caterpillar
v w x z	zigzag

We teach:

Some letters are **tall** and some letters are **short**. Some letters go **below the writing line**.

All letters except e and d start at the top.

We introduce the terms **ascenders** and **descenders**.

We call the **exit strokes** the **joining flicks**.

When forming letters that require a change of direction, say **'then change direction'**.

Capital Letters

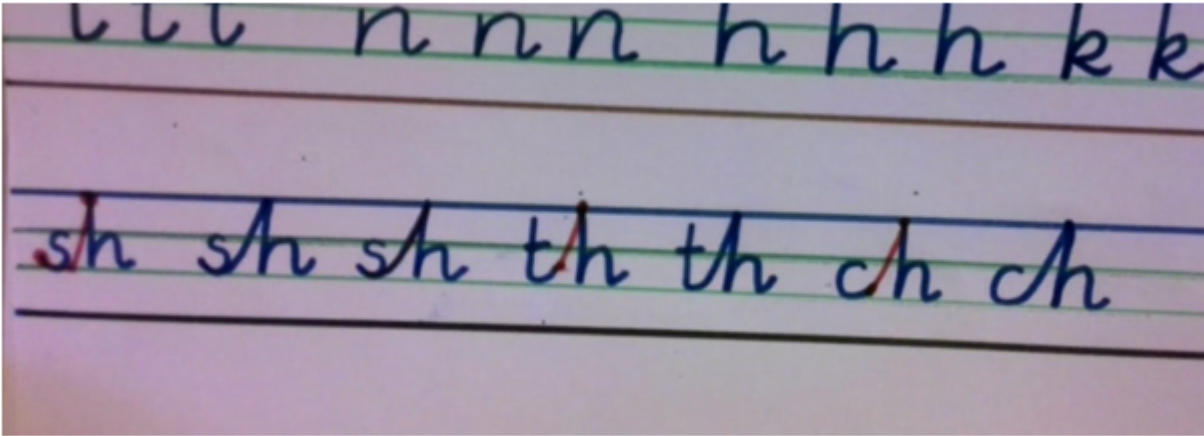
Are as tall as b, d, l and used for names and modelled when the date is written on the board.

Capital letters are not joined.

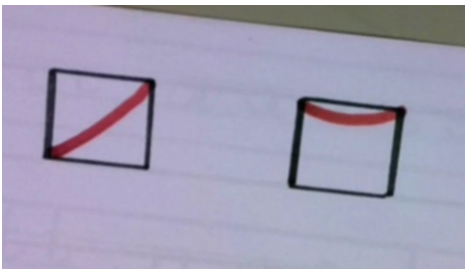
Joining

Introducing the join:

1. Form the individual letter.
2. Adults show the type of join in a different colour.
3. Write together.

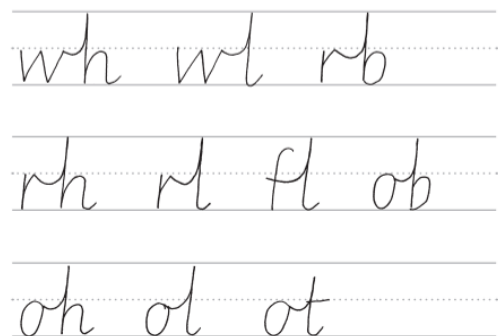
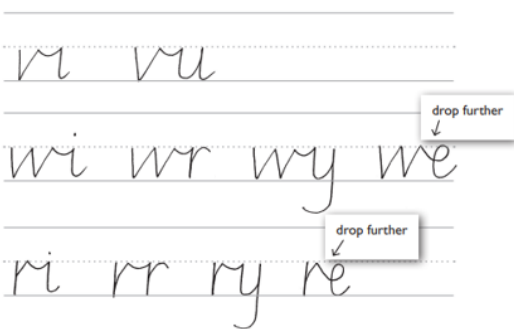


Diagonal join and washing-line join:



The diagonal line is normally a straight line when children first start joining but over time and with increasing fluency it naturally usually becomes slightly curved.

Children are taught where each letter starts and where it ends. Children learn which is the letter shape and which is the join.



bi gi ji si

yi

Joining to curly letters:

Say, "Do the diagonal/washing-line join and continue to the start of the next letter, then push back and round."

va vo

wa wo

ra ro rd rg

fa fo

oa oo od og

ic ka ko la

ld lo

For descenders with loops:

f, g, j, y have descenders which:

“Go straight down through the writing line with a thin loop then continue to form the diagonal join to the next letter.”

The letter ‘f’ is to be taught initially as a ‘tall’ (ascending) letter which then has a descending loop when joins are taught.



Joining to ascending letters

ab ah ak al

at eb eh ek el

et ib ik il it

al ch mb th da

le lm lu ly

me mi mm mu

ne ni nu ny

te ti tu ty tw

ui ue up

ε uw uy

ai ae aj am ar

ci ce cu cy

di dr dy de

ee ei em er

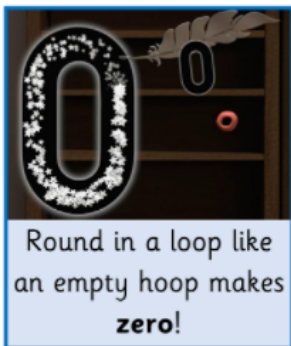
he hu hi hy

ie ir ip iw iy

ke ki kn ky

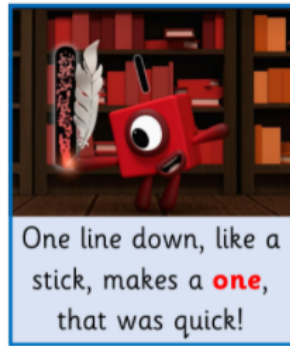
Number Formation

Children are taught using the Numberblocks rhymes. All numbers start from the top:



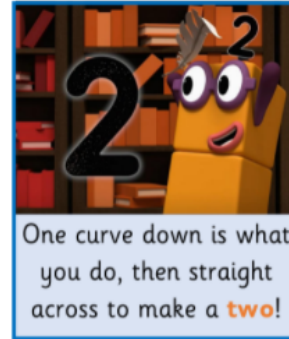
A large black number 0 is shown with a trail of white sparkles. A small grey bird is perched on top of the 0. To the right, a small red ring is shown. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

Round in a loop like an empty hoop makes **zero!**



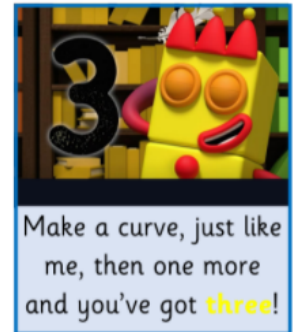
A red Numberblock character with one eye and a red stick-like body is shown. A small white feather is on its head. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

One line down, like a stick, makes a **one**, that was quick!



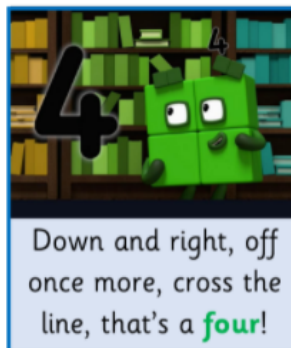
A yellow Numberblock character with two eyes and a purple hat is shown. A large black number 2 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

One curve down is what you do, then straight across to make a **two!**



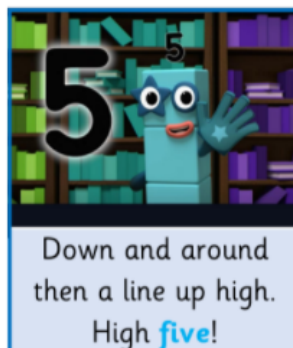
A yellow Numberblock character with a red crown and two eyes is shown. A large black number 3 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

Make a curve, just like me, then one more and you've got **three!**



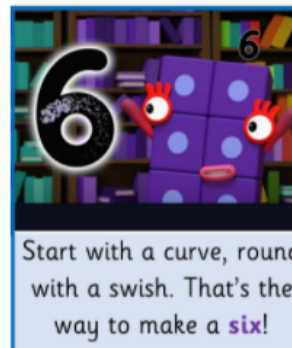
A green Numberblock character with two eyes is shown. A large black number 4 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

Down and right, off once more, cross the line, that's a **four!**



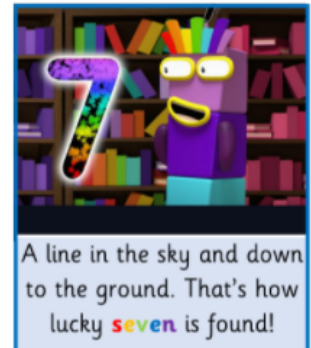
A blue Numberblock character with two eyes and a blue star on its chest is shown. A large black number 5 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

Down and around then a line up high. High **five!**



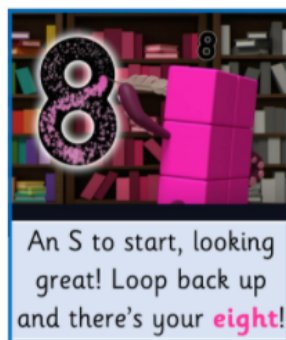
A purple Numberblock character with two eyes and a purple polka-dot pattern is shown. A large black number 6 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

Start with a curve, round with a swish. That's the way to make a **six!**



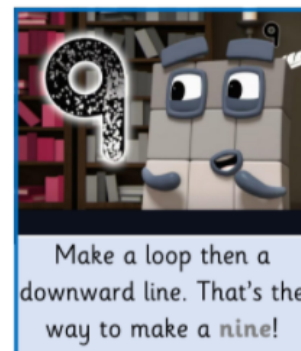
A purple Numberblock character with two eyes and a yellow mouth is shown. A large black number 7 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

A line in the sky and down to the ground. That's how lucky **seven** is found!



A pink Numberblock character with two eyes is shown. A large black number 8 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

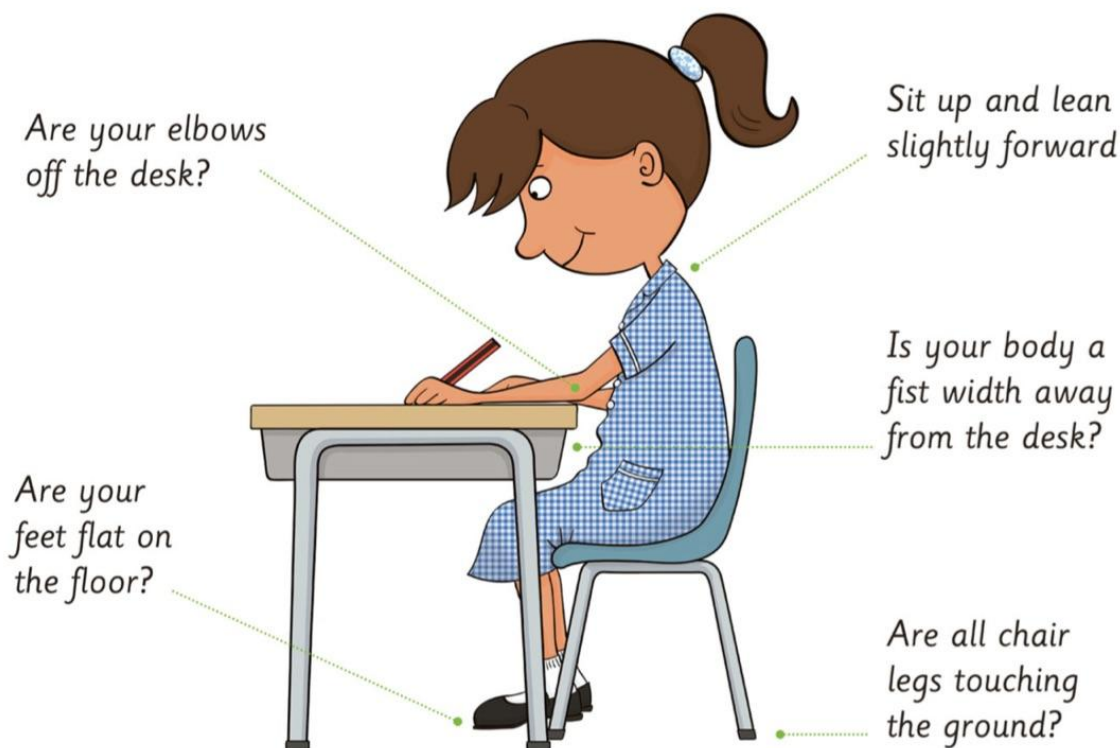
An S to start, looking great! Loop back up and there's your **eight!**



A grey Numberblock character with two eyes and a grey mustache is shown. A large black number 9 is next to it. Below the image is a blue box with white text.

Make a loop then a downward line. That's the way to make a **nine!**

Are you ready for handwriting? Relax!



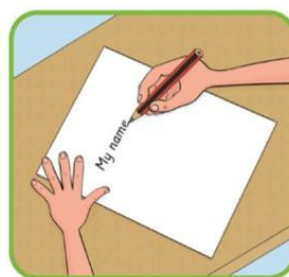
Left Handers



Is there a circle gap between your thumb and finger?

Is your paper tilted at a slight angle?

Right Handers



Simple Modern Cursive

Firstly, individual letters are taught without entry strokes. e.g.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Then, when letter formation and positioning are both secure, joining is taught. Some break letters are left un-joined. The choice of these is suggested by the scheme used, e.g.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

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