

UK National Curriculums for Handwriting

EYFS (4-5 year olds)

The statutory framework for the early years foundation stage – 8th December 2023

Early Learning goals - Literacy

"ELG: Writing (page 15)

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others."

Early Learning goals - Physical Development

"ELG: Gross Motor Skills (page 14)

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

"ELG: Fine Motor Skills (page 14)

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing."

Department of Education: Early years foundation stage statutory framework - For group and school-based providers Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five Published: 8 December 2023, Effective: 4 January 2024, © Crown copyright 2023

Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage; September 2020

The Department for Education has also published this additional document to support and guide practitioners in developing a varied and rich curriculum that meets the requirements of the statutory framework for early years foundation stage.

Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage; September 2020

Key Stage 1 (5 - 7 year olds)

Year 1 (5 - 6 year olds)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- 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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.

Year 2 (6 - 7 year olds)

Statutory Requirements – Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- 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 unjoined
- 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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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.

'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 National curriculum in England'; September 2013' (up-dated for implementation September 2014); Department for Education.

Key Stage 2 (7 - 11 year olds)

Lower Key Stage 2 - Year 3 and 4 (7 - 9 year olds)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be joining 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 what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Upper Key Stage 2 - Year 5 and 6 (9 - 11 year olds)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- 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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 National curriculum in England'; September 2013' (up-dated for implementation September 2014); Department for Education.