



## **Handwriting Policy 2024-25**

### Aim

At Old Town Infant School and Nursery, we believe in the teaching of effective transcription skills in order to develop each child's handwriting into a fluent, legible and individual style that can be adapted for a range of purposes and will support their spelling and composition. Our aim is for all children to become confident and fluent writers but we know that even when producing a single simple sentence, inexperienced writers will be juggling several elements, such as letter formation, spelling, word choice and sentence structure. Consequently, we believe that the children should begin to develop effective transcription skills from their earliest starting points.

Handwriting is of fundamental importance to educating our pupils because pupils who do not learn to read and write fluently and confidently are, in every sense, disenfranchised. The mastery of automaticity in handwriting is therefore one of the key priorities of our school.

### Methodology

The school uses printed handwriting, not cursive, as our agreed writing style. This ensures that there is a continuity of handwriting style from Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Key Stage 1.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

We recognise that appropriately formed and fluent handwriting relies on robust foundations that develop from the outset in EYFS. Good handwriting starts with good fine motor control, correct letter formation and an automatic, consistent and comfortable pencil grip.

Handwriting comprises physical and cognitive skills that need to be learnt and become part of the automatic cognitive skill set of the pupil. To aide our pupils in achieving this automaticity, we implemented the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme for Nursery and Reception in the academic year 2024/25. The teaching of Kinetic Letters will follow the children up the school as they progress into KS1, with a view to the whole school working solely from the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme by September 2026.

Through the delivery of Kinetic Letters, the outcomes that we will strive to ensure all our pupils achieve are:

- Having fluent, legible and speedy handwriting that can be performed automatically, so that the attention of the brain is predominantly on the content of the writing.
- Having a comfortable and efficient pencil hold and working position.

The Kinetic Letters programme has four threads:

- Making bodies stronger
- Holding the pencil (for speed, comfort and legibility)

- Learning the letters
- Flow and fluency

The key principles of the programme are:

- Building physical strength underpins handwriting and concentration. This knowledge informs the working positions that children use for writing and the strengthening targets they work on.
- Pupils are not expected to do anything before they are developmentally ready for it.
- The different components of writing are mastered individually before being used in combination.
- Letters are learnt as movements, not as visual shapes, and movement remains central to developing automaticity in letter formation, flow and fluency.
- Posture is important in developing the correct position for handwriting and so children are taught how to organise their working position and paper position to enable comfortable and fluent writing from the start.
- Correct pencil hold is taught from the start (ie as soon as a tripod grip is developmentally appropriate), and the strength is developed to maintain this, enabling comfort, speed and writing stamina.

Handwriting in Reception is taught in discrete sessions, separate from phonics. Letter formation is taught in specific letter families, grouping together the letters that require using similar sequences of physical movements:

<i>Family</i>	<i>Letters</i>	<i>Family Feature</i>
<i>Lower-case letters</i>		
Jumper Family	h n m r b p	Down-bump. Back up. Push over.
Abracadabra Family	c a o d g s q	Pull around and Push, Abracadabra.
Window Cleaner Family	l t i u	Down-bump. Flick (the water off).
Fisher Family	j g y f	Down, on-down and Pull around (to catch the fish).
Special Squirter	e	Push across. Up. Pull around and Push (along the ground).
Slider family	v w x z k	Slide

Pupils in Reception take part in daily handwriting sessions of at least 20 minutes. Thereafter, time allocation to maintain handwriting development and increase speed and flow will be regular, but at the discretion of the class teacher so long as appropriate progression continues to be made. Handwriting practice takes place on specific Kinetic Letters white boards, supported by visits to sand trays, with a transition to books when children show they are ready according to the checking of weekly targets. The majority of the time, sessions are taught to

the whole class with differentiation-enabled Kinetic Letters strategies and resources. Reinforcement may take place in small groups and/or individually.

Strategies to build physical strength for handwriting are integrated into general school life and provision for EYFS. The Digital Teaching Turtle (DTT), is used as a front of classroom teaching aide to animate letters and animate the strategies for Pencil Hold and Writing Positions.

EYFS children are taught solely the Kinetic Letters letter formation and adults aim to model and expose children as much as possible to strong examples of the expected font within the environment and across all areas of the curriculum (see appendix 2).

Although children have access to a vast range of writing implements and tools within the EYFS environment, any direct writing/handwriting teaching is carried out with specific Kinetic Letters whiteboard pens and pencils that support and enhance pen grip.

Nursery's main focus will be on the first two threads of Kinetic Letters: Making bodies stronger and holding the pencil. Inputs will be delivered within the classroom environment on a 1:1 basis or in small groups.

### Assessment of Kinetic Letters

Formative and summative assessment is built into the structure of the S.T.A.R.T. handwriting session and teachers and pupils use the Kinetic Letters strategy of **A**ssess, **D**etect, **C**orrect (ADC) for all Threads of Kinetic Letters. This is both during specific handwriting sessions, and when monitoring the transfer of the physical and cognitive handwriting skills into daily classwork.

### EYFS writing opportunities within the environment

Children in Nursery and Reception are involved in a variety of activities to develop their physical development that incorporate and build upon the guidance laid out in the Kinetic Letters programme. Both gross and fine motor skills develop in a 'top down' approach; the fine motor skills needed for effective writing emerge from the shoulder joint, then to elbow and lastly to wrist and finger joints. The development of these skills is supported in the following ways;

- Opportunities within continuous provision to develop gross motor skills (shoulder and elbow pivots) such as mopping, sweeping, digging, pushing wheelbarrows, climbing, throwing, painting and drawing on large surfaces.
- Opportunities within continuous provision to develop fine motor skills (wrist and finger pivots) such as scooping, threading, weaving, dabbing and using fingers to pinch, squeeze, twist, roll and manipulate dough.
- Opportunities for mark-making are planned in both the inside and outside environment where children are offered a range of materials and experiences for mark-making and 'bumping into writing' across the Early Years base.

## Key Stage 1

In KS1, the children work on the handwriting objectives from the Key Stage 1 programme of study and practise letter formation within phonics lessons and at the beginning of every writing lesson. At the beginning of KS1, children learn to form capital letters correctly and to form letters of the correct size, relative to one another. Highlighted paper is provided to the children as a scaffold to support the sizing of their letters with 15mm ruling used in Year 1 and 12mm ruling used in Year 2.

The children in KS1 practise lower case letters within the handwriting families taught to them in EYFS before the introduction of Kinetic Letters (see appendix 4) to ensure that this skill becomes fluent and automatic.

- Curly caterpillar letters: c a o d g q e s f
- Ladder letters: l i t u j y
- One armed robot letters: r b n h m k p
- Zigzag monster letters: v w x z

The use of dictated sentences allows the children to embed these skills and extra support and intervention is provided to children who require it.

The children continue to use triangular pencils throughout KS1.

Agreed letter formation:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt  
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

The pupils in KS1 continue to use 'Letter Formation Ditties' that they were introduced to in EYFS to support with the recall of correct letter formation (see appendix 3).

During the summer term, those year 2 children that are ready to progress to using a cursive style of handwriting are taught the diagonal strokes needed to begin to join letters.

### Planning and Delivery

Handwriting objectives are taken from the National Curriculum English Programme of Study (see Appendix 1) and form part of the class teachers' and children's continuous work. Handwriting is taught in explicit, regular sessions focusing on letter formation, consistent size and shape of letters. The teaching of handwriting follows the expectations set out in the 'OTIS Writing Long Term Plan' and is differentiated based on the needs of the child. Handwriting is applied in all writing and modelling, as well as in displays, and is a consistent marking focus.

### Handwriting position at the table

- Feet flat on the floor
- Bottom at the back of the chair
- Shoulders down and relaxed
- Tummy near table
- Left/right hand holding paper
- Left/right hand holding a pencil, attempting a tripod grip

## Appendix 1

### Early Years Framework

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
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others

### National Curriculum Ks1

#### Year 1

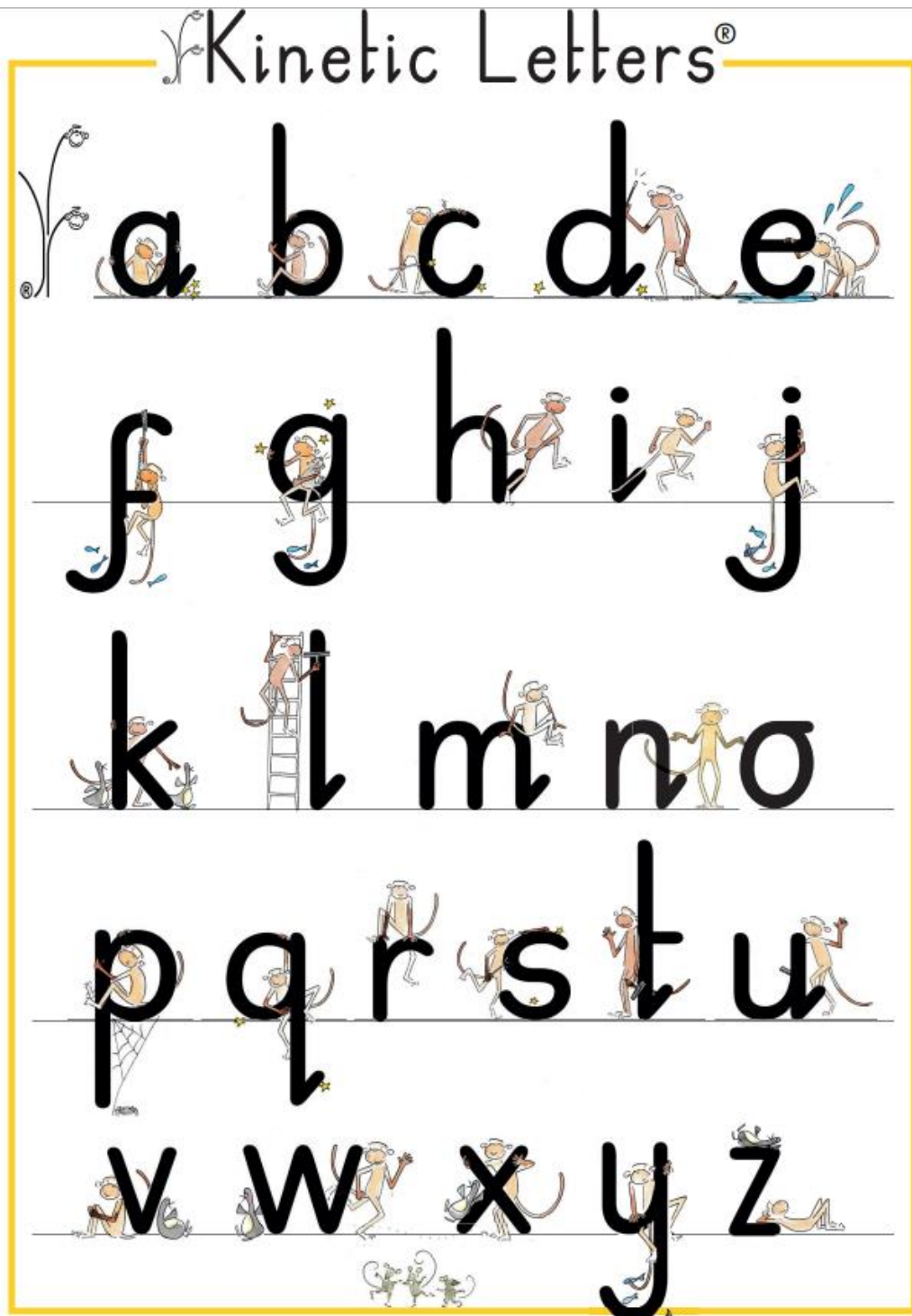
Pupils should be taught to

- 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.





#### Year 2

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.

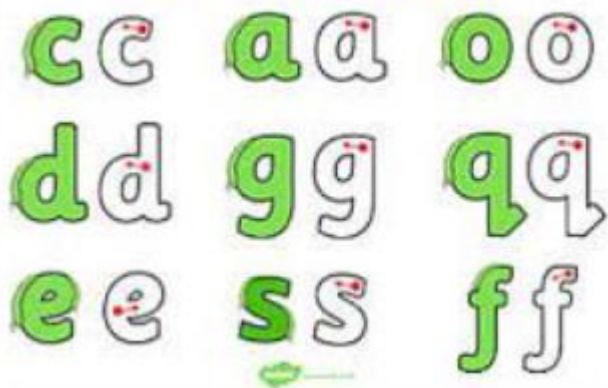


Appendix 3 KS1 letter formation ditties

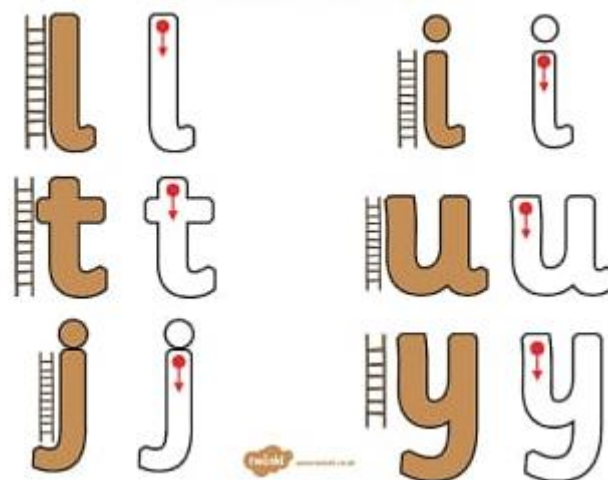
 <p>Maisie, mountain, mountain</p>	 <p>Round the apple, down the leaf</p>	 <p>Slither down the snake</p>	 <p>Round his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet</p>	 <p>Down the tower, across the tower</p>
 <p>Down the body, dot for the head</p>	 <p>Down Nobby, over his net</p>	 <p>Down the plait and over the pirate's face</p>	 <p>Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl</p>	 <p>All around the orange</p>
 <p>Curl around the caterpillar</p>	 <p>Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg</p>	 <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle</p>	 <p>Down the laces to the heel, round the toe</p>	 <p>Down the stem, and draw the leaves</p>
 <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg</p>	 <p>Down the long leg</p>	 <p>Down the head to the hooves and over his back</p>	 <p>Down his back, then curl over his arm</p>	 <p>Down his body curl and dot</p>
 <p>Down a wing, up a wing</p>	 <p>Down a horn up a horn and under his head</p>	 <p>Down, up, down, up</p>	 <p>Zig - zag - zig</p>	 <p>Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair</p>
 <p>Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side</p>				

Appendix 4 KS1 letter families

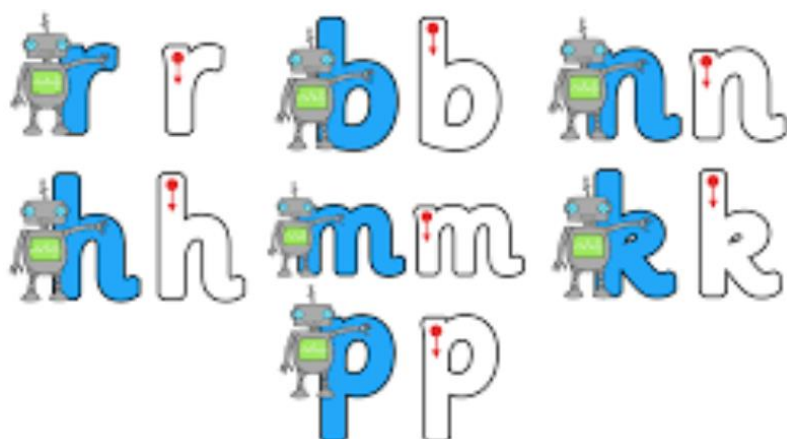
Curly Caterpillar Letters



Ladder Letters



One-Armed Robot Letters



Zigzag Monster Letters

