

National Schools' Handwriting Competition

The National Curriculum Handwriting Requirements – A summary

	Early Years outcomes (non-statutory guide)	Suggested activities
Age 30 to 50 months	<p>Ascribes meanings to marks that they see in different places.</p> <p>Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint.</p> <p>Hears and says the initial sound in words.</p>	<p>Raise awareness of patterns and shapes in the environment while demonstrating the vocabulary for describing them.</p> <p>Encourage children to talk about their patterns, letter patterns, shapes and drawings. Develop pattern-making skills and basic letter movement through making, modelling, drawing, painting and music.</p> <p>Ask children to identify the initial phonemes of words and think of other words beginning with the same sound.</p>
Age 40 to 60+ months	<p>Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together.</p> <p>Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.</p> <p>Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence.</p> <p>Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions.</p> <p>Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.</p>	<p>Ask children to identify sounds in high-frequency decodable words and high-frequency 'tricky' words and blend them together.</p> <p>Practice recognition of all the letters of the alphabet as letters and phonemes and an understanding that capitals and lower-case letters represent the same phonemes.</p> <p>Provide picture words for children to identify and write, establishing the phonemes.</p> <p>Encourage children to learn to write their own name and think of other names that begin with the same phoneme.</p> <p>Ask children to practise forming letters and write them in a context (e.g. a simple sentence).</p>
Key Stage 1 Year 1	<p>Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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' and to practise these. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check children have the correct posture and allow them to experiment with different writing implements to help them find a hold that is comfortable and efficient. • Practise lower-case letter and capital letter formation, showing starting and finishing positions and the direction of movement. • Practise joining two or three letters in a word. • Revise the formation of digits 1 to 9. • Provide letter formation practice for each of the four letter families.

The new National Curriculum Handwriting Requirements – A summary contd.

	Early Years outcomes (non-statutory guide)	Suggested activities
Key stage 1 Year 2	<p>Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise lower-case letter formation, with correct letter height and spacing, consistency of letter size and parallel ascenders and descenders. • Introduce and practise joining letter sets. Children should begin to join all the letters in a short word or to join letter patterns which can support spelling. They practise the joins and then write them in context (e.g. a simple sentence). • Introduce break letters b, g, j, p, y, x and z, ensuring children join and break words in the right places. • Ask children to write the alphabet in capital letters. Practice writing the days of the week, the months of the year and short sentences and rhymes, ensuring the correct size of capital letters in relation to lower-case letters. • Provide opportunities to practise writing digits (e.g. addresses, phone numbers). • Demonstrate correct spacing between words, helping children to present their work well.
Key Stage 2 Years 3 and 4	<p>Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (e.g. by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce children to a sloped style of writing and allow them to practise familiar and tricky diagonal and horizontal joins • Teach children about 'break letters' g, j and y and the letters x and z, which are never joined to or from. • As their gain fluency, ensure that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) letters are consistently sized ii) known joins are used correctly iii) ascenders and descenders are parallel iv) there are regular spaces within and between words.
Upper Key Stage 2 Years 5 and 6	<p>Handwriting and presentation Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters ii) choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give children the opportunity to practise speed, fluency and presentation skills. Give them tasks which allow them to experience writing for different purposes, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) note-making (quick writing, often including abbreviations) ii) fast and fluent writing (neat and legible for all readers) iii) best writing (writing for presentations) iv) printing (e.g. labelling, captions, posters). • Encourage children to choose the writing implement best suited for a specific purpose.