

Tuesday 6th October

Handwriting

2026-2027



By the end of this session you will...

- Understand why handwriting still matters.
- Know how handwriting will be taught at the Belham moving forward.

We're not aiming for “pretty” handwriting.

We're aiming for handwriting that is:

FLUENT

LEGIBLE

CONSISTENT

What are the benefits of fluent handwriting?

- Reduces cognitive load
- Improves writing fluency
- Frees working memory for ideas and vocabulary
- Increases confidence
- Improves presentation and pride
- Supports spelling through repeated letter formation
- Prepares pupils for SATs and secondary school where handwriting still matters.

What does the research say?

Research suggests that fluent handwriting is linked with:

- longer pieces of writing
- higher quality composition
- improved spelling
- greater writing stamina
- improved academic outcomes.

Why Oak?

One approach → Years 2–6

- Clear progression
- Consistent modelling
- Explicit teaching
- Regular practice
- Ready-made resources
- Shared language



Our shared expectation

Years 2–6

-  **3 × 15 minute sessions every week**
-  These are **timetabled and protected within the school day, not early morning work**
-  **Regular practice > occasional long sessions**

EXAMPLE Oak Lesson

Pre-cursive formation of c, a and d

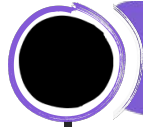


English

Unit: Pre-cursive lower case letters or lower case letters
revision

Lesson outline

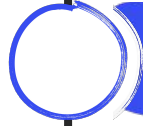
Pre-cursive formation of c, a and d



Handwriting warm-up



Forming the pre-cursive letter c



Forming the pre-cursive letter a



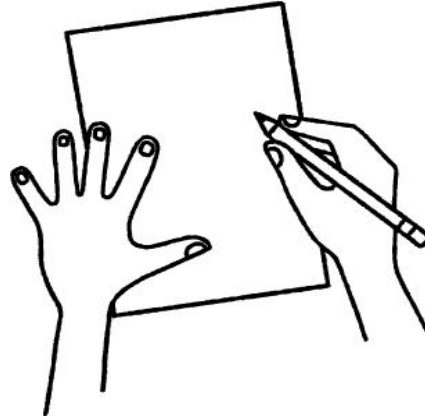
Forming the pre-cursive letter d



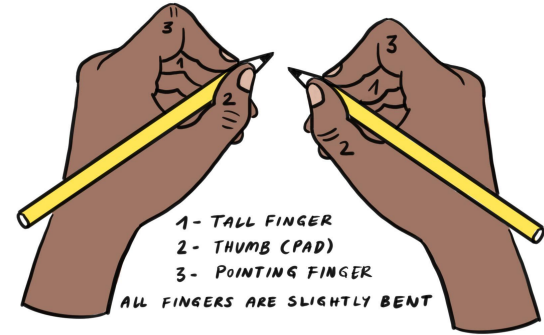
Before we start, what are these pictures reminding you to do?



- sit on a chair at a table
- feet flat on the floor
- back against the chair



- angle your paper correctly
- non-writing hand supports



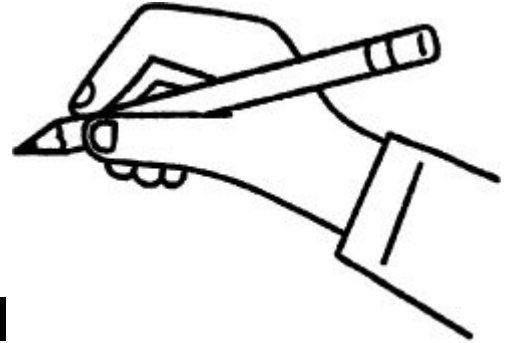
- hold your pencil in the tripod grip



Before starting to write, it is important to warm up your hand and wrist muscles.

Your hands and wrists get stronger when you exercise them.

Warming up your hands before writing will help to improve your handwriting.



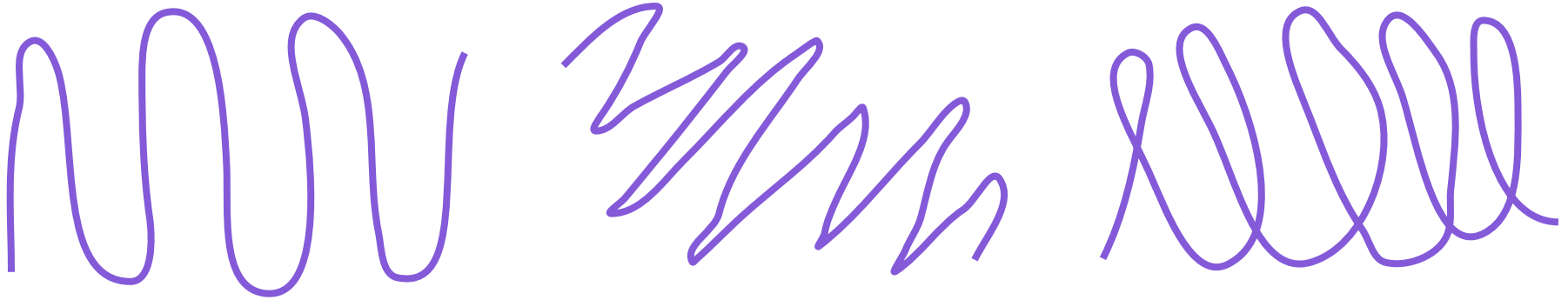
Handwriting warm-up

I do the **finger pulls** warm-up and the **rolling wrists** warm-up.

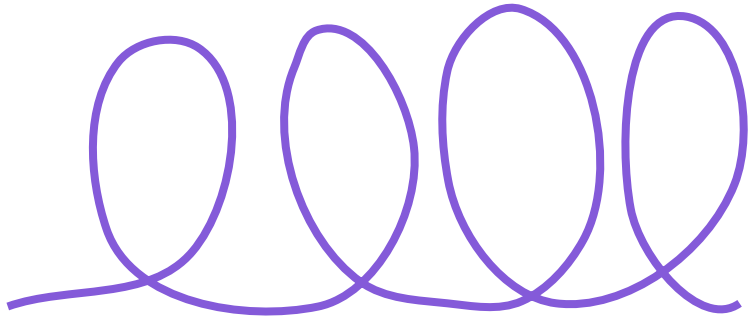
You do the **finger pulls** warm-up and the **rolling wrists** warm-up.



Practising writing patterns helps us to prepare for writing letters.



I do the pattern in the air with my finger.



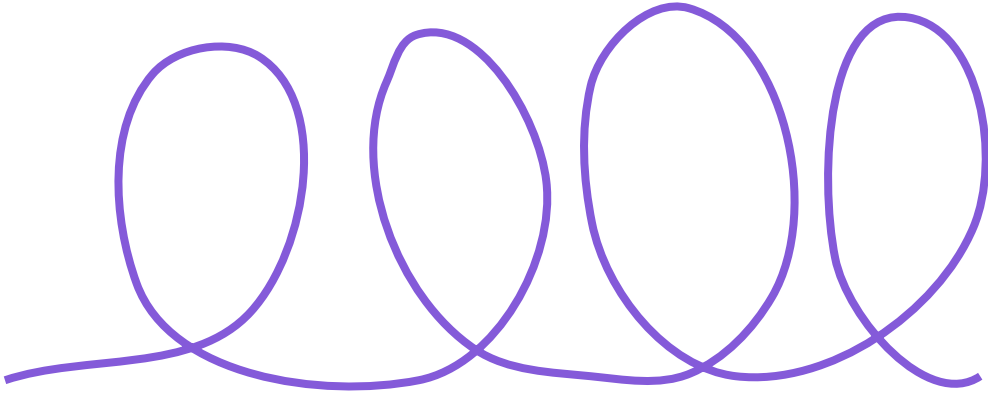
You do the pattern in the air with your finger.



Task A Handwriting warm-up



Copy and continue the pattern using your tripod grip.



Remember, don't lift your pencil when forming the pattern.



Lesson outline

Pre-cursive formation of c, a and d



Handwriting warm-up



Forming the pre-cursive letter c



Forming the pre-cursive letter a



Forming the pre-cursive letter d



Forming the pre-cursive letter c

Let's look closely.

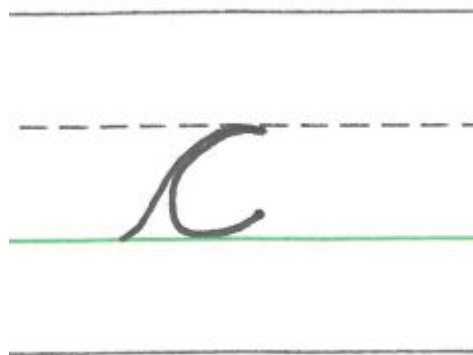
What can you see?

This is the pre-cursive formation of the letter c.

The pre-cursive formation of the letter c has a **lead in** and a **lead out**.

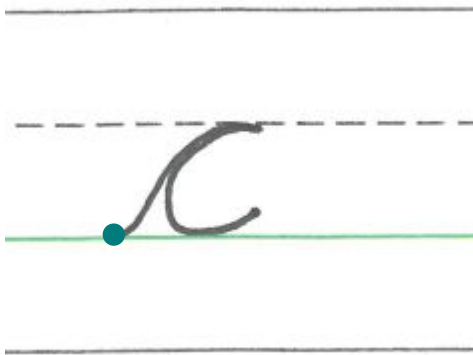
The letter c is an **x-height letter**.

The pre-cursive letter c starts on the baseline and goes up to the x-height line.



Forming the pre-cursive letter c

I will form the letter c in the air with my finger.



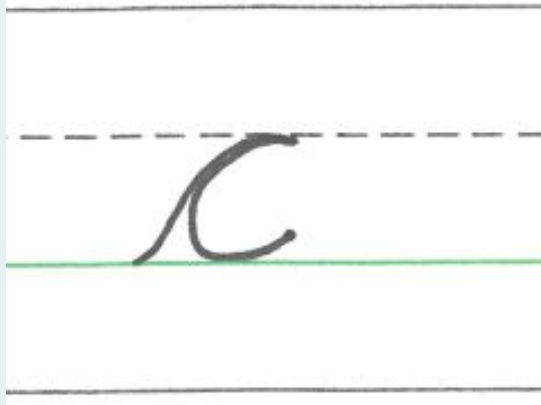
You will form the letter c in the air with your finger.



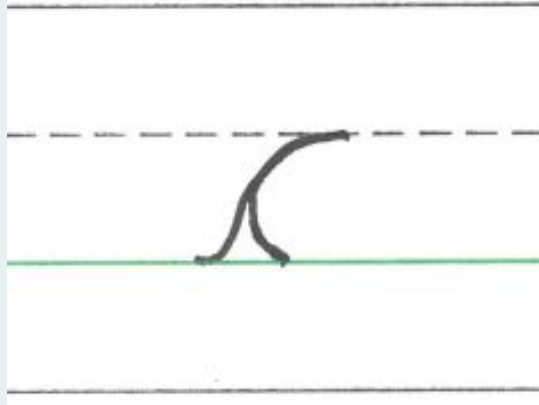
Forming the pre-cursive letter c



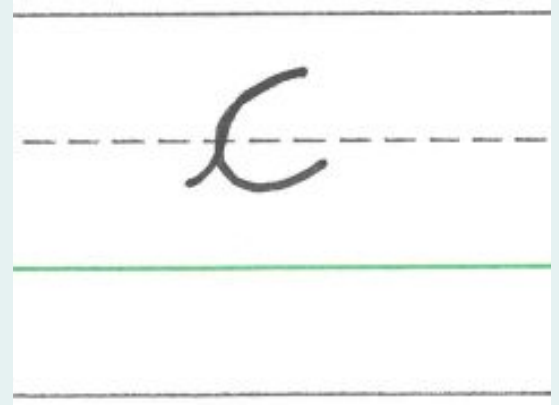
Which is the correct formation of the pre-cursive letter c?



a ✓



b



c

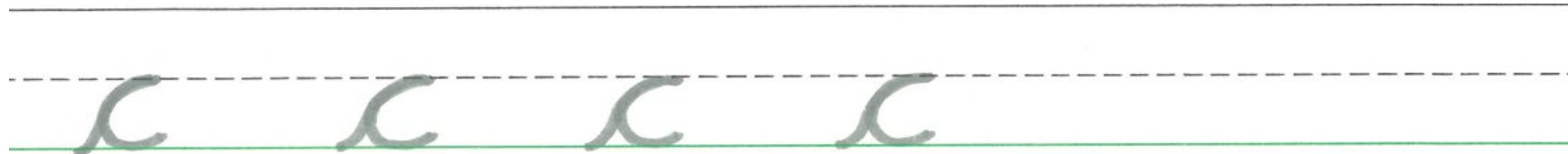


Task B Forming the pre-cursive letter c



Practise forming the pre-cursive letter c.

1. Go over the grey examples.



2. Try using the starting dot.

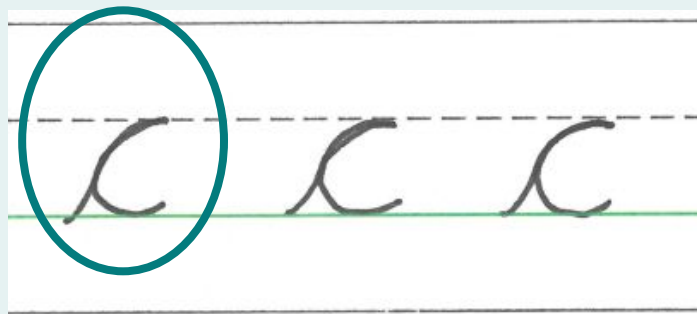


3. Complete two lines independently on your tramlines.



Task B Forming the pre-cursive letter c

Practise forming the pre-cursive letter c.



Did you start on the baseline?

Did you remember to curl up to the x-height line for the **lead in**?

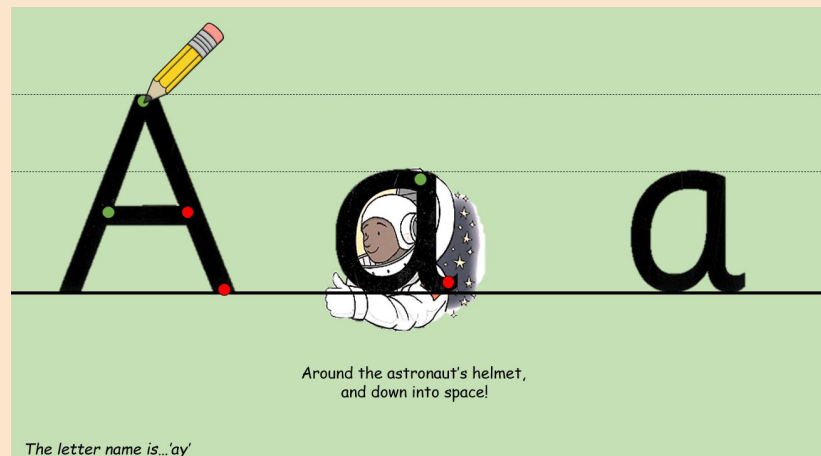
Did you remember a **curved up stroke** as the **lead out** on the baseline?

Circle your best and celebrate.



Little Wandle Handwriting - Reception & YR1

Handwriting lessons should last approximately 15 minutes and be scheduled at least three times per week.



Lesson format - Reception

Warm-up (2 minutes)	Revisit and review (3 minutes - lesson 2 onwards)	Teach and practise (5 minutes)	Practise and apply (5 minutes)
Hand exercises Choose four exercises from the Hand warm-up routines to warm up. Say: <i>Let's get our hands ready for writing.</i> - Model the first exercise. Say: <i>Copy me.</i> Observe the children as they do the exercise, providing support as required. - Repeat with the next three exercises. Say: <i>Now our hands are warmed up and ready for writing.</i> Get ready to write Say: <i>Check you are sitting up straight with your feet flat on the floor. There should be a small gap between your tummy and the table.</i> - Sing the 'Ready to write' rhyme: <i>Let's sit up straight, feet nice and flat, Tilt your paper - just like that! Pinch your pencil, give it a flip, Check your hold and then your grip. Now we can begin to write, But not too hard and not too light.</i>	Quick review Say: <i>Let's review the letter we learned in the last session.</i> Hand out the workbooks at the correct page. - Show the grapheme card. Say: <i>The letter is [say the letter name].</i> - Recite the formation phrase as you trace the mnemonic with your finger. Say: <i>Copy me.</i> Repeat as the children trace the mnemonic in their workbooks and join in with the formation phrase. - Check that the children are using their dominant hand. Write the review letter - Hand out sharpened pencils with the tip facing the children. Say: <i>Find the 'Letter check-up' box in your workbook. Pick up your pencil and check your grip.</i> Say: <i>Now write the letter [say the letter name] using your pencil. Start at the dot.</i> - Encourage the children to recite the formation phrase aloud to support correct formation. - Circulate to provide individual support and additional modelling where needed. - Check every child's pencil grip.	Teach the new letter Refer also to the Unit guidance. Say: <i>Let's learn how to write a new letter.</i> Show the Large grapheme card. Say: <i>This is the letter [say the letter name]. Its phoneme is [say the sound]. It is from the [say the family, e.g. curly] letter family.</i> - Put your finger on the starting point, then recite the formation phrase while tracing the letter. Repeat, encouraging the children to join in with the phrase. Practise the new letter Refer also to the Unit guidance. Say: <i>Let's write the letter [say the letter name] in the air.</i> - Face the same direction as the children and say the formation phrase as you model forming the letter in the air. Look over your shoulder to check the children are focused. Say: <i>Copy me.</i> Say the formation phrase and write the letter in the air together. - Repeat, checking that the children are starting and finishing in the correct position and are using the correct orientation. Say: <i>Now let's practise writing the letter [say the letter name] on our palms.</i> - Repeat the formation phrase as you model forming the letter on the palm of your hand. Say: <i>Your turn.</i> Observe the children as they form the letter on their palms.	Trace the new letter - Ask the children to turn the page to the new letter. Say: <i>Let's trace the letter [say the letter name]. Put your finger on the starting point.</i> - Recite the formation phrase as you trace the letter with your finger to model correct letter formation. Say: <i>Copy me.</i> Repeat as the children trace the mnemonic in their workbooks and join in with the formation phrase. Say: <i>Your turn.</i> Observe the children as they trace with their fingers. Circulate to check that they are starting and finishing in the correct position and are using the correct orientation. Model writing the new letter Say: <i>Now we are going to have a go at writing the letter.</i> - Model writing the letter on a lined tripod whiteboard, emphasising the starting and end points, correct orientation and any specific features. Recite the formation phrase as you write. The four Ps Say: <i>Remember the four Ps:</i> Posture: <i>Sit up straight.</i> Pencil grip: <i>Pick up your pencil. Pinch, pinch, pinch, flip.</i> Paper position: <i>Tilt your paper.</i> Pressure: <i>Not too hard, not too light.</i> Write the new letter Say: <i>Now you are ready to write. Use your pencil to write over the letters. Start from the dot.</i> - Circulate to provide individual support and additional modelling where needed. Check the pencil grip of every child, adjusting as needed, and check that they are starting from the black dot. - Encourage the children to recite the formation phrase aloud to support correct formation. - Move from writing over the letters with a pencil to writing the letters on the lines as the children grow in confidence. - Use Assessment for Learning to identify children needing further practice.



Lesson format - Year 1

Warm-up (2 minutes)	Revisit and review (5 minutes)	Teach and model (5 minutes)	Apply and practise (8 minutes)
Hand exercises Choose two exercises from the Hand warm-up routines. Say: <i>Let's get our hands ready for writing.</i> - Model the first exercise. Say: <i>Copy me.</i> Observe the children as they do the exercise, providing support as required. - Repeat with the next exercise. Say: <i>Now our hands are warmed up and ready for writing.</i> Get ready to write Say: <i>Check you are sitting up straight with your back against the chair and feet flat on the floor. There should be a small gap between your tummy and the table.</i> - Sing the 'Ready to write' rhyme: <i>Let's sit up straight, feet nice and flat, Tilt your paper - just like that! Pinch your pencil, give it a flip, Check your hold and then your grip. Now we can begin to write, But not too hard and not too light.</i>	Quick review (from Lesson 2 onwards) Say: <i>Let's review the digits we learned in the last session.</i> Say: <i>The digit is</i> [say the digit name]. Show the digit mnemonic from the Letter Formation Cards pack. - Model forming the digit on a lined whiteboard, encouraging the children to join in with the formation phrase. Write the review digit Say: <i>Now write the digit</i> [say the digit name] <i>at least three times in the check-up box.</i> - Encourage the children to recite the formation phrase aloud to support correct formation. - Circulate to provide individual support and additional modelling where needed. Check every child's pencil grip. Repeat this for the second digit.	Teach formation of the new digit Say: <i>Let's practise writing a digit we have learned before.</i> Show the digit mnemonic card. Say: <i>This is the digit</i> [say the digit name]. Say the formation phrase. - Put your finger on the starting point, then recite the formation phrase while tracing the digit on the formation card. - Repeat, encouraging the children to join in with the formation phrase. Model writing the new digit Say: <i>Now we are going to write the digit</i> [say the digit]. - Model writing the digit on a lined whiteboard, reciting the formation phrase as you write. - Model the digit three times. Tick the best version and explain your reasoning for choosing that digit. Say: <i>Now I'm going to make my digit formation even better.</i> - Model the digit again, three times, emphasising the assessment criteria.	The four Ps Say: <i>Remember the four Ps.</i> Refer to each one and check that the children are ready to begin writing. Write the new digit Say: <i>Now you are ready to write. Use your pencil to write the digit in your book at least three times.</i> - Circulate to provide individual support on pencil grip, starting points and formation where needed. Say: <i>Face the board and look at my digits.</i> Say: <i>Now look at the digits you have written and put a little tick next to the digit that you think is your best. Notice what is good about that digit.</i> Say: <i>Can you make your digit formation even better? Practise the digit again on a new line. Look carefully. Have you improved it?</i> Repeat for each digit.

Progression

Reception	Year 1
Autumn 1: Practising patterns	Autumn 1: Lower case letters
Autumn 2: Letter families (i.e. long, curly)	Autumn 2: Capital letters
Spring 1: Capital letters	Spring 1: Forming digits
Spring 2: Capital letters	Spring 2: Digraphs and trigraphs
Summer 1: Digraphs and trigraphs	Summer 1: Useful words (tricky words)
Summer 2: Digraphs and trigraphs	Summer 2: Words with Phase 5 GPCs

Regular Assess and review weeks are built in to the planning to target identified areas to secure learning.

Progression

Year 2

Term	Workbook	Unit number	Duration	Content
Autumn 1/Autumn 2	Workbook 8	Unit 1	6 weeks	Diagonal joins from the baseline to short letters
Autumn 2	Workbook 8	Unit 2	4 weeks	Diagonal joins from the baseline to tall letters
Autumn 2/Spring 1	Workbook 8	Unit 3	3 weeks	Diagonal joins from the baseline to curly letters
Spring 1	Workbook 8	Unit 4	3 weeks	Horizontal joins from the mid-line to short letters
Spring 2	Workbook 8	Unit 5	2 weeks	Horizontal joins from the mid-line to tall letters
		Unit 6	3 weeks	Horizontal joins from the mid-line to curly letters
Summer 1	Workbook 9	Unit 7	1 week	Punctuation
		Unit 8	1 week	Days of the week
		Unit 9	1 week	Months of the year
Summer 1/Summer 2	Workbook 9	Unit 10	8 weeks	Word families

Practice

Supporting children to develop fluent handwriting

Year 2: Assessment and providing additional support

What to assess

Use the key outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit to identify what you need to assess in each topic. These include the three assessment criteria for handwriting that need to be assessed consistently:

- correct posture
- correct pencil grip
- correct hold in the correct position

Assessment for Learning and providing additional support

It is important that you use assessment for learning through out each lesson to identify any areas where additional practice is required for the class and to address needs for progress. When providing support, it is also important to ensure which individual children need targeted support during the lesson and which children require further support after the lesson.

Key points after school for left-handed children and children who have history of school trauma include a separate in-between session, which is short and focused, during which a teacher provides specific support for children who have required extra support or extra additional practice for the week then learning. The intervention should be provided with awareness of the correct formation and good practice to address the area of concern.

When handwriting practice should be conducted by a teacher who can model correct techniques and address the specific needs identified in each of the handwriting.

Workbooks

- Children who need support can begin with tracing the letters in the workbook after teacher modelling
- Children with advanced control can move straight to independent formation
- Blank pages offer additional consolidation.

Unit 2: Curly letter family

Curly around the cat.

Trace the letter with your finger.



Write over the letters.

C C C C

Unit 2: Curly letter family

Write over the letters.

C C C C

Write over and copy the letter.

C

Copy the letter.

. . . .

Letter check-up

. . . .



Unit 4: Digraphs and trigraphs



ee



igh

Write the letters.

ee

igh



Letter check-up

. . . .

Digraph and trigraph

Write the words.

sheep

light

Additional practice

feel

night



How to videos:

Rhymes

'How to' videos

Support for teachers



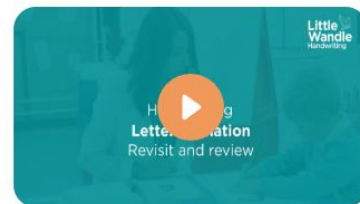
Hand exercises



Posture



Pencil grip



Revisit and review



Teach and practise



Practise and apply



Additional support

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Any questions?