




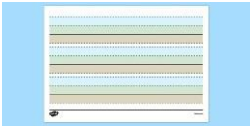
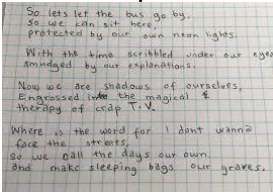
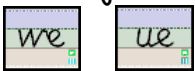




Promoting the expertise of schools to meet the needs of learners with specific learning difficulties through advisory work, training and exemplar teaching

## Appendix 1 - Handwriting Difficulties and what to do about them

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
<p>1. Poor posture</p> <p>Impacts on letter formation, comfort and speed of writing by causing excess muscle strain.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain need for good posture and model for the pupil</li> <li>Feet on the floor, chair pulled in, back straight, bottom close to the back of the seat, body facing the table</li> <li>Hips and knees should be at 90 degrees (see the video: Handwriting posture and seating advice at <a href="http://www.theschoolrun.com">www.theschoolrun.com</a>).</li> <li>If pupils find it hard to sit up straight, practise core strength and shoulder girdle building exercises (see <i>Speed Up</i> by Lois Addy or <i>Developmental Dyspraxia</i> by Madeleine Portwood)</li> </ul>
<p>2. Incorrect pencil grip</p> <p>A child may not develop a three-finger tripod pencil grip until the age of 5/6. This is considered the most appropriate pencil grip, for right and left-handed writers, as it allows the fingers and wrist to work together to provide a more free flowing movement.</p> <p>The dynamic tripod grip is the most comfortable and efficient grip for well controlled handwriting and for writing at length. It needs teaching from the outset.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model and ask the pupil to practise picking up the pencil</li> <li>Make sure it is held just above where the paint ends, and the sharpened bit of the pencil begins</li> <li>For right handers, the barrel of the pencil should extend back in the direction of the arm towards the elbow</li> <li>The barrel is held by pinching with the thumb and index finger and rests gently on the end of the middle finger</li> <li>Give the pupil a choice of style of pencil - their preference will depend on the size of their hands/fingers</li> <li>Younger learners will find fatter pencils easier to control initially</li> <li>Teach an alternative hold</li> <li>Try various pencil grips to help them keep their fingertips in the right position. (see video: The dynamic tripod grasp for better handwriting at <a href="http://www.theschoolrun.com">www.theschoolrun.com</a>)</li> <li>See Appendix 2 for different grips</li> </ul>
<p>3. Incorrect wrist position</p> <p>A correct wrist position is essential for comfortable writing and helps children develop a fluent flowing movement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outside edge of the wrist should rest against the paper rather than the heel of the hand and the inner wrist</li> <li>Using a writing slope may help</li> <li>Wrist should be below the writing line, so the learner can see the pencil tip as they write</li> <li>Get the child to roll up their sleeve a little so you can check the wrist position. (see video: Correct wrist position for handwriting at <a href="http://www.theschoolrun.com">www.theschoolrun.com</a>)</li> <li>Consider wrist weights - Appendix 2</li> </ul>
PROBLEM	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

<p>4. Incorrect paper position</p> <p>This needs to be correct as it will impact on the slant of the ascenders/descenders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For right handers, slant the paper slightly uphill</li> <li>For left handers, slightly downhill</li> <li>Non-writing hand should rest on the paper to stop it sliding</li> </ul> 
<p>5. Pencil pressure</p> <p>If too great a pressure is exerted, the finger, hand, wrist and arm muscles will fatigue quickly and become painful. If too little pressure is exerted, the handwriting will be faint and may be hard to read.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use pens that light up when pressure is applied as the child writes (see resources)</li> <li>If too much pressure is being exerted, ask the child to avoid making the pen light up by pressing more lightly and vice versa</li> <li>Use carbon paper and several layers of paper to encourage the child to press hard enough to produce several carbon copies of the same message</li> <li>Ensure opportunities are provided to use both pencils and pen</li> </ul>
<p>6. Poor pencil control</p> <p>Will impact on the letter formation, letter spacing and word spacing and therefore on the legibility of the writing.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once core stability and upper body strength are secure, develop fine motor skills through different activities (see appendices for ideas)</li> <li>Consider using App Dexteria for pinching and finger/ hand movements</li> <li><i>Write from the Start: Developing Fine-Motor and Perceptual Skills for Effective Handwriting</i> by Lois Addy</li> <li>Worksheets downloadable from <a href="http://www.theschoolrun.com">www.theschoolrun.com</a></li> </ul>
<p>7. Starts writing too far away from the left margin or from the right of the page</p> <p><i>Some EAL children who are also learning to write in another language that is written right to left, such as Urdu or Arabic, may need reminding that English is written left to right.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult to demonstrate how the writing needs to start very close to the margin</li> <li>Draw a green dot (for GO) on the left-hand side of the page to show where to start</li> <li>If the page has a margin, then draw over the margin in green. If needed, draw a red dot on the right-hand side of the page to show them where to stop, see Stop &amp; Go paper, Appendix 2</li> <li>Pupil to write the first letter of the lines in a different colour to highlight how they sit one underneath the other in a vertical line</li> </ul>
<p>8. Fidgeting and unable to sit still</p> <p>Need to remain seated for increasing lengths of time as writing skills develop and sustained writing is required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a semi-inflated sensory cushion that allows the pupil to shift around and get sensory feedback from it e.g. Move 'n' Sit cushion from website Back in Action</li> </ul>
<p>9. Unable to cross midline</p> <p>Need to be able to do this for cursive writing where the direction of movement keeps changing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use exercises which cross midline e.g. Lazy 8</li> <li>(drawing a figure of 8 lying on its side)</li> <li><i>Speed Up activities</i> by Lois Addy</li> <li><i>Sensory Circuits - A fine motor skills programme for children</i> by Jane Horwood. LDA</li> </ul> 
<p><b>PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><b>POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS</b></p>

10. Mixes upper and lower-case letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-teach all letter forms and joins for the letters concerned to re-establish the correct automatic motor movements</li> <li>Using cursive handwriting will really help with this as it encourages flowing movements</li> </ul>
11. Ascending and descending strokes follow different directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the pupils to take a red pen and a ruler and draw extended lines from the tips of the ascenders / descenders</li> <li>This will enable them to see clearly that they go in different directions. Encourage a slight slant to the writing by angling the paper</li> </ul>
12. Writing is very small/very large  Pupils often experiment with supersize or tiny writing either to fill the page more quickly or in an attempt to hide spelling errors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use handwriting guidelines paper e.g. Forest/Sky paper or shaded lined paper to encourage correct sizing (Appendix 2)</li> </ul> 
13. Very slow writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage use of cursive as the flowing movement will make handwriting faster with practice</li> <li>Try writing to music or practising writing a particular word as many times as possible in 30 seconds without compromising legibility</li> </ul>
14. Letters/words not sitting on the line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw child's attention to the gaps by using a highlighter pen between the line and the letters/words and explaining that they should be sitting on the line</li> <li>Check there are no underlying visual difficulties</li> </ul>
15. Uneven spacing between letters  This impacts on legibility - some letters will look like new words if they are away from the other letters and if letters are too close, they will become intertwined and impossible to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point out to the pupil the joins between each letter</li> <li>Indicate how the pencil needs to come away from the letter before drawing the next letter</li> <li>Using squared paper can help - one letter per square</li> </ul> 
16. Lack of spacing between words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give the pupil a small blob of blu-tak to keep moving and put after the word they have just written</li> <li>Use a spaceman (Appendix 2)</li> <li>If using squared paper, ask the pupil to leave a square between words</li> </ul>
17. Letter joins incorrect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify which letters are incorrectly joined and re-teach that letter family e.g. top joiners/ bottom joiners/letters that do not join - check your school Handwriting policy</li> <li>Provide table top example</li> </ul>
<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS</b>

<p>18. Incorrect letter formation</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify which letters are incorrectly formed and re-teach whole letter family</li> <li>• Model for the pupil talking about the formation as you draw the letter, pupil practises, pupil self-assesses and decides which aspect needs to be improved on in next attempt</li> <li>• As shape is secure, start to speed up and join to other letters to make words relevant to the pupil</li> <li>• Perhaps combine to practise the pupil's next HFW targets.</li> <li>• <i>MSL: The Handwriting Rescue Scheme</i> with photocopiable exercises or <i>Re-write</i> by Valerie Hammond, Partners in Education</li> </ul>
<p>19. Potential problems of the left-handed writer</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seat the pupil so he/she has enough elbow room and will not be banging elbows with a right-hander</li> <li>• Ensure the correct pencil grip</li> <li>• Make sure the wrist is below the line instead.</li> <li>• The child will need to hold pencil slightly higher up the pencil, so he/she can see what has been written</li> <li>• When working with a left-hander on developing handwriting, sit to his/her right so you can see the writing more easily</li> <li>• Provide left-handed pens/pencils/scissors.</li> <li>• Video: Left-handed handwriting tips and expert advice at <a href="http://www.theschoolrun.com">www.theschoolrun.com</a> &amp; <a href="https://www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk">https://www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Put a dot at the left side of the paper initially as left-handers often start writing from the right</li> </ul>

With thanks to Val Hammond for some of the content *RE-WRITE, Part One*