



Tudor Grange Primary Academy
Meon Vale

Handwriting Policy, September 2020

Rationale

At Tudor Grange Primary Academy Meon Vale, we recognise that handwriting is an important skill and that children's ability to write fluently for the rest of their lives depends on a good foundation of taught handwriting in the early years of their education.

We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, to practicing speed and fluency which leads on to higher presentation skills. A fluent and legible handwriting style, which can be achieved with accuracy and speed, empowers children to write with confidence and creativity focusing on what to write rather than **how** to form letters. This is an entitlement that needs skillful teaching if each individual is to reach their full potential.

Aims

Our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- For all children to develop a well-formed, legible style of handwriting with increasing fluency, confidence and speed;
- To raise attainment for **all** children in handwriting through a consistent approach;
- That staff and children use all opportunities for writing as handwriting practice across the curriculum;
- Take pride in their work and develop confidence and self-esteem;
- To promote continuity and progression throughout the school.

Objectives

To ensure the development of handwriting so that children can:

- Form capital letters correctly
- Form digits 0-9 correctly
- Form lower case letters in the correct starting and finishing positions

- Use horizontal and diagonal strokes to join letters.
- Increase legibility with parallel and equidistant down-strokes.

Teaching Strategies

All handwriting lessons will be completed at a table and children must have good posture (feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair and chair tucked close to the table). Children will need to be shown how to tilt their book slightly (either to the left or right depending on their writing hand) to help them with their handwriting and should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper. Pupils should not fold books back on themselves.

Each handwriting lesson will be structured in the following way:

- Warm up;
- Posture check;
- Teacher modelling;
- Children practising letter or join independently without a pencil/pen (sky writing/writing on partners back/writing on palm);
- Children practise letter or join in isolation in their book and then within a word.
- While children are practising their letters, joins or words, teachers should be circulating around the room, checking pupils' work and modelling in books for children demonstrating errors in formation or joins.

As letters and joins are taught in EYFS and KS1, letters will be identified as giraffe letters (ascenders), monkey letters (descenders) and tortoise letters (short letters). These will be displayed in classrooms for use in lessons (see Appendix 1). The vocabulary of ascenders, descenders, loops, formation, spacing, size, join should be introduced to pupils and used during teaching. Formal language should be used explicitly in KS2 lessons and the use of 'grass', 'sky' and 'soil' letters for pupils who require extra support (see Appendix 1).

In addition to this, to support letter formation in EYFS and KS1, '*Read, Write, Inc*' rhymes will be used (see Appendix 2) to help pupils remember how to form letters correctly. These rhymes have been adjusted to include lead in and out lines.

In KS1 and KS2 letters will be taught using shape families:

- Long ladder (down and off in another direction): i j l t u y
- One arm robot (down and retrace upwards): b h k m n p r 2 3 5 (numbers follow a clockwise direction)
- Curly caterpillar (anticlockwise round): c a d e g o q f s 0 6 8 9
- Zig zag letters: v w x z 1 4 7

Year group expectations:

Nursery and Reception

In EYFS, children should learn handwriting through movement and play with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children must develop fine and gross motor skills, manipulative skills and good hand-eye coordination to equip them with appropriate muscle strength and control needed to begin forming letters. Discrete handwriting lessons will begin in Reception where they will print letters, focusing on correct formation and size of letter. Children must be taught how to correctly grip their pencil to support good letter formation and children struggling with this need to be quickly identified and supported through one of the methods stated below.

Children will:

- Practise gross, fine and manipulative skills daily through structured sessions as well as play;
- Reception will have discrete handwriting lessons once a week working with a focus group. For those pupils who need more support with this, they will have 2 handwriting lessons a week.
- Develop gross motor control through activities such as: climbing, throwing, chair push ups, ribbon dancing, action songs and rhymes, sky writing, large scale painting on walls or playground and upper-body weight-bearing activities like wheelbarrow or animal walking;
- Develop fine motor control through various activities such as: threading beads or pasta on to string, threading pipe cleaners through a colander, play dough, hamma beads, sand and water play, finger rhymes, using glue spreaders and sewing;
- Manipulate objects with increasing control such as use scissors to cut along lines with greater accuracy, using tools such as hammers and screwdrivers to manipulate items such as screws and golf tees, use cooking utensils to stir and whisk and tweezers to move increasingly smaller items with good speed and accuracy;
- Nursery will begin with focusing on up and down movements, then side-to-side, next circles and finally diagonal movements using a multisensory approach. If children struggle to form these basic shapes, they are likely to have difficulties forming letters and numbers (see Appendix 4).
- Trace horizontal lines, vertical lines, wavy lines, shapes and letters.
- Complete warm up sessions from www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-warm-up-exercises.html to prepare them for writing when completing letter formation handwriting sessions;
- Learn and use edited '*Read, Write, Inc*' letter formation rhymes to support writing pre-cursive the letters;
- Nursery to start pre-cursive letter formation in Summer 1 and Reception to start pre-cursive from Autumn 1;

- Learn to form letters in ‘families’, during specific handwriting lessons, to support remembering the formations;
- Practise writing the letter without a pencil first by sky writing letters, writing on their palm with their finger and writing with their finger on their partner’s back;
- Use different mediums to form letters, chalk, in cornflour, foam, paint etc;
- Write on lined paper as this is important for the letter’s orientation on the line;

Year 1

Children will:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably;
- Correctly begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing on the line (forming letters pre-cursively – see Appendix 3);
- Form capital letters and digits 0-9;
- Understand which letters belong to which ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these;
- Learn to form pre-cursive letters in families to help remember formation.

Year 2

Children will:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another;
- Start using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters;
- Begin to write cursively;
- Understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined (qu x z);
- 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.

As children are beginning to write cursively, make it clear to pupils that capital letters never join. By the end of Year 2, pupils should be writing with a cursive style unless a specific learning need prevents this.

Year 3 and 4

Children will:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined (qu x z);
- Increase the legibility and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5 and 6

Children will:

- Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:
 - a) Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters;
 - b) Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

Writing Implements

Where used, children will use a sharp pencil, of an appropriate length*, during handwriting lessons. Children in Nursery are expected to initially use chunky pencils to begin their mark making and move towards regular size pencils when appropriate. Children are expected to be able to use a regular sized pencil when they leave Reception, unless a chunkier pencil is specifically needed. In Year 2, once letter formation, size and cursive writing has been established and is consistent, children can begin to earn a pen licence with the expectation that all children will be writing with a pen by the end of Year 4. Children with specific learning needs may need to continue using a pencil past this point. When children begin to use a handwriting pen, there is likely to be a temporary decline in their handwriting whilst they get used to writing with a new implement. If the letter formation, size and consistency of cursive writing is not maintained whilst using a pen, children will move back to using a pencil.

Handwriting lessons will be completed in a specific handwriting book in Year 1, 2 and 3. In Reception, children will use a handwriting book and a writing book with large lined pages. From Year 4 to 6, children will practise their handwriting on lined paper in their English book, unless specific support is required for certain children.

In Year 2, children will use books with line spacing of 15mm at the start of the year. In the Spring term, children will move to line spacing of 10mm to encourage smaller handwriting, unless there is a specific need to continue with 15mm spacing. They will continue using books with this spacing during Year 3 and will move to 8mm spacing in Year 4. Larger line spacing can continue to be used for children who require it.

* When a pencil is held with an age appropriate grip, the length of the pencil should extend past the hand by a minimum of 3cm.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support to achieve this objective and therefore extra provision needs to be provided

for these children. Teachers of children who display barriers to developing their handwriting must identify what is limiting their progress, liaising with the SENCo where necessary, and put supportive measures in place. Depending on the area of weakness, supportive measures could include: pencil grips, writing slopes, targeted interventions and fine motor development.

Teachers must also be aware of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision such as:

- They should sit to the left of right-handed pupils so they are not competing for space;
- Ensure pencil/pen is not held too far down otherwise the pupils' line of vision may be interrupted;
- Tilt paper slightly to the right so pupils can see what they are writing;
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers should also be aware that it can be difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher is modelling. Teachers may demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or small group basis using their left hand to allow children to follow the movement patterns more clearly, even if the results are not neat.

Promoting handwriting

To help promote good handwriting, teachers must ensure they model neat handwriting on the Interactive Boards/Interactive White Boards (IWB) and in pupils' books. Displays and worksheets in books should use the appropriate style font for the stage of handwriting the year group is working on.

EYFS: Twinkl pre-cursive

Year 1: Twinkl pre-cursive

All other year groups: Twinkl cursive looped

'Handwriting Hero/es' will be celebrated weekly in each class from Year 1 and above. These children will be rewarded with a certificate from their teacher explaining why they have been chosen and a piece of work showing their handwriting before and, if appropriate, on display.

Marking and Assessment

During independent practise, teachers should be checking all pupil's work to ensure misconceptions around correct formation and joins are quickly addressed. Teachers should model directly into the pupils' book to support their understanding and children can trace

over these and then continue to practise independently. Any letters or joins which children are continually struggling with need to be addressed through one to one support. Teachers can tick work they have reviewed to demonstrate they are happy with the letter formation/joins.

Teachers monitor and assess handwriting throughout the year using the National Curriculum expectation. When marking work in books, handwriting which is inconsistent with a pupil's normal ability needs to be addressed and pupils should re-write part or all of the piece of work again in a neater and more legible style.

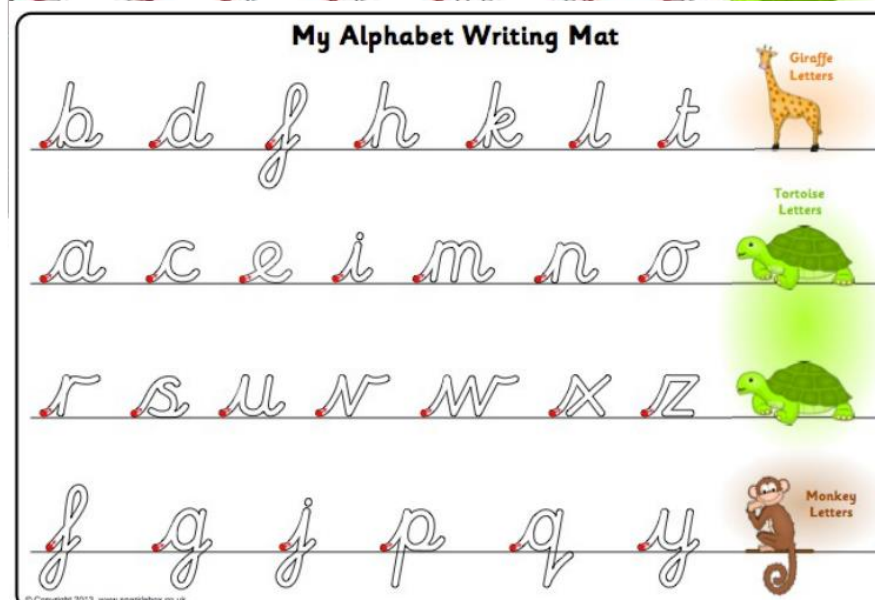
In EYFS, teachers will assess grip development using the following stages: palmar supinate grip, digital pronate grasp, static tripod grip and triangulation/tripod grip (see Appendix 5).

Appendix 1: Identifying ascenders and descenders

EYFS

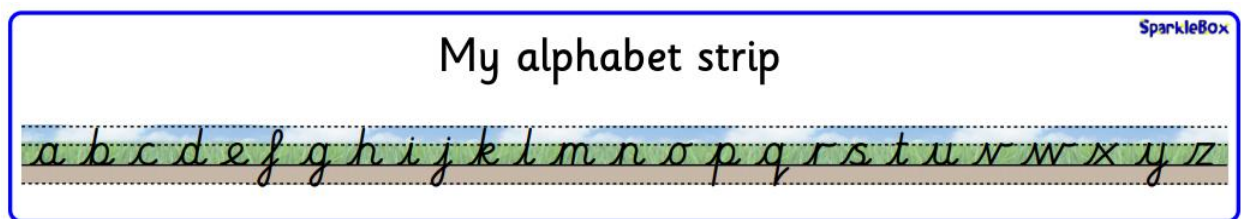


Year 1



and 2

KS2



Appendix 2: Read, Write, Inc Rhymes

Nursery should use these rhymes to support teaching the children how to form their letters correctly. This may also be displayed in the classroom.

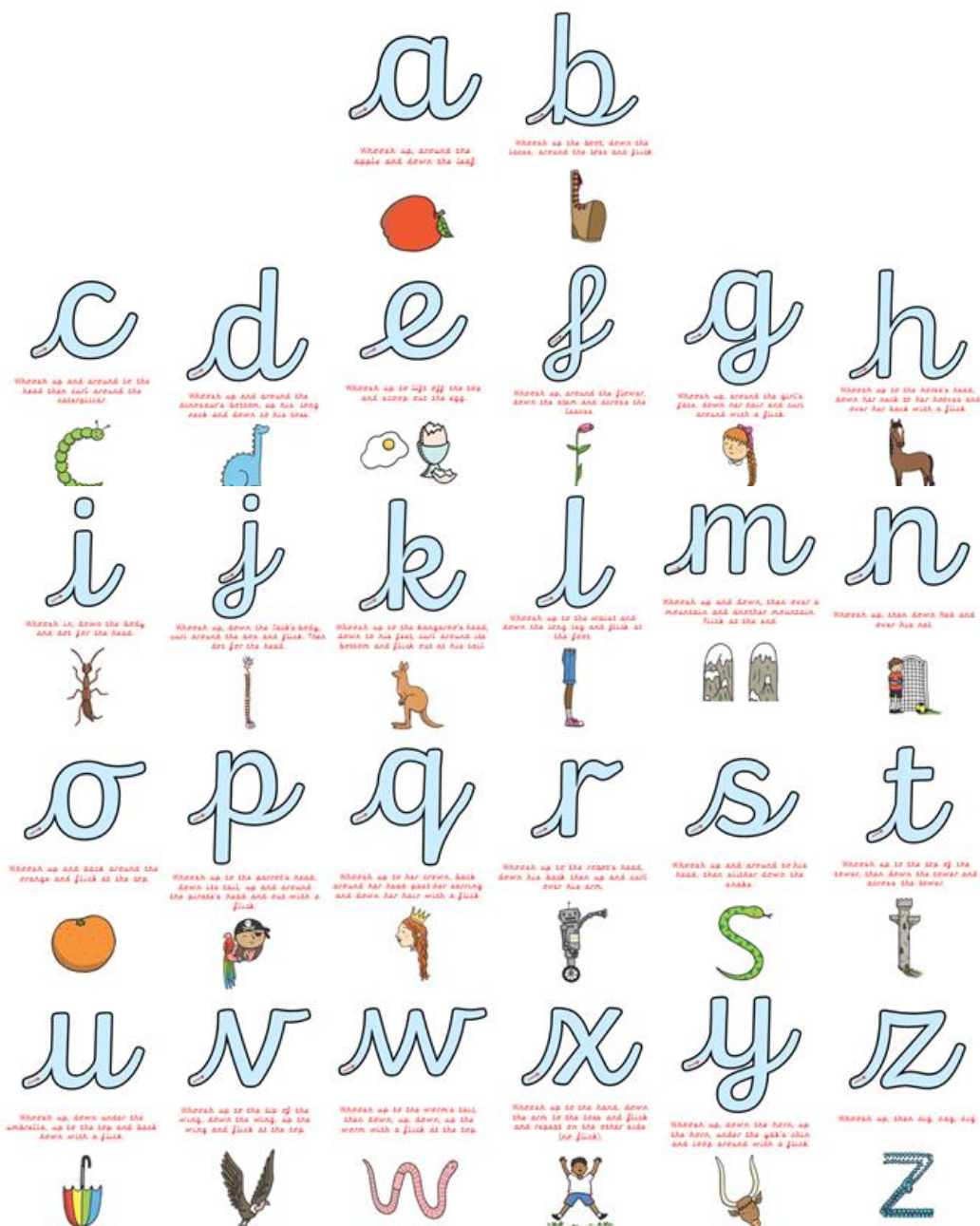
a  Around the apple and down the leaf.	b  Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	c  Curl around the caterpillar.	d  Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	e  Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	f  Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g  Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	h  Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	i  Down the body and dot for the head.	j  Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	k  Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	l  Down the long leg.
m  Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	n  Down Nobby and over his net.	o  All around the orange.	p  Down the pirates plait and around his face.	qu  Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.	r  Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
s  Slither down the snake.	t  Down the tower, across the tower.	u  Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	v  Down a wing, up a wing.	w  Down, up, down, up.	x  Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y  Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	z  Zig-zag-zig.				

Children in Reception and KS1 can use these letter formation rhymes and they can be introduced one at a time to match phonics and handwriting lesson and whole posters can be displayed as and when necessary.

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Pre-cursive Letter Formation

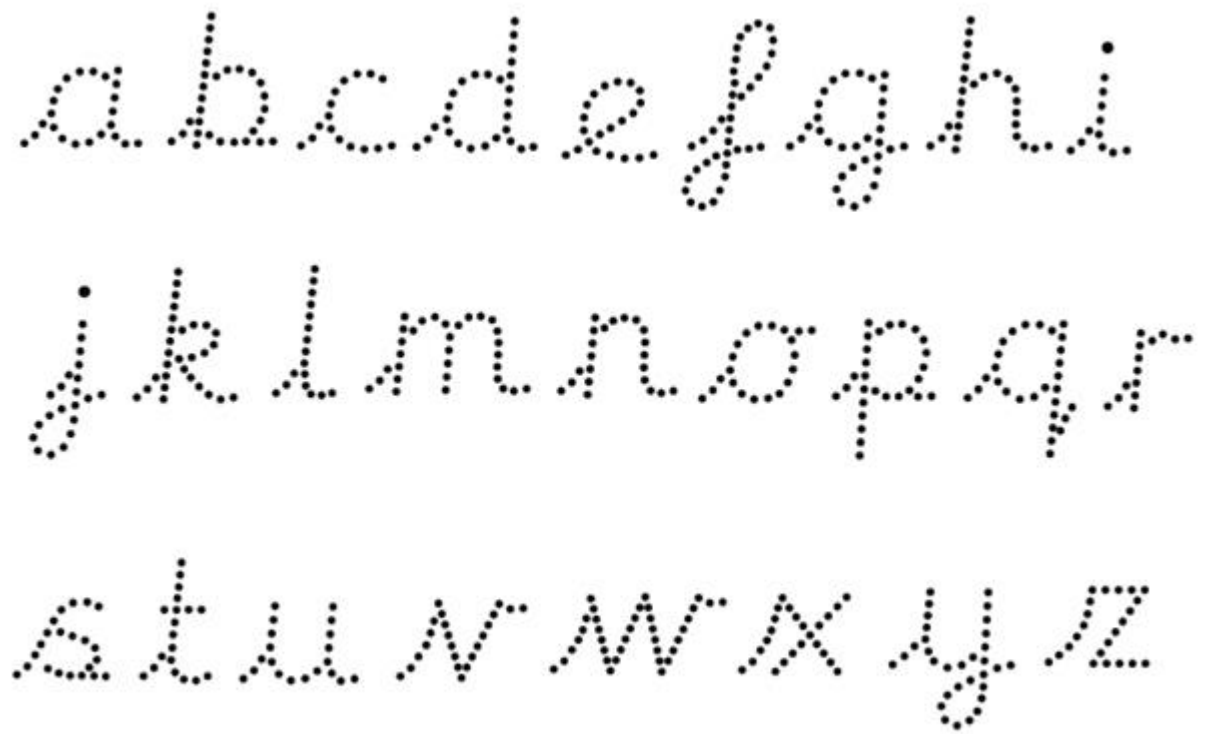
All letters start on the line using lead in lines, indicated by the red arrow. The rhymes are there to help children remember the correct formation of each letter.



Appendix 3: Cursive script

This is how each letter will be formed from Year 1. Teaching letters in this style will help pupils to develop a legible, fluent handwriting style. Please note that the letter **t** is a $\frac{3}{4}$ letter

and when teaching pupils to form this letter using handwriting paper, it should **not** touch the top line like other ascenders do.



Appendix 4: Visual-motor integration in handwriting

A skill that allows us to use our eyes (visual) and our hands (motor) in a coordinated and efficient way and with respects to handwriting, it allows us to produce something a child has

thought of to write/draw or been asked to write/draw. A guide to progression is noted below. Children need to be able to produce these different shapes to support them in being able to form letters and numbers.

9 PRE-WRITING SHAPES

Before your child can learn to write letters and words, they need to be able to form these 9 pre-writing lines and shapes:

vertical line



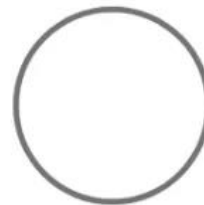
2 years

horizontal line



2.6 years

circle



3 years

cross



3.6 - 4 years

square



4 years

diagonal line



4.6 years

diagonal line



4.6 years

'x' shape



4.11 years

triangle



5+ years



Appendix 5: Assessing Grip Development

EYFS should use this to assess grip development of the pupils. The most efficient grip is the dynamic tripod grip, however other efficient grips are the quadropod grip and the adapted

tripod grip (where the pencil is placed in the space between the index and middle finger, support by the thumb, index and middle fingers).

Stages of Pencil Grip

Fisted grasp or Palmar Supinate Grasp



- Pencil is held in the palm.
- All fingers and thumb are used.
- Movement is from the shoulder; the arm and the hand move as a unit.
- Light scribbles are produced with this pencil grip.

Digital Pronate Grasp



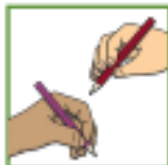
- All fingers are holding the pencil but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page.
- Movement comes mostly from the elbow and the shoulder is now stabilized.
- Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied.

Four-Finger Grasp



- Fingers are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb, beginning to form the arc between the thumb and index finger.
- Movement occurs from the wrist; the hand and fingers move as a whole unit.
- Zigzag lines, crossed lines and simple humans can be drawn with this grip.

Static Tripod Grasp or Static Quadropod Grasp



- A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit.
- Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp.
- A static quadropod grip has a fourth finger involved.
- Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.

Dynamic Tripod Grasp



- Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger.
- The ring and little fingers are bent and rest comfortably on the table.
- The index finger and thumb form an open space.
- Movement comes from the fingertips.
- This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.