

Grendon CE Primary School

Handwriting Policy

1 Introduction

The ability to write fluently and legibly gives children a means to communicate their thoughts and ideas efficiently. Children's self-esteem and confidence is increased when they are able to produce well-presented work of which they can be proud. When handwriting is automatic, the brain can concentrate on content, likely resulting in improved pupil progress in other curriculum subjects.

2 Aims and Objectives

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates. It is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. The different elements of handwriting need to be taught and practised.

The school handwriting style is based on "Kinetic Letters," which is available for reference within each classroom. A reference sheet showing an alphabet of capital, lower case and joined letters is included in the appendix and should be available to children in every classroom, and to parents. Further information on the "Kinetic Letters" approach is also included in the appendix.

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Understand the importance of clear presentation in order to communicate meaning.
- Take pride in the presentation of their work, developing handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Develop a fluent, comfortable, legible joined handwriting style by the end of Year 4. (By the end of Year 2 for pupils working at 'greater depth'.)

In order to achieve our aims, we intend that:

- In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, handwriting will be taught 3 times a week through the Kinetic Letters scheme.
- In Lower Key Stage 2, handwriting will be taught once a week and the children will work their way through the letter families. The class teacher/teaching assistant will move the children on to the next letter family as appropriate. Children who require extra support with handwriting will have an additional Kinetic Letters session once a week, led by a TA.
- The children in Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2 will be set for Kinetic letters for one session per week. This will involve the children in Key Stage 1, who are ready to begin joining their handwriting, working with the children in Lower Key Stage 2, who are also working on joins. Children in lower Key Stage 2, who require extra support, will work on letter formations with children in Key Stage 1.
- In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the focus will be upon improving core strength, motor and spatial preparation, learning the letters and holding the pencil. Where appropriate the children will move on to improving flow and fluency, leading to confident letter formations and joining when appropriate.
- Children in Upper Key Stage 2, who require extra support with their handwriting will work on letter formations and joins once a week, led by a TA, with the aim that any children who

enter Year 5 without joined handwriting, will have a joined legible style of handwriting by the end of Year 6.

- Regardless of which hand the children prefer to write with, they should have no greater difficulty in learning to write.
- Teachers will ensure appropriate differentiation and support for those children requiring more support with their handwriting, using the resources and materials from the “Kinetic Letters” scheme. All children will progress through the scheme at their own pace.
- Children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 will begin using sand trays and whiteboards when forming their letters. They will move on to using handwriting books where the middle line is already drawn in (Appendix 2)
- Children in Key Stage 2 will begin by forming their letters on whiteboards and move on to using handwriting folders, containing paper, where the middle line is already drawn in. Once they have mastered the cursive style of writing, they will move on to practising their handwriting in a lined exercise book without smaller lines in between.
- Practise sheets that are completed independently by children throughout the week should be monitored by teachers on a weekly basis and advice to be given through either verbal feedback or written marking, on formations that need more work and next steps.
- Handwriting will be assessed through independent pieces of writing in Literacy sessions. Where handwriting needs to be a focus, this will be included within the differentiated success criteria, provided for each child before they begin their independent writing.
- When children have achieved legible joined handwriting in pencil, they will progress to a fibre tip, “school handwriting pen”, which will then be used for all written work in school.

Appendix 1:

The Kinetic Letters handwriting scheme promotes:

- Automaticity – Formation, orientation and placement of letters becomes automatic which frees up space in the working memory.
- Achievement – Fast, legible and fluent handwriting underpins success in every curriculum area.
- Confidence – Good handwriting creates a positive initial judgement.
- Creativity – When handwriting is automatic, the brain can concentrate on content.
- Reading – Writing and reading are reciprocal skills, so improvement in one, helps the other.
- Phonics and Spelling – legible handwriting means children can read and correct spelling.

Appendix 2

Handwriting Paper

The image shows a series of ten horizontal lines for handwriting practice. Each line set consists of three lines: a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

Appendix 3 – Letter Formations

made by 



h b l t k

made by 



r m n p c a o d g q s

made by 



e u i f j y v w x z

Appendix 4 – Letter Families

Letter Families - Groupings and Teaching Order

Why is the letter grouping important?

Letters are grouped into six Letter Families. This is according to their common starting move, except for the Fisher Family whose common feature is their distinctive tail ending.

There is a story about the Monkeys for each Letter Family (page 3.21) that provides a fictional explanation for why and how the letters' movements came about.

Letter Family	Letters in the Family	Common Feature	Letter Part Movement
Jumper	h m n r b p	letter start	Down Bump Back Up
Abacadabra	c a o d g q s	letter start	Pull in (all start with c)
Squirt	e	letter start	In the middle
Window	l i t u	letter start	Down Bump
Fisher	g j y f	letter end	Pull around to make a tail
Slider	v w x z k	letter start	Slide Down

Important Note - g is unique as it belongs in two families because it has two distinctive features. It begins with a c (Abacadabra) and has a tail (Fisher Family).

Appendix 5 – Teaching Order



This table gives a guide to the pace of teaching letters in a Reception class.

Sessions are taught one per week

Session 1 of the programme may actually be several weeks into the first term if the children have no previous knowledge of the Six Letter Parts, as these must be learnt first.



etic Letters

Session	Letter type	Letter family	Main strategy
1	h n		
2	m r	Jumper	Introduces the two starting points for letters; those made by the Brave Monkey and those made by the Scared Monkey.
3	c o		
4	a d	Abracadabra	
5	s q e	Abracadabra and Squirter	These letters need to be learnt next as this links with phonic learning; handwriting practice becomes part of the wider writing context as children can start synthesising letters into words.
6	l t		
7	i u	Window cleaner	
8	g j y f	Fisher	Introduces the idea of letters that go below the line.
9	b		
10	p	Jumper	The only Jumper letters that return to the initial down stroke. This is of integral importance to remembering their orientation.
11	v w		
12	x z k	Slider	Left until last as they use diagonal moves which most children cannot control completely until 5½ - 6 years.

Why is this order important?

This order for teaching motivates children and provides a reason for learning to write, as within a few sessions they can combine letters to make their first common consonant-vowel-consonant words. This order is developmentally appropriate as the difficult diagonal lines of the Sliders are taught last.

Appendix 6 – Stories Associated with Letter Families



Letter Family models

Playmobil have a number of resources that are ideal for re-enactment of these stories.



Knitted toys

There are some good patterns available for the characters involved that make fantastic resources.



etic Letters

Letter Families - Stories and Letter Trails

Why is this important for handwriting?

The Letter Family Stories give reasons for the movements in the Letter Trails which are the instructions for writing each letter in the Letter Family.

Children love to retell these stories and in doing so, they are prompted to remember the moves that make the Letters.

How is this achieved?

- ★ All 26 letters are grouped into 6 Letter Families, according to the most distinctive movement made by the monkey in the story (see table on page 3.18).
- ★ The Letter Family Story is introduced by the practitioner telling the story to the children and using the monkeys as visual aids. The stories and resources become part of classroom culture and role play.
- ★ Each Letter Family Story is a different adventure about the Monkeys making letter shapes. They do this by moving in different ways and leaving behind 'Letter Trails' in the air, similar to the vapour trails that an aeroplane leaves behind in the air. Although each letter has its own individual Letter Trail, it shares characteristics with other letters in its Letter Family.
- ★ The vocabulary that describes the movements of the monkeys in the stories, is the same that is used to describe the Letter Part Movements. This links learning, making it obvious that the Letter Parts (page 3.9) are combining to make Letter Trails (page 3.14).
- ★ The stories and letters are taught in an order that helps learning (page 3.18).
- ★ The letters are taught as Letter Trails using the Move it, Say it Write it strategy (page 3.14)
- ★ Use the pupil Target Book for individual practise and consolidation.

Appendix 7 – Letter Families (Close up)

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Letter Families

Jumpers - Made by Monkeys jumping down from the tree.

Abracadabras - All magic from c.

Window Cleaners - Made with squeegees.

Fishers - Have tails to catch fish.

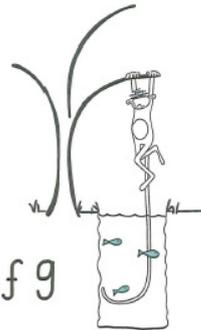
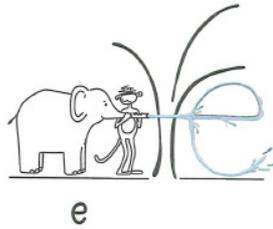
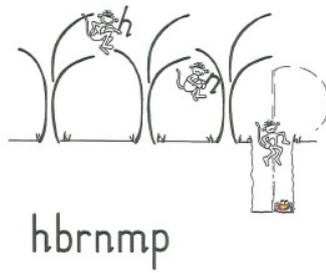
Sliders - Made by sliding up and down mountains.

The Squirter - Made by squirting with the elephant's trunk.

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Kinetic Letters



Appendix 8 – The Jumper Family

Avoid confusing b with d

Stress the initial move is down.

b has no flick, because when the monkey lands he stops and excitedly hugs the tree.

The story explains why p goes below the line

The Scared Monkey falls into a pit below the ground.

netic Letters

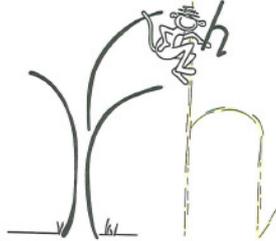
Jumper Family



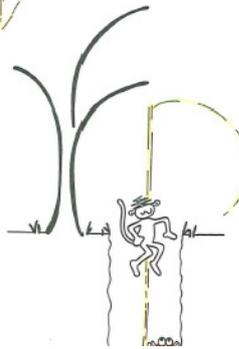
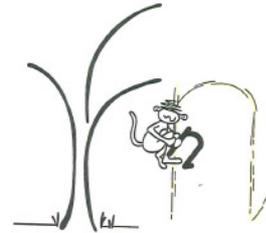
The story

Far away in a damp green jungle live two monkeys who spend all day jumping down, bump from the branches of their tree.

The Brave Monkey jumps from the high branch and makes the Letter Trail for h and b.



The Scared Monkey jumps from the low branch and makes the Letter Trail for r n m and p.



Story Resources

- Brave Monkey
- Scared Monkey
- Tree
- Spider

However...

When the Scared Monkey jumps down to make p, he gets a surprise!

Instead of bumping on the ground he falls down into a pit that has a spider.

"AHH" he cries and jumps straight back up again pushing the cobwebs off his face and makes the shape of the p Letter Trail.

h b

Made by the Brave Monkey jumping from the high branch.

r n m p

Made by the Scared Monkey jumping from a low branch.

netic Letters

Jumper Family - Letter Trails

h		└	└	h	h			
	down-bump	back up (half way)	push over	down-bump	flick			
b		└	└	b				
	down-bump	back up (half way)	push over	down, pull in and hug the tree				
r		└	└					
	down-bump	back up	push over					
n		└	└	n	n			
	down-bump	back up	push over	down-bump	flick			
m		└	└	n	rr	rr	m	m
	down-bump	back up	push over	down-bump	back up	push over	down-bump	flick
p				└	└	p		
	down	on down into the pit, see the spider (ahh!), back up	push (the webs away)	pull in and hug				

Appendix 9 – The Abracadabra Family

Avoid letter reversals by stressing the starting points of letters.

Abracadabra family start with a pull. This is different to p and b which start with a pull down.

Use helicopter role play to help with letter heights

The straight up move to finish and d is like a helicopter taking off.

a is made by a helicopter with a small engine so doesn't go up far.

d is made by one with a big engine so it goes further up.

Contrast this movement with the diagonal line take off of an aeroplane.

Kinetic Letters

Abracadabra Family

r c a o d s q g

Story Resources
Scared Monkey
Magician and a magic wand
Helicopter

The story

Walking through the jungle one day, the Scared Monkey finds a magician who waves his wand, shouts 'Abracadabra' and makes lots of different letters appear under the lower branches of the trees.



The magician offers to teach the Scared Monkey his magic trick.

He shows him that for each of these letters, he can pull around to write c, shout 'Abracadabra' and then magic it into a d g q or s.

The Scared Monkey makes all the letters start from under his branch.

3.24

r c a d g
r q o s

All made by the Scared Monkey under the low branch.

Note: Explain that d begins with c so it is in this Letter Family (even though it looks tall).

Kinetic Letters

Abracadabra Family - Letter Trails

c	
a	
d	
g	
q	
o	
s	

Appendix 10 – The Special Squirter

e is unique

This letter has a unique starting point as it is the only letter that begins in the middle of itself.

Therefore it must begin half way between the Scared Monkey's branch and the ground so that it fits under the branch.

kinetic Letters

Special Squirter



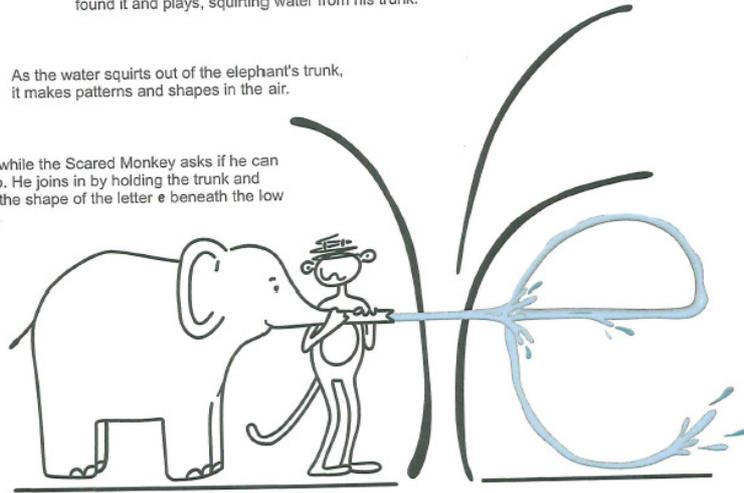
Story Resources
Scared Monkey
Elephant

The story

A big rainstorm in the jungle has filled the pit by the Monkeys' tree with water and a Baby Elephant has found it and plays, squirting water from his trunk.

As the water squirts out of the elephant's trunk, it makes patterns and shapes in the air.

After a while the Scared Monkey asks if he can play too. He joins in by holding the trunk and squirts the shape of the letter *e* beneath the low branch.

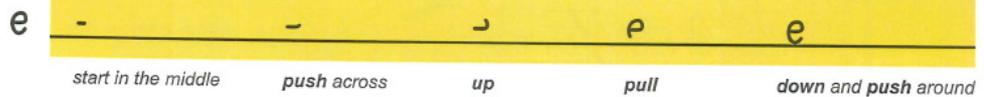


3.26

Made by the Scared Monkey under the low branch.

kinetic Letters

Special Squirter - Letter Trails



Appendix 12 – The Fischer Family

Fisher Family

y j f g

Story Resources
Scared Monkey
Fish

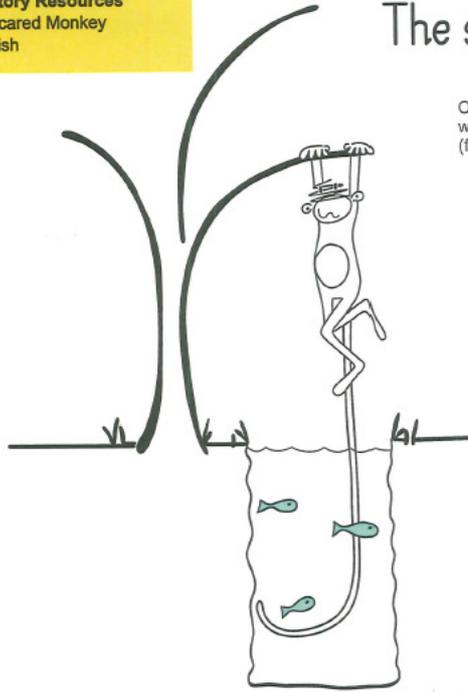
The story

One day there is a huge storm in the jungle which makes the river flood the spider's pit (fortunately the spider managed to climb out).

The monkeys sit in the trees and watch the fish swim around in it.

The Scared Monkey discovers that if he dangles his tail in the water, he can pull his tail around and catch the fish.

Extra note for g
This is the only letter that belongs to two letter families and it does so because it has two significant features. Firstly, it begins with c (Abracadabra Family) and secondly it has a tail (Fisher Family).



The pull ending of the letters is stressed in order to distinguish the pulling tails of this family rather than the flick of the q (otherwise children easily confuse these two letters).



Kinetic Letters

Fisher Family - Letter Trails

y j f g

Made by the Scared Monkey from the low branch.



Kinetic Letters

y | | | | | | | |
down-bump *along* *up* *back down* *on* *down* *and pull around to make a tail*

j | | | | | | | |
down *on down* *pull around to make a tail* *put a dot on*

f | | | | | | | |
pull over *on down* *pull around to make a tail (pen off)* *push a line*

g | **c** | **abracadabra** | | | | | | | |
write c *up like a helicopter* *down* *on down* *pull around for a tail*

Appendix 13 – The Slider Family

Letter Family role play

Playmobil have a number of resources that are ideal for re-enactment of the stories.

Use the story to teach the challenging letter k

Draw 'penguin heads' for the children to draw beaks on and then extend this to drawing the beaks onto the upright of the letter k.

 penguin head

 add a beak (in a single 'slide in, slide out' movement)

 write k in a similar way

Kinetic Letters

Slider Family

k v w x z

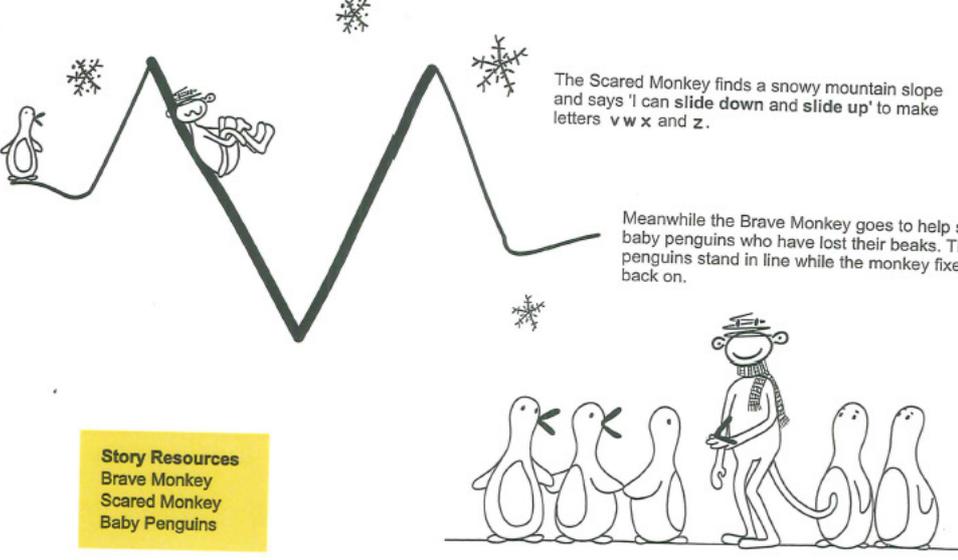
The story

One exciting day the magician waves his wand and takes the Monkeys to see the snow.

The Scared Monkey finds a snowy mountain slope and says 'I can slide down and slide up' to make letters v w x and z.

Meanwhile the Brave Monkey goes to help some baby penguins who have lost their beaks. The penguins stand in line while the monkey fixes them back on.

Story Resources
Brave Monkey
Scared Monkey
Baby Penguins



k

Made by the Brave Monkey who sits on the high branch.



v w x z

Made by the Scared Monkey who sits on the low branch.



Kinetic Letters

Slider Family - Letter Trails

k | | |
down-bump (pen off) slide in slide out, to make the penguin's beak

v | |
slide down slide up

w | | | |
slide down slide up slide down slide up

x | |
slide down slide down

z | | |
push slide down push

Appendix 14 – Teaching Joining

Cosy working

This is how the children describe this way of writing that makes them feel emotionally secure.

The 12 week teaching plan can also be used as a base for refreshing skills each September term.

Kinetic Letters

Teaching Joining - Planning and Organisation



Planning

Once the Targets for joining and the Preparation Sessions have been completed, joining letters can begin. This can be achieved over an organised 12 week plan.

Week	Join type	Joining from	Joining into	Joining chart
1 + 2	Flick	Window Cleaner	Window Cleaner+Jumper	1 2
3 + 4	Flick	Jumper	Window Cleaner+Jumper	3 4
5	Flick	Abracadabra	Window Cleaner+Jumper	5 6
6	Flick	Window Cleaner+Jumper	Abracadabra	7 8
7	Flick	Abracadabra	Abracadabra	9
8	Base-line	e c k	Windows+Jumper	10 11
9	Base-line	e c k	Abracadabra+Sliders+Fishers	12 13 14
10	Flick	Window Cleaner+Jumper+Abracadabra	Sliders+Fishers	15 16 17 18 19 20
11	Top-line	o v w	All Letter Families	21 22 23 24 25
12	All joins	All letters	e or s	26 27 28 29
	Cross bar joins	f t	all letters	

Note: This order of learning is progressive so that easiest letters are joined first.



Organisation

Targets - One or two set each week. Written as 'I can' statements explaining which family letters are being joined together.

Joining charts - The practitioner gradually teaches each join in the chart throughout the week (page 5.18).

Daily practise - Children practice each Letter Pair a number of times, self-marking for progress (page 5.19).

Immediate correction - Children's writing is clearly visible because of classroom organisation (below).

Resources - The teacher models the letter joins on the class board and children over practise on individual white boards. Use the large version of the Joining charts in the Big Book (page 6.29) for class work and the pupil Targets Books (page 6.28) for individual and differentiated consolidation.

How to Use the Joining Charts



Use steps 1 2 and 3 for each letter pair on the row

Step 1. Use Relevant Joining Chart (this example shows Chart 1)

Select - first letter on the vertical axis
- first letter on the horizontal axis

	l	i	t	u
l	ll	li	lt	lu
i	il	ii	it	iu
t	tl	ti	tt	tu
u	ul	ui	ut	uu

chart 1

Step 2. Join these two letters into a Letter Pair

Write the first letter

Think where the next letter starts

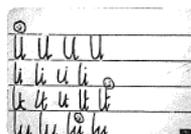
Make the flick bigger and travel to the correct starting place

write the next letter in the usual way
down, bump, flick

Step 3. Children practise writing the letter pairs repeatedly on white-boards



Self-mark the white boards



- ⊙ - correct join
- ⊙ - correct letter formation (especially 2nd letter of pair)
- ⊙ - correct letter height.

5.18

A fun story for an important fact

Write letters in the usual way

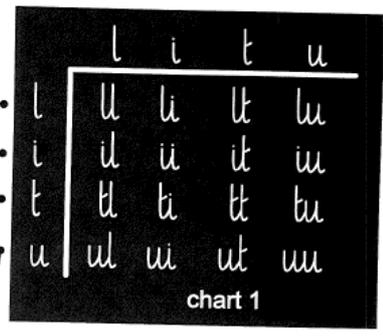
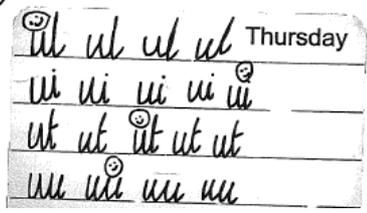
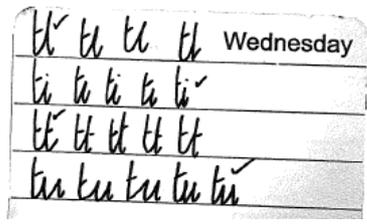
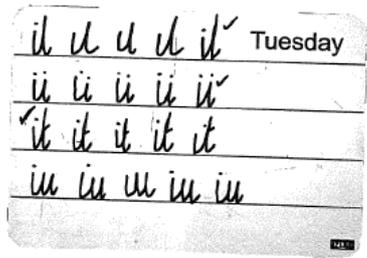
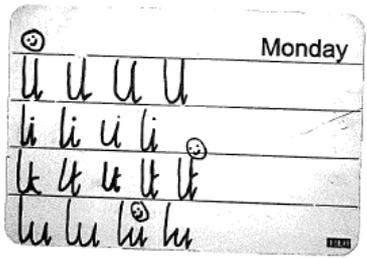
Then.....

Give the Flick extra breakfast

This makes it grow longer so it can join into the next letter.

Kinetic Letters

Use steps 1 2 and 3 (as above) for each letter pair, gradually working along a new row each day



Friday

apply learning to suggested words and sentences (5.20-5.37)