

Handwriting Policy and Progression

Intent

Handwriting is a fundamental skill that underpins success across the curriculum. The ability to write fluently, accurately and efficiently enables pupils to record their ideas, demonstrate their understanding and fully access learning opportunities. Strong handwriting reduces cognitive load, allowing children to focus on composition, spelling and vocabulary rather than the physical process of writing. As a key foundational skill, handwriting supports future academic achievement and effective communication throughout life.

At our school, handwriting is taught through a carefully planned, sequential approach from Pre-School to Year 6. Pupils develop the physical, cognitive and technical skills required for fluent handwriting through a progressive curriculum that builds on prior learning and provides targeted support where needed. Our staged approach ensures that all pupils, including those who may face barriers to writing, develop the confidence and automaticity required to become successful writers.

Strong handwriting is a key component of literacy and enables pupils to communicate effectively across the curriculum. By developing automaticity and fluency in handwriting, pupils can devote greater cognitive attention to composition, vocabulary and spelling. Secure handwriting also supports pupils' confidence, independence and participation in learning, particularly for those who may face barriers to recording their ideas.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Pre-School

In Pre-School, children develop the physical foundations required for handwriting through a range of gross and fine motor activities. Children are encouraged to:

- Use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks.
- Use one-handed tools and equipment, such as scissors.
- Develop a comfortable grip with good control when holding pencils and other mark-making tools.
- Show a preference for a dominant hand.
- Begin to apply their emerging knowledge of print and letters in their writing.
- Write some or all of their name.
- Form some letters accurately.

Reception

In Reception, children continue to strengthen the physical skills required for writing. They are taught to:

- Develop small motor skills to use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.
- Use core muscle strength to maintain good posture when sitting at a table or on the floor.
- Hold a pencil effectively using an efficient tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Develop increasing control and precision when drawing and writing.

Children also begin Stage 1 of our handwriting curriculum progression.

Handwriting Curriculum Progression

Typical Progression Through the Stages

While progression through the handwriting stages is based on demonstrated proficiency rather than age, pupils will typically follow the pathway below:

Stage	Typical Year Groups
Stage 1 – Letter Formation	Reception – Year 1
Stage 2 – Developing a Mature Handwriting Style	Year 1 – Year 2
Stage 3 – Introducing Joins	Year 2 – Year 3
Stage 4 – Developing Fluency and Speed	Year 4 – Year 6

Progression is dependent upon mastery rather than age. Pupils move to the next stage only when they can demonstrate secure and consistent application of the skills within their current stage.

Stage 1 – Letter Formation

Stage 1 teaches correct letter formation alongside the teaching of phonics. Through Read Write Inc. lessons and additional daily handwriting practice, children learn to form lower-case and capital letters correctly.

Letter formation is supported through memorable mnemonics which help children remember the correct starting points and movement patterns. This stage begins in Reception and continues into Year 1 until children demonstrate secure and consistent letter formation.

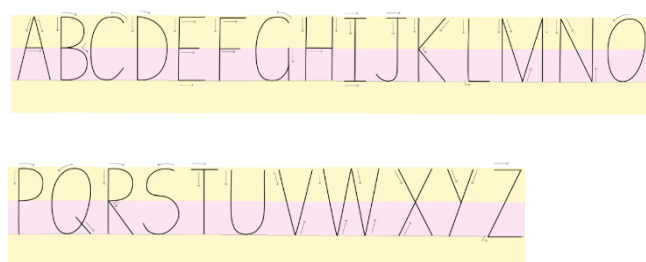
Stage 2 – Developing a Mature Handwriting Style

Once pupils can consistently form letters correctly, they progress to Stage 2. Children are taught a mature handwriting style that will flow naturally into joined writing. Through daily ten-minute Letter Village lessons, pupils:

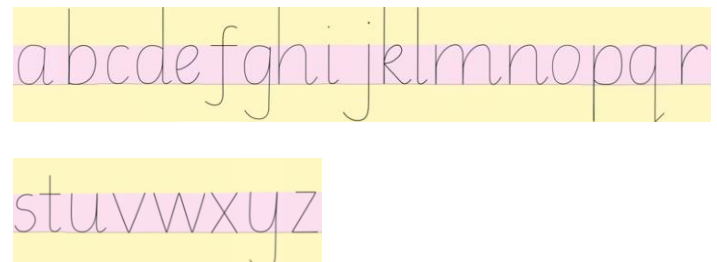
- Learn new picture hooks to help them “visualise to memorise” letter shapes.
- Learn letters in groups based on similar formation patterns.
- Develop consistent letter sizing through the use of the “Sponge Cake Layers” approach.
- Build automaticity and fluency in letter formation.

This stage typically begins during Year 1. By the end of Stage 2, pupils should consistently form letters using the agreed school style, with correct orientation, size and positioning.

Capital letters:



Lowercase letters:



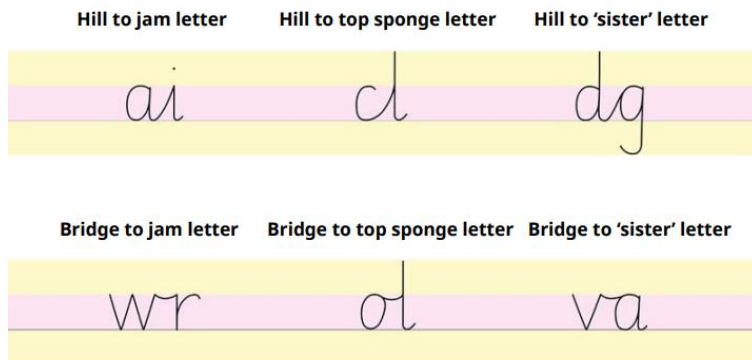
Stage 3 – Introducing Joins

Pupils move to Stage 3 when they can form letters correctly using the mature handwriting style introduced in Stage 2.

Children are taught two joining families:

- The Hill Join
- The Bridge Join

Each joining family includes three variations.



Pupils learn:

- How and when to apply joins correctly.
- That the letters g, j, q, y and z are not joined.
- How to modify the letters r, e and s to support fluent joining (as seen below).



- To continue using visualisation strategies to reinforce letter formation and joins.

Regular “Keep the Shape” lessons are incorporated to maintain correct letter formation while developing joining skills.

Stage 4 – Developing Fluency and Speed

Once pupils can confidently use both Hill and Bridge joins, they progress to Stage 4. At this stage, teaching focuses on developing:

- A mature, fluent handwriting style.
- Increased writing speed.
- Consistency of size, spacing and presentation.
- Automatic handwriting that supports extended writing across the curriculum.

Application Across the Curriculum

Pupils are expected to apply the handwriting skills they have been taught in all curriculum areas. Teachers provide consistent expectations, modelling and feedback to ensure that high standards of handwriting and presentation are maintained across all subjects.

Opportunities to practise and embed handwriting are therefore integrated throughout the wider curriculum so that pupils develop fluency and automaticity in authentic writing contexts.

Teacher Modelling

All adults model the school's agreed handwriting style when writing for pupils, including on whiteboards, working walls, displays and in written feedback. Consistent modelling supports pupils in developing accurate letter formation, joins and presentation habits.

Presentation Expectations

Pupils are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Consistent handwriting, appropriate spacing, correct use of lines and neat presentation contribute to high standards across the curriculum and reflect pupils' care and effort in their learning.

End of Key Stage Expectations

End of Key Stage 1

By the end of Key Stage 1, handwriting should be a secure foundational skill. Pupils should:

- Form all lower-case and capital letters correctly and consistently.
- Use a comfortable and efficient tripod grip.
- Sit letters correctly on the line.
- Demonstrate consistent letter sizing and orientation.
- Leave appropriate spaces between words.
- Write with sufficient fluency to support simple composition tasks.
- Present work neatly and legibly across the curriculum.

Pupils who are unable to consistently demonstrate these elements have not yet secured the foundational handwriting skills required for successful access to the wider curriculum and should receive targeted support to address identified barriers.

End of Key Stage 2

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils should demonstrate a fluent, automatic and legible joined handwriting style that supports extended writing across the curriculum. Pupils should:

- Write using the school's agreed joined handwriting style.
- Join letters accurately and consistently where appropriate.
- Maintain consistent size, spacing and orientation.
- Write with sufficient speed and fluency to support extended writing tasks.
- Adapt handwriting for different purposes while maintaining legibility.
- Present work neatly and consistently across all subjects.

Handwriting should be sufficiently automatic that pupils can focus their cognitive effort on composition, vocabulary, spelling and the communication of ideas rather than the mechanics of transcription.

Supporting Pupils with Handwriting Difficulties

We recognise that some pupils may encounter barriers to handwriting development. Early identification and intervention are essential to ensure that these barriers do not impact wider learning.

Handwriting difficulties are addressed through a graduated, stepped approach. Interventions are carefully matched to the specific barrier identified and are regularly reviewed to ensure progress.

Stage 1 – Mark Making (Not Yet Ready for Letter Formation)

Support may include:

- Daily Write From The Start intervention.
- Handwriting warm-up activities before writing tasks, such as Write Dance or Dough Disco.
- Additional opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills.

Stage 2 – Errors in Individual Letter Formation

Support may include:

- Completion of a handwriting assessment to identify incorrectly formed letters.
- A personalised intervention programme with daily repeated practice of target letters.
- Teaching focused on specific letter families where appropriate.
- Consistent feedback and coaching from all adults across the curriculum.
- Letter formation guides available on desks.
- Review of pencil grip and provision of pencil grips where necessary.

Stage 3 – Correct Formation but Inconsistent Sizing

Support may include:

- Use of guideline sheets within books for a defined period.
- Daily transcription practice using guideline booklets and short passages.
- Consistent feedback and coaching focused on letter size and positioning.
- Review of pencil grip and provision of pencil grips where necessary.

Stage 4 – Correct Formation and Size, Developing Joins

Support may include:

- Structured practice using the six joining-practice sheets.
- Daily joining practice sessions.
- Additional teacher modelling and feedback to support fluency and consistency.

Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with SEND

We recognise that a small number of pupils may experience significant barriers to handwriting development due to identified special educational needs, physical difficulties or motor coordination needs.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments may be implemented to enable pupils to access learning successfully. These may include adapted writing equipment, specialist seating or positioning, occupational therapy recommendations, modified recording methods or the use of assistive technology.

Such adjustments will be considered alongside continued opportunities to develop handwriting skills wherever appropriate.

Monitoring and Assessment

Handwriting is monitored regularly through classroom observations, pupil discussions, book scrutiny and ongoing teacher assessment.

The English Subject Leader monitors the quality of handwriting provision and pupil outcomes across the school to ensure consistency and progression. Findings from monitoring activities are used to identify strengths, inform professional development and address areas for improvement.

Progress through the handwriting stages is based on demonstrated proficiency rather than age alone, ensuring that all pupils develop secure foundations before moving on to more advanced skills.

Through high-quality teaching, regular practice and targeted intervention, we aim for all pupils to develop a fluent, legible and efficient handwriting style that supports success across the curriculum.