

Handwriting Policy

Parish CE Primary School

St James CE Primary School



Introduction

We recognise that being able to write legibly and fluently is an important skill in being able to communicate language to readers. The National Curriculum 2014 contains statutory information and additional guidance on how this should be done, and we implement this throughout the year groups and key stages. **“Writing also depends on fluent, legible and eventually, speedy handwriting.”** (National Curriculum 2014)

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work across the curriculum and is inherent to Strong Foundations in the Early Years.

Aims

- To help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.
- The children will be able to write clearly, fluently and quickly so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school.
- We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.
- To make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking thus reducing cognitive overload.

Importance of Physical Development:

Physical development in the Early Years refers to the growth of the body and brain from birth through early childhood. This includes changes in body size, muscle strength, balance, co-ordination, sensory development, and skills such as movement and handling. Physical development is a foundational area that enables children to engage with the world around them and lays the building blocks for later physical capabilities and health.

The physical development skills of movement and handling are often divided into different groups, for example, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and stability. Gross motor skills involve the use of the whole body and include movements like crawling, walking, and running. Fine motor skills involve the control of small muscles in activities like pinching, grasping, and handling.

The development of motor skills is also needed for mark-making and letter formation. Stability is the ability to control and coordinate movement using core strength, for example, sitting and balancing. Physical development also encompasses sensory development, which includes taste, smell, vision, hearing, touch, and spatial and positional

awareness. Safety awareness is also developed whereby a child makes appropriate decisions based on risk and their own physical capability.

Physical development supports and is supported by other areas of a child's development. For example, movements that involve coordinating both sides of the body (such as crawling or skipping) aid brain connectivity, which supports speech, communication, and literacy skills. Both movement and handling objects support spatial reasoning skills as well as provide opportunities to develop thinking and problem-solving skills. Fine motor development encompasses hand muscle strength, wrist movement, and pincer control: skills which facilitate independence in daily tasks such as eating, dressing, and mark-making.

Children's physical development is typically rapid in the early years and is influenced by the adults and peers around them. This theme looks at what adults can do to support physical development as part of young children's education. Educators need to consider the stage and age of the children when deciding how to apply the approaches below due to the speed of physical development within this age range.

Evidence shows that educators can implement approaches that benefit young children's physical development. The EEF's Early Years Toolkit finds that physical development approaches may also benefit children's cognitive development. Focusing on a specific physical development skill can help children improve competency in that skill.

Physical development approaches may be more effective when educators thoughtfully vary the difficulty of tasks, provide feedback to children, combine instruction with active play, provide a range of resources and environments, including outdoors, for physical activities, and draw on theories of learning to design activities.

Approaches that educators can use to support the physical development of children, as described by the EEF (2024), include:



- Promoting physical activity:** educators can encourage and provide opportunities, including play, for children to regularly engage in physical activity, both indoors and outdoors.
- Teaching the skills needed for movement and handling:** educators can aim to improve physical development by explicitly teaching and consolidating movement and handling skills.
- Teaching the skills needed for mark-making and letter formation:** educators can support the development of the skills and mechanics required to actively engage in mark-making opportunities.

Preparing to Write:

Once children have 'strong foundations' in Physical Development, the 'P checks' are used to support the *process* of handwriting and cover Posture, Pencil grasp, Paper position and Pressure (as recommended by the Handwriting Association).



TIPS FOR TEACHING

National Handwriting Association 
Promoting good practice

'P' Checks

Preparing to write



The 'P checks' are used to support the *process* of handwriting and cover Posture, Pencil grasp, Paper position and Pressure and fluency.

Posture

Poor posture can be a root cause of common handwriting difficulties such as pain or fatigue and will present as a reluctance to write, poor presentation or legibility, slow writing speed and reduced output.

POSTURE GUIDELINES

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface
- Knees at a right angle with 2-fingers space behind the knee to avoid compression
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90° with the back supported
- Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table

AND

- Table height adjusted so that forearms rest on the top without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders/arms (too high)
- Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered

Tip



Establishing good habits of posture and position early is really helpful. Correcting bad habits later is much more difficult.

ALTERNATIVE FURNITURE

Adaptive equipment is available for those that struggle with underlying stability, gross and fine motor skills.

If standing desks are used they should also be an appropriate height.

A writing slope can help with wrist position and posture. The chair height needs to be higher.

TABLE AND CHAIR HEIGHT

If the table is at the correct height the forearm is supported, making it easier to control the movement.

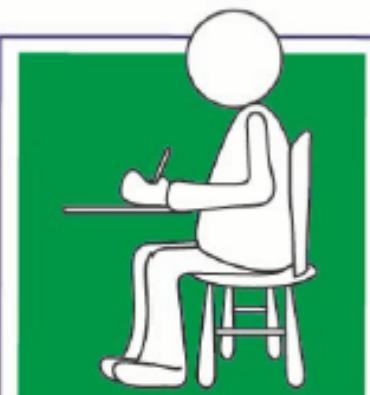
Too High: children may raise their shoulders inducing greater fatigue.

Too Low: children may slump forwards and increase strain on the trunk, neck, arm, wrist and fingers making it more difficult to make controlled precise movements.

Too Far: children will slump forwards if their chair is set too far back from the table, regardless of chair and table height.

Tips  Exchanging furniture with another class can accommodate children who are taller or shorter than their classmates.

At times swap a chair for a ball to sit on or try an air-filled or a wedge cushion. Check the height is correct.



Posture



Pencil

Children and adults can be seen to use a wide range of different pencil grasps, often because they have not learnt differently or as compensation for postural instability elsewhere. An inefficient pen/cil grasp can cause discomfort, impacting motivation, fluency and legibility and create difficulty in sustaining speed.

1

Before children are asked to write, it is important that they are developmentally ready to do so. The teacher will be able to assess when a child has developed the essential skills. In Early Years, most children will manage pre-writing tasks only, which are designed to introduce the basic movements and 'feel' required for writing. Asking a child to hold a pen or pencil and write before they are developmentally ready can create difficulties.

2

Introducing an effective pencil grasp, when appropriate, is beneficial for developing fast, efficient, legible handwriting in the longer term.

A **dynamic tripod grasp**, with the pencil held between thumb and index finger with the middle finger supporting is considered optimal as it provides stability, but allows the precise movements needed to form letters. To be effective, this grasp must be supported by a stable wrist resting on the writing surface and positioned below the writing line.



PENCIL GRASP GUIDELINES:

- Check the child is developmentally ready before asking them to write.
- A dynamic tripod pencil grasp is the most efficient and is expected by end of Year 1.
- Address an inappropriate grasp in the early learning stages and later if it is causing discomfort or impacting speed.
- Consider corrective action using adaptive grips or specialist writing tools, but always trial several options to find the most appropriate.
- Encourage a 2 cm gap between finger tip and pencil point – and slightly greater for left-handers.

5

When developing handwriting skills, the child needs to see the pencil nib to monitor their writing. This is more difficult for left-handers.

Holding the pencil too close or too far from the tip or holding too tightly can cause tension and thereby difficulties with handwriting.

3

Changing a writing grasp can be challenging for an older child and should only be attempted if there is discomfort or other difficulty.

(See *Tips for Teaching - Writing Grip* from www.nha-handwriting.org.uk for more detail)

4

There is a wide range of specialist pencils, pens and adaptive grips available to purchase.

However, focusing on the writing tool alone will not solve handwriting difficulty – take care when recommending specialist pens and pencils and trial several options as what helps one writer may cause greater discomfort for another.

See NHA booklet 'NHA TOOLS' (available soon from www.nha-handwriting.org.uk) for more details



Correct paper position is vitally important during the early years of handwriting development as bad practice can lead to compensatory strategies, such as a hooked-wrist in left-handers, that are difficult to remedy in later years.

TILT

When writing, the wrist and hand will naturally step along a path across the paper, but at an angle to the body. The writing paper should ideally be positioned so that the hand follows this natural path. For a right hander the top left corner of the paper is angled down to the left.



For a left-hander, the opposite is best, having the top right corner angled down to the right.



PAPER GUIDELINES:

- Tilt and offset the paper according to the writing hand.
- Move the paper up or down to facilitate a comfortable reach and keep it in place with the non-writing hand.
- Consider glare from paper and overhead lighting.
- Consider a specialist vision assessment if visual stress continues.

OFFSET

The paper should not be directly in front of the child but slightly offset, to the right for a right hander and to the left for a left hander.

NON-WRITING HAND

Encourage the use of the non-writing hand to stabilise the paper. (This enables the writing hand to move freely and also balances the body). Encourage writers to move the paper and adjust the position of the holding hand as writing progresses down the page.

LIGHT ON THE PAPER

TOO LITTLE

Make sure that the children's work is well lit - sometimes there is a dark corner of a classroom where lighting levels are low

TOO MUCH

Direct sunlight tends to reflect brightly off white writing paper

Eyes have to work hard to compensate for fluctuating light levels. It is better to try to keep light levels as constant as possible. Artificial light or window blinds can be effective as can writing on coloured, rather than white paper.

VISUAL STRESS

Ocular motor (eye movement) difficulties tend to be fatiguing, especially when having to be focussed on an extended writing task. If a child rubs their eyes frequently or complains of headaches when writing, it can be a sign of visual acuity or ocular motor difficulties. An eye test will detect visual acuity difficulties, but other factors can make the eyes work harder than they need to, causing fatigue.

The teacher will be able to identify the best measures for each child, but ocular motor difficulties should not be ignored, as left unaddressed will tend to demotivate children to writing regardless of lighting levels.



The act of writing should leave a clear trace on the paper, neither too faint nor too dark, and flow along the line rhythmically.



Tip The shape of the writing tool and the way it is held impact the amount of pressure exerted onto the paper. Trialling a range of pens, pencils and grips can be a good place to start.

EARLY WRITERS

When learning to write, pencil pressure is likely to vary depending on the demands of the task and stage of development. Most children will learn through experience how much pressure they should exert through the pencil onto paper.

LIGHT PRESSURE INDICATORS

- Faint, shaky script
- The fingers are often more extended at the joints and higher up the pencil

HEAVY PRESSURE INDICATORS

- Marks that go through to the next page
- Raised ridges on the back of the paper that can be felt with the fingertips
- Red marks on the skin because of contact with the pen
- White knuckles

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP

- Use carbon paper underneath layers of writing paper and challenge the student to aim for: p2 - copy, p3 - shadow, p4 - invisible.
- Use a 2H pencil for increased sensory feedback so there is less need for hard pressure.
- Use a mechanical pencil (0.5mm) that will break under heavy pressure.
- Use a B/2B pencil or a pen to improve the visibility of writing for those who have light pressure.
- Use light up pens: the light is activated to correct light pressure and deactivated to correct heavy pressure.
- Use a lead pencil to shade in a picture using light, medium and dark grey. Discuss how different amounts of pressure alter the shade.
- Write on a single sheet of paper when at a desk or table. A firm surface can limit the amount of pressure the child can use.

PRESSURE GUIDELINES:

- The just-right pressure eases writing across the page, which is important for fluency and reducing the risk of pain during handwriting.
- Use teaching tools such as carbon paper, mechanical pencils, 'light-up' and 'squiggle' pens to demonstrate appropriate pressure.
- Try some gross and fine motor warm ups before and during the handwriting task. Actions which include squeezing and deep pressure, resistance and/or vibration will increase body awareness.
- Check that posture/issues with postural control are not the causative factor here.

FLUENCY

- Write to rhythms / beats of music
- Pattern repeated letters and encourage flowing movements
- Think of skating / gliding on the paper
- Use gel crayons or pastels to increase ease of flow when patterning at a larger scale and on bigger blank paper

See also - NHA posters: '*P*' Checks and '*S*' Factors and *Tips for Teaching: The 'S' Rules*

Adapted from an article '*P*' Checks explained' by Catherine Elsey, Joanna Moore and Michelle van Rooyen in *Handwriting Today* 2016, the journal of the National Handwriting Association.

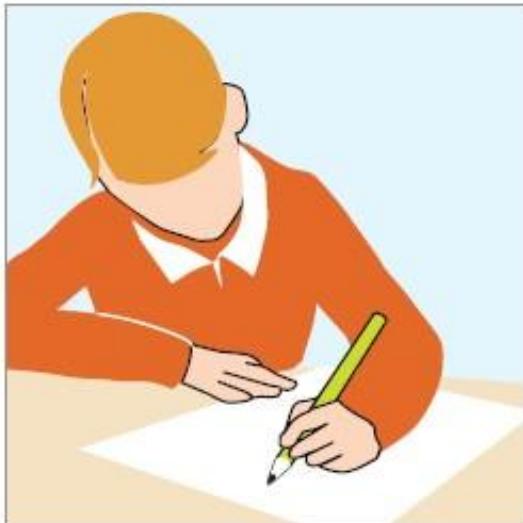
Edited by Gwen Dornan

Establishing Hand Dominance:

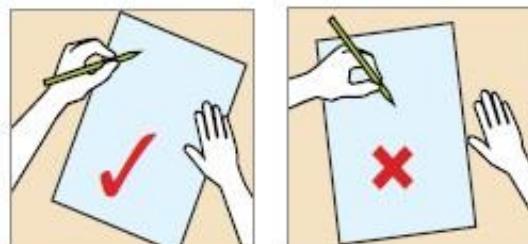
This is usually well established by age 5, but preference may appear earlier and hand dominance must be taken into consideration in teaching tasks.

LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow right-handed teachers as they demonstrate letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.



- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children

Letter formation

Most left-handed learners naturally draw a circle in a clockwise direction, which has implications for letter formation. Extra time and attention are given to ensure they are able to form letters as right-handed people do.

Paper

Left-handed learners need to have the paper to the left side of the mid-line of the body and tilted at an angle of 30 degrees clockwise so the pupil can see what is being written.

Writing tool

It is important to have a free-flowing implement as the implement is being pushed rather than pulled across the paper. Left-handed pupils are encouraged to use a wide variety of implements including left-handed nibs.

Grip

Pupils are encouraged to hold the pen further from the point than right handers (approximately 1.5cm from end of writing implement) so that the writing is not obscured. The wrist should be straight and any hook grip should be corrected with paper angle and formation guidance.

Seating

LHL sit on the left of right-handed children to avoid arms clashing. Some children will benefit from a higher seating position to see their work more clearly.

Inclusion

All pupils need a chair that enables them to sit with their feet flat on the floor and their knees at right angles. Tables should allow space between the knees and underside of the table while good lighting is also essential.

It is then the responsibility of class teachers, in liaison with other staff (including our SENCO and our English Leader) to ensure that the work set and subsequent adaptations are appropriate to child's skills and level of development. Children need to be ready to progress built upon 'Strong Foundations' in the First Years of School and beyond.

Teachers will need to be sensitive to the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and to genuine developmental needs. Tangible examples, including (but not limited to) pencil grips, slopes, hand exercises, hand eye co-ordination games and exercises to improve fine and gross motor skills are all used when deemed appropriate to the pupil. Appropriate interventions are also put in place to support children if necessary.

S Factors for Success:

Once 'P checks' are secure, the 's' factors for handwriting success are progressively taught across school. These build sequentially to ensure 'Strong Foundations' for all children centered around an evidence-informed approach from the National Handwriting Association.

1 Shape

EYFS: Reception
NC: KS1

Once a child is ready to write, the first important task is to learn how to form the letters correctly - best taught as a motor skill. (This will save many problems at later stages.)

Children learn best by:

- 1 Watching the letters being made and hearing a simple patter.
- 2 Making the letters themselves in developmentally appropriate ways using just fingers - sand, paint, sandpaper, air-writing etc. - before pencils.

2 Space

NC: KS1

Children need to understand that spaces need to be left between words so they can be easily read.

Gradually, they need to learn to leave an appropriately-sized space - about the size of 1 or 2 letter 'o's. Lolly sticks make good spacers for beginner writers, followed by coffee stirrers if necessary later. These work much better than the traditional finger-spacing. (Fingers grow bigger while writing becomes smaller so are ineffective when the child is older. Finger spacing is also difficult for left-handers to use).

3 Sitting on the line

Once children are secure in forming letters correctly they need to know where to position them in relation to the base line.

The plan is hot.
mum has a wig. Writing on a single base-line
I hid the map.

1

4 Size

NC: KS1

... and also to their relative sizes:

Small/halfway letters/x-height letters e.g. a, e, o, s

Tall letters/letters with ascenders e.g. h, l, b, k (plus all capitals)

Tailed letters/letters with descenders e.g. p, g, y, j

A visual image helps children understand the 3 levels. Suggestions are:

- sky/grass or forest/underground
- head/body/legs

While children are learning about size it is helpful to use paper marked with a base-line and a second line above for the tops of a, e, s, o etc. The tall letters and tails are written at about twice that size.

(This is preferable to traditional 'tram-line' paper with 4 lines that encourages over-long ascenders and descenders).

i u c a o e s r n m v w x z

l t d f b h k

j y g f q p A B C D

Beginner writers, especially, need widely spaced lines to avoid cramping letters and all children need some flexibility in line spacing rather than 'one size fits all'.

5 **Stringing together**
NC: KS1 & KS2
Basic joins.

Joined or cursive writing is the next step towards fluency.

The NC states that children 'should be taught a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation' and 'understand which letters, when adjacent to each other, are best left unjoined.'

The NC expectation for Years 3 & 4 is that pupils will be 'using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing'. This will encourage joined writing to become automatic.
Note: cursive/joined writing can have some breaks - usually after **j,y,g,x,z.** (See Style below)

6 **Slant**
NC: KS 2

A consistent slant helps the appearance of handwriting.

A slightly forward slant is a natural movement for right-handers and helps to improve fluency and speed. (See 'Slant' in Part 2)

7 **Speed**
NC: Y5+

Students in KS2 & 3 need to be able to write legibly and quickly.

Students need help in understanding that increasing speed changes writing: it can improve rhythm and fluency but can cause illegibility if allowed out of control. It will help students if they are encouraged to gradually build up the speed of legible writing by repeating words, then phrases, sentences & paragraphs in short regular periods of practice. (See *Tips for Teaching: Speeding up*)

8 **Style**
NC: Y5+

Students should be encouraged to develop a style of writing that works for them.

Students can consider changes to their writing style that could increase speed and/or fluency, e.g.

- Adding loops to **g,y,j** and possibly **f** to increase speed and flow.
- Consider if there are any joins that do not flow well and would be better left unjoined.
- Be aware that different qualities and speeds of writing are required for different tasks: personal notes, exams, course work, job applications – and adapt accordingly.

N.B. They should also be aware of occasions when an unjoined style is appropriate: for labelling diagrams/data, e-mail addresses etc. and be able to use capital letters for form-filling.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. When she had reached the

These children are developing personal styles

Our Progression in Handwriting:

In line with Strong Foundations guidance and the Writing Toolkit (2025) we implement a phased approach to the development of joined handwriting at Parish, leading to a fluent joined cursive style.

Our approach ensures that pupils practise handwriting regularly and consistently to develop legibility and ultimately maintain fluency.

Our teaching approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- Taught daily, within a discrete handwriting session in addition to Phonics (if relevant) for all learners.
- Taught in small steps with lots of opportunity for practice.
- Sequenced in a cumulative way so that teachers build on what pupils have learned previously and children can visualise to memory (without the need to copy).
- Revisited when further practice is needed.

Across EYFS:

Nursery (and Reception if developmentally appropriate) have a daily discrete session timetabled to develop children's physical development which is then built upon throughout all areas of provision. Children continually practise manipulative skills (including fine and gross motor skills). This will include movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing as well as exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets. This teaches pupils to:

- Develop pre-writing skills with an emphasis on gross motor skills central to Physical Development.
- Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing pre-cursive patterns in a variety of writing materials that are carefully chosen by the teacher.
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation.

Stage 1 Handwriting (Reception):

In Reception, this builds towards a daily handwriting lesson that is delivered separately to Phonics (when children are at the appropriate stage of development) and as soon as children can read Set 1 sounds. Within this session, children will:

- Familiarise themselves with letter shapes, formation and vocabulary with letters taught in the order that will generate most word reading. Our approach ensures that children build a strong mental model of the movement patterns that underpin letter formation first.
- Have the opportunity to practice letter formation which is modelled and consolidated daily to support progression in RWI Sessions. This is consolidated before the teacher moves on so that pupils do not practise letters incorrectly.
- See letters demonstrated by the teacher (making connection to the letters they read with the shape they write).

To build strong foundations, handwriting instruction starts in term one of Reception. Using RWI Handwriting, Stage 1 (taught separately to Phonics) this teaches pupils to:

- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature.
- Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement.
- Connect the letter they read with the shape they write.
- By the end of Reception, write recognisable letters and numerals, most of which are correctly formed.

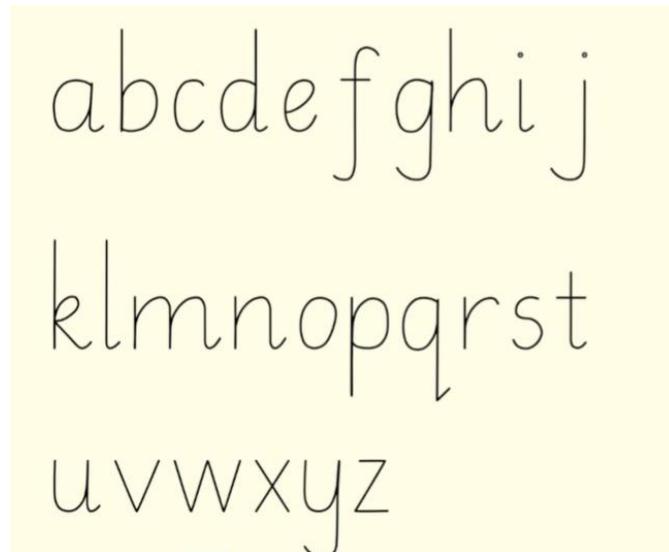
For example:

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Round the apple, down the leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the stalk ✓ go round the apple ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom
	Round the dinosaur's bottom, up its tall neck, down to the feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ go round his bottom ✓ up the tall neck ✓ down the straight line to the feet ✓ make a curl for the feet
	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at her bubble ✓ go round her face ✓ go back to her bubble ✓ go down her straight hair ✓ draw a curl
	All around the orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the stalk ✓ go around the orange back to the stalk
	Curl round the caterpillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the caterpillar's head ✓ curl round the body
	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the back of her crown ✓ go round her face ✓ go back up to her crown ✓ go down her hair ✓ give it a sharp flick

Stage 2 Handwriting:

To build on the strong foundations set in EYFS, and following the same teaching principles, daily handwriting instructions continues in Year 1. Using RWI Handwriting Stage 2, this teaches pupils to:

- Sit correctly at a table, continuing to hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (using specific models to ensure this is consistently understood).
- Form capital letters and the digits 0–9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.



Once single letter formation is secure and letters are formed in the correct position, the teaching of handwriting will move onto Stage 3 shown below.

Stage 3:

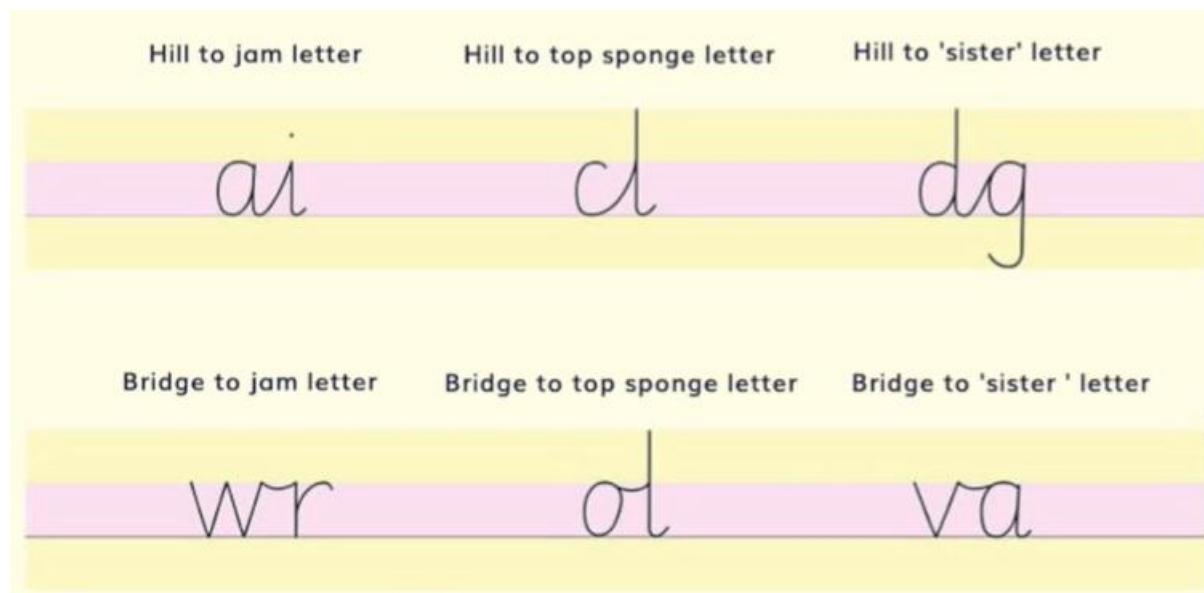
The delivery of stage 3 handwriting take place once stage 2 has been fully delivered (typically this is in Year 1 and into Year 2).

Stage 2 revisits may take place in KS2 based where teacher assessment indicates that a review before learners continue to progress further.

Stage 3 adheres to the Writing Framework recommendation that to join letters easily and legibly, pupils first need to form the shape of each letter correctly, starting and finishing each one at the correct point and ensuring that its size is properly related to other letters in the same family. Joined handwriting is not formally taught until pupils are able to form these unjoined letters (print forms) correctly and consistently.

Using RWI Handwriting Stage 3, this teaches pupils to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. This is taught through two joins: the 'hill' join and the 'bridge' join. Each has three variations.
- 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, so that later joins do not create extra, confusing shapes



Outside of handwriting lessons, it is known that using joins accurately and successfully takes time. Once children have practised all the letters, they can start writing the title and first sentence in their new handwriting. This will be increased week by week to ensure a sense of achievement.

Stage 4A:

Applying the strong foundations that have been developed in Stage 3 and building on their increasingly fluent and legible joined style, children (typically in LKS2) start to apply their learning to longer words and dictated sentences. In doing so, children are able to develop a mature and speedy style and further secure their understanding of the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined to continue to increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting. Children are encouraged to 'start slowly and get quicker as they go.'

Stage 4B:

Typically in UKS2, our teaching (in line with the National Curriculum and recommendations from the Writing Framework) pupils are taught to continue to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Content is progressively taught with a focus upon dictation activities supporting the 'S' factors for success to be mastered. Learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length. The aim for children in Year 5 and Year 6 is to be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing. Children can choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

At Stage 4, the cursive joined style that children choose to use may not or may include lead ins (due to historically previously taught styles that are in line with National Curriculum expectations).

Assessment:

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – staff will circulate, monitor and intervene with high-quality modelling at all times.

The following will be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters revered or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with whole-school expectations.

Handwriting Implements

- Reception-Variety of suitable implements e.g. crayons, large felt pens, chunky crayons with a focus on fine motor skills.
- Years 1 to 2 - Pencils in all work.
- Years 3 to 5 - Pencils in all work.
- Year 5 -When ready through the award of a pen licence, all writing is completed in pen except work in Mathematics books.
- Year 6 – Pen in all work (with pencils used in Mathematics).

Staff Handwriting:

Staff handwriting is the model for the pupils. All staff should produce quality handwriting in the script that is taught in the class they are working in, both when modelling and writing feedback in children's books and on the whiteboard.

Culture of Handwriting:

All handwriting information will be included within our school website to ensure that parents/carers understand both school policies and the latest research.

References:

Read Write Inc Handwriting - <https://schools.ruthmiskin.com/training/modules/151/>

National Handwriting Association - <https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/>

Education Endowment Foundation – Physical Development (2024) -

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store/physical-development>

Direct Gov - Strong Foundations in the First Years of School (October 2024) -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school>

Policy last updated: December 2025

Policy to be reviewed: September 2026

Appendix 1: Letter Formation in School:

abcdefghijklj

klmnopqrst

uvwxyz

Hill to jam letter

Hill to top sponge letter

Hill to 'sister' letter

ai

d

dg

Bridge to jam letter

Bridge to top sponge letter

Bridge to 'sister' letter

wr

ol

va

We modify some letters to allow them to join. For example, r, e and s.

re

ee

as

Letter Groupings

a d g o c q
u y
b p
h n m r
e s f i
l t k j
v w x z

Appendix 2: Number Formation in School.



Start at the top and down we run,
That's the way we make a one!



Around and back on a railroad track,
Two, two, two!



Around the tree, around the tree,
That's the way we make a three!



Down and over, down some more,
That's the way we make a four!



Down and around, then a flag on high,
That's the way we make a five!



Down we go and make a loop,
Number six makes a hoop!



Across the sky and down from heaven,
That's the way we make a seven!



Make an 'S' then don't wait,
When it's joined up, you have an eight!



Make a loop and then a line,
That's the way you make a nine!



Around and round and round we go,
When we get home we have a zero!