

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.

Objectives

Handwriting is a movement skill and as such, should be taught directly by demonstration, explanation and practice in line with our ‘Teaching and Learning Toolkit.’

In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught (National Curriculum guidelines):

- How to hold a pencil/pen
- To write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
- To start and finish letters correctly
- To form letters of regular size and shape
- To put regular spaces between letters and words
- How to form lower- and upper-case letters
- How to join letters
- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning effectively.
- Write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed
- Use different forms of handwriting for different purposes.

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.

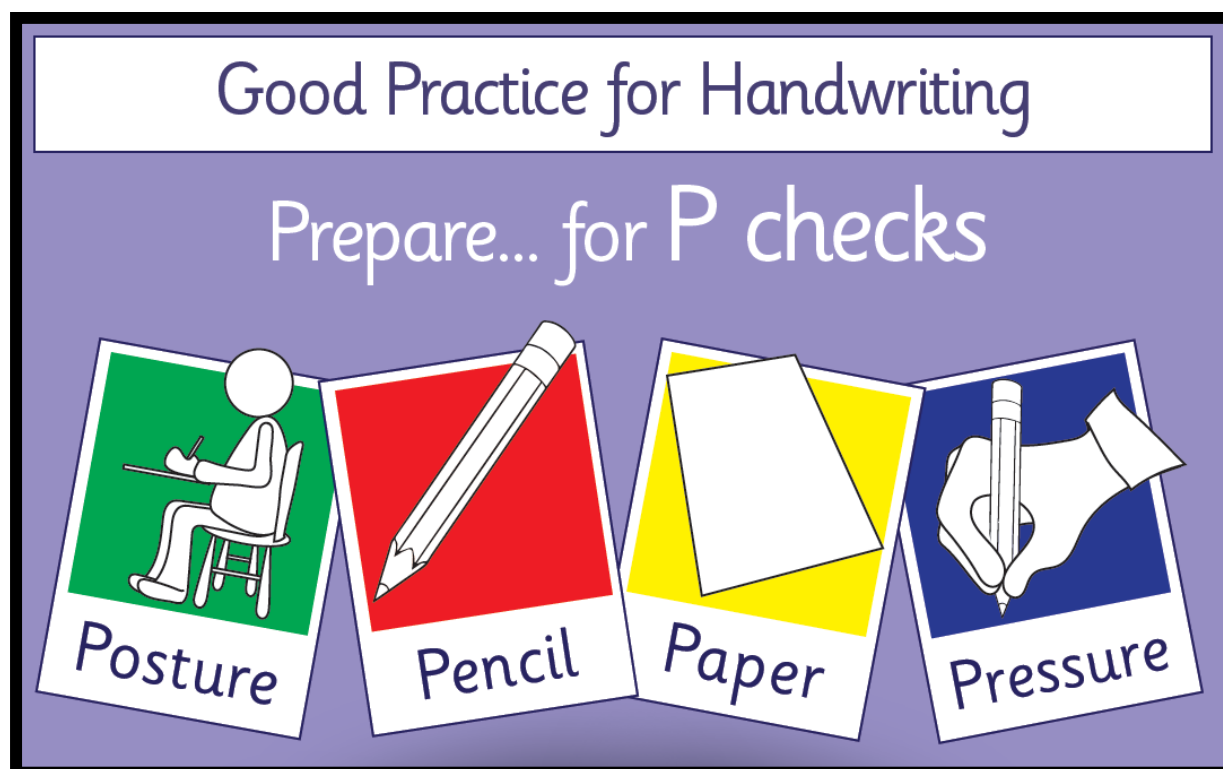
Approaches that educators can use to support the physical development of children, as described by the EEF (2024), include:



1. **Promoting physical activity:** educators can encourage and provide opportunities, including play, for children to regularly engage in physical activity, both indoors and outdoors.
2. **Teaching the skills needed for movement and handling:** educators can aim to improve physical development by explicitly teaching and consolidating movement and handling skills.
3. **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.

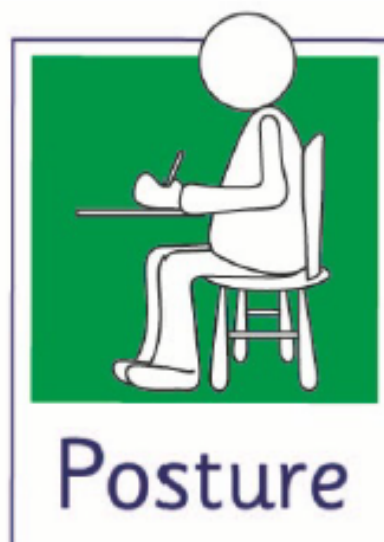
Too Far: children will slump forwards if their chair is set too far back from the table, regardless of chair and table height.

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.





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.

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.

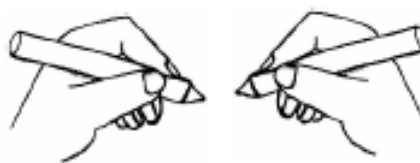
Holding the pencil too close or too far from the tip or holding too tightly can cause tension and thereby difficulties with handwriting.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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:

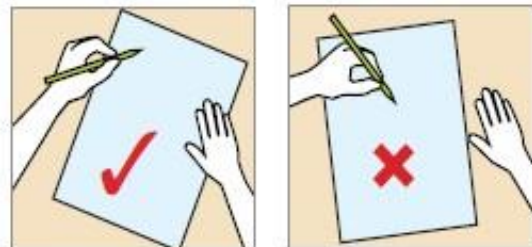
This is usually well established by age 5, but preference may appear earlier and hand dominance must be taken into consideration in teaching tasks.

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.

Letters can be put into groups or teams according to the movement needed to make them. When children learn to write a new letter, the 'lead' letter of its team will help them to start.

The 'l' team

l i u t y j

The 'c' team

c a d g q o e s f

The 'r' team

r n m h b k p

The 'zig-zag' team

z x v w y k

N.B.

These letters have exit flicks to support joining but **no entry strokes** which complicate the basic letter shapes and use diagonal lines that many young children find difficult at this stage.

A basic lower case alphabet in letter formation families

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.

I hid the map.

Writing on a
single base-line

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).

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

l t d f b h k

j y g f a 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.'

These can be taught in a series of lessons with plenty of practice:

- Diagonal (up the hill join) to 'l' team letters, both tall and short e.g.
- Horizontal (washing line join) to both tall and short letters from **o, v, w** e.g.
- Joins to 'c' team letters e.g.

cu il

ou wh

uc nd

Practice is more fun making patterns from digraphs using felt tipped pens. (See *Tips for Teaching: Patterns* for ideas)

The NC expectation for Years 3 & 4 is that pupils will be 'using joined hand-writing 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 labeling 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

Progression from EYFS to End of KS2:

By the end of EYFS most children will:

- Be given opportunities 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 such as modelling clay, air writing, sand trays, felt pens, crayons, pencils, IWB, iPads/tablets.
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation.
- 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.
- Understand that letters are written on a base line
- Securely form some recognisable printed letters, capital letters and numerals.
- Have an understanding of writing their own name.
- Understanding different shaped letter families.
- School End of EYFS Expectation - Write recognisable letters and numerals, most of which are correctly formed.

By the end of Key Stage 1 most children will:

- Write legibly using upper- and lower-case letters with correct joins.
- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are to be used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.
- School End of Year 1 Expectation – Begin to correctly form lower-case and upper-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. If appropriate, a pre-cursive style to be introduced in Summer Term.
- School End of Year 2 Expectation - Write legibly using upper and lower-case letters with correct lead ins/flicks in a pre-cursive style. Some children may be able to write using correct joins.

By the end of Key Stage 2 most children will:

- Quality: Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- Speed: Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- Stamina: Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.
- Have full knowledge and ability of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes. Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters. Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.

- Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as + instead of 'and', can be used.
- School End of Year 3/4 Expectation – To use joined handwriting throughout independent writing with diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters. This involves an appropriate 'slant' with an understanding of which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- School End of Year 5/6 Expectation – To write with stamina both legibly and fluently and with increasing speed and style in a quality legible joined-handwriting style.

Year 1 (Statutory requirements of handwriting in the National Curriculum 2014):

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9 correctly
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- Notes and guidance (non-statutory). Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Year 2 (Statutory requirements of handwriting in the National Curriculum 2014):

Pupils should be taught 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 un-joined
- 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.
- Notes and guidance (non-statutory). Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Year 3/4 (Statutory requirements of handwriting in the National Curriculum 2014):

Pupils should be taught to:

- 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 increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, 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].
- Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of

increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Children in Year 3 will be taught to use diagonal and horizontal strokes.

Children in Year 4 will begin to use diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters.

Year 5/6 (Statutory requirements of handwriting in the National Curriculum 2014):

- Pupils should be taught 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.
- Notes and guidance (non-statutory) Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. 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 un-joined 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.

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 6 - Pencils in all work.
- KS2 -When ready through the award of a pen licence, all writing is completed in pen except work in numeracy books.

The Teaching of Handwriting:

Handwriting is a cross-curriculum consideration and is considered during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met. This goes beyond the teaching of Phonics. This is delivered discretely for four 10-minute slots per week.

For simplicity, the letters of the alphabet can be sorted into 4 main movement groups, informing the teaching of letter shape from EYFS onwards.

The 'l' team l i u t y j
The 'c' team c a d g q o e s f
The 'r' team r n m h b k p
The 'zig-zag' team z x v w y k

We use Letter-join as the basis of our handwriting sessions to progressively cover all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum.

- **EYFS:**
 - EYFS have a daily discrete session timetabled to develop their Physical Development before this is 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 builds towards letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary. Letter formation is also practiced, modelled and consolidated daily in RWI sessions.
- **Years 1 and 2:**
 - Four 10-minute sessions taught and modelled handwriting sessions each week in line with specific year group expectations outlined above supported by Letter Join resources.
 - Through adult modelling or correct letters formation in books and on the board
 - RWI daily modelling to build on work in daily discrete handwriting sessions.
- **KS2**
 - Four 10-minute sessions taught and modelled handwriting sessions each week in line with specific year group expectations outlined above using Letter Join resources.
 - Content is progressively taught with a focus upon dictation activities supporting the 'S' factors for success to be mastered.
 - Through adult modelling or correct letters formation in books and on the board.

Teaching Resources:

The Letter Join scheme of work is used to inform (not dictate) our daily handwriting sessions as the basis of our teaching sequence. Delivered from EYFS through to Year 6, this ensures that all of the key stage requirements are met and children can progressively develop a fluent and legible handwriting style to ensure they reach the standard expected at the end of each key stage. Teachers will adapt the scheme of work accordingly to meet the needs of their cohort (alongside individual learners where appropriate) and ensure that Strong Foundations are built upon. Letter Join fonts are also used across school.

EYFS –

It starts with Getting Ready for Handwriting: warm-up exercises, sitting position and tripod pencil grip. Resources supporting the printed font include all animations, lowercase letters and words, phonics, games and activities and KS1 worksheets. This begins with pre-writing patterns building to letters and once children are ready, words.

Year 1 -

A focus upon teaching how to correctly write capital letters, uses of printed letters, numbers, punctuation, maths symbols and other symbols. Pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters are then introduced in preparation for Year 2 when children are required to start joining their handwriting.

Year 2 –

Introduce children to cursive letters and how to join them. They will have regular practice in letter formation and joining their handwriting. Support in forming cursive letters and words, letter families, high frequency words, joining practice through sequencing sentences and dictation exercises.

Year 3 –

In Year 3, the focus is to improve the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum. Exercises include: dictation activities, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, onomatopoeia, simile, WOW words and spellings – all supporting joined handwriting.

Year 4 –

Year 4 focuses on using handwriting practice to support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time building fluency. Making links across the curriculum enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum. Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module's lessons.

Year 5 –

Learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. The aim of the Year 5 resources is for children to be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing

Year 6 –

Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based links will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length. By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects.

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:

Letter Join - <https://www.letterjoin.co.uk/index.html>

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) -

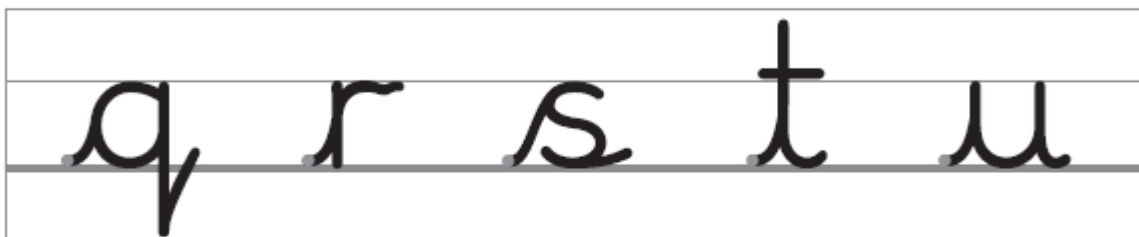
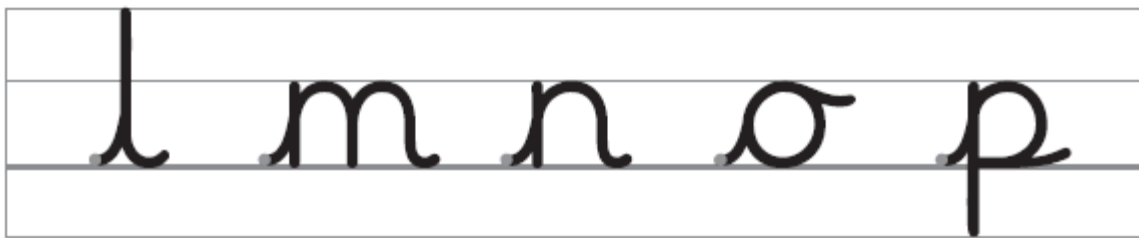
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school>

Policy agreed on: September 2024

Policy to be reviewed: September 2026

Appendix 1: Letter Formation in School:

Cursive lowercase letters



Letter-join 

Printed lowercase letters

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z

Letter-join 

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!