



Handwriting policy

Primary Academies

November 2025

Due for review November 2027

NSCTPol / PRI / 0109 / 2511a

Purpose

All children will leave our schools with the ability to write fluently, legibly and be able to communicate their thoughts and ideas efficiently. Handwriting is a skill which must be learnt in order to provide a style which becomes simple to produce and easy to read. Cursive handwriting helps children to learn and remember spelling patterns. It is an integral part of the multisensory technique enabling pupils to make the automatic grapheme- phoneme (symbol-sound) relationship for spelling. All children are introduced to Cursive Handwriting from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We believe this raises standards in handwriting throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy and fluency.

Strong handwriting skills reduce cognitive load and enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Staff will identify and correct any handwriting errors seen within all subjects to improve handwriting automaticity.

High quality Assessment for Learning will ensure careful adaptations are made to allow all pupils to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up'. Additional handwriting tools, activities and interventions provide pupils with opportunities with the support needed to develop strong handwriting skills.

All staff receive high quality CPD that builds their expertise. This can include expert provision from the Local Authority, e.g. Occupational therapist.

Parental involvement throughout the school is important to ensure children make progress towards clear outcomes. School staff will have regular communication with parents and carers and provide appropriate/additional home learning, celebrating pupils progress and success.

Some definitions

CVC words

Consonant-vowel-consonant (e.g. 'cat', 'dog', 'bed')

Red words

Words that cannot be sounded out because they break the phonetic rules of the English language (e.g. 'the', 'you', 'her')

Handwriting ascenders

The upwards part of a letter that extends above the baseline of a font (e.g. 'h')

Handwriting descenders

The downwards part of a letter that extends below the baseline of a font (e.g. 'y')

Phoneme

The smallest unit of sound that distinguishes one word from another word in a language.

Grapheme

A written letter or letters that represent a sound (phoneme) in a word.

Letter Join

The school uses 'Letter Join' programme as a way of delivering strong handwriting outcomes. Each school will adapt 'Letter Join' programme based on the needs of the pupils. Letter-join air plus 40 (no joins) and Letter-join basic 40 (fully cursive).

Handwriting in EYFS

This is the most crucial part of a child's handwriting journey as it underpins all subsequent teaching. At EYFS, children will be introduced to cursive handwriting through explicit teaching during phonics lessons and writing activities, as well as during free-flow play opportunities provided by the teacher and physical activities aimed at developing both gross and fine motor skills.

Examples of these opportunities may include, but are not limited to: -

Air-writing	Pattern-making	Dancing	Balancing skills	Upper-body strength exercises
Experimenting with different writing media – crayons, paint	Puzzles	Squeezing wet sponges	Finger painting	Water play activities
Sand play activities	Using play dough	Rice play activities	Fastening buttons and threading	Using tweezers
Cutting with scissors	Practising pencil grip	Printing letters with lead-ins	Writing words with correct letter formation	Printing numbers accurately

How a classroom environment supports handwriting

Classrooms must display letter formation using the school's cursive script and refer to this when modelling handwriting in class. Where possible, interactive white board resources, worksheets and classroom displays should also promote the handwriting policy. Within the continuous provision daily opportunities will be provided for meaningful mark making and letter/number formation. Staff led and targeted opportunities will also be provided based on Assessment for Learning.

Expectations of teaching handwriting in EYFS

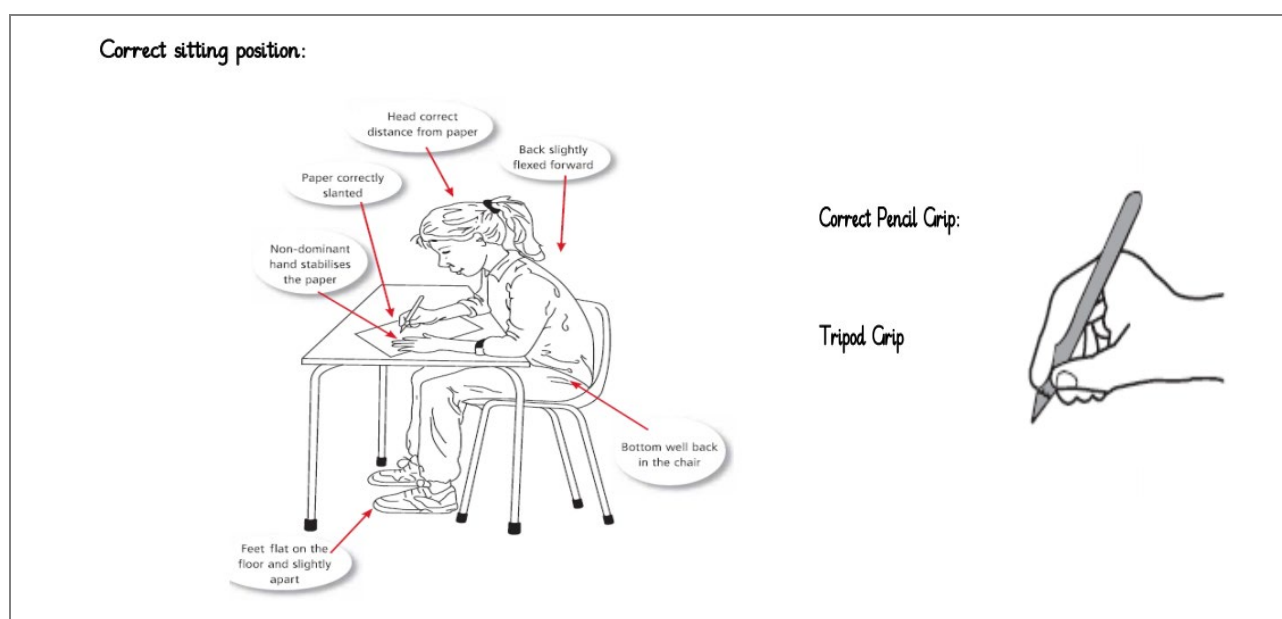
- Children must have opportunities to practise letter formation with lead-ins within phonics, writing activities, handwriting sessions and within continuous provision.
- Children will build on gross and fine motor skills through practical activities which are both directed, independently chosen and child-initiated.
- Pre-cursive skills will also be developed through planned activities such as 'Squiggle while you Wiggle', 'Dough Disco'; 'Funky fingers' and pre-writing patterns.
- When learning letter sounds we use the *Read, Write Inc.* program. Children need to know that there are different types of font in books, computers etc which all produce a wide range of writing styles.
- Children will use their knowledge from the set of sounds they are learning in phonics to practise letter formation and word building.
- Children will be exposed to all letter families in the EYFS.
- Teachers will use their Assessment for Learning effectively to plan and meet the needs of all pupils.
- Time and attention will be given to ensure that children learn to have good posture, page position and pencil grip when writing. Pencil grips, triangular pencils and other aids will be used to support this as required.
- Left handed pupils are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise and sit on the left hand side so that they can more easily see what they have written.

Outcomes at the end of EYFS

Most children are able to use a pencil, holding it effectively in a tripod grip to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed using cursive handwriting with lead-ins.

Children should be able to: -

- form lower case 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*
- form capitals: *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*
- form numbers: *1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0*
- correctly write their name as well as basic CVC words and red words, corresponding with the set of sounds and graphemes they have been taught so far.
- adopt the correct sitting position and use a correct pencil grip



Handwriting in Key Stage 1

In KS1, handwriting will be taught every week as discrete lessons. Additional opportunities will be taken to reinforce handwriting practice throughout the week, e.g. further modelling; as home learning; during spelling activities or through physical activities which build on gross and fine motor skills. Staff will use Assessment for Learning to support handwriting across the curriculum.

How a classroom environment supports handwriting

Classrooms must display letter formation using the school's cursive script and refer to this when modelling handwriting in class. Where possible, interactive white board resources, worksheets and classroom displays will also promote the handwriting policy as well as staff's own handwriting. All classrooms will have access to a range of handwriting tools.

Expectations of teaching handwriting in Key Stage 1

- All handwriting sessions will follow the adapted 'Letter-Join' plans. This will be explicitly modelled by staff.
- In *Read, Write Inc.* sessions staff will encourage writing with leading lines.
- Staff will use effective Assessment for Learning to plan and deliver weekly handwriting practice sessions and interventions to ensure pupils 'keep up' with their handwriting skills.
- During the Summer term in Year 1, handwriting focus will move towards 'Module 3: Diagonal and Horizontal Joins'.
- Time and attention will be provided to ensure that children learn to have good posture, page position and pencil grip when writing. Pencil grips, triangular pencils and other aids will be used to support this as required.
- Left handed pupils are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise and sit on the left hand side so that they can more easily see what they have written.
- Staff must identify and correct any incorrect formation during handwriting sessions and across the curriculum.
- Pupils will self and peer assess and staff will celebrate correct letter formation.

Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1

- All children should be able to legibly form letters cursively, and recognise where ascenders and descenders are used

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

- Number formation should be clear and consistent.
- From the Summer Term of Year 1, the majority of children will be beginning to join their letters.
- At the end of Year 2, most children should be able to join legibly.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Handwriting in Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 pupils' handwriting speed, fluency, and legibility are built up through practice. Pupils use joined handwriting for all writing unless other specific forms are required (e.g. printing on a map, note taking, posters, etc) appropriateness to the task being paramount. Children will begin to

use a handwriting pen for the majority of classwork where appropriate. Children will be rewarded with a 'pen licence' (from year 4) for demonstrating consistently neat, joined writing.

How a classroom environment supports handwriting

Classrooms must display letter formation using the school's cursive script and refer to this when modelling handwriting in class. Where possible, interactive white board resources, worksheets and classroom displays will also promote the handwriting policy as well as the staff's own handwriting. All classrooms will have access to a range of handwriting tools.

Expectations of teaching handwriting in Key Stage 2

- In KS2, handwriting will be taught every week as discrete lessons.
- Staff will provide additional opportunities and interventions for pupils who have not yet secured strong handwriting foundations.
- Pupils in Year 3 and 4 will practise letter joins to help them build speed, consistency and fluency.
- Pupils in Year 5 and 6 will practise fluency, consistency and develop their own handwriting style.
- Time and attention will be provided to ensure that children learn to have good posture, page position and pencil grip when writing. Pencil grips, triangular pencils and other aids will be used to support this as required.
- Left handed pupils are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise and sit on the left hand side so that they can more easily see what they have written.
- Staff must identify and correct any incorrect formation during handwriting sessions and across the curriculum.
- Pupils will self and peer assess and staff will celebrate correct letter formation.

Outcomes at the end of KS2

- At the end of Year 4, all children will confidently form diagonal and horizontal joins with increasing legibility and consistency.
- At the end of Year 6, all children will join cursively, legibly and fluently and develop their own handwriting style.
- Number formation will be clear and consistent.
- All pupils will be writing in pen.