



Handwriting policy

Primary Academies

November 2023

Purpose

All children will leave our schools with the ability to write fluently, legibly and 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 symbol-sound relationship for spelling. All children are introduced to Cursive Handwriting from the start of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We believe this raises standards in handwriting throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy and fluency and improved presentation.

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 letter or letters that spell a sound in a word.

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

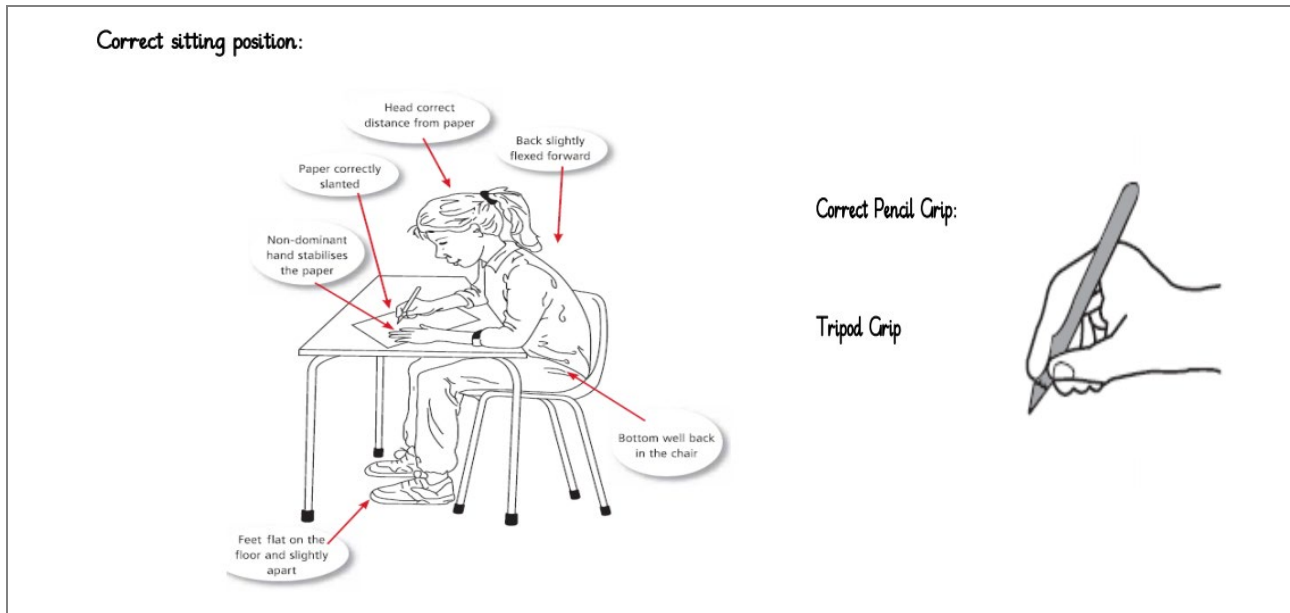
How a classroom environment supports handwriting

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, red and green word displays, worksheets and classroom displays should also promote the handwriting policy.

Expectations of teaching handwriting in EYFS

- Children should have opportunities to practise letter formation with lead-ins within phonics, writing activities and free-flow play.
- Children should build on gross and fine motor skills through practical activities which are both directed, independently chosen and child-initiated.
- When learning letter sounds we use the *Read, Write Inc.* program. Children need to know that there are different types of font as books, computers etc which all produce a wide range of writing styles.
- Children should use their knowledge from the set of sounds they are learning in phonics to practise letter formation and word building.

- Time and attention should be provided to ensure that children learn to have good posture and pencil grip when writing. Pencil grips and triangular pencils may be used to support this.
- Children who are left handed are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise 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*
- adopt the correct sitting position and use a correct pencil grip
- 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.

Handwriting in Key Stage 1

In KS1, handwriting is expected to be taught in **5 sessions over two weeks** as discrete lessons. However, where there are opportunities to reinforce handwriting practise it should be taken. This may be when the teacher is modelling writing, as homework, during spelling activities or through physical activities which build on gross and fine motor skills.

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, red and green word displays, worksheets and classroom displays should also promote the handwriting policy as well as the teacher's marking

Expectations of teaching handwriting in Key Stage 1

- Handwriting practise should aim to mirror the phoneme being taught in *Read, Write Inc.* program where possible, correspond with red words which have been introduced (See RWI Programme) or match the Year 1 and Year 2 spelling expectations in the National Curriculum.
- Children will enter Y1 having been taught to print their letters using a lead-in. During the **summer term of Year 1**, handwriting focus should move towards joining letters where children have the appropriate level of fine motor skills.
- Where appropriate, patterns may be practised, as well as letters, words and number formation.

Expectations 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 Y1, 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. Children 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 can be rewarded with a 'pen licence' 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 should also promote the handwriting policy as well as the teacher's marking

Expectations of teaching handwriting in Key Stage 2

- Handwriting is expected to be taught in **5 sessions over two weeks** as discrete lessons. However, where there are opportunities to reinforce handwriting practise it should be taken.
- Handwriting practise should aim to mirror the spelling pattern / convention being taught in spelling lessons.
- Children will enter Year 3 having been taught to join their letters and now need to build on speed and consistency.
- More detailed attention should now be paid to ensuring that ascenders and descenders are accurately placed and sized and the degree of italic slant is legible. Further opportunities should be given to practise more difficult joins such as the letters 'x' and 'f'.
- By Year 6, pupils may develop their own handwriting style within the cursive, joined handwriting style.

Expectations at the end of Key Stage 2

- All children should be able to join cursively, legibly and consistently.
- Number formation should be clear and consistent.
- The majority of children should be writing in pen.
- Where children need further support, opportunities to build on fine motor skills should be provided in class or if the concern is particularly acute, raised as a possible SEND.