

Foundational Handwriting at Sherborne Primary School

At Sherborne Primary School, we follow a consistent whole-school approach to handwriting and presentation.

This helps ensure that pupils produce written work of a high standard, and that both staff and children clearly understand and follow the same expectations.

Below is an overview of how handwriting is taught from Reception (EYFS) through to Year 6:

EYFS (Reception): Foundations

Handwriting instruction begins in Term 1. Initial work builds the motor foundations (gross and fine) and movement patterns (including sky/ground/under-the-line air writing).

Teaching is:

- Daily, until pupils write legibly and easily.
- In small steps with frequent practice.
- Cumulative and consolidated to avoid practising errors.
- Demonstrated by the teacher and revisited when needed.
- Additional to any handwriting within phonics.
- Children sit correctly, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly (tripod grip encouraged)

Pupils develop:

- Good gross and fine motor control.
- Language to talk about shapes and movements.
- Letter formation alongside phonics using RWI Set 1 mnemonics and films; parents may practise at home with the same resources.
- Teach letter sounds at the speed children can read them, not the speed they can write them. Set 1 mnemonics are used daily through Reception.

Example:

'Around' letters



Checklist: caterpillar

- ✓ start at the caterpillar's head



Checklist: apple

- ✓ start at the stalk
- ✓ draw a nice round apple
- ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down

Letter formation Film- [Please click here](#)

Year 1

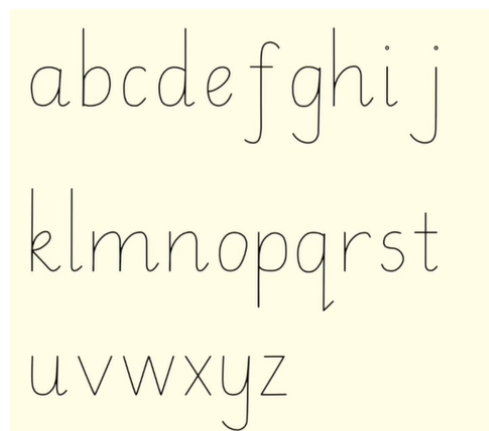
Pupils are taught to:

- Sit correctly, hold a pencil comfortably and correctly (tripod grip encouraged).
- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Form capital letters and digits 0–9.
- Understand letter families and practise within these.

Provision:

- Wide-lined paper is essential initially; narrower lines introduced when legible and easy on wide lines.
- RWI mnemonics continue. Pupils write with finger spaces, develop speed and accuracy, and use Stage 2 RWI films/lessons to build towards joining.
- Pupils memorise formation rather than copy.
- We use the 'sponge cake' layers metaphor to visualise letter placement and joins: *all joins are in the jam*.
- Stage 2 is only started once correct formation is secure.

Stage 2 example script:



Example of Stage 2 parent film- [Please click here](#)

Year 2

Pupils are taught to:

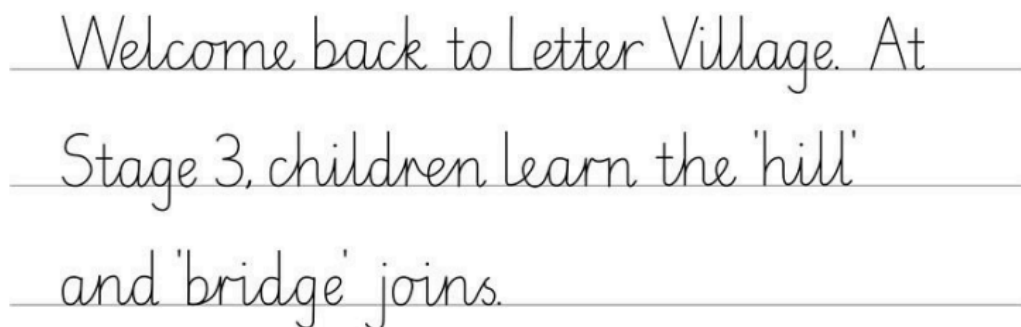
- Make lower-case letters the correct size relative to one another.
- Begin diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join and know which letters are best left unjoined when adjacent.
- Write capitals and digits to correct size and orientation relative to lower case.
- Use spacing that reflects letter size so joins do not create confusing shapes.
- Sit correctly, hold a pencil comfortably and correctly (tripod grip encouraged)

Practice and progression:

- Pupils continue to use the sponge cake visual and transition to Stage 3 when ready.
- Joined handwriting is not taught until print forms are correct and consistent. Once joining begins, discrete practice continues to develop automaticity.

Stage 3 example script:

Children will learn a style that looks like this:



Handwritten example script for Stage 3 joined handwriting, written on lined paper. The text is: "Welcome back to Letter Village. At Stage 3, children learn the 'hill' and 'bridge' joins." The script demonstrates the 'hill' and 'bridge' joins between letters.

Example of Stage 3 teaching film- [Please click here](#)

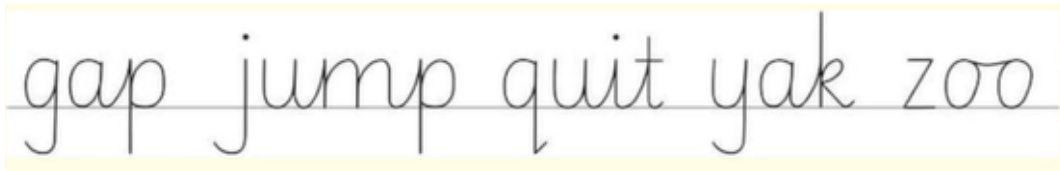
Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

Focus on further developing handwriting so it is increasingly legible, consistent and of high quality.

Pupils:

- Write with greater fluency and speed to record ideas efficiently and accurately.
- Adapt handwriting to purpose (e.g., quick functional notes vs. polished final pieces).
- Apply newly taught joins and letter formations across subjects, initially writing just the title or first line in joined handwriting, and increasing expectations week by week.
- Sit correctly, hold a pencil comfortably and correctly (tripod grip encouraged)
- Note: there is no national requirement to teach lead-ins (entry strokes) from the outset.

Exceptions: g, j, q, y, z are not joined(Y2+).



Our full Handwriting and Presentation Policy can be located on our school policy website page.

