

# **Handwriting and Presentation Policy** **at Sherborne Primary**

**Achieving, Belonging, Caring**



## **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out Sherborne Primary School's unified approach to handwriting and presentation. It ensures a consistently high standard of written work across the school that pupils and staff recognise, understand and follow. By aligning the teaching of handwriting with whole-school presentation expectations, we promote clarity in communication, pride in learning and a shared culture of high expectations

## **2. Whole-School Principles**

- High-quality presentation supports learning, communication and pride.
- Handwriting is taught explicitly and progressively and applied consistently across the curriculum.
- All staff model excellent handwriting and presentation.
- Expectations are clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate from EYFS through to Year 6.
- Presentation reflects our values of *Achieving, Belonging, Caring*.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Teachers and Teaching Assistants**

1. Know and model the school's agreed handwriting style, letter formation and joins.
2. Teach handwriting progressively so that pupils' handwriting develops lesson by lesson.
3. Maintain high expectations during handwriting sessions and insist on transfer of standards to all written work.
4. Ensure a consistently high standard of presentation in classroom environments and in all displayed work.
5. Identify pupils who require additional support and provide targeted interventions.
6. Make appropriate adaptations for left-handed pupils and those with specific needs.

### **3.2 Pupils**

1. Understand the importance of clear, neat presentation to communicate meaning effectively.
2. Write legibly with increasing fluency and speed, using joined handwriting and print as appropriate for purpose.
3. Maintain correct pencil/pen grip, start points and letter sizes.
4. Take pride in presentation and celebrate high standards (e.g., use of presentation display to reward and share good examples of work).

### **3.3 Subject and Senior Leaders**

- Monitor the quality of handwriting and presentation across the school.
- Provide coaching, resources and staff development as required.
- Approve movement to handwriting pen in line with the Pen Licence process (see Section 4.2).

## **4. Teaching Model and Time Allocation**

- We follow Read Write Inc. (RWI) for letter formation and progression.
- Handwriting is taught as a specific skill, *little and often*, and in line with the National Curriculum.
- Daily handwriting lessons are taught in EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils who find handwriting difficult receive targeted additional intervention.
- EYFS and KS1 link handwriting to daily phonics sessions and also teach discrete handwriting lessons.

### **4.1 Structure of a Handwriting Session**

- Posture check and correct book positioning.
- Teacher modelling on the board/visualiser.
- Guided practice with teacher model, then practice from memory.

### **4.2 Writing Tools**

- Pupils begin with pencil. When handwriting is consistently at the required standard, pupils move to a handwriting pen in Key Stage 2.
- Writing in pen is reassessed each year to maintain high standards.

### **4.3 Inclusion and Support**

- Most pupils can develop fluent, legible handwriting; some will need additional support.
- Additional sessions target the pupil's specific difficulty.

- For left-handed pupils: position paper to the right, seat to the left of right-handed pupils to avoid elbow clash, and provide extra left-to-right practice as needed.

## 5. Curriculum Progression (EYFS → KS2)

### 5.1 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.
- Sit correctly, hold 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
- ✓ curl around the body



Checklist: apple

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

## 5.2 Year 1

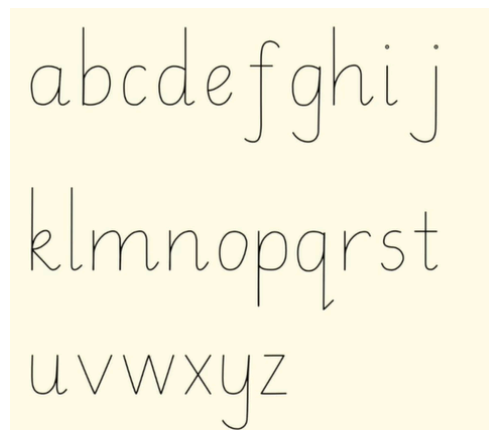
Pupils are taught to:

- 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:



## 5.3 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:

Welcome back to Letter Village. At  
Stage 3, children learn the 'hill'  
and 'bridge' joins.

#### **5.4 Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)**

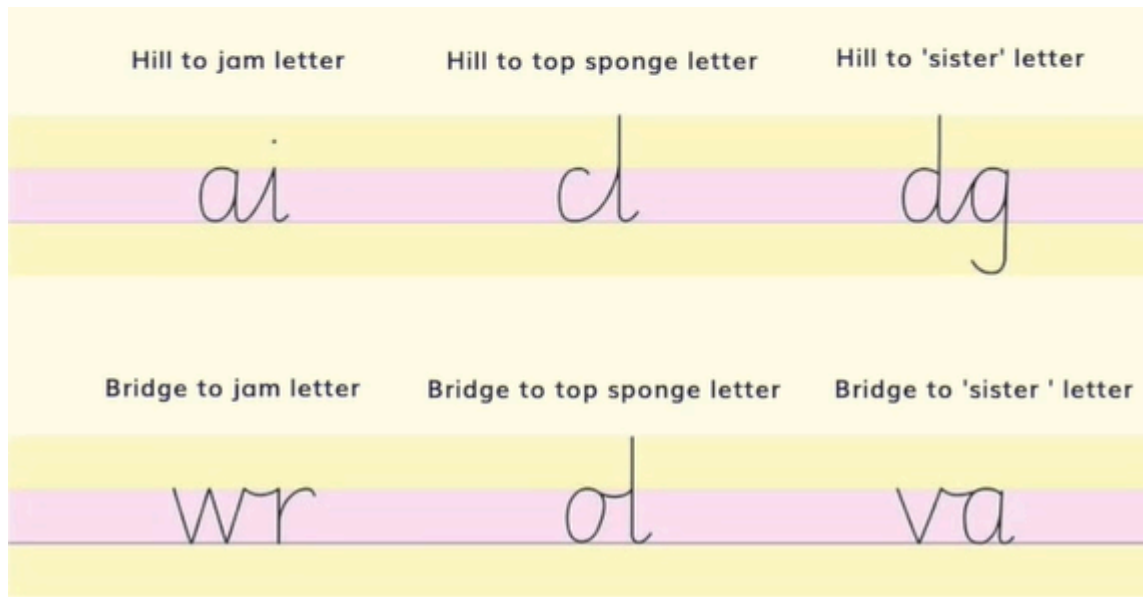
Focus on further developing handwriting so it is increasingly legible, consistent and of high quality.

Pupils:

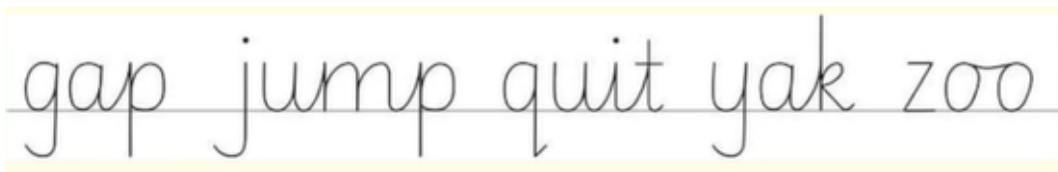
- Write with greater fluency and speed to record ideas efficiently and accurately.
- Adapt handwriting to purpose (e.g., quick functional notes vs. polished final pieces).
- Apply newly taught joins and letter formations across subjects, initially writing just the title or first line in joined handwriting, 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.

## 5.5 Handwriting Stages (Overview)

- Stage 1: Secure single-letter formation (EYFS/early Y1).
- Stage 2: Mature print that flows towards joining; consolidation of size, spacing, and baseline placement (Y1–Y2).
- Stage 3: Introduction of joins ('hill' and 'bridge' joins and their variations).



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

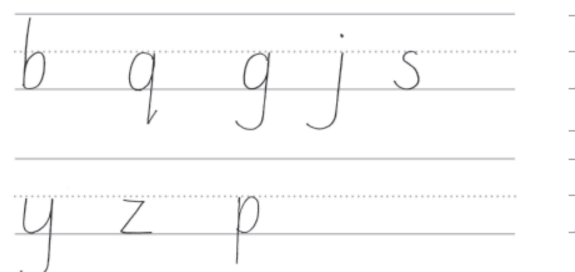


- Stage 4: Fluency and Personal Style (KS2):
  - Develop speed and stamina without loss of legibility.
  - Make purposeful choices about print vs. join for clarity.
  - Maintain consistent slant, spacing and size under time constraints.
  - Apply standards across all subjects and in assessments.

### Letters that do not join to others (if using a non-curly style)

Schools need to decide whether or not to join the following letters: **b q g j s y z** onto the next letter. (Some schools only teach 'bi' and 'si' joined.)

It is not a statutory requirement of the 2014 National Curriculum that children use joined-up handwriting until Year 3, although it notes that children 'should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation'.



## **6. Applying Handwriting Across the Curriculum**

- Once letters are secure, pupils apply their new handwriting beyond dedicated lessons.
- Application grows incrementally: start with titles, then the first sentence/line, and increase the volume of joined, polished writing each week.
- Teachers make expectations explicit for the task type (e.g., quick notes vs. display-quality writing).

## **7. Presentation Expectations (All Subjects)**

### **7.1 General Standards**

- Work is neat, legible and consistently formed, in line with our agreed RWI-aligned style.
- Pupils maintain pride in the appearance of their work.
- Teachers model the expected standard on all boards and display writing.
- Dates on Learning Objectives/index pages or date stamped in EYFS and Year 1 as appropriate.
- Dates written and underlined in full in English Books by children in Y2-6. All other books with short numerical dates and underlined.
- Dates are written to the left margin with date on the first line and title underneath.
- All work clearly titled and underlined.
- Use a rubber or single ruled line to cross out errors.
- For more creative pieces like double-page spreads and diagrams-writing is still presented on the line.
- Printed letters may be used for a range of reasons like labelling diagrams or newspaper headlines.
- Best examples are celebrated each day in class.
- Where work is underlined a ruler is used.
- Ensure children stick work in straight and within the page using a glue-stick.

### **7.2 Learning Environments and Displays**

- Writing Walls: showcase each class's writing journey over the year and include presentation rewards.
- English and Maths Displays: may include supportive material; not all displays need to be working walls.

- Spelling (NC Appendix 1) Words: displayed on whiteboards or display boards (e.g., *word of the day*).
- Topic Displays: high-quality work from core and foundation subjects to show termly achievement.
- Team Displays & Corporate Gallery: corridor boards with frames celebrate best work; one board is maths-related.
- In some rooms, displays may be backed with hessian to support a graduated sensory response.
- Display lettering sets can be found at:  
<http://www.instantdisplay.co.uk/alphabetsets.htm>

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

- As part of the school's monitoring cycle, SLT conduct termly reviews of pupils' books and displays to ensure consistent implementation.
- Findings inform feedback, CPD, and resource allocation.
- Outcomes sought:
  - Pupils of all abilities present their work to the highest possible standard, building confidence and self-esteem.
  - Consistency of expectations across the school.
  - Clear progression in presentation from year to year.

### **9. Appendices (Staff Reference)**

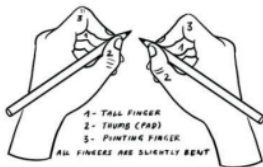
- Appendix A: Pencil grip and finger positioning guidance (tripod grip; relaxed grip; placement about a finger space above the point; use of stickers to mark finger position). *The Writing Framework (2025)*, p.100.
- Appendix B: Classroom set up. *The Writing Framework (2025)*, p.35.

Note: Visual diagrams and examples used in class and CPD are stored on the Staff Shared Drive → English → Handwriting and the RWI portal.

## Appendix A

Teachers should encourage pupils to maintain correct finger positioning. Most pupils find the tripod grip the easiest to learn and support grips can help. Teachers should show pupils how to pinch the pencil with the index ('pointing') finger and the thumb, about a finger space from the end (on the coloured part just above the sharpened point); and how to rest the middle finger underneath the pencil to support it. If necessary, a sticker can show pupils where to place their fingers. The way a child grips the pencil will affect the quality, speed and flow of the handwriting. The grip should be relaxed, not pressing too hard on the pencil or the paper.

Finger positioning using the tripod grip:



Paper positioning for left-handers:

Paper positioning for right-handers:



## Appendix B- Classroom set-up

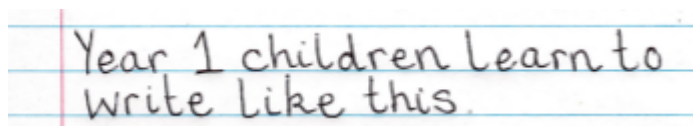
From the beginning, seating pupils at a table for handwriting will best support them to hold their pencil and position themselves properly to write. This does not mean children should be sitting at a table for the rest of the day.

Before any handwriting teaching starts, pupils should have pencils sharpened, ready on tables; grip-supports and finger markers in place on pencils, if needed; paper in position; and any necessary adjusted equipment in place. All pupils can be taught to slant their paper: slightly anti-clockwise for right-handers and clockwise for left-handers (Appendix A: Handwriting guidance illustrates this). The slanting particularly helps left-handers to have a good view of what they are writing, since their left hand moves away from what they have written. Every pupil should have a good view of the adult and what is being modelled, including pencil grip, have space to write and be seated at the right height.

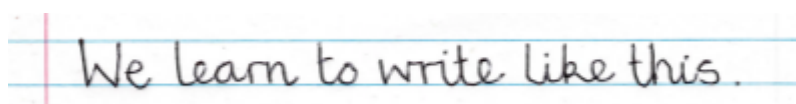
Although activities such as painting, holding a knife and fork, and playing with playdough develop finger and hand strength, pupils need to be taught explicitly how to hold a pencil.

An inefficient pencil grip can cause discomfort, which can affect motivation, fluency, legibility and create difficulty in sustaining speed. Schools should also support pupils to apply appropriate pressure as they write, since this is important for fluency and reduces the risk of pain. The same routines for finding the correct and comfortable pencil grip and sitting position should be used throughout the school and practised until they are automatic, so that only shorthand reminders to pupils are necessary. These can be referred to as 'ready to write' routines. Schools should consider the choice of writing implement and the classroom set-up.

#### **Appendix C- Book covers/slips**



Year 1 children learn to  
write like this.



We learn to write like this.

#### **Appendix D- Computer script**

*Edu NSW ACT Cursive (Google docs)*

*Click on font and then on 'More fonts'*

*Search 'cursive'*

*Select 'Edu NSW ACT Cursive'*

*Or*

*Edu NSW ACT Hand pre for KSI*

| Document Control Table |                                                                                                                              |                                 |                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Document Title         | Handwriting and Presentation Policy                                                                                          |                                 |                                                                                                   |
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| 1                      | Adopted by the Governing Body on:<br>27th April 2015<br>Signed by: Tim Bartley (Chair of Governors)<br>Date: 27th April 2015 | Senior Leaders                  | Update inlight of changes to our current practices and detail them within the new policy          |
| 2                      | Summer 2025                                                                                                                  | F Griffiths                     | No changes to policy- renewed date                                                                |
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