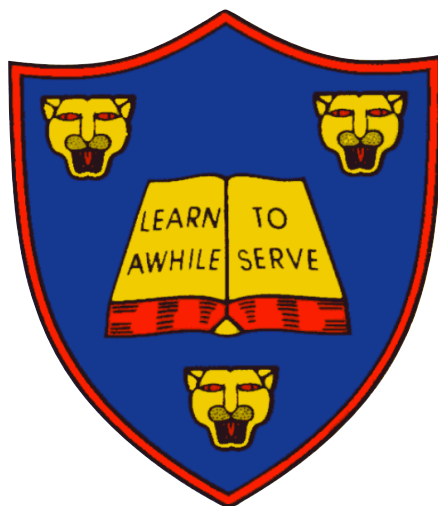


Stratford-upon-Avon Primary School



English curriculum: Handwriting

Document Reference Number:	
Title:	English curriculum: Handwriting
Policy Owner:	Heather Chapleo, English Leader
Version:	2
Approved Date:	March 2025
Approving Body:	March 2025
Next Review Date:	March 2027

Version Control:		
Version	Last Modified	Last Modified By
1	March 2025	Gill Humphriss
1.1	November 2025	Heather Chapleo



Stratford-upon-Avon Primary School English curriculum: Handwriting

Intent

Every morning, children from Key Stage 1 upwards practise their handwriting, following our progressive curriculum that ensures skills build incrementally and are retrieved to consolidate, until children are fluent writers.

Handwriting is an integral component of the English programmes of study for Key Stages 1 and 2. The programmes describe two dimensions of writing:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

The curriculum demands that teaching should develop competence in both dimensions, as writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription. This relationship defines the role of handwriting as a functional tool in the writing process. The National Curriculum for English places high importance on handwriting, but does not provide guidance on how it should be taught. It also does not specify a particular font style, for example. At Stratford-upon-Avon Primary School, we adopt a casual cursive style. We build fluency progressively throughout school so that children are able to quickly record their thinking in a legible, well-presented style.

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Learn handwriting in a way which reduces cognitive load and enables regular, precise practise
- Receive specific live feedback in a way which prevents misconceptions from becoming embedded
- Develop a cursive handwriting style that enables them to write fluently
- Understand the importance of good presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly
- Take pride in the presentation of their work, and therefore work across the curriculum is presented to the same high standard
- Understand the difference between note-taking handwriting for speed and best handwriting for presentation, and be supported to identify when each are appropriate
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations

Intended impact milestones ahead of using cursive writing in KS2

By the end of Reception:

- all pupils will have developed sufficient core and fine motor strength to use appropriate pencil grip and to sit with correct posture for writing at a table
- **most pupils will be able to form lower case letters correctly and most upper case letters**
- pupils who cannot form most letters correctly will be identified and interventions planned for

By the end of Year 1:

- **all pupils will use appropriate grip and form all letters correctly**



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- all pupils will use handwriting lined paper in exercise books to support their developing understanding of proportionality, including ascenders and descenders

By the end of Year 2:

- all pupils will form their letters correctly
- **most pupils have begun to join their letters correctly**
- some pupils will now be writing on lined paper instead of handwriting lines as a scaffold
- some pupils will use pens

By the end of Year 3:

- all pupils will be using lined paper
- **most pupils will write using cursive handwriting**
- all pupils will use appropriate proportionality (ascenders and descenders)
- all pupils will use pens

By the end of Year 4:

- **All pupils will write using cursive handwriting**

Implementation:

Our handwriting approach is consistently embedded throughout school so that our children develop well-presented, fluent handwriting with which to record their thoughts swiftly and coherently.

We follow the guidance outlined in 'Development Matters' and English curriculum. Our progressive approach to the teaching of handwriting is informed by Nelson Handwriting by Oxford Owl, though adapted to meet the needs of children within our school.

EYFS

Children take part in engaging activities to develop their gross motor skills to build sufficient core strength to have good posture for writing by the time they exit Reception.

Purposeful stations within continuous provision encourage gross and fine motor development, with a construction area and Funky Fingers station permanent aspects of this environment. Stations are continually adapted to respond to pupil motivations and current topics to ensure motivation to independently access opportunities is as high as possible.

They are provided with engaging activities within the provision which encourage the development of fine motor strength (such as pinching, twisting, pressing and cutting).

Pupils are encouraged to transition to purposeful mark-making as they, for example, use their index finger in sand or paint.

When ready, pupils are taught tripod pencil grip and writing posture when sitting at a table with both feet on the ground and straight backs.

Children begin by mark making with a pencil, tracing over lines and exciting shapes.

Teachers direct letter formation practice and, by the end of Reception, differentiated dictation.

Engaging activities are provided within continuous provision for them to rehearse this new learning. Adults maximise upon opportunities to encourage and correct, whilst ensuring the impact of these corrections does not dampen enthusiasm for writing.



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Year 1

Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities.

At the start of Year 1, children focus upon consolidating their lower case letter formation whilst direct teaching focuses primarily upon securing their knowledge and skills when writing upper case letters.

Adults continue to guide children on how to write letters correctly, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.

Pupils have a directed handwriting lesson daily where an adult explicitly models a letter formation for the children to imitate.

Adults circulate to conduct AFL and offer live feedback to prevent misconceptions from becoming embedded. Adults may tick great examples or remodel and ask pupils to imitate.

In addition to tightly-focused daily letter formation lessons, handwriting is discussed within, and linked to, phonics sessions.

Dictation is a core component of our phonics sessions. Adults feedback immediately to address misconceptions in terms of letter formation and phoneme-grapheme correspondence.

When writing across the curriculum, pupils use handwriting lines to ensure proportionality: children form ascenders, descenders and capital letters with appropriate size differentiation.

By the end of Year 1, pupils can form all lower case and capital letters correctly (or pupils have been identified for rapid catch up handwriting interventions which are a priority within the Summer term so they become Year 2 ready).

Year 2

Pupils have a directed handwriting lesson daily where an adult explicitly models a letter formation for the children to imitate.

Adults circulate to conduct AFL and offer live feedback to prevent misconceptions from becoming embedded. Adults may tick great examples or remodel and ask pupils to imitate.

Pupils use handwriting lines to ensure proportionality, forming ascenders, descenders and capital letters with appropriate size differentiation.

When ready, children begin to learn to join their letters in a guided and progressive way.

Some children begin to use a pen.

Year 3

Pupils continue to access regular handwriting lessons to continue teaching joins.

Once the curriculum is completed, children need to continue to access handwriting rehearsal lessons so that this becomes fluent and embedded. This must be separate to other lessons so that the focus is clear and cognitive load managed.

Year 4 onwards

Children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting so that they develop a clear, fluent style upon entering Year 6.

Children are explicitly taught to adapt their handwriting for the for different purposes (using a neat, legible hand for finished and published work; using a faster script for note-taking).



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Closing the gap

Pupils who are working significantly below age related expectations access timely interventions with SMART targets. These are mentioned in IEPs and learning plans. The impact of these interventions is tightly monitored by teachers, Teaching Assistants and the SLT.

Closing the handwriting gap is a particular priority in EYFS and KS1, so that pupils are on track by the time that they exit Year 2. Without this skill, pupils will struggle to write across the curriculum as the pace and demands of the KS2 curriculum are introduced. Therefore, handwriting and phonics interventions are given precedence over other English curriculum learning in these phases to ensure rapid gains are made.

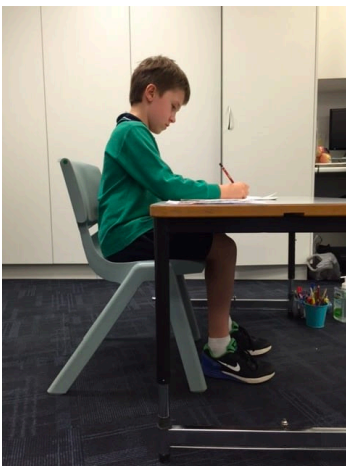
These interventions may look like:

- Regular Funky Fingers interventions to build fine motor strength
- 1:1 or small group tightly-focused additional handwriting lessons with adults modelling accurate formation and offering specific remodelling corrections
- Short blast, daily practise homework sent home with accompanying videos to support families

Interventions should:

- Be 1:1 or in small groups to enable adults to offer quality, specific, immediate feedback
- Short blasts to ensure high engagement
- Tightly-focused upon one letter and practised until secure before moving on (e.g. one letter may take a week, or longer, of daily rehearsal)
- (In KS1) Using handwriting lines as a scaffold appropriate to the pupil's stage of learning (e.g. wider ones if pupils are still forming large letters)
- When using a pencil, always sat at a table using correct grip and writing posture

Implementation - Structure of a handwriting lesson



Adopting a correct posture for writing:

- Sitting with both feet flat on the floor
- Thighs parallel to floor and knees at a 90 degree angle
- Back up straight, inclined towards the desk and pivoted from the hips
- Forearms resting on desk with elbows level with the desktop at 90 degrees
- Paper stabilised with non-dominant hand
- Neck and shoulders relaxed
- Body faces desk squarely so non-dominant arm can support body weight
- Paper tilted to the up to the right (if right handed) or up to the (if left handed)
- Ensuring our hair is not in front of our eyes
- Ensuring that we have clean hands



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Our handwriting lesson sequence

Lesson one

1. Teacher explicitly models the correct formation in the air and on a whiteboard so that all can see
2. An adult circulates to correct misconceptions and praise correct attempts

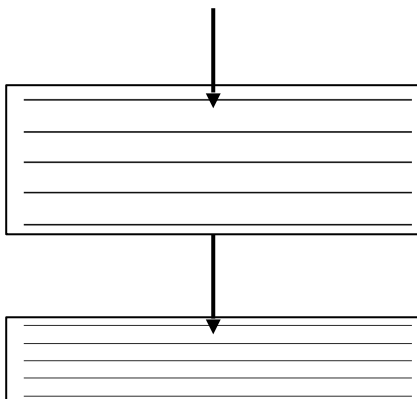
Lesson two

1. The same letter formation is practised. This time a greater emphasis is placed upon learner retrieval and application rather than teacher modelling
2. An adult circulates to address misconceptions and praise correct attempts

Lesson five

1. Once secure, learners apply their learning to using the lines within their English books rather than handwriting lines as scaffolds
2. An adult models the correct formation on the new format
3. An adult circulates to address misconceptions and praise correct attempts

Handwriting scaffolds



We transition for writing on paper in books using handwriting scaffolds to broad lines to narrow lines progressively at a pace which is right for each cohort. Some individuals may use handwriting scaffolds for longer than their peers as they find this a useful support.

Children achieve 'Pen Licenses' when their handwriting is neat enough for them to transition from pencil to pen.

However, we also discuss the importance of choosing the correct tool for the writing purpose. Sometimes, a pencil might be more appropriate when drafting and making lots of changes!



Inclusive practice

Teachers can use their discretion to ensure that, on occasion, a particular weakness does not prevent an accurate judgement being made of a pupil's attainment overall. This can be implemented for children with a handwriting difficulty who are secure in all other aspects of writing.

Some children may benefit from using digital tools to support them with writing their ideas. They may benefit from touch-typing lessons to improve their fluency when using digital tools instead.



Some children find mastering the tripod grip difficult, or have a disability which affects their fine motor skills or sensory tolerances. These children may find it useful to use a pencil grip when writing.