



'Celebrating Learning Together'

Shebbear Community School

HANDWRITING POLICY

Policy adopted on: 18th May 2026

Reviewed: 28th September 2026

To be reviewed:

**This policy was adopted by the Governing Body of
Shebbear Community School**

On the 28th September 2026

Signed: Andrew Goode, Chair of Governors

At Shebbear Community School we believe that clear, fluent handwriting is a fundamental life skill which supports pupils in communicating their ideas effectively across the curriculum. High-quality handwriting enables children to write with confidence, accuracy and increasing speed, allowing them to focus on composition rather than letter formation.

This policy outlines our whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of handwriting from Reception through to Year 6.

We want all pupils to:

- Develop a neat, legible and fluent handwriting style
- Form letters correctly and consistently
- Progress from print to joined handwriting at an appropriate pace
- Take pride in the presentation of their work
- Write with increasing speed, stamina and automaticity
- Use handwriting as a tool to support spelling and composition

Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)

Handwriting in Reception is taught through the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme. The focus is on:

- Correct letter formation linked to phonics teaching
- Use of RWI rhymes and visual prompts
- Developing fine motor control through structured activities
- Correct pencil grip, posture and seating position
- Writing on lines when developmentally appropriate
- Building confidence and enjoyment in mark-making and early writing

Children are encouraged to form letters accurately rather than quickly. Early intervention is provided where pencil grip or motor control needs support.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

Handwriting continues to be taught through the Read Write Inc. handwriting scheme. Teaching focuses on:

- Secure and consistent letter formation
- Correct orientation and size of letters

- Use of ascenders and descenders
- Beginning to introduce simple joins when children are ready
- Reinforcing links between phonics, spelling and handwriting
- Regular short practice sessions

By the end of Year 2, most pupils are expected to:

- Form all lower-case and capital letters correctly
- Write legibly on lines with appropriate spacing
- Begin to use some joins confidently
- Demonstrate increasing fluency and control

Structure of Read Write Inc. Handwriting

We teach children to read and write Set 1 sounds from the start of Reception as part of their Read Write Inc. Phonics lessons.

Children first learn to form letters while they learn to read Set 1 letter-sounds in Reception.

As soon as they can read Set 1 sounds, we teach a separate daily 10-minute handwriting lesson. These handwriting lessons are at a different time from the Read Write Inc. lesson.

We teach handwriting in four stages.

Stage 1 begins as soon as most children can read Set 1 sounds. We continue to teach children to form letters correctly.

a d g o c q

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Round the apple, down the leaf	✓ start at the stalk ✓ go round the apple ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom
	Round the dinosaur's bottom, up its tall neck, down to the feet	✓ go round his bottom ✓ up the tall neck ✓ down the straight line to the feet ✓ make a curl for the feet
	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl	✓ start at her bobble ✓ go round her face ✓ go back to her bobble ✓ go down her straight hair ✓ draw a curl
	All around the orange	✓ start at the stalk ✓ go around the orange back to the stalk
	Curl round the caterpillar	✓ start at the caterpillar's head ✓ curl round the body
	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair	✓ start at the back of her crown ✓ go round her face ✓ go back up to her crown ✓ go down her hair ✓ give it a sharp flick

u y

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle	✓ start at the handle ✓ go down the straight handle ✓ go underneath the umbrella and back up the other side ✓ go down the umbrella ✓ add a little curl for the puddle
	Down a horn, up a horn and under its head	✓ start at the top of the first horn ✓ go down the straight line for the first horn ✓ go underneath the horns ✓ draw a straight line up for the second horn ✓ go down and curl under its head

b p

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down the laces to the heel, round the toe	✓ start at the top of the boot ✓ go straight down the boot ✓ go up over the toe ✓ back to the heel
	Down the plait and over the pirate's face	✓ start at the top of the plait ✓ go down the plait ✓ go over the face ✓ finish under the chin

h n m r

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down the head to the hooves and over its back	✓ start at the horse's head ✓ go down its straight neck ✓ go down to its feet ✓ go round its back ✓ draw a back leg ✓ add a little curl of dust as the horse runs away
	Down Nobby, over his net	✓ start at the top of Nobby's head ✓ go straight down Nobby ✓ go over the net ✓ add a curve for the grass
	Maisie, mountain, mountain	✓ start at Maisie's head ✓ go straight down Maisie ✓ go over the mountains ✓ check the mountains are the same height as Maisie ✓ add a small curl for the grass
	Down its back, then curl over its arm	✓ start at the robot's head ✓ go straight down its body ✓ go over the robot's arm

e s f i

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg	✓ go up around the shell that needs to be cut off the egg ✓ draw underneath the egg
	Slither down the snake	✓ start at the snake's head ✓ curl one way ✓ curl the other
	Down the stem and draw the leaves	✓ start at the top of the flower ✓ go round and down the flower stem – then lift the pencil off the page ✓ draw a straight line across the leaves
	Down the body, dot the head	✓ start at the top of the insect's neck ✓ go down the body ✓ draw a tail ✓ add a dot for the head

tklj

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down the tower, across the tower	✓ start at the top of the tower ✓ go straight down the tower ✓ add a curve ✓ make a straight line across the tower
	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg	✓ start at the kangaroo's head ✓ go down its body ✓ draw a tail to the body ✓ draw a straight back leg
	Down the long leg	✓ start at the top of his leg ✓ go down his long leg ✓ add a curl for the shoe
	Down its body, curl and dot	✓ start at the top of the jack-in-a-box's neck ✓ go down the long straight body ✓ draw a smooth curl for the legs ✓ add a dot for the head

vwxz

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down a wing, up a wing	✓ draw two straight lines for the wings – down, up
	Down, up, down, up	✓ draw four lines, all the same length – down, up, down, up
	Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side	✓ start at the top left ✓ go to the feet ✓ start at the bottom left ✓ go up to the arms
	Zig-zag-zig	✓ draw three straight lines – across, down, across

Stage 2 begins during Year 1. Children learn the relative size of letters and to form letters that will flow easily into a joined style.

At Stage 2, we group letters that have a similar formation:

a d g o c q

u y

b p

h n m r

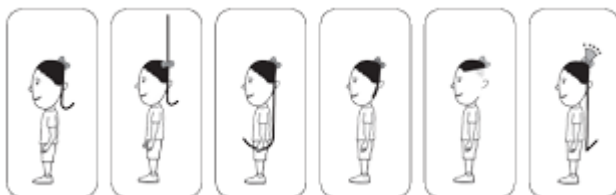
e s f i

l t k j

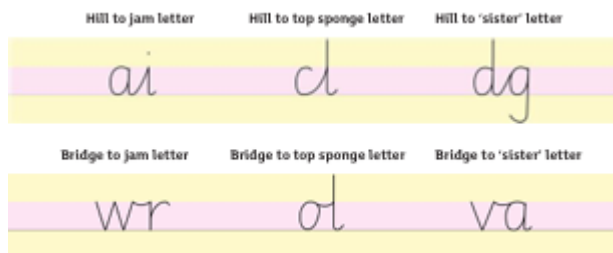
v w x z

These new handwriting 'picture hooks' focus on each group's shared similarities. For example, here's the first group of letters – a d g o c q

You can see that the shape of all six sisters' heads is identical – except for their hair.



Stage 3 follows straight on. Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins – the ‘bridge’ join, the ‘hill’ join and the two variations on each.



Example letter joins

Letter	to jam	to top	no 'sister'	to e	to s	Letter	to jam	to top	no 'sister'	to e	to s
a	ar	ab	aa	ae	as	m	mr	mb	ma	me	ms
b	br	bb	ba	be	bs	n	nr	nb	na	ne	ns
c	cr	cb	ca	ce	cs	o	or	ob	oa	oe	os
d	dr	db	da	de	ds	p	pr	pb	pa	pe	ps
e	er	eb	ea	ee	es	r	rr	rb	ra	re	rs
f	fr	fb	fa	fe	fs	s	sr	sb	sa	se	ss
h	hr	hb	ha	he	hs	t	tr	tb	ta	te	ts
i	ir	ib	ia	ie	is	u	ur	ub	ua	ue	us
k	kr	kb	ka	ke	ks	v	vr	vb	va	ve	vs
l	lr	lb	la	le	ls	w	wr	wb	wa	we	ws
Letter that do not join						x	xr	xb	xa	xe	xs
g	j	q	y	z							

Stage 4: Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

At Stage 4 of the Read Write Inc. Handwriting programme, pupils develop fluency, consistency and accuracy in joined handwriting. The focus is on securing correct letter formation and ensuring that joins are smooth, efficient and legible across all written work.

Pupils are taught to:

- Use a clear, fluent cursive style with appropriate joins between letters.
- Apply correct letter size and proportion, ensuring that ascenders and descenders are accurately formed.
- Maintain consistent spacing between letters, words and sentences.
- Write with increasing speed while maintaining legibility and presentation.
- Use joins automatically and appropriately in independent writing across the curriculum.
- Sit correctly, hold their pencil efficiently and position paper appropriately to support comfortable handwriting.

At stage 4 children practise writing the 'hill' and 'bridge' joins, and build speed writing words and sentences.

Teachers model the handwriting style explicitly and provide regular opportunities for guided practice. Pupils are expected to transfer their handwriting skills into all areas of learning, demonstrating pride in the presentation of their work.

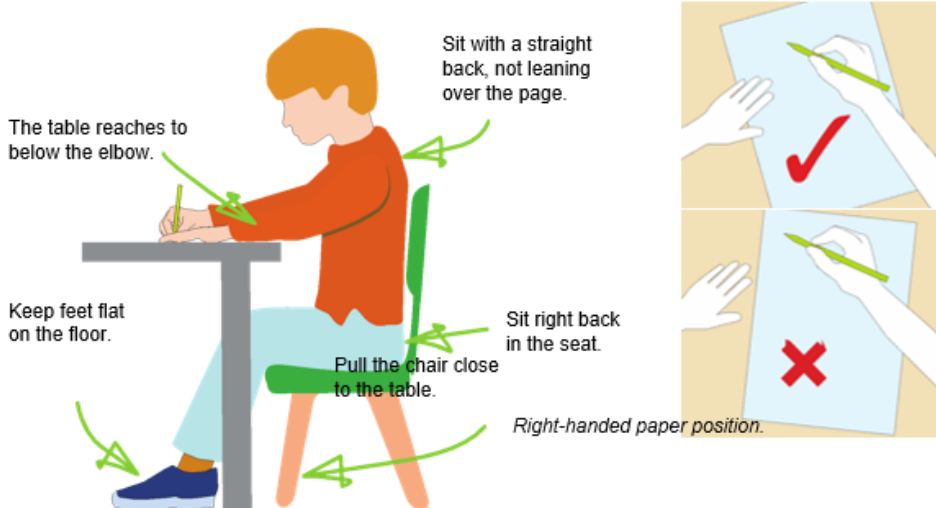
By the end of Stage 4, pupils should be able to write neatly, confidently and fluently using a joined handwriting style that is clear and easy to read. Handwriting should be sufficiently automatic to allow pupils to focus on the content and quality of their writing rather than the mechanics of letter formation.

Expected Outcome: Pupils produce well-presented work with consistent joins, accurate letter formation, appropriate spacing and a fluent writing style suitable for the transition to upper key stage learning

Correct posture, pencil grip and paper position for handwriting

Pupils are taught to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.

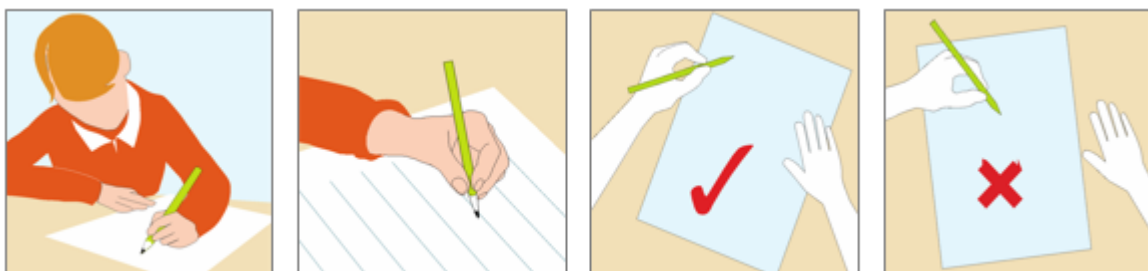
Sitting position



Left-handed writer

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers will demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

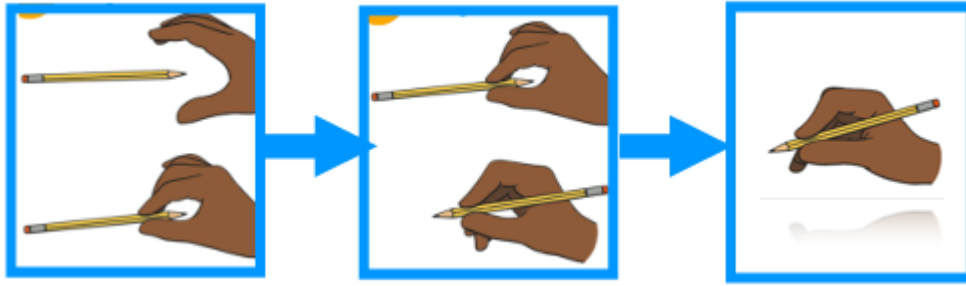


Left-handed paper position.

The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left-handed children should use the tripod grip which enables the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

We use the tripod grip rhyme: Nip, Flip, Grip



Children will be taught this grip from their first day in school and any children finding this difficult will be picked up quickly.

Expectations for Presentation

Across the school, pupils are encouraged to:

- Date and title work neatly
- Use a sharp pencil or teacher approved blue handwriting pen (KS2, when appropriate)
- Cross out mistakes with a single line with a ruler
- Maintain consistent letter size and spacing
- Take pride in the appearance of their books

Teachers model high standards of handwriting on the board and in feedback.

Inclusion and Support

We recognise that pupils develop handwriting skills at different rates. Support may include:

- Additional fine motor activities
- Pencil grips or adapted writing tools
- Targeted small-group or individual practice
- Occupational therapy advice where appropriate
- Adjusted expectations for pupils with identified needs

Assessment and Monitoring

Handwriting progress is monitored through:

- Ongoing teacher assessment
- Book looks and work scrutiny

- Moderation within year groups
- Feedback during lessons
- End-of-year expectations

Where concerns arise, early support strategies are implemented.

Role of Teachers

Teachers will:

- Model correct letter formation and joins
- Teach handwriting regularly and explicitly
- Provide clear feedback and praise effort
- Encourage pride and care in presentation

Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Support correct pencil grip and posture at home
- Encourage neat writing in homework tasks
- Celebrate effort and improvement
- Avoid teaching alternative letter formations that conflict with school schemes

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if there are changes to national guidance or school practice.

This policy ensures a clear, consistent progression from early letter formation through to fluent cursive handwriting, supporting all pupils at Shebbear Community School to become confident and capable writers.