



Three Bridges Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Approval Date: April 2018

Review Date: November 2025

Headteacher: 

Handwriting Policy

Rationale

At Three Bridges Primary school, we are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care in our handwriting style. We use Letter-join's on-line handwriting resource and Lesson Planners as the basis of our Handwriting Policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Handwriting across the school

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aim

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

The aim is that all children leaving Three Bridges Primary School will be confident writing in the following style:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (+, -, =, %)

Expectations

Teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each Year Group in our school when writing on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Consistency throughout the school

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and develop their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride. Opportunities for linking phonics and spelling are used across the school.

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met. Handwriting is modelled daily in the Foundation Stage and opportunities for children to practise letter formation is provided. In Years 1 to 6 it is taught daily: Letter Join is followed by all staff.

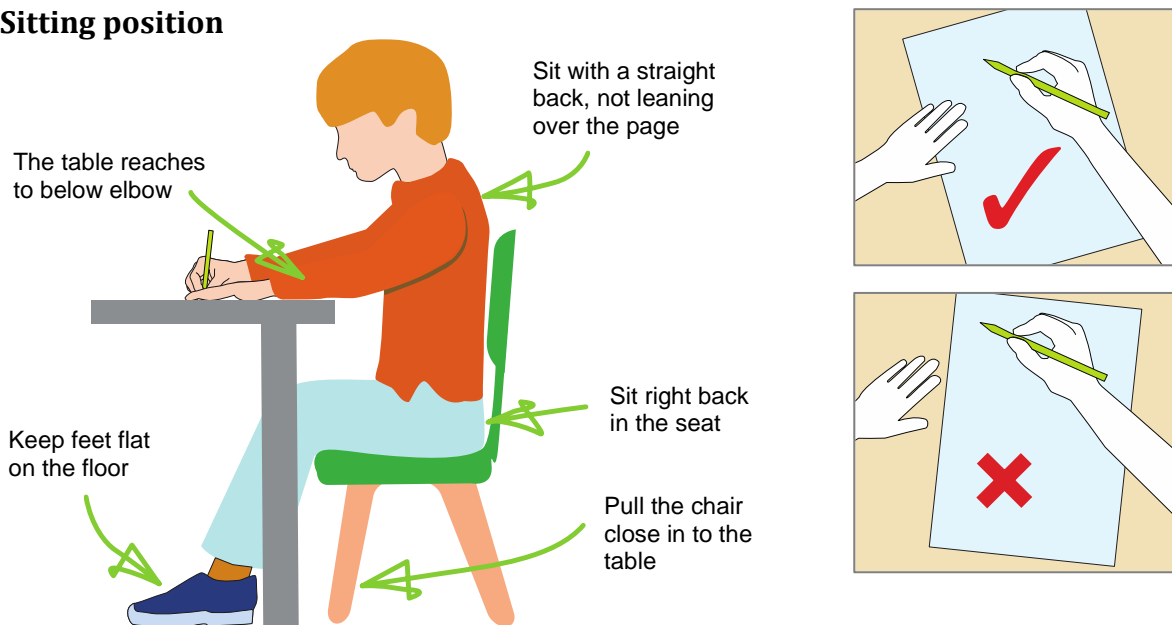
Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used. Children are encouraged to maintain the correct posture and pencil grip. Children should begin writing in pen as soon as they have developed a neat, cursive style of handwriting, ideally by Year 4: see Presentation Policy.

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

Sitting position

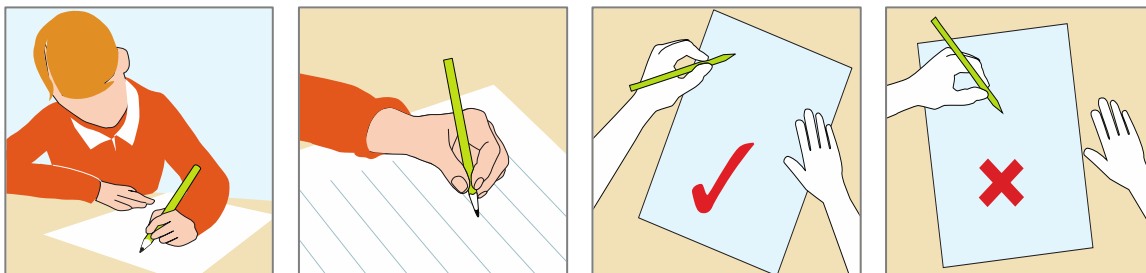


Left-handed children

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should 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 nib as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Experiment with seat height – some left-handed children may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.

Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically. Model letter formation, skywriting, etc. specifically for left-handed children, with your left hand.



To avoid smudging their work:

- Left-handed children should be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of their writing implements;
- The pencil should sit in the 'V' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb;
- The wrist should be straight.

A variety of writing equipment can be used to support the children's handwriting such as pencil grips, tripod pencils/ pens, wide lined exercise books and writing slopes.

The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib. We use the Tripod Grip Rhyme:

Right-handed pencil grip



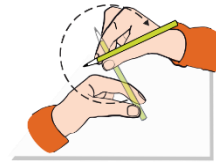
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,

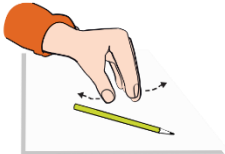


Spin it round...



and grip.

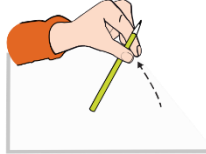
Left-handed pencil grip



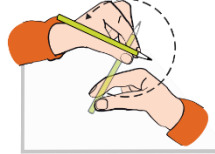
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,



Spin it round...



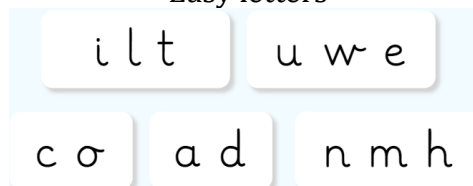
and grip.

Other functional pencil grips:

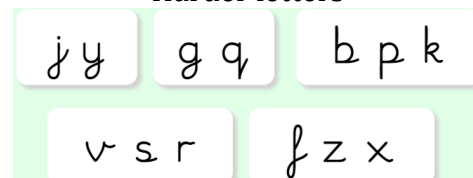
- ✓ Dynamic tripod
- ✓ Lateral tripod
- ✓ Dynamic quadrupod
- ✓ Lateral quadrupod

Handwriting will be taught in the following groups:

Easy letters



Harder letters



- Down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l (**long ladder**): letters i, j, l, t, u;
- Down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r (**one-armed robot**): letters b, h, k, m, n, p, r; (numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction);
- Anti-clockwise round, exemplified by the letter c (**curly caterpillar**) letters: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s; numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9;
- Zigzag letters: letters: v, w, x, z; numbers: 1, 4, 7.

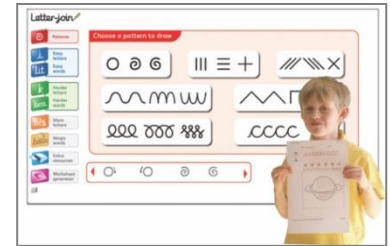
Specific progression

EYFS

Early Years

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:

- ✓ Enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- ✓ Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- ✓ Becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- ✓ Correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting



Module 1 Cursive: Early Years teaches pre-cursive patterns and cursive, lower case letters. It starts with fine and gross motor skills warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip. The first module is divided into three sections covering:

- pre-cursive patterns
- easy letters and words
- harder letters and words

At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and form all the cursive, lowercase letters of the alphabet and write words using the correct joining techniques.

The following letter formation will be taught in EYFS:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

- Children are free to select a writing implement of their choice in child initiated learning.
- Correct sitting position and pencil grip is modelled.
- They are encouraged to write in a straight line from left to right.
- Some children are taught how to write 'on the line' and begin to join letters.

Years 1 and 2

Children are taught how to join letters, maintain regular size and shape of letters and regular spaces between words.

- ✓ The majority of children will develop the fluency of their joined handwriting at word and sentence level.
- ✓ Children are all taught to write 'on the line'.
- ✓ They are taught how to underline and label neatly with a ruler.

Teaching progresses from five short, to three longer lessons per week:

- Continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- Strengthening handwriting, learning and practice
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice

Module 2 Cursive contains lessons for teaching how to write capital letters, printed letters, numbers and symbols, whilst reinforcing cursive handwriting using Letter-join's on-line and printed resources. It is divided into three sections covering:

- warm-ups, letter families and capital letters
- printed letters
- numbers and symbols

On finishing this module, children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their use.

Module 3 Cursive: Year 2 includes lessons to improve letter formation and orientation of letters through regular practice and to support spelling, grammar and punctuation. The sections in this module cover:

- ✓ Letter families
- ✓ High frequency words
- ✓ Joining techniques
- ✓ Sequencing sentences
- ✓ Dictation exercises
- ✓ Times table facts

With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing. Children should be able to write words using the correct joining techniques.

Years 3 and 4

Years 3 and 4 are the transition time from pencil to blue handwriting pen. Children continue to use pencil in their work books but are taught to use pens during handwriting lessons. When the expected standard has been achieved, children will be given a pen to use. However, the pen can be withdrawn if the handwriting or presentation expectation is not consistently met. For this reason, we do not offer “handwriting licences”.

- They work on securing joins, improving fluency and continuing spelling links.
- Children are taught how to, and expected to use a ruler to draw lines, including underlining, diagrams, labelling and crossing out. Lines should be drawn in pencil only.
- Handwriting lessons will continue at least twice a week in Lower Key Stage 2.
- **Lesson Planner Module 4 for Year 3** is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.
- Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children’s handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.
- **Lesson Planner Module 5 for Year 4** focuses on using handwriting practice to support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, and French. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum.
- Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module’s lessons.
- On concluding this module, children will have practised applying size-appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum whilst maintaining fluency and legibility.



EXAMPLE

Word of the Week: precarious

Write this week's word six times:

precarious precarious precarious
precarious precarious precarious

Use a dictionary to find the definition of this week's word:

If something is precarious, it is not safe and likely to fall off or fall over.

Write some synonyms of this week's word:

insecure risky hazardous
treacherous unsafe dangerous

Write some antonyms of this week's word:

safe fixed strong
secure protected stable

Write a sentence using this week's word:

The cat was in a precarious position in the tree.
Because the cliff edge is precarious.
Take care on that precarious, old ladder.
The stranded climber was in a precarious situation.

Letter-join

Years 5 and 6

Children write in blue pen (not biro unless there is a specific need).

- They are expected to use a ruler to draw lines, including underlining, diagrams, labelling and crossing out.
- Teaching of handwriting continues to develop an efficient writing speed and aids spelling.
- Children learn to select the most appropriate presentation style for different writing genres.
- They begin to understand the balance between speed and legibility which is dependent on the purpose of the writing: the product or the final draft of a piece of writing.

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during (at least) two weekly lessons:

- Reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- Dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- KS2 SATs SPaG practice

Lesson Planner Module 6 for Year 5 continues to build on combining fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum.

In this module, learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. With Letter-join's wide range of resources they will be able to work towards producing consistently neat and well-presented handwriting in all curriculum subjects.

On completing this module, children should be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.

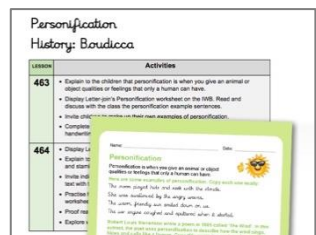
Lesson Planner Module 7 Year 6 presents learners with a range of tasks where they have to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based worksheets will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length.

Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to aid KS2 SATs SPaG revision. They are designed to support year 6 pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of SPaG preparation and plenty of handwriting practice.

By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an unjoined style or capital letters. All of these writing styles are covered in this module.

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place. Letter-join's Lesson Planners all include differentiation activities for extra practice/challenge.



These expectations apply to the vast majority of children in our school. Occasionally, a decision will be made to personalise expectations for a child who has such specific needs that these expectations could be a barrier to their progress (e.g. a child with physical difficulties writing). Difficulties are addressed through appropriate interventions or specific equipment. Handwriting will look different at different stages throughout a Year Group.

Celebration and Motivation

All staff will ensure that presentation and handwriting is promoted by:

- Celebrating work of a high standard in whole class situations;
- Displaying work of a high standard;
- Ensuring good presentation and handwriting is rewarded in line with the whole school behaviour policy (Praise, Dojo points and Headteacher awards).
- Using joined, legible and consistently formed handwriting on boards, in books, on flip charts and displays.
- Providing modelled examples and reviewing expectations with children.

Monitoring

- Presentation is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team on a regular basis through work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews.
- Feedback will be shared with the class teacher and at Leadership meetings. This will ensure that the policy leads to good practice.
- School Governors will receive reports based on the findings of SLT and ELT as part of the school development plan.

Handwriting at Home

Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home by using the Pupil log-in for Letter-join. Teachers can set Home Learning Tasks which may include:

- Magic Patterns
- Magic Words
- SoundMatch
- PhonicsMatch
- LetterMatch
- LetterLotto
- Letter Families activity
- Word Search
- Word Bank
- Spelling lists
- Write it Right!



Children can also watch the word and letter animations and practice and explore other handwriting resources on Letter-join.