



Brookside Primary School

Handwriting Policy 2026



1. Intent

At Brookside Primary School we are committed to ensuring that every pupil develops a fluent, legible, consistent handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing. Pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly. The cursive style is recommended by the British Dyslexia Association.

Strong transcription skills, including handwriting and spelling, are essential foundations for successful writing. Once handwriting is secure and automatic, pupils can focus on expressing their ideas with creativity, purpose and clarity. Our handwriting curriculum builds confidence, fluency and stamina from the very start of school life. It provides clear progression from early mark-making in Reception to fluent joined writing in Key Stage 2. By the time pupils leave Year 6 they are able to meet the expectations of the National Curriculum and The Writing Framework (DfE, 2025) and they take pride in the presentation of their work across all subjects.

Teachers are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwritten tasks including marking and board work whenever possible. Pupils experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride. As such pupil's handwriting should regularly form part of displays and they should be encouraged to redraft work for display purposes. Any written work displayed should be of the highest standard that individuals can manage.

2. Implementation

Handwriting Lesson Frequency

While The Writing Framework (DfE, 2025) does not prescribe fixed timetables, it does recommend:

- Frequent, explicit and discrete handwriting lessons
- Teaching that is in addition to phonics, not embedded in it
- Daily handwriting in Reception and Year 1 to develop automaticity

At Brookside Primary School, we follow a structured approach to the frequency of explicit and discrete handwriting teaching across the school. These sessions form the starter of all literacy

lessons and take place daily. Dictation is also included in the literacy lesson starter to support the art of transcription in becoming automatic and unconscious by revisiting and securing prior learning.

In Reception, pupils handwriting will initially focus on single letters before putting them together to form a simple CVC word or their name. In Year 1, pupils will secure the positioning of single lowercase and uppercase letters. Year 2 will introduce cursive handwriting through the teaching of the joins. In KS2, as pupils begin to apply their handwriting skills more independently their sessions will be focused on securing the style for fluency and consistency.

All handwriting teaching is supported by consistent daily modelling for instruction then observed and corrected for support. We hold high expectations for handwriting across all areas of the curriculum and it will be taken into consideration during all lessons. It is modelled by all staff across all subjects and supported through displays and teacher demonstration.

Phonics and spelling lessons are taught separately to handwriting lessons. While pupils practise using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised within spelling, handwriting is referred to but does not become combine.

Nursery and Reception:

For our youngest pupils we focus on;

- Giving the children a range of early mark making experiences
- Offering all children, a range of gross and fine motor activities to support in muscle movement and development
- Use anti-clockwise movements and retrace vertical lines and circles
- Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib
- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature
- Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing letter patterns in a variety of writing materials such as modelling clay, air writing, sand trays, felt pens, crayons, pencils, IWB, tablets
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation
- Understand that letters are written on a base line
- Have an understanding of writing their own name
- Understanding different shaped letter families
- Link letter shapes to the teaching of phonics via the Read Write Inc scheme
- Use of Nelson handwriting books to independently practise letter formation in a more formal way

Key stage one:

Handwriting will explicitly and discretely focus on;

- Write legibly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins
- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation
- Leave the correct space between words
- Form capital letters (not joined) and use where appropriate
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing

Key stage two:

In Lower Key Stage 2 pupils will continue with explicit daily handwriting to develop their cursive style. A Handwriting Pen is introduced when children demonstrate they have mastered the fluency and legibility of cursive writing. This is awarded in assembly with a certificate and a Brookside pen.

In Upper Key Stage 2 pupils refine their joined writing with emphasis on fluency and stamina while developing their own personal style.

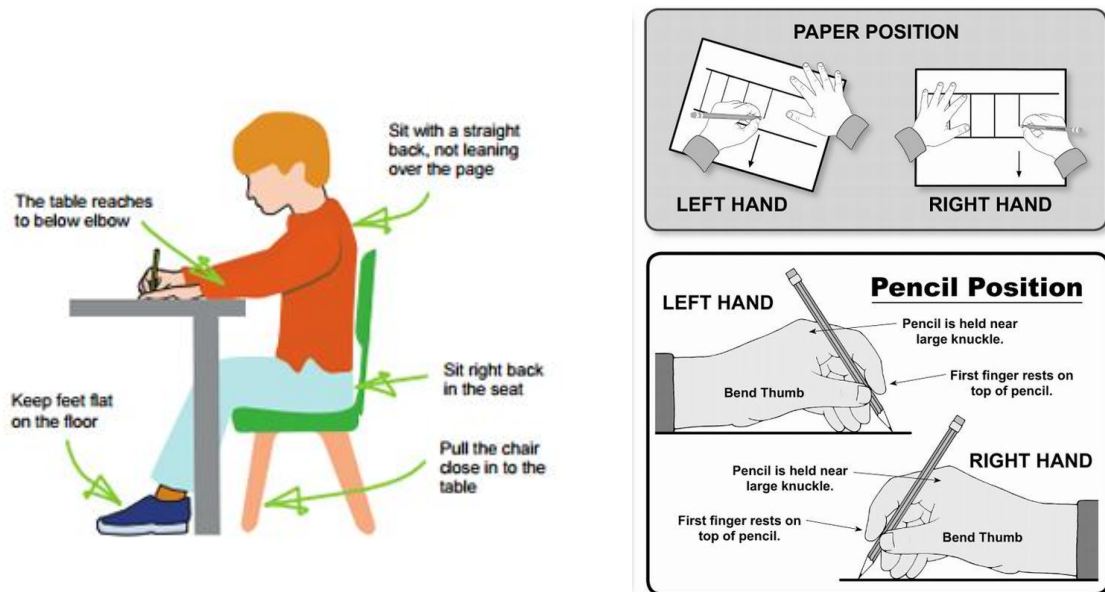
- *Quality:* Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- *Speed:* Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- *Stamina:* Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.
- Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters.
- Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.
- Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as + instead of 'and', can be used.

Posture and Pencil Grip

Pupils are taught correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.

They should:

- Sit with a straight back, not leaning over the page
- Pull the chair close to the table with fist width between body and table and with feet flat on the floor
- Sit right back in the seat, with the table just below elbow height
- Position the paper correctly: straight or slightly slanted for right-handed pupils, to the left and slanted for left-handed pupils
- Both right- and left-handed pupils are encouraged to use the tripod grip



Left-handed children

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- 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

Consistency of Letter Formation, Language and Resources

To ensure consistency and support children's motor memory and directionality in letter formation, all teachers and support staff from Reception to Year 6 will endeavour to use the same RWInc Letter Formation Phrases when modelling or teaching handwriting (see Appendix 1). These phrases are carefully designed to embed correct letter directionality and support multisensory learning. As repetition and consistency aid memory and muscle control, all adults are encouraged to adopt this shared language. This approach is introduced in Reception during phonic teaching and continued throughout KS1 and should be reinforced during KS2, especially when addressing handwriting misconceptions or during intervention work.

All staff are expected to use the agreed phrases when:

- Introducing new letters in phonics or handwriting
- Modelling on the board
- Supporting individuals or small groups during handwriting practice

Progression of Joined Handwriting

At Brookside Primary School, we follow the progression set out in The Writing Framework (DfE, 2025), which makes clear that handwriting foundations must be secure before joining is introduced. Pupils first develop posture, grip, letter formation and spacing so that print handwriting becomes automatic. Only then are joins taught and practised, moving from early introduction in Year 2 through to fluent, adaptable handwriting by the end of Year 6.

Reception – Secure print handwriting foundations: posture, tripod grip, paper position, accurate letter formation on the line. No joining taught.

Year 1 – Consolidate print handwriting: lowercase and capitals with correct size and spacing, digits 0–9, consistent letter families. No joining yet.

Year 2 – Begin joining once print is secure: diagonal joins (ai, ch, fl) and horizontal joins (or, ov, ow). Teachers make clear which letters are not joined.

Years 3 and 4 – Consolidate joined handwriting until it is embedded across the curriculum: focus on fluency, stamina, consistent spacing and legibility.

Years 5 and 6 – Fluent, legible and adaptable handwriting: pupils develop a personal style suited to purpose, sustaining writing over extended tasks while maintaining legibility. This allows for children to progress their writing skills in line with the national curriculum expectations detailed below:

KS1

Statutory requirements
Handwriting Pupils should be taught to: • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place • form capital letters • form digits 0–9 • understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and practise to these.

Statutory requirements

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

KS2

Statutory requirements

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Statutory requirements

Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
 - choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
 - choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

3. Impact

Pupils at Brookside Primary School leave Year 6 with neat, fluent and consistently joined handwriting. They write with confidence, stamina and pride, demonstrating presentation skills that reflect their effort and achievement. Pupils with additional needs benefit from targeted support and appropriate adaptations so that they make progress alongside their peers.

Teachers follow clear whole-school guidance on lesson frequency, language and style, ensuring that handwriting is taught and modelled consistently. Handwriting is monitored across all subjects, so high standards are maintained throughout the curriculum.

Brookside Primary School meets National Curriculum expectations and promotes a culture of pride in presentation. A consistent, whole-school approach, supported by agreed resources, enables every pupil to become a confident, legible writer. This policy provides clarity for teachers, support for pupils and assurance that high standards are upheld across the school.

4. Special Educational Needs and Disability

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will have full access to the English curriculum. We recognise that some pupils may experience challenges with writing as a result of their needs. To support them, a range of additional resources and strategies may be provided. Where appropriate, tasks will be adapted to ensure that pupils are able to participate fully and achieve success. Careful and sensitive grouping will also be used to reduce barriers to learning and promote inclusion.

Pencil grips, sloped boards and adaptive lined paper are available.

Pupils with fine motor difficulties access **targeted interventions** (e.g. dough disco, tracing). Children struggling with letter formation or joins receive 1:1 or small-group boosters.

5. Monitoring and Review

The English subject leader, alongside the senior leadership team, monitors the implementation and impact of this policy. Monitoring includes lesson observations, planning reviews, book scrutiny and pupil interviews. Assessment data is analysed termly to identify strengths and areas for development. Staff receive professional development to ensure high-quality teaching is maintained.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1

RWInc Letter Formation Phrases

a  Around the apple and down the leaf.	b  Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	c  Curl around the caterpillar.	d  Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	e  Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	f  Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g  Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	h  Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	i  Down the body and dot for the head.	j  Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	k  Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	l  Down the long leg.
m  Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	n  Down Nobby and over his net.	o  All around the orange.	p  Down the pirates plait and around his face.	qu  Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.	r  Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
s  Slither down the snake.	t  Down the tower, across the tower.	u  Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	v  Down a wing, up a wing.	w  Down, up, down, up.	x  Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y  Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	z  Zig-zag-zig.				

Appendix 2

Cursive lowercase letters with starting points



Appendix 3

Capital letters with starting points

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

Appendix 4

Order of teaching

Single lowercase letters

Reception and Y1

- c o a d g q
- l t i
- r n m
- h b p
- e s f
- u y j k
- v w x z

Uppercase letters

Reception and Y1

- **Vertical and horizontal lines first:** Teach letters like **I, L, F, E, H, T** because straight lines are easiest for young hands to control
- **Curves and circles next:** Introduce **U, C, O, Q, G, S, J, D, P, B, R** after straight lines are mastered
- **Diagonal lines last:** Finish with **K, A, N, M, V, W, X, Y, Z** as diagonals require more advanced motor coordination

The eight joins

Year 2 into Year 3

1. Horizontal joins with letters with no ascenders or descenders - ow ou on om or oo oi ov
2. Diagonal joins with letter with no ascenders or descenders - ai ui oi in im ar um an am au
3. Horizontal joins with letters with descenders - og oy op
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders - ot ol oh od
5. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders - ul ut it il at al
6. Diagonal joins to letters with descenders - ay ap
7. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders and descenders – if uf
8. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders and descenders – of if

Year 3 into Year 4

- in ine
- ut ute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es
- ri ru ry
- oa ad as
- ee ea ed
- ow ov os
- ky hy ly
- ha ta fa
- od oo og
- er ir ur
- ai al ay
- you oi
- re oe fe
- fu wu vu
- ot ol ok
- ai al ow ol

Year 4

- ning ping ting
- cod oo
- ake ome are
- fla flo fle
- who wha whe
- ie in il
- inly ky ny
- ap ar an
- ick uck ack
- he we re
- fte fir fin
- wra wri kni (silent letters)
- ii ll tt rr nn mm cc o odd ss ff ee
- 13we v ex
- th ht fl (proportions)
- ac ag af
- Capital letters
- • Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ , ‘

Years 5 and 6

- Practise consistency of letter size
- Practise using the diagonal joining line
- Practise leaving an equal space between letters
- Practise joining to the letter y
- Practise using a horizontal joining line
- Practise the size and height of letters
- Practise joining from the letter l
- Practise joining to and from the letter v
- Practise consistency in the forming and joining of letters
- Practise speedwriting
- Practise crossing double tt on completing the word
- Practise joining to and from the letter e
- Practise joining to and from the letter w
- Practise joining to the letter t