



## Introduction

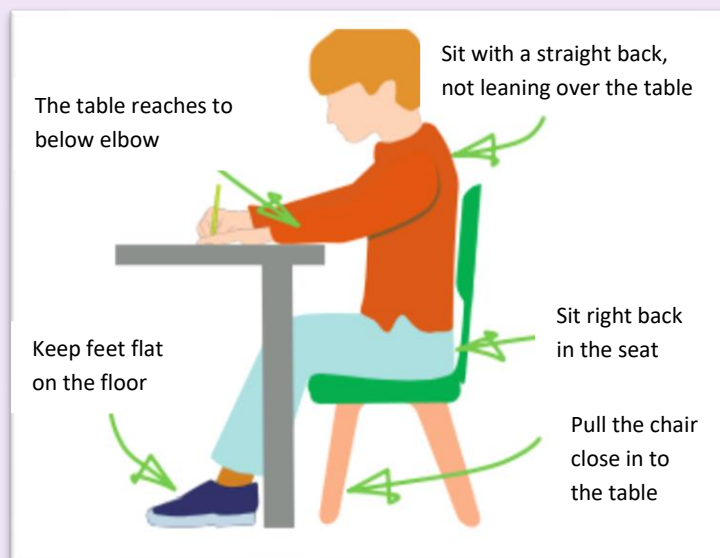
At St James' First School, all children benefit from four discrete handwriting lessons a week. These sessions are taught in single-age classes. We use the Read Write Inc mnemonics (memory pictures – see appendix 1a) to help children visualise the letter or join before they write it down. Children practise handwriting under the guidance of the teacher so they do not develop habits or misconceptions that will be difficult to undo later. We want the formation, orientation and placement of letters to become automatic and as a result free up space for children in the working memory. The children are encouraged to develop a fluent style through effective modelling and independent practice. We believe that legible and fluent handwriting supports with many areas of the curriculum.

### Handwriting position:

From EYFS, the children recognise that when the teacher uses the handwriting signal, 'Ready to Write' they automatically go into the perfect handwriting position:



- feet flat on the floor
- bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist from the table
- shoulders down and relaxed
- back leaning forward slightly
- left/right hand holding the page
- left/right hand ready in a tripod grip (where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work together)





## Handwriting Stages

We follow the Read Write Inc Programme which comprises of three stages. These are outlined below:

### Stage 1

#### **Stage 1a: Letter formation**

Children practise correct letter formation using the same picture mnemonics they have already learnt in the Speed Sounds Set 1 lessons.

- 'Around' letters: **c a o d g q**
- 'Down' letters: **l t b p k h i j m n r u y**
- 'Curly' letters: **e f s**
- 'Zigzag' letters: **v w z x**.

#### **Stage 1b: Relative size of letters**

Children learn how to place the letters on the line. Picture mnemonics help children to visualise the size and placement.

Some small letters are called 'boat letters': a c e i m n o r s u v w x z.

Letters that are written below the line are called 'water letters': g j p q y.

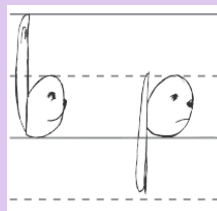
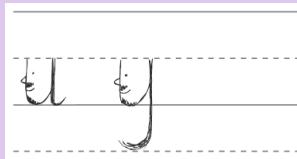
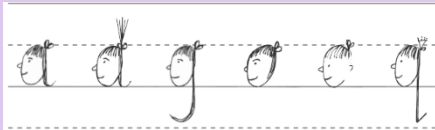
Tall letters are called 'sun letters': b d h k l t f (f and t are just a little bit smaller).



### Stage 2

Children learn a mature style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing.




The children are introduced to the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.





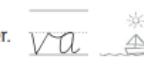
### Stage 3

Children learn the two basic joins: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal) and the different variations.

The arm join has three variations:

- arm to boat 
- arm to sun 
- arm to sister. 

The washing line join has three variations:

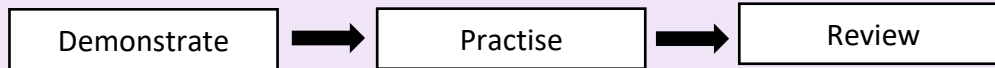
- washing line to boat 
- washing line to sun 
- washing line to sister. 

In order to be successful at handwriting, we understand that the children need to develop the skills of holding the pencil, learning the letter shapes, flow and fluency and also making their bodies stronger. We recognise and value the importance of developing children's fine and gross motor skills to enable them to have the strength required for pencil grip accuracy and posture. Where required, we therefore plan in physical activities to build the strength needed for handwriting.



**Lesson plan**

We use the following routine for our daily handwriting lessons: demonstrate, practise and review.



**Demonstrate:** Say the mental checklist as you write the letter. Repeat a few times, asking the children to use the checklist to tell you how to write the letter.

**Practise:** Cover up the letter and ask children to write the letter until you stop them, saying the checklist out loud. Teacher to circulate the group and identify any common errors.

**Review:** Write the letter on the board including the common error. Ask children to turn to their partner and look for ‘two best bits and one to fix’. Demonstrate writing the letter correctly. Repeat the steps until all children form the letter correctly.

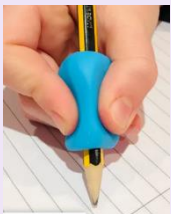
**Whole-school progression**

	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Autumn	Children are taught to make marks and engage in writing of many different types using a range of mark making materials.  Stage 1a: Children are introduced to the RWI rhymes and practise correct letter formation: ‘Around’, ‘Down’, ‘Curly’ and ‘Zigzag’ letters.	Stage 1b: Relative size of letters  The children use Sun letters’, ‘Boat letters’ and ‘Water letters’.	<u>Autumn 1</u> Stage 2: Children revisit the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets  <u>Autumn 2:</u> Stage 3: The children are introduced to the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal)	The children revisit the two basic joins: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal) and apply this to write words.	Continue to build fluency and consistency through handwriting practice linked to weekly spellings.
Spring	Stage 1a: Children continue to practise the correct letter formation.	Stage 1b: Relative size of letters  The children apply their learning to words.	Stage 3: The children continue to develop their understanding of the arm and washing line join.	↓	↓
Summer	Stage 1a: Continuation of letter formation  Summer 2: When ready, the children begin stage 1b where they think about the relative size of letters.	Stage 2: Children learn a mature style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing and are introduced to the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.	↓	Continue to build fluency and consistency through handwriting practice linked to weekly spellings.	↓



\*Children are taught how to form their numbers from EYFS using the number formation rhymes – see appendix 1b.

## Support



If required, children will have access to a range of writing tools (including pencil grips and specialist pens and pencils) and will be given guidance about which are best suited to their needs.

Left handed children should always sit on the left side of right-handed children, so that they are not competing for space. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of centre of their body. Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right-handed teacher.

Tripod grip for left-handers



## Pens

From Year 4, all children will write with a black handwriting pen in preparation for middle school. In class, we celebrate well-presented learning where the children have taken pride in using their neatest handwriting.



## Aims of the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum:

### EYFS:

Writing ELG Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

Fine Motor Skills ELG Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases

### **Year 1:**

- sit correctly and use the right pencil grip
- form lowercase letters in the correct way: starting in the right place, moving the pencil in the correct direction and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters in the correct way
- forming the digits 0–9



- understand which letters are formed in similar ways
- to leave a space between words.

**Year 2:**

- form lowercase letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters
- understand which letters, when next to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits in a size that matches the size of any lowercase letters
- understand which letters are formed in similar ways
- use the correct spacing between words.

**The National Curriculum states that in Key Stage 2, pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.**

**Year 3:**

- writing neatly and legibly with letters that are all a similar size
- joining some letters
- deciding which letters to join and which letters not to join
- keeping their writing lines horizontal and keeping the space between lines parallel and consistent
- keeping the downstrokes of their writing upright and parallel making sure that descenders of one line do not touch the ascenders of the line below.



























**Year 4:**

- writing neatly and legibly with letters that are all a similar size
- joining some letters
- deciding which letters to join and which letters not to join
- keeping their writing lines horizontal and keeping the space between lines parallel and consistent
- keeping the downstrokes of their writing upright and parallel making sure that descenders of one line do not touch the ascenders of the line below.








Appendix 1a

Rhymes for letter formation - taken from Read Write Inc.

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



Appendix 1b: Number formation rhymes

<p>Around and round and round we go, round we go,</p>  <p>When we get home we have a zero.</p>	<p>Start at the top and down we run,</p>  <p>That's the way we make a one.</p>	<p>Around and back on a railroad track</p>  <p>Two, two, two</p>	<p>Around the tree and around the tree,</p>  <p>That's the way we make a three.</p>
<p>Down and over, down some more</p>  <p>That's the way we make a four.</p>	<p>Down and around then a flag on high</p>  <p>That's the way we make a five.</p>	<p>Down we go and make a loop,</p>  <p>Number six makes a hoop.</p>	<p>Across the sky and down from heaven,</p>  <p>That's the way we make a seven.</p>
<p>Make an 's' and do not wait</p>  <p>When it's joined up you have an eight.</p>	<p>Make a loop and then a line,</p>  <p>That's the way we make a nine.</p>		