



HERON CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

HANDWRITING

Date: September 2025
Review Date: September 2026

Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance:

3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; writing 'm' for mummy. Write some or all of their name.	Motivate children to write by providing opportunities in a wide range of ways. Suggestions: clipboards outdoors, chalks for paving stones, boards and notepads in the home corner. Children enjoy having a range of pencils, crayons, chalks and pens to choose from. Apps on tablets enable children to mix marks, photos and video to express meanings and tell their own stories. Children are also motivated by simple home-made books, different coloured paper and paper decorated with fancy frames.
Write some letters accurately.	Help children to learn to form their letters accurately. First, they need a wide-ranging programme of physical skills development, inside and outdoors. Include large-muscle co-ordination: whole body, leg, arm and foot. This can be through climbing, swinging, messy play and parachute games, etc. Plan for small muscle co-ordination: hands and fingers. This can be through using scissors, learning to sew, eating with cutlery, using small brushes for painting and pencils for drawing. Children also need to know the language of direction ('up', 'down', 'round', 'back', etc).

Children in reception will be learning to:

Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.	Teach formation as they learn the sounds for each letter using a memorable phrase, encouraging an effective pen grip. When forming letters, the starting point and direction are more important at this stage than the size or position of the letter on a line.
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National Curriculum Guidelines:

Year 1 -

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 to practise these.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Year 2 -

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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Year 3 and 4 -

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].

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Year 5 and 6 -

Statutory requirements

Handwriting and presentation

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.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

The teaching of letter formation / handwriting at Heron Cross:

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2:

A timetabled 15-20 minutes a day should be spent on quality letter formation practise.

- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 follow Monster Phonics handwriting scheme.
- Monster Phonics letter formation rhymes to be used.
- Children draw the letter in the air from the start to the endpoint. This should also be modelled by the teacher.
- Children complete the relevant letter formation worksheet.

Year 3, 4, 5 and 6:

A timetabled 10-15 minutes a day should be spent on quality handwriting practise before each written lesson.

- Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 practise letter formation of the 'handwriting families' and stages, with a focus on the National Curriculum objectives for that year group.
- The chosen letter/s should be correctly modelled by the class teacher, clearly for all children to see. Talk about the direction your pen/pencil is going in when forming the letters.
- Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 should attempt forming the letter correctly three times (remind children that their third attempt should be their best).
- The class teacher and TA should be active marking whilst children are doing this. If it is not done correctly, model correctly in the child's book, for them to attempt again.
- Choose 3-4 words for the children to practice forming the focussed letter/s (more meaningful if they can be linked to future lessons).
- Chosen words are to be modelled correctly by the class teacher, clearly for all children to see. This may be modelled with the use of a visualiser.
- Repeat active marking and modelling in childrens' books if needed.

Children gaining their 'Pen Licence'

When children have completed the handwriting outcomes in Year 3, children receive a 'pen license' certificate during celebration assembly and are also provided with their pen.



Monster Phonics Letter Formation Rhymes

Grapheme	Rhyme	Card
s	Over her head, sweep past her fin, a curly tail to help her swim.	
a	Follow the ants half way round, march up to the leaf, then down to the ground.	
t	Down the trunk, follow the roots, across the branch, to find the fruit.	
p	Down her mane, up to her ear, around her head, what sound can you hear?	
i	Down and curl, super try! Now add a dot to catch the fly.	



Moondust
Phonics

n	Weave the needle, straight down low, then back up high, and over we go.	
m	Magical fairies swoop low to high, over the mushrooms, then down they fly.	
d	Around his body, up to his ear, down to his tail, what sound can you hear?	
g	Around the grape, climb up to the top, down the leaves, curl then stop.	
o	This little octopus likes to hide, circle around, then peek inside.	
c	Curl around the cat, as she sleeps, from her head to her feet.	



Moondust
Phonics



k	From his head, to his foot we go, along his arm, and out to his toe.	
e	Along the trunk, over the spray, curl around and play all day.	
u	Swoop under and up, dart down and flick, Umbrellabirds are so quick!	
r	Down the rocket, then shoot up high, over the clouds, and into the sky.	
h	From her head to her feet, up to her chest, over her back, and into the nest.	
b	Down the bunny's ears, up to her bow, around her nose, she's ready to go!	





Moon and stars
Phonics



f	Over the rod, down to the fish, across the water, and make a wish.	
l	Down the lolly, look at the mess, don't forget, to scoop up the rest.	
j	Hang down and curl, don't miss a spot, burst the bubble, with a little dot.	
w	Down, up, down, up, all in a row, watch the waves as they flow.	
v	The van whizzes down, and up to the top, make the 'v' sound, when the van stops 'vvv'.	
x	Across the spoon, get ready to bake, down the sprinkles, let's mix the cake. Mix mix mix!	





Moon and stars
Phonics



y	Under and up, what can you see, follow the anchor, hanging under the sea.	
z	Zigzag zig down, can you hear the clap? Let's make the sound of the lightning ...zzzap!	
q	Around her face, up to her bun, down her hair, add a flick for fun.	



In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, the handwriting ‘families’ should be taught in the following order:

Stage 1 <i>a, c, o, e</i> (curly caterpillar letters)
Stage 2 <i>d, s, g</i> (curly caterpillar letters)
Stage 3 <i>i, l, u, t</i> (long ladder letters)
Stage 4 <i>q, f</i> (curly caterpillar letters)
Stage 5 <i>j, y</i> (long ladder letters)
Stage 6 <i>z, n, w, k</i> (zig-zag letters)
Stage 7 <i>x, b, h, m, k, p</i> (bouncing back letters)

Please note: b , g , j , p , q , s , y, do not join on to the following letter

Handwriting

Stage 1 - a c o e

Stage 2 - d s g

Stage 3 - i l u t

Stage 4 - q f

Stage 5 - j y

Stage 6 - r v w x

Stage 7 - b n h m k p

Letters that do not join :

b g j p q s y

Letters that join at the top :

c r v w

Tall ascenders :

b d f h k l t

Low descenders :

a i n u