

# Creating a whole-school handwriting policy

A written policy helps to promote continuity and consistency in the teaching of handwriting throughout the school. It helps to ensure consistent progression, with children constantly building on established knowledge, and helps to avoid confusions and contradictions.

The policy should be agreed and put into practice by all staff. The first step should be to review current practice. Then it is important to agree on a whole-school approach to teaching handwriting. You will find materials from this introduction a useful starting point for your discussion.

The final policy will reflect the decisions made in the discussion. It should include the following:

- The aims of handwriting teaching in the school (e.g. to teach all pupils to write fluently and legibly at an acceptable speed).
- The developmental Stages in handwriting and the expected progression through the school (what will be taught and when). See pages 15 to 17 for an explanation of the developmental approach of **Schofield & Sims WriteWell**, and the **National Curriculum chart** on pages 18 to 19, which shows how the series content maps against the primary school year groups.
- The importance of activities that promote writing readiness by developing pupils' general strength and gross- and fine-motor control (see pages 24 to 25).
- The importance of warming up for writing (see pages 31 to 32), the process of writing and the **P checks** (see pages 26 to 27).
- How handwriting will be taught – the teaching sequence, focused teaching, including demonstration as well as explanation, opportunities to practise and to apply (see pages 20 to 22).
- The number and timing of handwriting sessions planned for each year group, and whether homework will be assigned.
- The style to be used – the agreed formation and shape of lowercase letters (and their letter families), capital letters and numbers; the joins to be taught; and which letters are break letters (optional joins). It is useful to include a visual reference for the letter shapes and their formation, as well as a reference for the joined style and some examples of the different types of join (see the **Reference guide** on pages 34 to 35). You should also ensure that formation patterns are used consistently to ensure a cohesive whole-school approach (formation patterns are given in each of the **Formation charts**).
- How handwriting will be assessed, including the role of ongoing formative assessment as well as more formal summative assessment and use of the **S factors** (see pages 28 to 29).
- Plans for supporting left-handed writers (see page 30).
- A list of resources, materials and equipment available in the school, such as writing slopes, pencil grips and wooden letters for tracing. This should also include a list of the range of writing tools and types of paper available.
- Equality of opportunity – how children with specific intervention requirements are identified and supported, and how the needs of pupils with disabilities are accommodated.
- Plans for involving parents in the implementation of the handwriting policy. Some schools create a short booklet to give to parents when a child starts the school year. This information could also be given to support workers and supply teachers as required.