CALSHOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

'At Calshot we aim to provide the highest quality of learning and care for ALL children in a safe and enjoyable environment, nurturing personal values, in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community. We expect everyone in our school to strive to achieve their full potential.'

Policy Lead	Head Teacher
Sub Committee	Achievement and Curriculum
Link Governor	None
Date of Last Review	Autumn 2026
Next Review Date	Autumn 2029

N. Jones 2026

Aims

At Calshot Primary School we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards, as the pupils take pride in and have a sense of ownership of their work. This is achieved through excellent modelling and teaching of handwriting and a consistent, whole-school approach.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of Handwriting are set out in the National Curriculum and in the 'Physical Development' and 'Literacy' sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2026).

The aim for Handwriting in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by allowing children to develop a strong command of the written word and to develop their fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Intent

From the ELGs and Year 1 to Year 6, the National Curriculum (Programmes of Study) aims to ensure that all children:

- Use a pencil effectively, holding it comfortably, using the tripod grip in most cases
- All children know the difference between lower case and capital letters
- Use diagonal and horizontal strokes between letters, joining up where necessary and knowing which letters are best left unjoined
- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed and accuracy, choosing a suitable writing implement for the task

Implementation

At Calshot Primary School, we have adopted the 'Nelson' handwriting scheme. This follows on from the 'Essential Letters and Sounds' phonics scheme, where Reception use the mnemonics to aid letter formation.

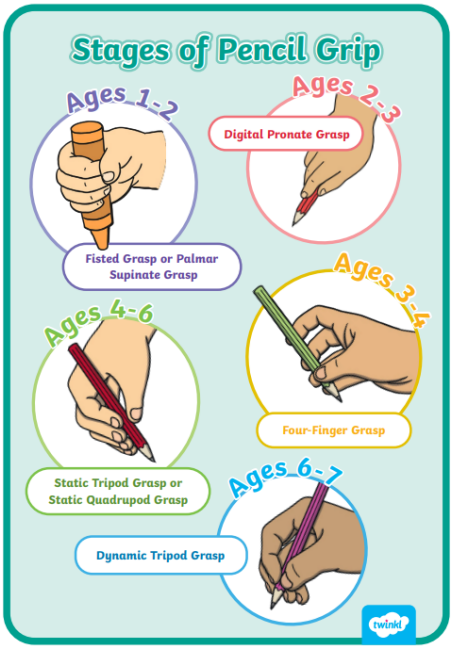
EYFS

In EYFS children are taught to:

- Hold a pencil correctly and encouraged to use a tripod grip.
- Adopt the correct posture when writing, for comfort and ease of transcription.

To build strong foundations, handwriting instruction starts in Term 1 of YrR and is taught by trained teachers and practitioners. This will include building the foundations for handwriting, such as practising making the movements needed to form letters in the air, tracing over patterns, developing fine motor skills and control over mark making tools. Teachers then plan

to move on to a clearly sequenced progression of letter families once the children have learnt the corresponding letters through their phonic lessons. We have chosen to use the 'ELS' letter formation from the phonics scheme (see appendix 1). In addition to daily phonics lessons, children practise letter formation every morning as a start of the day activity and fine motor skills are planned into continuous provision activities.



Year 1

In Year 1, pupils are 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'

The 'ELS' phonics scheme continues to form the basis for handwriting and the letter formation which is followed. Children practise reading and writing new words and phonemes during the 'practise and apply' sections of the phonics session. Outside of the phonics lessons, discrete handwriting practise is taught following the letter families from the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, with a focus on starting points to aid correct letter formation. Book 1 units 1-14 are used to practise letter formation. Children use books with wide lines in Year 1.

Year 2

In Year 2, pupils are 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, so that later joins do not create extra, confusing shapes.

In Year 2, children continue to build on the letter formation from Year 1, now incorporating the Nelson letter f' and 'k'. There is a continued emphasis on correct letter formation and Year 2 begin by recapping Year 1 content. Book 1 is revised and from unit 14 and through to Book 2, pupils in Year 2 begin to join. As soon as children have accurate letter formation and orientation, children are taught to write with a joined style. Children use books with wide lines in Year 2.

LKS2

In Year 3 and 4, pupils are 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 handwriting.

In Year 3 children will continue to develop their use of cursive handwriting, building upon the skills they have developed in Key Stage 1. These skills will be mastered through Year 4 ready for the demands in UKS2. Nelson book 3 is followed for Year 3 and book 4 for Year 4. A weekly modelled lesson is taught discretely with subsequent lessons being more practise based and informal, such as lesson starters and SODA activities.

UKS2

In Year 5 and 6, pupils are taught to:

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

In Year 5, a weekly modelled lesson is taught discretely with subsequent lessons being more practise based and informal, such as lesson starters and SODA activities. Nelson book 5 is followed for Year 5. By Year 6, children will have developed their own handwriting style and may not be now fully using all of the joins taught, deciding when it is suitable and for the

type of task. Handwriting is not formally taught in Year 6, however there may be the need for some intervention for individuals or small groups to support the legibility of their writing.

Where pupils are not keeping up with the handwriting expectations for their year group, interventions may be needed, delivered across the week. Pens are introduced at the end of Year 4, when pupils can demonstrate accuracy and legibility of handwriting. Erasable pens are encouraged, although blue pens are provided by school.

Left-handed pupils and adaptations

When a right-handed person writes in English, the hand is being drawn away from the writing as they write, allowing them to see what they have written. However, the left-handed person's hand follows behind the writing. About 10% of pupils are left-handed and face some of the following problems:

- smudging
- obscuring their writing with their writing hand
- difficulty making 'finger spaces' between words

Left-handed pupils need specific demonstration and adjustments, including by making sure they:

- have space to write
- sit to the left of any right-handed pupil to prevent their arms colliding
- turn their paper to the right
- use softer pencils that require less pressure
- grip the pencil at a slightly higher point so they can see around their fingers
- do not hold the pencil too tightly or press down too hard



Impact

Handwriting is a skill which affects written communication across the curriculum. Our aim is that children are able to write with ease, speed and legibility. By year 6 children will use cursive handwriting using flowing movements and patterns. This handwriting should be demonstrated in all writing across the curriculum. Writing should be fluid in style to allow children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves.

Appendix 1-

Mnemonics and Rhymes to Support ELS

RECEPTION/PRIMARY 1 AUTUMN 1: PHASE 2
s – snake – **swerve around the snake**
a – ant – **around the head, down the body**
t – teacher – **down her body and cross her shoulders**
p – parrot – **down his body, around his face**
i – inventor – **down her body, spot her idea**
n – nest – **down the bird and over her nest**
m – meerkat – **meerkat, mound, mound**
d – duck – **over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet**
g – goat – **start at his ear, around the face and down the beard**
o – ostrich – **around the ostrich's body**
c – camel – **curl around the camel's back**
k – kid – **down the body, up the arm, down the leg**
ck – a camel and a kid – **the camel stood by the kid**
e – elephant – **around the head and down the trunk**
u – umbrella – **under the umbrella and down to the tip**
r – runner – **down her body, up over the arm**
ss – two snakes – **sunbathing snakes**
h – heron – **from his head to his feet, up and over his back**
b – bike – **down the person and around the wheel**
f – fox – **over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw**
ff – two foxes – **two foxes facing forwards**
l – ladder – **down the long ladder**
ll – two ladders – **ladders in a line**
Plus: words with /s/ at the end (sits, fits, cats, bats)