



Roche School: Handwriting Overview

How do we teach handwriting?

Structure of Read Write Inc. Handwriting– the four stages

Stage 1 begins as soon as most children can read Set 1 sounds. We continue to teach children to form letters correctly.

Stage 2 begins during Year 1. Children learn the relative size of letters and to form letters that will flow easily into a joined style.

Stage 3 follows straight on. Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins – the 'bridge' join, the 'hill' join and the two variations on each.

Stage 4 helps children develop a mature and speedy style.

Each stage ensures pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements for handwriting from Reception to Year 4.

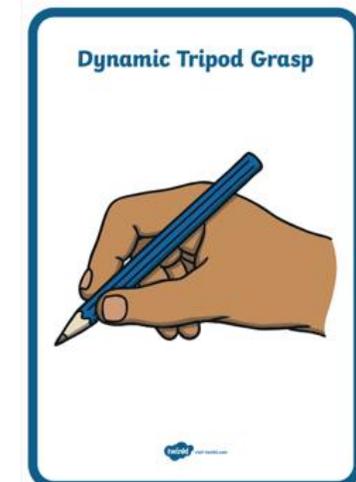
We teach children how to hold a pencil in a tripod grip. We check their grip at the start of every handwriting lesson. Pencil grip displays are in every class to show children's progress and to enable them to see the correct pencil grip. Pencil grip assessments are carried out half termly. Children use a standard HB pencil.

Name:

Date:

<input type="checkbox"/>  Four Finger Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Static Quadropod Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Static Tripod Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Dynamic Tripod Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Thumb Wrap Grasp
<input type="checkbox"/>  Thumb Tuck Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Transpalmar Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Index Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Interdigital Brace Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

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Where should children sit to write?

We arrange tables and chairs so all children can clearly see the board/whiteboard. Children practise sitting comfortably at a table to write. We teach children that when we say 'perfect handwriting position' they quickly:

- put two feet on the floor
- push their bottom to the back of their chair
- tuck their chair under the table
- hold their pencil in a tripod grip
- place their other hand on their book or paper, so it doesn't move around.

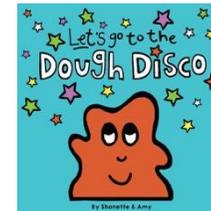


Roche Reception Class: Readiness to Write

In Reception class we help children to develop their pre-writing skills through a range of gross and fine motor activities. We follow the squiggle while you wiggle programme in Autumn Term to focus on using whole-body movements to create marks and patterns, which supports shoulder strength, coordination and control.

A basic lesson layout looks like this:

- Large gross motor movements linked to a letter using in the air to music
- Do the same movement on large paper, whiteboard, chalk
- Doodle with your noodle -using your writing hand to practise forming the letters (again to a song but chanting the RWI letter formation chant too).



Fine motor skills are developed through activities such as Dough Disco, where the child uses malleable materials to strengthen hand and finger muscles. These experiences help the child to build control, develop a comfortable pencil grip, and confidently explore mark-making as a foundation for early writing.

Pencil Grip

End outcome: Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases (ELG)



we teach a separate daily 10-minute handwriting lesson. These handwriting lessons are at a different time from the Read Write Inc. lesson.

We now teach letters in handwriting families. Each family has a common formation.

a d g o c q

u y

b p

h n m r

e s f i

l t k j

v w x z

Children continue to write on plain paper.

We follow the individual letter formation lesson plans daily for each handwriting session. (In Handbook)

Rhymes for letter formation - taken from Read Write Inc.

a Around the apple and down the leaf.	b Down the leaves to the heel and around the toe.	c Curl around the caterpillar.	d Around the dinosaur bottom, up his tail 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 girl's 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 Maise, mountain, mountain.	n Down Nobby and over his net.	o All around the orange.	p Down the pirates plait and around his face.	q Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair and back.	r Down the robot's 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.				

Stage two: Readiness to Join

End outcome: children form correctly sized letters in a mature style that will flow easily into joined writing

By Year 1, children should be confident to read and write the letters with the correct formation.

At Stage 2, we now group letters that have a similar formation.

We teach the letters in these groups using RWI's Letter Village

10-minute films daily

Stage 2:

a d g o c q

u y

b p

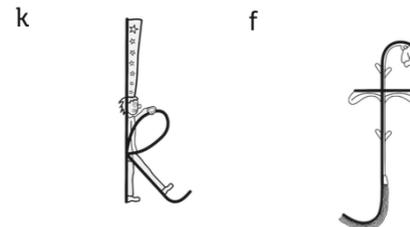
h n m r

e s f i

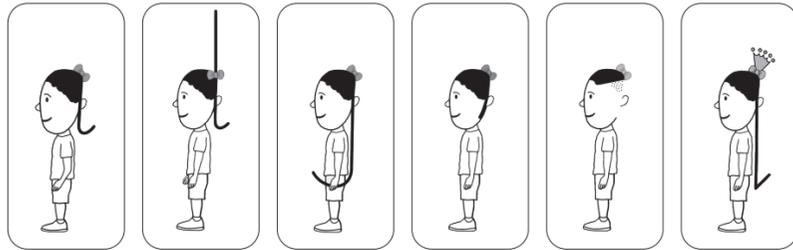
l t k j

v w x z

- Our 'k' loops
- Our 'f' does not loop.



All letters start from the top apart from 'd' and 'e'.

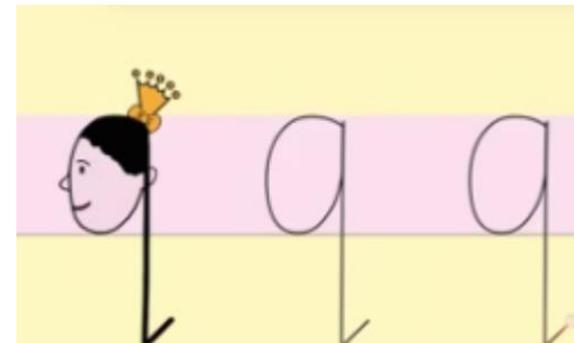
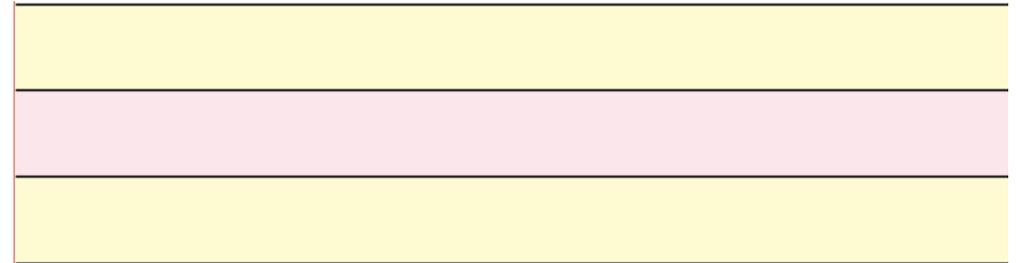


Each film follows the same structure:

1. Introduce the story with a letter and a rap.
2. Show children how to write the letter.
3. Children practise writing the letter.
4. Children check their letters with their partner.
5. Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4.
6. Review the new letter and previous letters by asking children to practise writing words containing them.

While your children are writing, support children who need extra help.

We use an imaginary sponge cake so children can visualise where to place each letter on the line:
the jam in the middle and a layer of sponge on the top and bottom. This teaches children about 'relative sizing'



Stage three: Starting to Join

End outcome: Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins – the 'bridge' join, the 'hill' join and the variations on each.

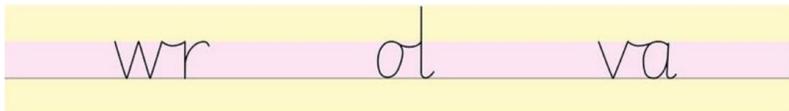


We teach children how to join once they are secure and automatic in Stage 2.
Children return to Letter Village for Stage 3. They will learn two joins: the 'hill' join and the 'bridge' join. There are three variations of both joins:

Hill to jam letter Hill to top sponge letter Hill to 'sister' letter



Bridge to jam letter Bridge to top sponge letter Bridge to 'sister' letter



Children practise each join with specific letter combinations. Then they write words with the joins they have practised. We teach children that all letters are joined with the 'hill' or 'bridge' join with the exception of g, j, q, y and z:

gap jump quit yak zoo

We modify some letters to allow them to join. For example, r, e and s.



Children will learn a style that looks like this:

Welcome back to Letter Village. At Stage 3, children learn the 'hill' and 'bridge' joins.

Stage four: Develop a mature and speedy style

Stage 4 will teach children to build writing fluency and will be available in 2026.

End outcome: children join letters using the 'hill' and 'bridge' join in a mature and speedy style

**Awaiting resources from Read, Write, Inc. to be published*



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How do we teach handwriting? (Appendix)

Stage 1: Letter formation

Use the following routine for every lesson:

1. Use MTYT to say the handwriting phrase: Round the apple, down the leaf.
2. TOL as you use the checklist below to write the letter on the board. For example:
 - ✓ start at the stalk
 - ✓ go round the apple
 - ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down
 - ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom.

Ask the children say the checklist with you as you write the letter a few times.

Children practise writing the letter:

1. Check that the children are still sitting in the perfect handwriting position
2. Rub out the picture and any letters from the board – the children must visualise the letter, not copy.
3. Ask the children to write one letter, slowly and carefully. (Do not ask them to draw the handwriting picture.)
4. Model again how you repeat writing the letter, getting a bit quicker each time.

Review the letter:

1. Write the letter on the board and make one error, choosing a common error children have made.
2. Ask the children to TTYP to find your 'two best bits', for example, you remembered to start at the stalk, and you went back up to the stalk.
3. Then ask children to TTYP to find 'one to fix', for example, you made the leaf too curly.
4. Rewrite the letter perfectly.
5. Ask children to practise again.

On the next day, choose a new focus letter or review one or two previously taught letters.

Note: Help children learn to visualise the letter as a picture and not the written checklist. Do not write the checklist on the board, though you may need a sticky note to help you remember to start with.



5. Go round the room supporting children who need help. Don't sit with one child.

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Round the apple, down the leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the stalk ✓ go round the apple ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom

Stage 2: Readiness to join

Use the following routine for every lesson (film):

1. Introduce the story with a letter and a rap.
2. Show children how to write the letter.
3. Children practise writing the letter. (perfect handwriting positions)
4. Children check their letters with their partner.
5. Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4.
6. Review the new letter and previous letters by asking children to practise writing words containing them.

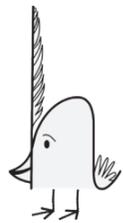
While your children are writing, support children who need extra help.

Pause the film to:

- remind children how the sponge cake layers correspond to the lines in their books
- address any common difficulties
- give children extra time to practise.



This symbol shows when it's time for partners to check each other's letter, join or word. In each film, one of the sisters writes the letter. They then choose their best letter and decide 'the two best bits and one to fix'. Children take turns to do the same for one of their letters. Pause the film if children need more discussion time.

Letter	Name	Checklist
h 	H hen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the sponge ✓ straight down her long feather back up to the top of her beak ✓ slope up her forehead ✓ curve round her head ✓ straight down ✓ add a curl for the tail feather

Review words: hug, hop, happy

Stage 3: Starting to join

**Awaiting resources from Read, Write, Inc. to be published*

Use the following routine for every lesson (film):

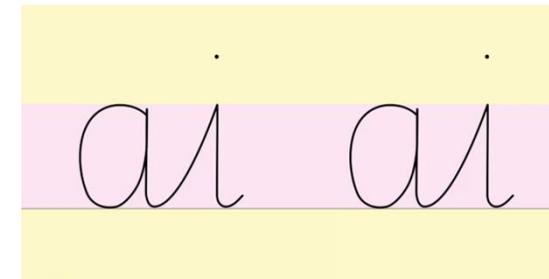
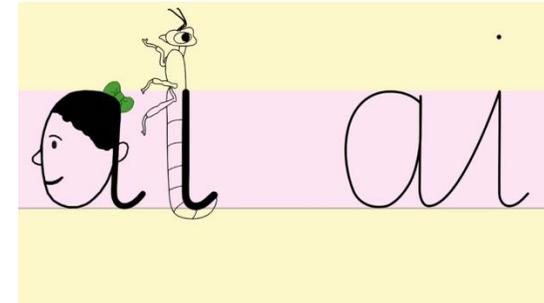
1. Introduce the join with a story and a rap.
 2. Show children how to join two letters.
 3. Children practise writing two letters with the join (perfect handwriting positions).
 4. Children check their letter joins with their partner.
- Repeat steps 2,3 and 4.

While your children are writing, support children who need extra help.

Every fourth film is a 'celebration' lesson: children practise writing words that contain all the joins they have learnt following the same structure.

If needed, pause the film to:

- remind children how the sponge cake layers correspond to the lines in their books
- address any common difficulties
- give children extra time to practise



Stage 4: Develop a mature and speedy style

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When do we teach handwriting? (2025-2026)

2025-2026	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Reception	Stage one: Letter formation taught alongside RWI daily As soon as they can read Set 1 sounds, we teach a separate daily 10-minute handwriting lesson. 	Stage one: Handwriting lesson	Stage one: Handwriting lesson
Year 1	Stage two: Readiness to join	Stage two: Readiness to join	<i>When most children are secure and automatic in Stage 2 move onto:</i> Stage three: Starting to join
Year 2	n/a	Stage two: Readiness to join	Stage three: Starting to join
Year 3	n/a	Stage two: Readiness to join	Stage three: Starting to join
Year 4	n/a	Stage two: Readiness to join	Stage three: Starting to join
Year 5	n/a	Stage two: Readiness to join	Stage three: Starting to join
Year 6	n/a	Stage two: Readiness to join	Stage three: Starting to join

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
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10 minutes daily	10 minutes daily	10 minutes daily From Spring 2: Stage 2: One video a day Summer 1: Stage 3: Three days on one video (three joins per video) + 1 celebration video	10 minutes daily From Spring 2: Stage 2: One video a day Summer 1: Stage 3: Three days on one video (three joins per video) + 1 celebration video	10 minutes daily From Spring 2: Stage 2: One video a day Summer 1: Stage 3: Three days on one video (three joins per video) + 1 celebration video	10 minutes daily From Spring 2: Stage 2: One video a day Summer 1: Stage 3: Three days on one video (three joins per video) + 1 celebration video	10 minutes daily From Spring 2: Stage 2: One video a day Summer 1: Stage 3: Three days on one video (three joins per video) + 1 celebration video
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When do we expect children to use their new handwriting skills in other lessons? When children write outside of a handwriting lesson, it is too challenging for pupils to use a newly learned letter straightaway. Once children have practised all the new letters, explain that they can start writing the title and first sentence in their new handwriting. You can increase the number of sentences week by week.