BELFORD
PRIMARY SCHOOL
make believe learn achieve

Rationale

At Belford Primary School, we believe that clear and fluent handwriting is an essential life skill. Our aim is to ensure all pupils develop a legible, fluent, and confident handwriting style that supports their written communication and overall learning. We value handwriting as a key element of presentation and take pride in fostering a sense of care and achievement in written work.

Aims

By the end of their time at Belford Primary School, pupils will:

- Develop a legible, fluent and consistent handwriting style.
- Understand the importance of neat presentation across all subjects.
- Use joined handwriting by the end of Key Stage 1 (where developmentally appropriate).
- Write with increasing speed and stamina, while maintaining legibility.
- Take pride in the presentation of their work.

Teaching and Progression

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- A strong emphasis is placed on gross and fine motor skill development as the foundation for writing.
- Regular programmes are used to support and develop these skills progressively across the Early Years. At 2 years old, children are introduced to *Squiggle While You Wiggle*, developing large arm movements and early mark-making skills. In Nursery, *Wiggle Squiggle* builds on these foundations, strengthening coordination, control and confidence in mark making. By Reception, *Wiggle Me into a Writer* further develops gross

and fine motor control, helping children to refine their movements and develop the physical skills needed for fluent and effective handwriting.

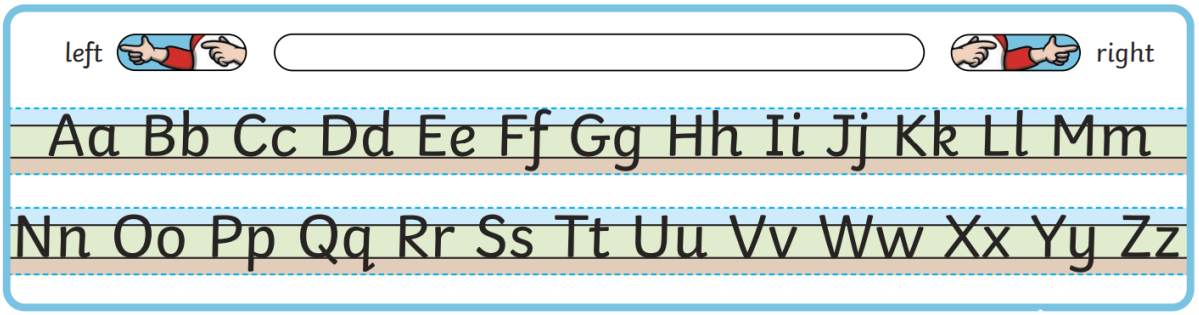
- Children are provided with daily opportunities to strengthen core muscles through activities such as climbing, balancing, dancing, yoga, PE and outdoor play.
- **Gross motor activities** are used to develop shoulder stability and upper arm strength, essential for controlled hand movements. Activities include vertical painting, pushing and pulling tyres, sweeping, using bodyboards and large-scale mark making.
- **Body crossover exercises** (e.g., reaching across the midline, cross-crawling and rhythm games) are encouraged to develop coordination between both sides of the body, supporting writing fluency, spatial awareness and overall physical development.
- **Wrist rotation, hand strength and flexibility** are developed through a wide range of play-based activities, including threading, painting, dough work, sand play and Dough Disco. Tool work is regularly incorporated indoors, outdoors and at Forest School, using equipment such as tweezers, tongs, scissors, brushes and other mark-making tools to strengthen hand and finger muscles and develop control.

- Focus is placed on developing an effective pencil grip (tripod grip), good posture and pre-writing patterns before introducing formal letter formation.
- Children are given frequent opportunities to practise these skills through meaningful, play-based experiences across all areas of provision.
- Children are introduced to correct letter formation using the school's agreed style, with plenty of multisensory and mark-making opportunities across all areas of learning.

Key Stage 1

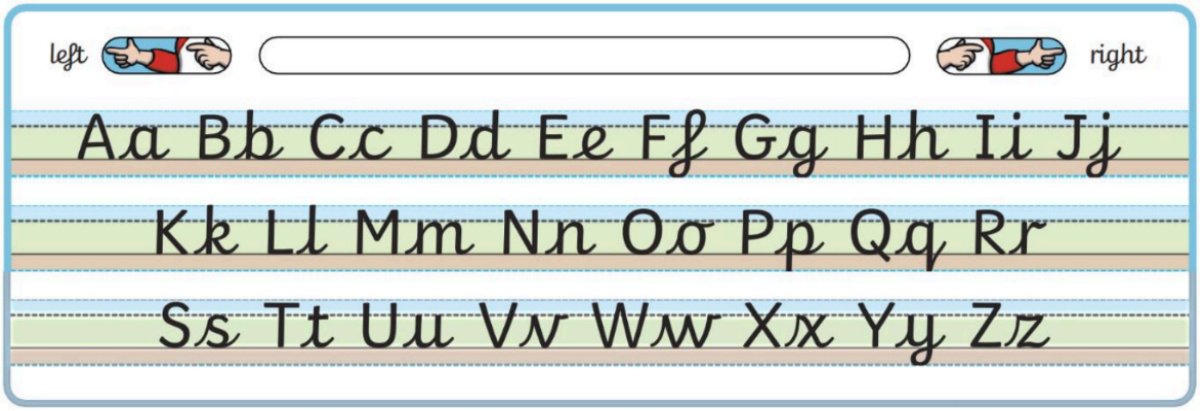
- Formal handwriting teaching begins using the school's chosen handwriting formation
- Children are introduced to correct letter formation using the school's agreed style, with plenty of **multi-sensory opportunities** to practise writing — for example, *writing in the air, tracing on their hand, and then forming the letters in their books*.
- Pupils are taught consistent letter size, orientation, and spacing.

- Once secure in print, children are introduced to joining letters in Year 2.



Key Stage 2

- Pupils refine their joined handwriting style, focusing on consistency, legibility, and fluency.
- Emphasis is placed on developing a personal handwriting style that is both legible and efficient.
- Presentation expectations are consistent across all subjects.



Handwriting Style

Belford Primary School uses the **continuous cursive style** ensuring:

- Lowercase letters start on the line.
- Letters are joined smoothly where appropriate.
- Capital letters are not joined to lowercase letters.
- Consistent spacing between letters and words is maintained.

Letter families and relative sizes

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed.

The 'families' are grouped according to where each letter starts, although these families may differ slightly, depending on the handwriting programme used.

Typical families are:

- c o a g q d
- i l t k j
- v w u y f
- r n m h p b
- e s x z

Pupils should be taught to write each 'family' of lower-case letters correctly on the line, and then to write words that include letters from that family.

Diagonal and horizontal joins

Pupils should be taught two basic joins: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

The diagonal join connects:

- letters from the line to small letters
- letters from the line to tall letters
- letters from the line to a, d, g, c, o, q (These letters need an extra stroke backwards across the top of a, d, g, c, o.)

The horizontal join connects:

- v, w, x, f, r to small letters
- v, w, x, f, r to tall letters
- v, w, x, f, r to a, d, g, c, o, q

(Taken from The Writing Framework July 2026)

Teaching Strategies

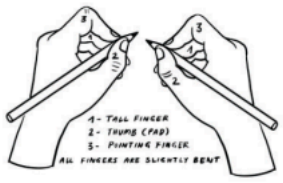
- Daily or weekly focused handwriting sessions in handwriting books and short focused activity in other books.
- Use of shared and modelled writing to demonstrate correct formation.
- Regular reinforcement of handwriting expectations across all subjects.
- Targeted support for pupils who experience difficulty with fine motor control.
- Use of pencil grips, sloped boards, or other aids where necessary.

Children are explicitly taught the correct **writing posture** to support comfort, control and good handwriting habits. We encourage children to keep their **feet flat on the floor, back straight and chair tucked in**, with their paper positioned at a slight angle for comfort and control.

We teach the children to remember the **4Ps of handwriting**:

- **Posture** – Sit comfortably with feet flat, back straight and chair tucked in.
- **Pencil** – Hold the pencil correctly to support a relaxed and controlled grip.
- **Paper** – Position the paper at a slight angle to help with movement and letter formation.
- **Pressure** – Use a light, controlled pressure when writing to avoid tension and fatigue.

Finger positioning using the tripod grip:





Paper positioning for left-handers:

Paper positioning for right-handers:



Presentation Expectations

- Pupils write in pencil up to Year 3. Children who are developmentally ready and consistently demonstrate secure, neat and fluent handwriting may be given a pen in Year 3, although this is rare. The majority of pupils progress to using a pen in Year 4, when they are ready to demonstrate the required level of handwriting control and presentation.

- Date and title must be written neatly and underlined with a ruler (from LKS2).
- Mistakes should be crossed out with a single neat line or rubbed out if writing in pencil.
- Work should be well presented in both exercise books and display materials.

Inclusion and Support

All pupils, including those with SEND, will have access to appropriate support to develop handwriting skills. This may include:

- Adapted writing tools or paper.
- Specific gross and fine motor skill interventions.
- Alternative recording methods where appropriate.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Handwriting will be assessed regularly as part of writing assessments.
- Teachers will provide feedback on the presentation as part of marking.
- The English Lead will monitor handwriting standards across the school through work scrutiny and learning walks.

Celebrating Success

- Writing from children of all ages is celebrated through our Golden Book, with examples shared and celebrated in assembly.
- Children may receive a handwriting certificate to recognise their progress, effort and achievement, which can also be shared at home with parents and carers.

Home-School Partnership

- Provide opportunities for writing in everyday activities, such as writing shopping lists, cards, labels, messages, names and drawing or colouring.
- Encourage gross and fine motor activities such as climbing, dancing, playdough, threading, drawing, painting and using scissors.
- Praise effort and celebrate progress in handwriting.