



## **Handwriting at Riverside**

### **Why handwriting matters**

Good handwriting increases children's motivation: their belief in themselves as writers is predicated on this, particularly in their first years at school. Writing involves many processes, so having fluent handwriting is one less thing to think about.

As it says in the Writing Framework 2025:

"Pupils can gain great satisfaction and pleasure in learning how to write if the teaching is explicit, cumulative and engaging. As they see progress and sense growing competence, their motivation to improve increases. Gaining a new skill becomes a source of pride, in the same way as learning to play a musical instrument. It gives them freedom to express their ideas without being hampered by an uncomfortable pencil grip, poor letter formation or inaccurate spelling."

Our teaching is grounded in one important principle: We always help children 'visualise to memorise'. We use 'picture hooks' to help them build a mind picture of the letter or join before they write. We never ask children to copy letters, joins or words. Copying results in children writing what they think they see – often starting in the wrong place or writing an approximation of the letter or join. Our aim is to build children's writing fluency.

### **Our approach**

At Riverside, we teach children to read and write Set 1 sounds from the start of Reception as part of their Read Write Inc. Phonics lessons. Children first learn to form letters while they learn to read Set 1 letter-sounds in Reception.

As soon as they can read Set 1 sounds, we teach a separate daily 10-minute handwriting lesson. These handwriting lessons are at a different time from the Read Write Inc. lesson.

In Read Write Inc., we teach handwriting in four stages.

#### **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.

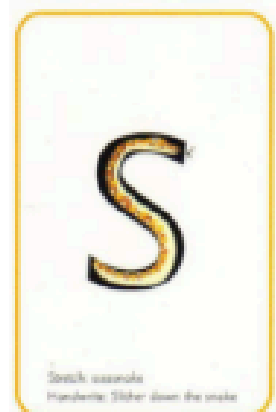
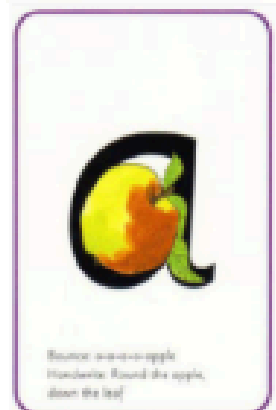
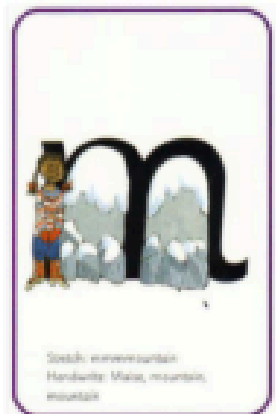
Each stage ensures pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements for handwriting from Reception to Year 6.

## Handwriting phrases for helping your child to form letters

This works best if your child practises for a short time every day.

1. Show the picture side and air-write as you say the phrase.
2. Ask your child to practise in the air with you.
3. Using a sharp pencil and sat at a table, encourage your child to have a go.
4. Praise your child for their efforts.

- m Maisie, mountain, mountain  
a round the apple, down the leaf  
s slither down the snake  
d round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet  
t down the tower, across the tower  
i down the body, dot for the head  
n down Nobby, over his net  
p down the plait and over the pirate's face  
g round her face, down her hair and give her a curl  
o all around the orange  
c curl around the caterpillar  
k down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg  
u down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle  
b down the laces to the heel, round the toe  
f down the stem and draw the leaves  
e lift off the top and scoop out the egg  
l down the long leg  
h down the head to the hooves and over his back  
r down his back and then curl over his arm  
j down his body, curl and dot  
v down a wing, up a wing  
y down a horn, up a horn and under his head  
w down, up, down, up  
z zig-zag-zig  
q round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair  
x down the arm and leg and repeat the other side

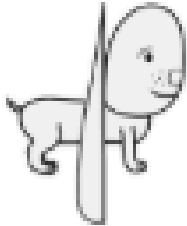


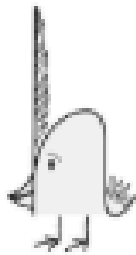
## Stage 2

| Letter                                                                                   | Name  | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a<br>   | Annie | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the bow on the top of her head</li> <li>✓ over the top of her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ round her chin</li> <li>✓ up to her ear</li> <li>✓ up to her bow</li> <li>✓ straight hair down</li> <li>✓ add a curl (not too curvy)</li> </ul>                         |
| d<br>   | Dina  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at her bow on the top of her head</li> <li>✓ over the top of her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ round her chin</li> <li>✓ up to her ear</li> <li>✓ up to her bow</li> <li>✓ spiky hair – up to the top sponge and down</li> <li>✓ add a curl (not too curvy)</li> </ul> |
| Review: a d                                                                              |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| g<br> | Gaia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at her bow</li> <li>✓ over her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ round her chin</li> <li>✓ up to her ear</li> <li>✓ up to her bow</li> <li>✓ down her long hair to the bottom sponge</li> <li>✓ add a round curl</li> </ul>                                                |
| Review: a d g                                                                            |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| o<br> | Olive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at her bow</li> <li>✓ over her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ round her chin</li> <li>✓ up to her ear</li> <li>✓ and up to her bow</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |
| Review: d g o                                                                            |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| c<br> | Cara  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at her bow</li> <li>✓ over her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ round her chin and stop</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Review: g o c                                                                            |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

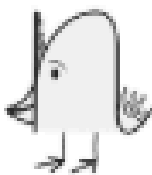
|               |                                                                                   |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| q             |  | Queenie | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at her crown</li> <li>✓ over her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ round her chin</li> <li>✓ up to her ear</li> <li>✓ up to her crown</li> <li>✓ down her long hair</li> <li>✓ sharp flick</li> </ul> |
| Review: o c q |                                                                                   |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Letter                        |                                                                                    | Name          | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| u                             |   | Uncle Umberto | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ down to the bottom</li> <li>✓ round his chin</li> <li>✓ up to his ear</li> <li>✓ up to the top of his head</li> <li>✓ back down</li> <li>✓ add a curl on the line (not too curvy)</li> </ul>                                                               |
| Review words: dug, dog, add   |                                                                                    |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| y                             |  | Uncle Yan     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ down his face – to the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ round his chin</li> <li>✓ join the chin by his ear</li> <li>✓ up to the top of his head</li> <li>✓ down his very straight long hair – to the bottom sponge</li> <li>✓ add a nice round curl</li> </ul> |
| Review words: day, daddy, cod |                                                                                    |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

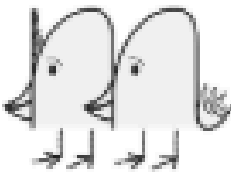
| Letter                         |                                                                                     | Name     | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| b                              |  | Bunnie B | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the sponge</li> <li>✓ down his straight ears</li> <li>✓ over his head</li> <li>✓ curve down his face</li> <li>✓ make a round chin</li> <li>✓ join his chin to his ears</li> </ul>                                                                        |
| Review words: bad, bug, body   |                                                                                     |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| p                              |  | Puppy P  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ go down her straight long ears – to the bottom of the sponge</li> <li>✓ back up again</li> <li>✓ over the top of her head</li> <li>✓ curve down her face</li> <li>✓ make a round chin</li> <li>✓ join her chin to her ears</li> </ul> |
| Review words: yap, puppy, good |                                                                                     |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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

Review words: hug, hop, happy

|                                                                                        |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| n<br> | N hen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ straight down her feather</li> <li>✓ back up to the top of her beak</li> <li>✓ slope up her forehead</li> <li>✓ curve round her head</li> <li>✓ straight down</li> <li>✓ add a curl for the tail feather</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

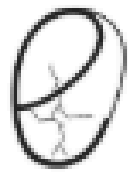
Review words: and, bun, hand

|                                                                                          |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| m<br> | M hen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ straight down their feather</li> <li>✓ back up to the top of the beak</li> <li>✓ slope up the forehead</li> <li>✓ curve round her head</li> <li>✓ straight down</li> <li>✓ back up to the top of the beak</li> <li>✓ slope up the forehead</li> <li>✓ curve round her head</li> <li>✓ straight down</li> <li>✓ add a curl for the tail feather</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: map, mug, man

|                                                                                          |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| r<br> | R hen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ straight down her feather</li> <li>✓ back up to the top of her beak</li> <li>✓ slope up her forehead</li> <li>✓ curve round her head and stop</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: egg, queen, deep

| Letter                                                                                   | Name | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| e<br> | egg  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start in the middle of the jam</li> <li>✓ scoop and loop up to the top of the egg at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ round the egg back to the middle of the jam</li> </ul> |

Review words: egg, queen, deep

|   |                                                                                   |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| s |  | snake | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the snake's tongue at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ slither round the back of the egg</li> <li>✓ slither round the front of the egg</li> <li>✓ and round the bottom of the jam</li> </ul> |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: sunny, soggy, dress

|   |                                                                                   |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| f |  | flower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the flower in the middle of the top sponge</li> <li>✓ curve gently round</li> <li>✓ straight down the stem to the middle of the bottom sponge</li> <li>✓ curve gently over the root</li> <li>✓ go the leaves left to right – across the top of the jam</li> </ul> |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: fluffy, floppy, huff

|   |                                                                                   |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i |  | insect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ straight down its body to the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ add a curl for its tail – not too sharp, not too round</li> <li>✓ dot for the eye in the middle of the top sponge</li> </ul> |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: flip, spin, igloo

| Letter | Name                                                                                                        | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| l      | <br>Long-legged<br>Layla | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ start at the top of the sponge</li><li>✓ straight down her legs to the bottom of the jam</li><li>✓ add a curl – not too sharp, not too round</li></ul> |

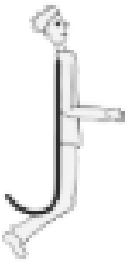
Review words: long, well, smelly

|   |                                                                                     |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| t |  | Top hat Taylor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of her hat in the <b>middle</b> of the top sponge</li> <li>✓ down to the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ add a curl – not too sharp, not too round</li> <li>✓ go the rim of the hat left to right on top of the jam</li> </ul> |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: trap, teeth, attic

|   |                                                                                     |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| k |  | Kay the Clown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the sponge for Kay's tall hat</li> <li>✓ straight down to the bottom of the jam up to the middle of the jam</li> <li>✓ around the hoola hoop – <b>keep it in the jam!</b></li> <li>✓ make a diagonal line to the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ add a curl – not too sharp, not too round</li> </ul> |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: knock, kitten, kick

|   |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| j |  | <b>Jumping Jay</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ straight down Jay's body to the bottom of the sponge</li> <li>✓ add a round curl for his legs</li> <li>✓ dot for the eye in the middle of the top sponge</li> </ul> |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: jump, jacket, jolly

| Letter | Name              | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| v      | <b>V- Acrobat</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ diagonal line down to the feet at the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ diagonal line up to the hands at the top of the jam the same both sides</li> </ul> |

Review words: love, have, give

|   |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| w | <b>W- Acrobat</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ diagonal line down to the feet at the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ diagonal line up to the hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ diagonal line down to the feet again</li> <li>✓ diagonal line up to the hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ all lines are the same length</li> </ul> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: what, when, which

|   |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| x | <b>X- Acrobat</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the left hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>diagonal line down to the feet at the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ lift your pencil</li> <li>✓ diagonal line up to the hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>✓ hand, feet, feet, hand</li> </ul> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: fox, box, extra

|   |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| z | <b>Z- Acrobat</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ start at the hand at the top of the jam</li> <li>go across the jam to his head</li> <li>✓ diagonal line down to his knees at the bottom of the jam</li> <li>✓ across the bottom of the jam to his feet</li> <li>✓ hand, head, knee feet</li> </ul> |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Review words: zebra, zoo, quiz

## Stage 3

# Stage 3 Handwriting

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**

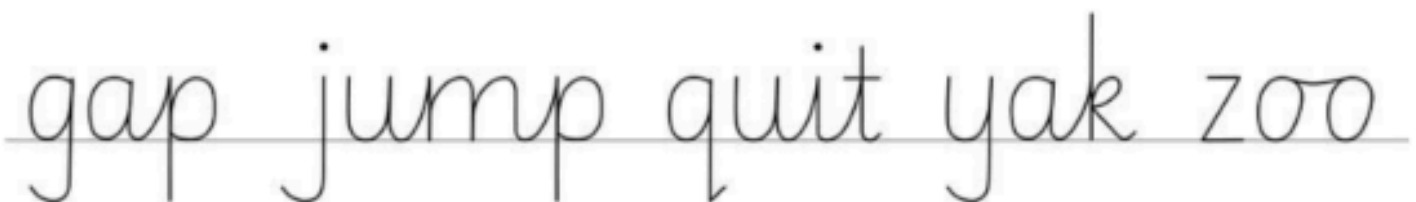
**Bridge to top sponge letter**

**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:



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

re

ee

as

Children will learn a style that looks like this:

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

