Workshop for Parents - **Year 1**

Handwriting and Reading

Monday 5th October 2026

Ben Jonson Primary School



Workshop Aims

🎯 By the end of today, you'll:

- Understand handwriting expectations
- Understand reading expectations
- Learn practical ways to help at home
- Gain confidence supporting early writing and reading

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Icebreaker

- Try this: Write your child's name using your non-dominant hand!



- How does it feel?

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National Curriculum Expectation for Year

Writing – transcription

Statutory requirements

Spelling (see English Appendix 1)

Pupils should be taught to:

- spell:
  - words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught
  - common exception words
  - the days of the week

Statutory requirements

- name the letters of the alphabet:
  - naming the letters of the alphabet in order
  - using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound
- add prefixes and suffixes:
  - using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs
  - using the prefix un–
  - using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words [for example, helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest]
- apply simple spelling rules and guidance, as listed in English Appendix 1
- write from memory simple sentences dictated by the teacher that include words using the GPCs and common exception words taught so far.

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Statutory requirements
Handwriting Pupils should be 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Writing – composition

Statutory requirements

Pupils should be taught to:
▪ write sentences by:
  ▪ saying out loud what they are going to write about
  ▪ composing a sentence orally before writing it
  ▪ sequencing sentences to form short narratives
  ▪ re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense
▪ discuss what they have written with the teacher or other pupils
▪ read aloud their writing clearly enough to be heard by their peers and the teacher.

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The Writing Journey

- Mark-making & drawing
- Writing letters & sounds
- Building words
- Writing sentences
- Adding detail & punctuation

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Is your child ready for handwriting?

Before children can develop fluent handwriting, they need:
hand strength • stability • finger control

TRY IT TOGETHER

✋

Touch your thumb to each fingertip
one at a time:
1 • 2 • 3 • 4
Now try the other hand.

- ✓ Can they touch each fingertip to their thumb?
- ✓ Can they do this with both hands?
- ✓ Can they move and control their fingers independently?
- ✓ Can they use one hand while the other supports or steadies?

These small movements help children control a pencil effectively.



Before handwriting comes hand strength and control

Handwriting is not just about holding a pencil.

Strong hands
Strength and control in the hands and fingers

Controlled movements
Using both hands together and controlling small movements

Letter formation
Making the lines, curves and shapes needed for letters

Fluent handwriting
Writing more comfortably, accurately and confidently

Playing • cutting • threading • building • drawing

preparation for successful handwriting



How can you help at home?

Short, playful activities are often more useful than long handwriting sessions.

Playdough
Roll, pinch, squeeze and make small shapes.

Threading
Use beads, pasta, string or laces.

Peg & tweezer games
Pick up and sort small objects.

Cutting
Practise straight, zigzag and curved lines.

Drawing patterns
Try circles, waves, loops and zigzags.

Construction
Build with Lego or other small pieces.

Everyday jobs
Buttons, zips, cutlery and opening containers.

Draw & write
Keep practice short, purposeful and enjoyable.



From physical readiness to fluent handwriting

In Year 1, we build on these foundations through Penpals for Handwriting.

1. **Physical readiness**
   Hand and finger strength

2. **Pencil control**
   Controlled lines, shapes and patterns

3. **Letter formation**
   Starting in the correct place and forming letters accurately

4. **Fluency**
   Writing with increasing ease and confidence

The goal: comfortable, accurate and increasingly automatic handwriting



Parent Tips

•Keep activities short (5–10 minutes).

•Praise effort — fine motor development takes time.

•Alternate quiet activities (threading, tracing) with active ones (squeezing balls, climbing).

•Make it fun — children learn best through play and exploration!

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Handwriting at Ben Jonson - We teach children letter writing when they learn phonics

OXFORD

Ruth Miskin Training

Read Write Inc. Phonics Handwriting phrases

Use these handwriting phrases to help your child to remember how to form each letter correctly.

Always practise writing sitting at a table and write on paper using a sharp pencil.

1. Write the letter in the air as you say the phrase. Ask your child to practise in the air with you.
2. Help your child to say the phrase as they write the letter on paper.
3. Always praise your child for their efforts. Focus on correct formation rather than size.
4. Aim to practise with your child for a short time each day.

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

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Letter formation



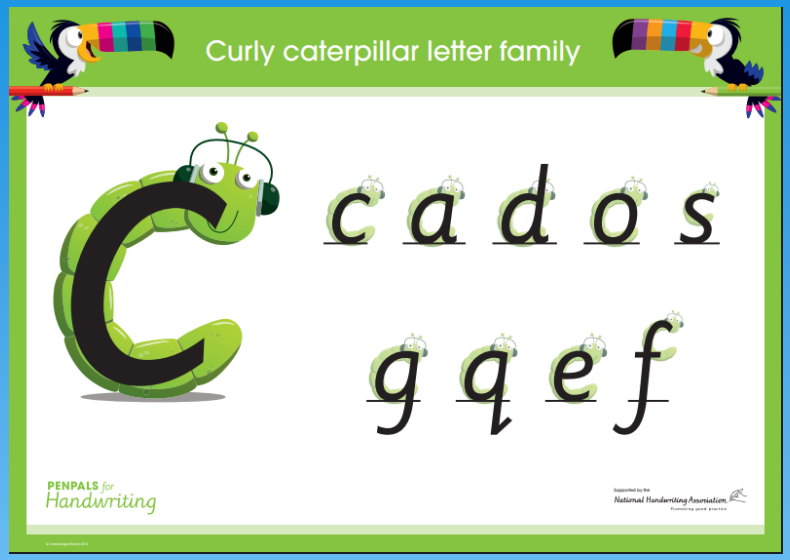
As well as learning to form letters correctly during phonics sessions, your child will also have separate handwriting sessions during the week.

We use Penpals handwriting scheme which follows closely the formation taught in their phonics sessions.

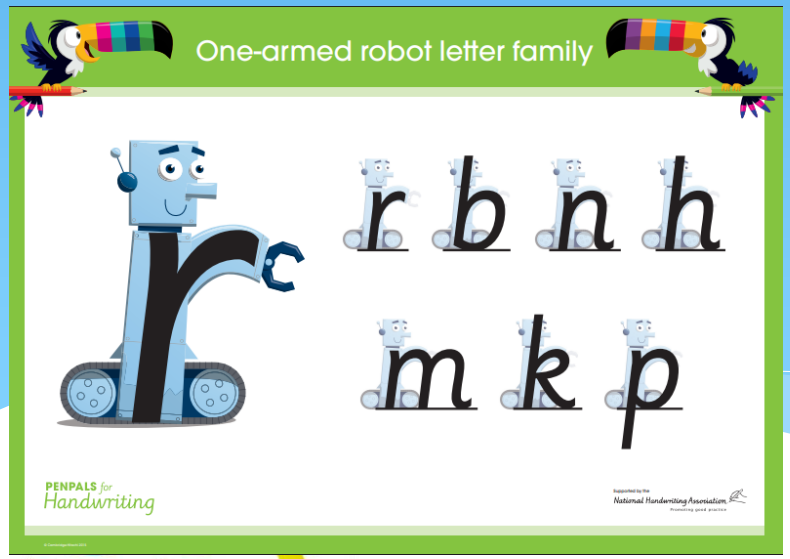
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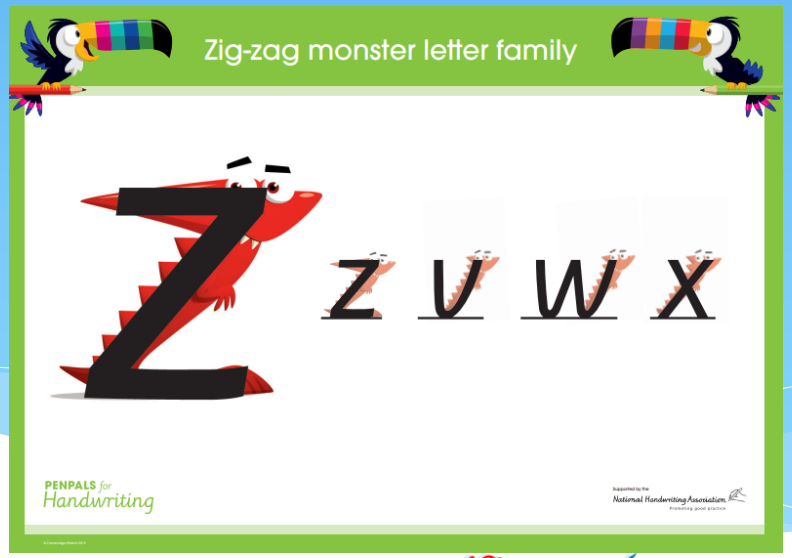
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Let's practise









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Handwriting Focus

Key Handwriting Skills:

- Correct pencil grip
- Posture and control
- Consistent letter formation
- Writing on the line
- Developing stamina

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Common Challenges

⚠️ Common hurdles:

- Reversing letters
- Slow writing pace
- Tiring easily
- Avoiding writing tasks

💡 Tips:

- Use finger tracing and visuals
- Break writing into short bursts
- Praise small wins

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Why is reading so important in Year 1?

Learning to read opens the door to learning across the whole curriculum.

Reading fluency
Children become quicker and more confident at recognising words.

Vocabulary
Books introduce children to words they may not hear in everyday conversation.

Understanding
Reading develops comprehension, knowledge and curiosity.

Writing
Children meet sentence patterns, vocabulary and ideas they can use in their own writing.

Speaking & listening
Talking about books develops oracy and confidence.

Enjoyment
Positive experiences help children see themselves as readers.



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In Year 1, children are learning to become readers

At school, Read Write Inc. phonics helps children learn how the English alphabetic code works.

1

See the sound
Recognise the letter or group of letters.

2

Say the sound
Recall the correct sound quickly.

3

Blend
Put sounds together to read a word.

4

Read fluently
Recognise more words automatically.

5

Understand
Think and talk about what the text means.

The more children practise reading accurately, the more fluent and confident they become.

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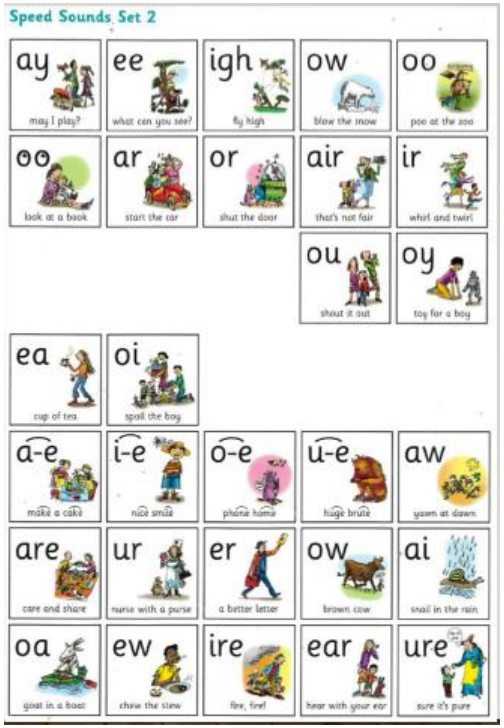
Phonics

Read Write Inc is a phonics programme that we use at Ben Jonson to teach your child to read. It begins in Reception and carries through into Year 1 and start of Year 2, at which point your child will complete the programme and be confident, independent reader.

They are progressively taught to read and spell new sounds until they develop accuracy and fluency.

Words in the story books used only contain the sounds that the children have been taught previously.

Children then practise these books at home to show off how fluently and confidently they can read!



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Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

All Year 1 children sit the phonics screening check in June each year.

Children are given 40 words to decode and read.

These 40 words include real and ‘alien’ words

Children must identify the sounds in the word and blend them together accurately.



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HOW READ WRITE INC. HELPS CHILDREN TO PASS THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK

- Read Write Inc. tailors to your child's reading ability.
- Children are grouped according to their ability to allow them to make accelerated progress in reading.
- Each book teaches the children to read a specific sound, including all the sounds taught previously.
- Children should be able to read these books independently as they are studied in school during the week.
- These books are the biggest focus in Year 1 and 2 as they consolidate the phonics they have been taught in school and ensures they make good progress.



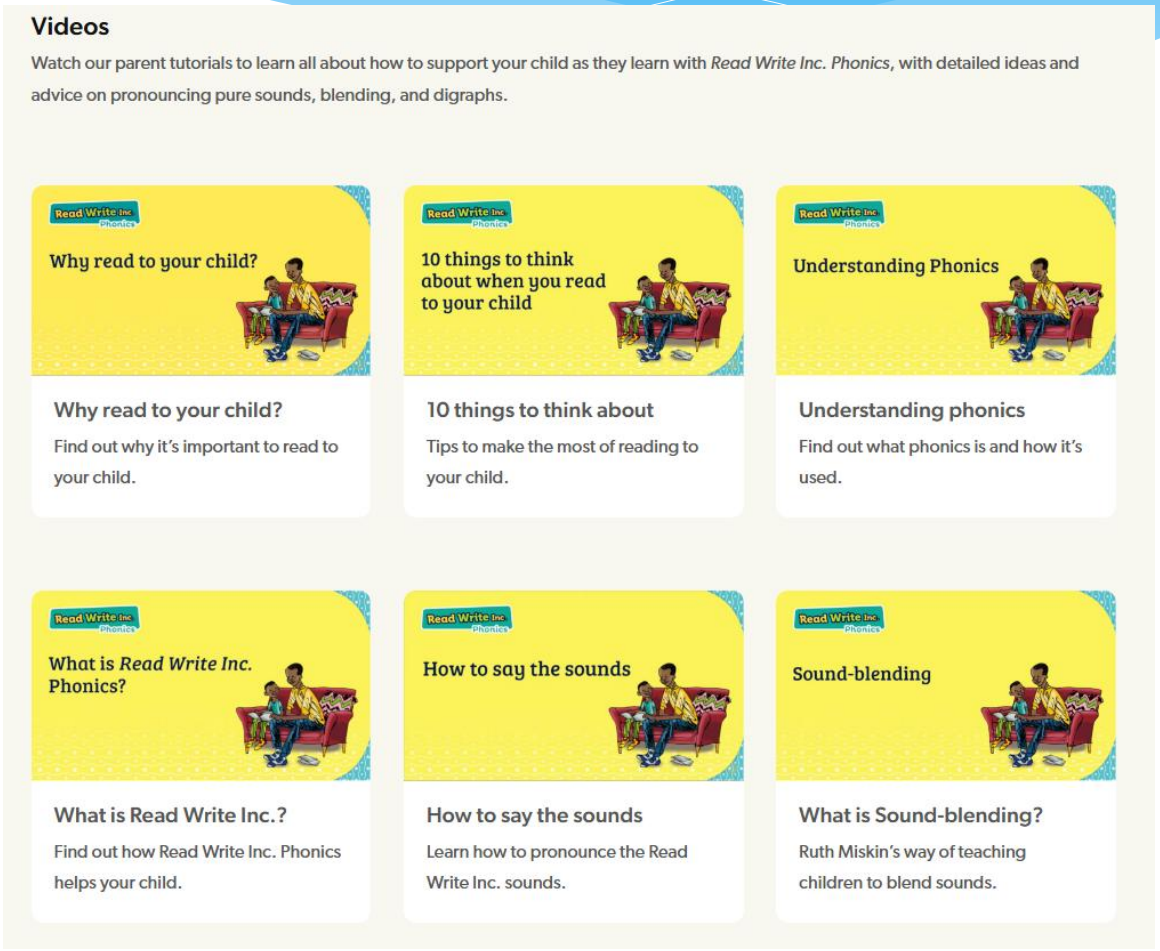
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Resources available to support you and your child

Here are some video resources on how to support your child as they learn to read with Read Write Inc.

https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/read-write-inc-phonics-guide/



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Fluency Reading

What is reading fluency?

Accuracy



Reading accurately means to decode and read words correctly. It is the ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships when reading and saying written words. Pupils' level of accuracy will impact their speed and ease of reading.

Automaticity



The more cognitive space that is taken up with trying to decode words, the less space that is available to comprehend meaning in a text. Therefore, readers must be able to decode words without thinking about the decoding.

Reading with automaticity is reading words on sight automatically and at an appropriate pace. It feels and sounds effortless for pupils.

Prosody



Prosody is reading aloud (and silently in the reader's head) with appropriate use of stress, intonation and expression. It requires both reading accuracy and a level of comprehension.

Understanding words and ideas enables pupils to make decisions about how they might vary their volume, phrasing, smoothness and pace to reflect emotion, emphasis or tone. Reading with prosody sounds interesting and engaging to others.

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How can you support your child with developing fluency?

Your child will bring home a Read Write Inc book once they have finished it at school.

It is important that they continue to read this as it will help them develop their fluency.

They will also bring home a decodable book – a book matched to the phonics they are learning.



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Why reading at home matters

A little and often makes a big difference.

Regular reading helps children…

✓ practise sounds and blending

✓ recognise familiar words more quickly

✓ build reading stamina

✓ develop confidence

✓ understand and talk about books

✓ build a positive reading habit

Keep it manageable

- Find a calm time when your child is not too tired.
- Short, regular practice is better than one long session.
- Praise effort, careful sounding-out and perseverance.
- If a word is difficult, support them rather than allowing frustration to build.
- Talk about the story as well as reading the words.

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Reading the words is only part of reading

Talk helps children understand, think and develop language.

Before

What do you think this book might be about?

What can you see on the cover?

During

What has happened so far?

How is the character feeling?

What do you think will happen next?

After

What was your favourite part? Why?

Can you retell the story?

Did anything surprise you?

Try these next time you read with your child:

“Tell me more…”

“Why do you think that…?”

“What makes you think that?”

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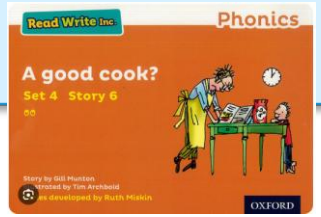
Two kinds of reading at home

Children need practice AND pleasure.

1. Reading practice

Your child reads to you.

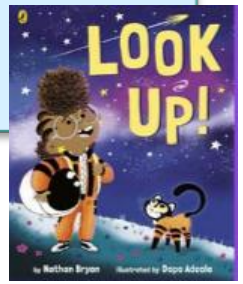
- Use the RWI sounds they know.
- Encourage sounding out and blending.
- Reread to build fluency.
- Talk briefly about what was read.



2. Reading for pleasure

You can read and enjoy books together.

- Let your child choose books that interest them.
- Read stories that are too difficult for them to read alone.
- Enjoy favourite books again and again.
- Talk, laugh, wonder and share opinions.



Both are important for developing confident, motivated readers.

Building a reader at home

The aim is not simply to finish a book—it is to help children want to come back to books.

Let your child choose sometimes.

Make books easy to reach at home.

Visit the library together.

Reread favourite stories.

Talk about what you are reading too.

Use audiobooks alongside printed books.

Share poems, comics, information books and stories.

Make reading a warm, enjoyable part of family life.



Read with your child • Read to your child • Talk about books • Enjoy books together

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Reading for Pleasure

Lena (1) Reading Canon

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Reading Challenge at school to earn badges.

9 books – Bronze Award
18 books – Silver Award
27 books – Gold Award

Read the book with your child and complete a book review!

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Reflection & Questions

- What's one idea you'll try at home this week?

- Q&A Time

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Thank You!

Please complete the feedback survey.

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