Workshop for Parents - **Year 2**

Handwriting and Reading

Tuesday 6th 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

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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

En1/3.2 Handwriting and Presentation

Year 1

En1/3.2a sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly

En1/3.2b begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place

En1/3.2c form capital letters

En1/3.2d form digits 0-9

En1/3.2e understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

En2/3.2 Handwriting and Presentation

Year 2

- 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.

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The Writing Journey – Year 2

In Year 2, children build on their Year 1 foundations and become more independent writers.

1. **Say & plan**
   Talk through ideas and organise what they want to write.
2. **Write sentences**
   Use capital letters and full stops accurately and begin to use ? and !.
3. **Join ideas**
   Use words such as and, but, because and when to develop sentences.
4. **Add detail**
   Choose precise vocabulary, including adjectives and expanded noun phrases.
5. **Re-read & improve**
   Check that writing makes sense; correct spelling and punctuation.
6. **Build stamina**
   Write longer pieces with increasing independence and clear handwriting.

The goal: confident, fluent and increasingly independent writers



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.



In Year 2, handwriting develops towards fluency

The foundations still matter, but the focus increasingly moves to consistency, speed and stamina.

Hand strength & control
Comfortable pencil grip and controlled movements

→

Accurate letter formation
Letters start and finish in the correct place

→

Size & spacing
Letters are an appropriate size with clear spaces

→

Fluency & stamina
Writing becomes easier, quicker and more automatic

Short practice • drawing • cutting • construction • fine-motor activities
These can still support children who tire easily or find handwriting difficult.

→

Confident, fluent handwriting

The goal: comfortable, accurate and increasingly automatic handwriting



How can you help at home?

Short, regular handwriting practice helps children develop accuracy, fluency and confidence.

Letter formation
Practise letters your child finds difficult. Focus on the correct starting point.

Size & position
Keep letters an appropriate size and sitting correctly on the line.

Spacing
Encourage clear spaces between words and consistent spacing between letters.

Capital letters
Practise forming capitals correctly and using them in the right places.

Words & sentences
Write useful words, short sentences, lists, labels or messages.

Fluency
Encourage smooth, comfortable writing rather than rushing.

Build stamina
Gradually move from one sentence to several while keeping writing neat.

Praise & encourage
Notice improvements in formation, spacing and consistency.

Keep practice short, purposeful and positive.

The aim is not perfect handwriting — it is increasingly comfortable, consistent and independent writing.



From accurate formation to fluent handwriting

In Year 2, we build on the foundations developed in Year 1 through Penpals for Handwriting.

1. **Secure letter formation**
   Form lower-case and capital letters correctly and consistently.

2. **Size and positioning**
   Keep letters an appropriate size, with ascenders and descenders positioned correctly.

3. **Spacing and presentation**
   Use clear spaces between words and position writing accurately on the line.

4. **Fluency and stamina**
   Write with increasing ease, consistency and confidence across longer pieces of writing.

The goal: comfortable, accurate, consistent and increasingly automatic handwriting



Parent Tips – Year 2

Small amounts of regular practice can make a big difference.

- **Keep it short –** 5–10 minutes of focused practice is enough.
- **Quality, not speed –** Encourage careful, comfortable handwriting rather than rushing.
- **Little and often –** Practise letters, spacing or other areas your child finds difficult.
- **Good habits –** Check posture, pencil grip and paper position.
- **Real reasons to write –** Try lists, cards, labels, notes and short messages.
- **Praise progress –** Notice improvements in formation, size, spacing and presentation.
- **Keep it positive –** Build confidence and avoid turning handwriting into a battle.

Aim for comfortable, confident and increasingly fluent handwriting.



What is Penpals for Handwriting?

Penpals is the handwriting programme we use at Ben Jonson to teach handwriting explicitly and progressively.

A clear progression
Children build from secure letter formation towards fluent, legible handwriting.

Regular teaching
Handwriting is taught directly, not left to develop by chance.

Consistent language
Children hear the same messages about posture, pencil control, formation and presentation.

Practice and application
Children practise the skill and then apply it in their everyday writing.



What does Penpals teach?

Handwriting is made up of several skills that work together.

Posture
Sitting comfortably and being ready to write.

Pencil grip
Holding and controlling the pencil effectively.

Letter formation
Forming letters accurately and consistently.

Size & position
Keeping letters appropriately sized and placed on the line.

Spacing
Creating clear spaces between words and letters.

Fluency
Writing with increasing ease, rhythm and stamina.



Penpals in Year 2

In Year 2, the focus moves from forming individual letters towards greater consistency and fluency.

1. **Secure formation**
   Lower-case and capital letters are formed correctly.

2. **Size & position**
   Letters are appropriately sized and positioned on the line.

3. **Spacing**
   Words are clearly separated and writing is easy to read.

4. **Fluency & stamina**
   Children maintain clear handwriting across longer pieces.

The goal: handwriting that is legible, comfortable and increasingly automatic.



How can parents support Penpals at home?

Use the same simple messages: short practice, correct formation and plenty of encouragement.

Keep it short
5–10 focused minutes is enough.

Use the school model
Encourage the letter formation taught at school.

Quality before speed
Slow down if rushing affects formation or spacing.

Write for a purpose
Lists, cards, labels and notes make practice meaningful.

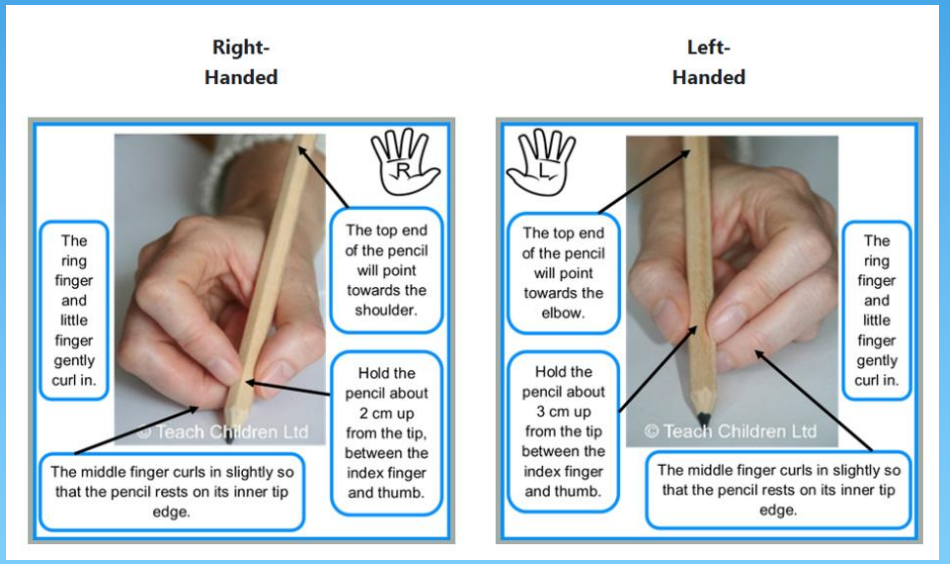
Notice one thing
Choose one focus such as spacing, size or a tricky letter.

Praise progress
Celebrate improvement rather than expecting perfection.



Correct Posture and Letter Formation

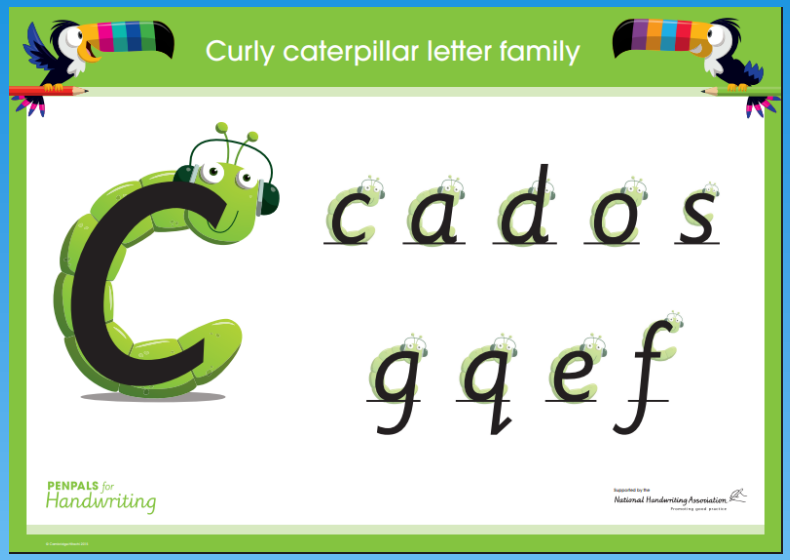




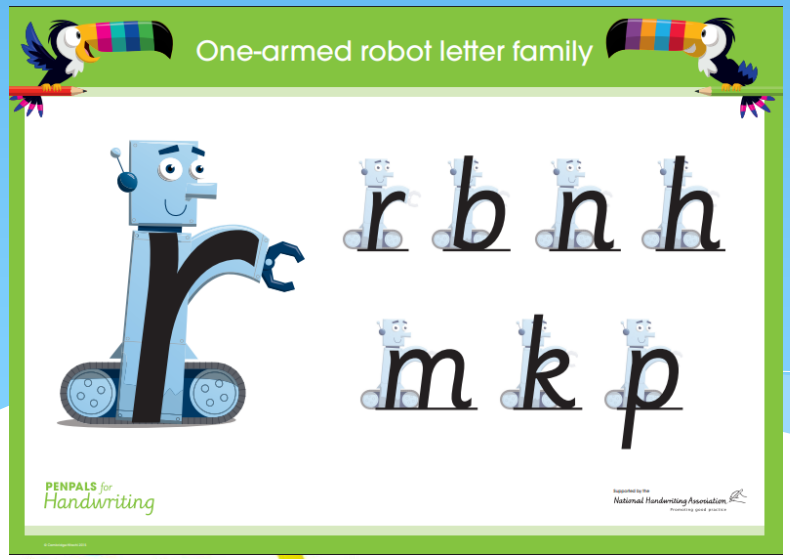
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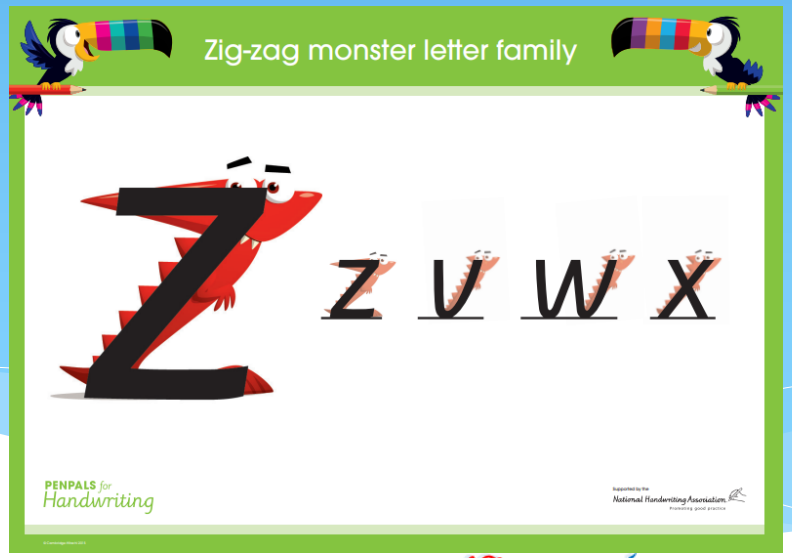
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Let's practise









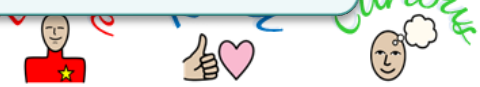
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Handwriting Focus – Year 2

- **Key Handwriting Skills:**
  - Secure and consistent letter formation
  - Correct letter size and positioning
  - Clear and consistent spacing between words
  - Writing accurately on the line
  - Maintaining good posture and pencil grip
  - Developing fluency and writing stamina
  - Making handwriting increasingly automatic

The aim: clear, comfortable and fluent handwriting that children can maintain across their writing.



Common Challenges – Year 2

⚠ Common hurdles

- Inconsistent letter size or formation
- Letters not sitting correctly on the line
- Uneven or missing spaces between words
- Reversing or incorrectly forming some letters
- Handwriting becoming less clear when rushing
- Tiring during longer pieces of writing

💡 How we can help

- Focus on one handwriting target at a time
- Model and practise correct letter formation
- Use short, regular practice
- Encourage children to slow down and check
- Gradually build writing stamina
- Praise specific improvements
- Speak to the teacher if difficulties persist

The aim is progress and increasing fluency — not perfect handwriting every time.





Why is reading so important in Year 2?

Reading helps children become fluent, confident learners across the whole curriculum.

Reading fluency
Children read more smoothly, accurately and with expression.

Vocabulary
Reading introduces richer words and language for speaking and writing.

Understanding
Children retrieve, explain, predict and discuss what they read.

Writing
Books provide ideas, sentence patterns and vocabulary for writing.

Speaking & listening
Talking about books develops oracy, reasoning and confidence.

Reading for pleasure
Choice and enjoyment help children build a lasting reading habit.

2026 • National Year of Reading • GO ALL IN

If you're into it, read into it — use your child's interests to spark a love of reading.

At home: read together • talk about books • let children choose • aim for 10 minutes a day



Reading in Year 2: What will my child be doing?

Children follow the reading provision that best matches their stage of reading development.

Still developing early reading skills?

- Your child will continue to take part in a Read Write Inc. phonics group.
- They will practise the sounds and word-reading skills they still need to secure.
- They will read books matched closely to the phonics they are learning.
- Regular reading at home will help build accuracy, fluency and confidence.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

Finished the phonics programme?

- Your child will take part in whole-class reading sessions.
- They will read and discuss a wider range of texts together.
- Teaching will develop fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- Children will explain ideas, retrieve information, make predictions and discuss what they have read.



At home: keep reading regularly and follow the books and guidance sent home by your child's teacher.



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?

The book your child brings home will depend on where they are in their reading journey.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

- Your child will bring home a Read Write Inc. book once they have finished it at school.
- Please continue to read this book at home. Re-reading builds accuracy, fluency and confidence.
- They will also bring home a decodable book matched to the phonics they are learning.



Whole-Class Reading

- Your child will bring home a suitable reading book matched to their reading level.
- Please encourage them to read it regularly at home for practice.
- Reading aloud, re-reading sections and using expression will develop fluency.
- Talk about the book to develop vocabulary and understanding.

Whichever reading pathway your child is following, regular reading at home is essential.

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Read aloud • re-read • use expression • talk about the book • praise progress

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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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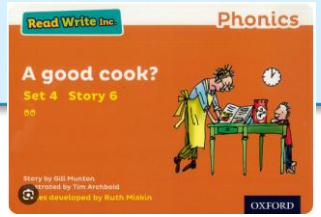
Two kinds of reading at home

Children need practice AND pleasure.

1. Reading practice

Your child reads to you.

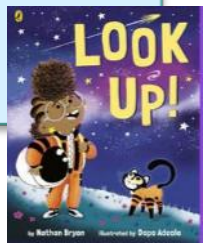
- Use the RWI sounds they know.
- Encourage sounding out and blending.
- Reread to build fluency.
- Talk briefly about what was read.



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.

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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

Mekong (2) 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!

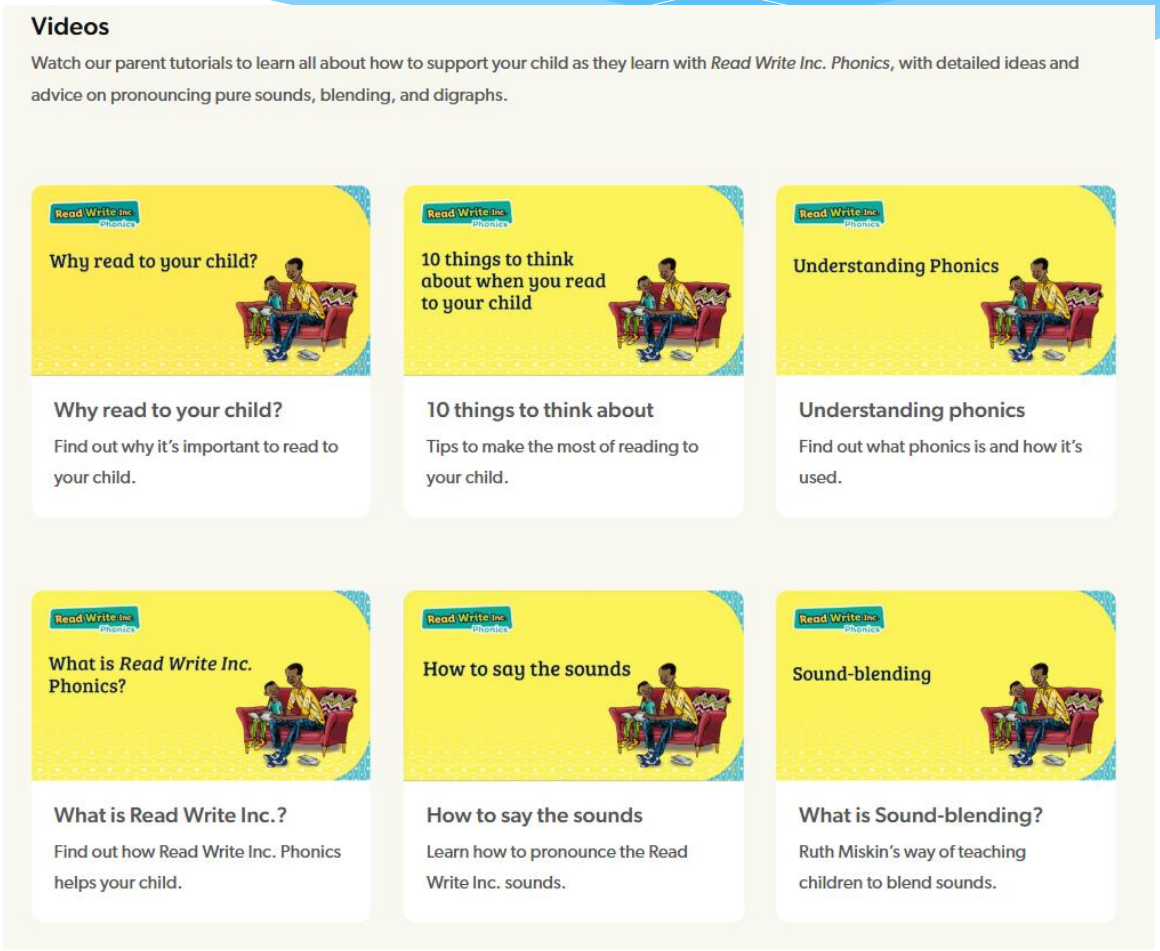
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Resources available to support you and your child

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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Reflection & Questions

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

- Q&A Time

Please complete the feedback survey.

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