



Federation of Beckwithshaw, Kettlesing Felliscliffe and Ripley Endowed CE Primary Schools

Growing Together, Guided by Love

Curriculum Overview - Handwriting

Speaking, listening and communication: learn to - learn through - learn about.

Intent

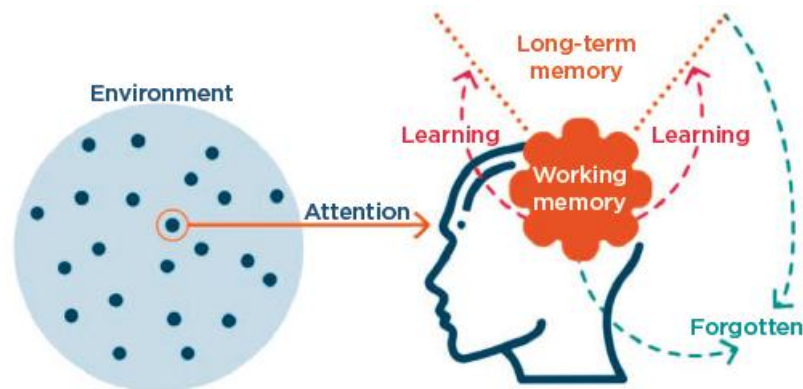
This document outlines the rationale and structured approach underpinning our handwriting progression. Handwriting is a foundational skill that supports literacy, cognitive development and academic achievement. Research highlights that fluent transcription reduces cognitive load, enabling pupils to focus on composition and the communication of ideas. Therefore, handwriting is taught explicitly, regularly and cumulatively from Reception, following a clearly sequenced progression in line with national guidance, including the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, National Curriculum and Writing Framework (2025).

EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3 / 4	Y5 / 6
Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases (ELG) Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed (ELG) Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters (ELG) Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others (ELG) Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils (Development Matters) Show a preference for a dominant hand (Development Matters) Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient. (Development Matters) Form lower-case and capital letters correctly. (Development Matters)	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’ (ie letters that are formed in similar ways and practice these)	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	Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]	Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Implementation

The handwriting lessons are designed to be short and focused, involve recall from the previous day, with direct, explicit teaching through strong modelling. This is followed by repeated practice, accompanied by precise feedback, to embed the learning in the long-term memory and ensure it becomes automatic.

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Vocabulary

Using consistent vocabulary helps children understand handwriting more easily. When we always use the same words, children know exactly what we mean and can focus on forming their letters correctly.

We use clear teaching words such as:

- Curly letters – c, a, d, g, o, q, e, s, f
- Long letters – l, i, t, j, u, y
- Bouncy letters – m, n, r, b, p, h
- Zig-Zag letters – v, w, x, z, k
- Ascenders
- Descenders
- Lowercase letters
- Capital letters
- Digraph
- Grapheme

When these words are used regularly in lessons and feedback, children build confidence and connect handwriting to their phonics learning. Familiar language removes confusion and supports accuracy and fluency.

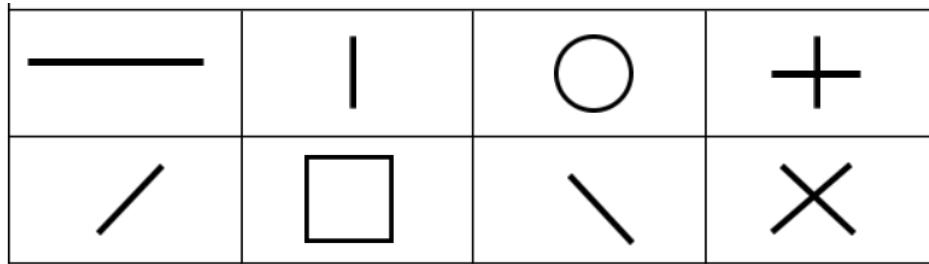
EYFS

Little Wandle Handwriting is taught alongside Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, and the programme progression takes account of children's growing phonic knowledge. It uses the well-loved and familiar mnemonics from the core Little Wandle programme to ensure children can make links in their learning. The Writing Framework 2025 highlights the importance of this approach. It states: Pupils should be taught handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from reception, to support their gradual acquisition of skills.

Preparation for Handwriting

Before children can begin forming letters, they must first develop the ability to draw pre-writing lines in a specific developmental sequence – vertical, horizontal, circular, diagonal, and intersecting strokes – which serve as the foundational components of all letters and numbers.

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Core Strength and Motor Control

Core strength helps children sit upright and maintain stability, providing a strong base for movement and fine motor tasks like handwriting. Coordination allows the brain to manage movements across different body parts simultaneously – for example, holding paper steady while writing. In the early years, developing core strength and coordination is essential for motor control, balance and fine motor precision. These skills support children in becoming confident, agile and physically ready for classroom tasks. Before fine motor dexterity can be refined, children first develop gross motor control (large movements involving the arms and shoulders). This stability provides a base for precise hand movements. Activities aimed at developing gross motor control should be intentionally integrated into the broader curriculum, ensuring that children have daily opportunities to engage in movement-based tasks that support the development of these essential skills.

KEVIN THE KANGAROO SAYS:

JUMP UP AND DOWN

Two-footed standing jump with waving arms.



COLIN THE CRAB SAYS:

WALK SIDeways

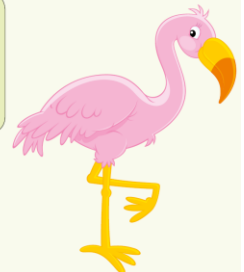
Take side steps one way, then the other.



FRAN THE FLAMINGO SAYS:

STAND ON ONE LEG, NOW THE OTHER LEG

Balance on left foot, then balance on right foot.



CHARLIE THE CAT SAYS:

STRETCH UP AS FAR AS YOU CAN

Stretch up and try and touch the ceiling.



BORIS THE BEAR SAYS:

WALK ON ALL FOURS

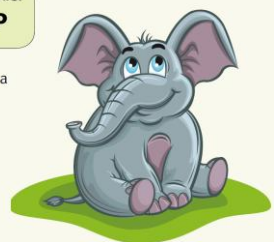
Move around on hands and feet.



ENOCH THE ELEPHANT SAYS:

LIFT ME UP

Pretend to lift up a heavy object.





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Lesson structure

1. Introduce the letter and formation phrase.
2. Form the letter in the air.
3. Form the letter on the palm of the hand.
4. Trace the mnemonic with a finger.
5. Write the letter.

Warm ups

1. Rub hands together

Rub hands together until they feel warm. Move them up and down, or in circular motions to stimulate blood flow.

2. Push palms together

Push the palms firmly together and hold for five seconds. Repeat a few times.

3. Finger stretches

Open hands wide, stretching fingers as far apart as you can. Then make a tight fist, hiding fingers away inside the palm.

4. Drumming fingers

Drum fingers on the table, one finger at a time. This can be extended to tapping a rhythm.

5. Squeeze forearms and hands

Use the left hand to squeeze the right forearm and hand firmly, applying gentle pressure to stimulate the muscles and increase awareness. Swap hands.

6. Pulling fingers (like taking off a glove)

With one hand, grasp each finger of the other hand in turn and gently pull downward, as if taking off a glove. Repeat for the other hand.

7. Oppose thumb to each fingertip

Touch the thumb to each fingertip of the same hand in turn. For more challenge, this can be done with both hands at the same time, or with your eyes closed.

8. Finger circle tug

Form a circle with the thumb and index finger. Then form another circle with the other hand, within that circle, and try to pull them apart.

Ready to Write

‘Ready to write’ rhyme

Let's sit up straight, feet nice and flat,
Tilt your paper – just like that!
Pinch your pencil, give it a flip,
Check your hold and then your grip.
Now we can begin to write,
But not too hard and not too light.



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Posture

If children have a poor posture when writing, it can result in pain and fatigue, causing poor presentation, handwriting that is difficult to read, slow speed and lack of motivation to write. By modelling, monitoring and reinforcing good posture from the beginning, poor habits can be prevented from developing and children can be supported in building the stamina and speed needed for fluent writing.

- **Feet** are flat on the floor or supported on a wide, stable raised surface.
- **Knees** form a 90 degrees angle, with about two fingers' space behind the knees to prevent pressure on the lower thighs.
- **Hips** are positioned at approximately 90 degrees, with the back fully supported by the chair.
- **Seat position** with the back against the chair maintaining a small gap (about the width of a fist) between the stomach and the table, so there is sufficient space to breathe comfortably.
- **Table and chair height** should allow the forearms to rest comfortably on the surface – without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders (too high).
- **Work surface** must be clean, smooth and clear of clutter to promote proper hand and arm placement and allow arms to move freely to write.



Pencil Grip

Children need to learn how to hold their pencil correctly from the outset, as grip affects the flow, speed and overall quality of handwriting. Without a proper grip, children's hands can tire more quickly, their writing can become harder to read and they may struggle to write for extended periods – an essential skill as they progress through school. Young children need to develop the muscles in their hands to build the strength required for a proper pencil grip. For some, this will take longer and require additional practice. Children initially start to hold the pencil within their fist (age 1–1.5 years), progress to holding the pencil shaft with all their fingers (2–3 years) and then move on to a static, then dynamic tripod grasp. Children typically progress through a series of grasp patterns before developing a tripod grip.

1-1½ years Palmar Supinate Grasp	2-3 years Digital Pronate Grasp	3½-4 years Static Tripod Grasp	4½-6 years Dynamic Tripod Grasp

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Positioning

Paper placement is important and should not be directly in front of the child. Encourage the use of the non-writing hand to hold and steady the paper. This positioning encourages smoother writing, better wrist alignment and improved visibility of the writing area.

For right-handers: Position the paper slightly to the right. Tilt the paper so that the top left corner angles downward to the left.



For left-handers: Position the paper slightly to the left. Tilt the paper so that the top right corner angles downward to the right.



Pressure

As children learn to write, their pencil pressure often reflects their stage of development and the task at hand. With practice, most naturally adjust. Pressing too hard can tire the hand and slow writing, while pressing too lightly makes handwriting faint and difficult to read.



Inclusion

Once a dominant hand has been decided, encourage children to consistently use the same hand to draw with and the other hand to support the paper. Notice which hand the child generally prefers to use and encourage this to be the one to hold the pencil. Also ensure that children are using the same hand when forming letters in the air and on their palms.

- Some children would benefit from the use of pencil tripod grips to help with their pencil grasp.
- Chunkier pencils and triangular pencils can further support children with pencil grip.
- Writing slopes can also be an effective tool as they support a more natural wrist position enabling the child to hold the pencil with increased control so it can be moved more fluidly.

Supporting left-handed children in writing

- Approximately 10% of children are left-handed. Unlike their right-handed peers, left-handed writers face unique challenges due to the natural mechanics of writing.
- When a right-handed person writes, their hand moves away from the freshly written text. This natural motion allows them to clearly see their writing and avoid smudging

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it. In contrast, left-handed children move their hand over the writing, which can lead to immediate difficulties if not properly addressed. These include:

- smudging the ink or graphite
- obscuring their own writing
- inconsistent finger spacing
- struggles with copying from the board or book
- reduced academic performance
- lowered self-esteem.
- To prevent these challenges, it is essential that left-handed children are explicitly taught a writing technique suited to their needs. The most effective method involves keeping the writing hand below the line of text. This technique helps maintain clear visibility of the work and prevents smudging.
- The formation of some letters differs slightly for left-handers, who tend to pull lines from right to left, unlike right-handers who push lines from left to right. This is especially noticeable with the lower-case letters t and f, and the capital letters A, E, F, H, J and T.

Practical strategies for supporting left-handed writers

- Provide ample writing space
- Optimise seating arrangements
- Guide paper positioning
- Select suitable writing tools
- Encourage correct pencil grip



- Foster a relaxed grip

Lessons in KS2

Daily handwriting starters are carefully linked to long term curriculum maps, ensuring that practice is purposeful and reinforces key skills over time rather than existing as an isolated activity. These short, focused tasks have a positive impact on handwriting development by promoting consistency, correct letter formation, and fluency through regular rehearsal. Designed to be manageable within the timetable, they provide structured practice without placing pressure on lesson time. Children can also refer back to these starters during the lesson, using them as a model to support presentation, letter formation, and overall writing quality.

Teachers begin in the same manner as EYFS/ KS1 lessons with a gross or fine motor activity. Children then complete their hand warm ups and finger warm ups with the pencil. Teachers check that children are then sat appropriately and check children's pencil grip.

Right handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.



How to hold and position the paper.



Left handed children

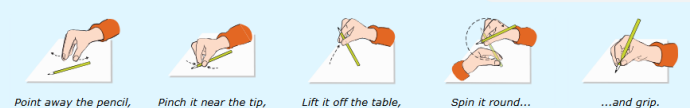
How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.



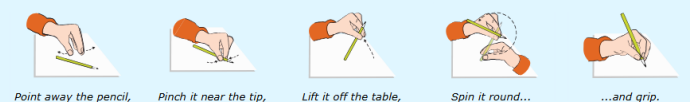
How to hold and position the paper.



Right Handed Grip



Left Handed Grip

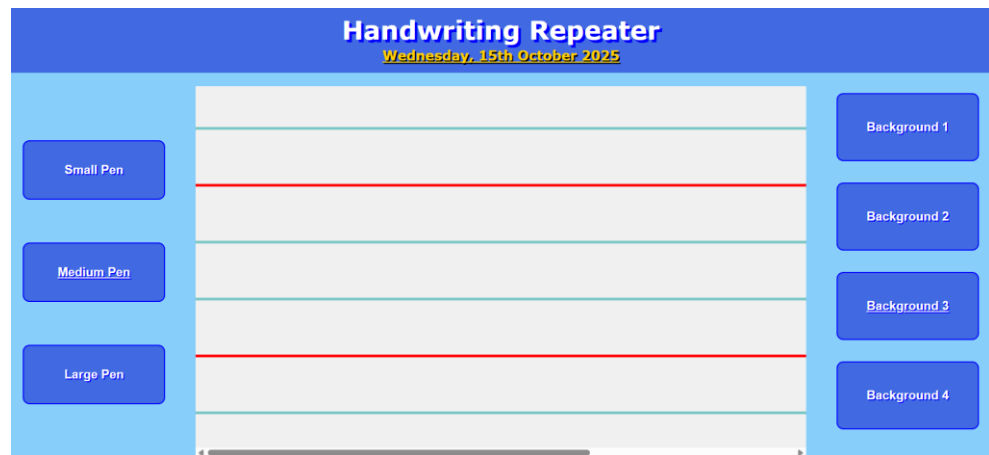


Teacher then models the handwriting using software handwriting repeater for children to trace and complete in their English books daily.



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Tuesday 10th February 2026

LO: I can explore vocabulary to create a tense atmosphere

Handwriting:

Look

Trace

often

often

Impact

Ultimately, our goal is for every child to develop fluent, legible and automatic handwriting that enables them to write with confidence and stamina across the curriculum. We want pupils to form letters accurately, join them consistently and write at an appropriate pace so that transcription does not limit composition. As handwriting becomes secure and effortless, children are able to focus on vocabulary, sentence structure and the quality of their ideas rather than the mechanics of letter formation. Alongside this, we aim to strengthen fine motor control and promote pride in presentation, ensuring that pupils see handwriting as an essential life skill that supports independence, academic achievement and clear communication in a range of contexts.