



Handwriting Policy

St Luke's Park Primary

Reviewed spring 2025



Intent

Our Intent is for our pupils to:

1. Know the importance of clear and neat presentation, in order to communicate meaning effectively.
2. Write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - Having a correct pencil grip
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
 - Forming all letters correctly
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters
3. Raise their self- esteem through the establishment of best handwriting practice.

Implementation - Guidelines for good practice

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling by the teacher is vital. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned to enable the teacher to provide direct teaching and accurate modelling our school's style; to provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting.

Teaching Time

- **Foundation Stage:** Frequent opportunities are made for children to practice and develop their fine motor skills throughout the week. Through the Little Wandle phonic programme, letter formation and word spacing is taught as soon as it is appropriate.
- **KS1:** In Year 1, letter formation and word spacing is taught daily through the Little Wandle programme. In Year 2, there are three sessions of handwriting a week.
- **LKS2:** Two 15/20 minute sessions are taught each week.
- **UKS2:** There is one 15/20 minute session each week until no longer needed as handwriting has reached Year 6 standard.

Good handwriting skills and neat presentation are continually reinforced in all work across the curriculum by all staff.

The basic structure of a handwriting session is as follows:

1. Teacher modelling, talking through the process – the success criteria
2. Children forming letters on paper, in the air or on a white board and practising alongside the teacher model. Teachers will encourage the children to join in and verbalise the process.
3. Children practising, using the success criteria, from memory.

During handwriting lessons, teachers emphasise quality over quantity and remind children frequently about good grip and posture: feet flat on the floor and chair pushed in.

Grip and Posture



Tripod grip
for a left-
handed writer

Children should be taught and continually encouraged to hold their pencil using the tripod grip. Pencils should be held lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support. Children should be sitting with chairs tucked in and with both feet on the floor.



Tripod grip
for a right-
handed
writer

Terminology

When discussing handwriting it is important for children to understand the following terms: **ascender, descender, lower case, and capital letter, join.**

Continuity and Progression throughout St Luke's Park Primary School

Not all children develop the motor skills necessary to hold a pencil, form letters or join up their writing at the same time. It is very important that children are introduced to the next stage of handwriting when they are ready and that if they have difficulties, the correct support is put in place. What follows is a guide to teachers as to the usual progression in handwriting, alongside end-of-year expectations from the National Curriculum and our school's expectations.

Reception

In Reception, children practise the skills required for handwriting in a variety of contexts, including activities for developing gross and fine motor movements. These include:

- using a finger to trace over tactile letters;
- tracing with a pencil;
- writing over highlighter pen writing or dotted letters;
- drawing around templates;
- writing in sand, foam or toothpaste with a finger or stick;
- writing with chalk on a chalkboard;
- using a finger to trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you;
- writing on outside walls with water and paintbrushes.



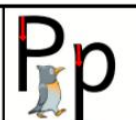




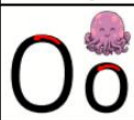
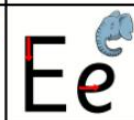

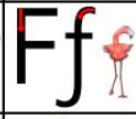






Through Little Wandle mnemonics and rhymes, children are taught letter formation.

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Staff ensure that the emphasis for letter formation is with starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction. If this is learned at this early stage, then correct letter formation becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility.

To aid movement, pupils may be given support with triangular pencils or special pencil grips - if needed- correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space.

Style

Our phonics SSP, Little Wandle, teaches print as this is what is read in books. The letter 'k' is therefore not looped.

 Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.	 Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.	 From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	 Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.	 Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.	 Down the stick, up and over the net.	 Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.
 Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.	 Round the goat's face, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin.	 All around the octopus.	 Curl around the cat.	 Down the kite, up and round, down to the corner.	 Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.	 Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.
 From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.	 Down, up and over the helicopter.	 Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.	 Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.	 All the way down the lollipop.	 All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.	 Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.	 Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	 Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.	 Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.	 Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. Quick, it's the queen!		

Letter families:

Letters are taught in groups by the direction they are written:

1. **Long ladder** down and off in another direction – l, i, j, t, u, y
2. **One-armed robot** down and retrace upwards – b, h, k, m, n, p, r
3. **Curly caterpillar** or one o'clock club anti-clockwise round – c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s
4. **Zig zag letters** – v, w, x, z

Key Stage 1

During KS1 children may need continued support with triangular pencils or special pencil grips, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Sessions are kept short, frequent, fun, varied and multi-sensory. Letters are written in the air, on backs or on hands as well as on whiteboards and paper; letter shapes or joins are described orally and children join in. Handwriting is then practised in English books. The children's attention is drawn to handwriting in all subjects.

Year 1

Children revisit all letters, using the Little Wandle mnemonics to reinforce and practise correct orientation, formation and proportion. They are taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

- Form 'long ladder' lower case letters correctly (i, j, l, t, u)
- Form the equivalent upper case letters correctly (I, J, L, T, U)
- Form 'one-armed robot' lower case letters correctly (b, h, k, m, n, p, r)
- Form the equivalent upper case letters correctly (B, H, K, M, N, P, R)
- Form the digits 2, 3 and 5 correctly
- Form 'curly caterpillar' lower case letters correctly (c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s)
- Form the equivalent upper case letters correctly (C, A, D, E, G, O, Q, F, S)

Handwriting Policy – St Luke's Park Primary School

- Form the digits 0, 6, 8 and 9 correctly
- Form 'zigzag' lower case letters correctly (v, w, x, y, z)
- Form the equivalent upper case letters correctly (V, W, X, Y, Z)
- Form the digits 1, 4, and 7 correctly

It is vital that children have correct letter formation before they learn the exit strokes in Year 2.

Year 2

Children develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and practice forming lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join later.

Where possible, handwriting is practised in conjunction with teaching or revision of phonics and reinforcing the spelling of common exception words.

Once the children have mastered early letter formation in Year 2, we use a font which will be easy to join when pupils reach KS2.

We use a looped k in our handwriting lessons from Year 2 onwards as it helps children when joining letters and all letters have an exit stroke.

By the end of Key Stage 1, most children can do the following:

- Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size
- Use exit strokes in preparation for joining
- Ensure spacing between words is appropriately sized

Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv

Ww Xx Yy Zz

These patterns can be used at the end of Year 2 and the beginning of Year 3 to help develop fluency and flow:

mm mm mm mm
cccc cccc cccc
uuuu uuuu uuuu
zzzz zzzz zzzz

llll llll llll llll
rrrr rrrr rrrr rrrr
oooo oooo oooo oooo
nnnn nnnn nnnn nnnn

Key Stage 2

At KS2, sessions involve modelling of a particular join or skill by the teacher and then practising writing a spelling pattern or a range of words with this spelling pattern. Letter shapes with joins are described orally and children join in. When handwriting joins are secure, then sentences and later short passages of fiction, poetry or non-fiction can be practised in books. The children’s attention is drawn to handwriting in all subjects.

Year 3

When letter formation is correct and secure and children have the exit strokes, they begin to work on basic joins with the aim to write consistently in joined handwriting by the end of the year. Children are taught to join the letters that are blends and digraphs. This reinforces an understanding of the sound and spelling as well.

The four joins:

- diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai, ar, un;
- diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ab, ul, it;
- horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi;
- horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol, wh, ot;

Pupils begin with diagonal joins, first to the letters without ascenders then those with. As appropriate, the children are introduced to horizontal joins (top joins), first to letters without ascenders and then those with.

As the children become confident with these skills, and correctly form their letters with the correct joins, they are encouraged to apply these skills to their independent writing. It can be helpful for children to complete their handwriting practice before they write in an English lesson; this way they can compare handwriting and self-assess.

Year 4

Children practise and consolidate the four basic joins introduced in Year 3. They are encouraged to use a joined script in their independent writing to enable them to build a fluent and clear style. They use joined handwriting for all writing, except where other forms are required, and gradually build up fluency and speed. They start to learn a range of presentation skills, for example, print script for captions, sub-headings and labels and use capital letters for posters, title pages, headings. Where possible, handwriting is practised in conjunction with teaching or revision of spelling rules and words from the Year 3 and 4 vocabulary list.

Once their handwriting joins are correct and have some fluency to their writing, in addition to using and practising the known joins, there is a focus on more complicated anti-clockwise joins in handwriting sessions: ac, ca, da, ha, ad, ag, ea, ed, va, wa, oa, oo, od, fa, fo.

- Improve the quality of handwriting by tackling any issues consistently
- Write consistently with neat, legible and joined handwriting

For children who have exceptionally neat writing in a consistent style, they may have the opportunity to write in biro during the summer term of Year 4.

Handwriting Policy – St Luke’s Park Primary School

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use joined script consistently in their writing. In handwriting sessions, children practice, reinforce and refine previous work from years 3 and 4, especially considering consistent spacing and size of letters and words, distinguishing ascenders and descenders. There is a greater analysis of writing style and presentation. Handwriting lessons continue to reinforce grammar and spelling rules, e.g. prefixes and suffixes. By the end of Year 5, all children will have access to a pen for writing. As children become confident many of them will develop individual writing styles. These variations will give their writing character and should be encouraged as long as they are neat and legible.

Year 5

- Begin to adapt handwriting to specific purposes e.g. printing, use of italics
- Increase the speed of handwriting without losing legibility
- Make the move from pencil to pen in their handwriting
- Use features of layout, presentation and organisation effectively.

Year 6

- Develop a neat, personal, handwriting style
- Consistently use a neat, personal handwriting style
- Choose the writing implement that is appropriate to the task.

Left-handed writers

- All staff must know who their left-handed pupils are.
- Staff make sure that if left-handed and right-handed children next to each other, their elbows do not bump.
- Left-handed children are encouraged to tilt their page or book clockwise slightly so they can see what they are writing without 'hooking' their hand.
- Young left-handers sometimes need to learn how to put a dot instead of a finger space to help them organise their writing. Staff model this to the relevant pupils.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

The ability to form legible handwriting is fundamental to children’s development as independent learners. We believe that all children are entitled to high quality teaching and learning and we embrace the philosophy of inclusion. Provision is made for children with Special Educational Needs. This includes individual or small group sessions at the appropriate level, the use of specialist equipment or exercises and opportunities to practise using a range of media (bead threading, cutting out, colouring, tracing, and jigsaw puzzles). If the difficulty is with general co-ordination, then the SENCo may suggest ways to help develop gross and fine motor skills. Some children who experience sensory feedback when writing may need to experiment with a range of writing implements to find one which feels comfortable.

Computing links

Interactive whiteboard resources, such as [Handwriting Repeater \(edu-tools.github.io\)](https://edu-tools.github.io) are used across the school, where appropriate to model letter formation and joins. A range of programs such as *Word*, *PowerPoint* and *Publisher* are used to present and publish work to a high standard.

Impact

This systematic approach ensures development in the skill of handwriting throughout each year group. Children take pride in their written work and achieve proficiency in their own use of the school's looped cursive script. Outcomes in children's wider curriculum work, as well as in their English books and school displays, evidence the progress that children make in this area, as well as the consistency of the approach across the school.

Assessment

Year group statements are used as a guide for on-going teaching and assessment. Individual difficulties are noted down. Children are encouraged to peer and self-assess by going back with the teacher to the model and checking against very clear success criteria. For example:

- Which letters are started from the top?
- Which words have clear ascenders?
- Which words have vowels which are all consistent size?
- Is the writing legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?

Monitoring and Review

The English subject leader, in consultation with the SLT, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of handwriting. In discussion with the governors, areas for development and resource needs are identified. Handwriting throughout the school and how it reflects this policy will be reviewed in the following ways:

- SLT/staff book scrutinies;
- EYFS/KS2 external moderation;
- Year group internal moderation across the Eveleigh-Link Academy Trust;
- Learning walks and observations.