The Gates Primary School Westhoughton

Handwriting Policy
September 2026
Miss L Fairhurst

Intent

At The Gates, English is at the heart of our curriculum and embedded across all areas of learning. We aim to deliver a high-quality English education that provides strong foundations for every child to become literate and equips them with the skills needed for adult life. We are passionate about developing confident, articulate writers who can express themselves clearly for a range of audiences and purposes. Our writing curriculum is carefully designed to equip pupils with the skills of transcription and composition, enabling them to become independent, creative, and proficient writers who can build on key transferable skills throughout each phase of their education.

We aim to:

- Develop a joined, confident handwriting style that is clear, legible and fluent.
- Instil a positive attitude towards handwriting.
- Present work in a neat and orderly fashion, appropriate to the task.
- Provide children with a coherent approach that demonstrates continuity and progression across the whole school, from EYFS to Year 6.
- Adopt a consistent approach to handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on whiteboards, or on displays and resources.
- Enable children to develop fluency and speed in writing, so that eventually all pupils can write in legible, joined handwriting with confidence and correct letter orientation.

Implementation

Teaching Handwriting:

EYFS:
Children in EYFS begin by primarily focusing on developing efficient control of gross motor skills. Children also develop the necessary fine motor skills and hand eye coordination through planned provision and activities. Manipulative materials in enhanced provision and directed activities such as Dough Disco provide opportunities to develop their skills alongside direct teaching during ELS phonics lessons. Every child has their pencil hold tracked and monitored, and where necessary children have extra support to progress to the tripod grip before entering Year 1.

Our handwriting expectations are in line DFE and EEF Guidance that states*; 'Accurate letter formation is an essential early skill that forms the basis of a fluent handwriting style. There is no quick way to develop these essential skills other than through regular and substantial practice.'*

By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage all children should be able to recognise and form correctly all printed uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet from the correct starting point so they are Year 1 ready.





KS1:

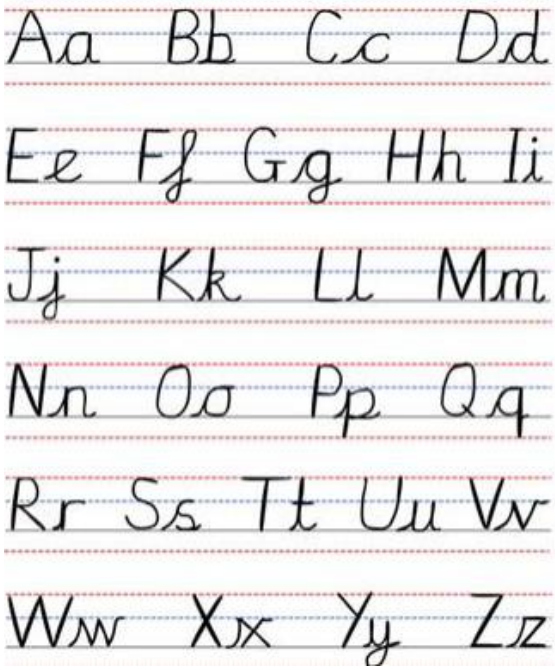
Year 1:

Children in Year 1 will receive discreet handwriting lessons each afternoon, aligned with the ELS phonics scheme to ensure fidelity to the programme. In morning writing lessons, children will further develop their handwriting through writing starters, following a progression of individual letters before applying these within Year 1 statutory words.

Throughout the curriculum, teachers and support staff will model and reinforce correct letter formation, with a particular focus on developing clear, consistent print handwriting. Children will be encouraged to use a comfortable tripod pencil grip that allows for efficient control and fluency. As children develop confidence and consistency in letter formation, they will be prepared for the transition to cursive handwriting in Year 2.

Year 2:

In Year 2, children will receive at least three discreet handwriting starters per week, building on their individual starting points and the skills developed in Year 1. Children will begin to develop cursive handwriting, with an explicit focus on the use of lead-ins and lead-outs to support fluency and consistency.



Within these starters, children will follow a progression of individual letters before applying their developing cursive skills within Year 1 and 2 statutory words and subsequently across their wider writing. Teachers and support staff will continue to model and reinforce correct letter formation, joins and pencil control, encouraging a comfortable tripod pencil grip that allows for efficient movement and fluent handwriting.

Through regular practice and application across the curriculum, children will develop increasingly fluent, legible and consistent cursive handwriting.



KS1 Handwriting Sequence

Phase 1: Letter Formation (by Letter Families)

Ladder Letters	l, i, t, u, j, y
Curly Caterpillar Letters	c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s
One-Armed Robot Letters	r, n, m, h ,b, p, k
Zigzag Monster Letters	v, w, x, z

Phase 2: Apply to statutory/common exception words and high-frequency application words.

Ladder Letters	**l (words)** Words: like, little, look, all **i (words)** Words: is, in, if, his **t (words)** Words: to, into, time, today **u (words)** Words: up, us, under, uncle* (phonically useful) **j (words)** Words: jump, just, January*, July* (non-CEW but useful for formation) **y (words)** Words: you, your, they, by
Curly Caterpillar Letters	**c (words)** Words: can, come, school, because **a (words)** Words: a, and, any, after **o (words)** Words: of, old, only, once **d (words)** Words: do, did, done, door **g (words)** Words: go, going, get, great **q (words)** Words: quick, quite, queen* (phonically useful) **e (words)** Words: he, me, she, be **s (words)** Words: is, was, said, so
One-Armed Robot Letters	**r (words)** Words: are, our, there, where **n (words)** Words: no, not, now, one **m (words)** Words: my, me, Mr, Mrs h (words) Words: he, his, has, had **b (words)** Words: be, because, brother, by **p (words)** Words: people, push, pull, put **k (words)** Words: kind, keep, key* (phonically useful)
Zigzag Monster Letters	**u** Words: very, have, even, every **w (words)** Words: we, was, were, what **x (words)** Words: next, box*, six* (phonically useful) **z (words)** Words: zero*, zoo*, zip* (non-CEW but reinforces formation)

LKS2:

In Years 3 and 4, handwriting starters will continue three times a week, building on the cursive handwriting skills developed in Key Stage 1. Children will be expected to use a fluent, legible cursive style consistently in their independent writing across all subjects, refining their handwriting in response to the demands of each lesson.

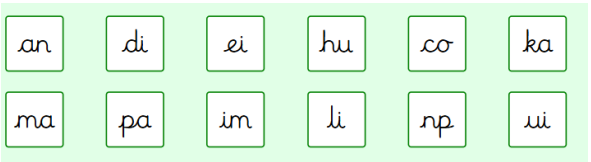
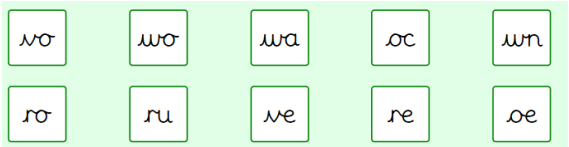
The focus of discreet handwriting practice will be on developing fluency, consistency and accuracy when joining letters within words, alongside maintaining appropriate letter formation, spacing, sizing and pencil control.

Handwriting may also be explored and reinforced through dictation starters, where children develop their handwriting alongside sentence structure and the accurate application of relevant statutory spelling words.

Teachers and support staff will continue to model and reinforce these skills, supporting children to develop an increasingly automatic and efficient handwriting style.

<u>LKS2 Handwriting Sequence</u>

Phase 1: Correct Joins

Tricky Letters	j, r, s, v, x, z, f, k
Diagonal Joins	an, di, ei, hu, co, ka, ma, pa, im, li, np, ui 
Horizontal Joins	vo, wo, wa, oc, wn, ro, ru, ve, re, oe 
Double letters	bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, gg, ll, mm, nn, oo, pp, rr, ss, tt, zz

Phase 2: Apply to statutory words

Ladder Letters	**l & I** Words: library, imagine, important, island **t & u** Words: interest, minute, particular, natural **j & y** Words: journey, knowledge, young, mystery
Curly Caterpillar Letters	**c & a** Words: accident, actual, calendar, caught **o & d** Words: decide, consider, complete, often **g & q** Words: group, guide, question, quarter

	e & s Words: exercise, separate, sentence, suppose **f** Words: different, difficult, famous, forward
One-Armed Robot Letters	**r & n** Words: remember, recent, continue, centre **h & m** Words: history, material, mention, minute **k & p** Words: knowledge, position, peculiar, purpose **b** Words: build, believe, breath, busy
Zigzag Monster Letters	**v & w** Words: various, weight, woman, women **x & z** Words: exercise, extreme, experience, zero* (non-statutory, but useful) **n (revision as zigzag pattern in joins)** Words: enough, increase, interest, invention

UKS2:

In Years 5 and 6, handwriting starters may continue to be taught where there is an identified whole-class need to develop or refine particular handwriting skills.

Handwriting may also be explored and reinforced through dictation starters, where children develop their handwriting alongside sentence structure and the accurate application of relevant statutory spelling words. Handwriting skills will also be reinforced within Friday spelling lessons, providing further opportunities for children to practise accurate letter formation, joins and presentation.

Where handwriting is secure across the majority of the class, provision will increasingly move towards targeted intervention for individual children who require additional support to develop fluency, legibility, consistency or accuracy. Children receiving targeted intervention will follow the handwriting scheme from the previous year, or an appropriate earlier stage, to identify and address gaps in their knowledge and skills and secure the handwriting knowledge and techniques they have not yet mastered. This will provide a structured pathway for children to revisit, practise and embed key skills before progressing through the scheme.

By the end of Key Stage 2, all children will be expected to use a fluent, legible cursive style consistently in their independent writing across all subjects. Children should be able to produce cursive writing automatically and with increasing fluency, without conscious thought about the mechanics of handwriting. This will enable them to focus on the content and quality of their work rather than the process of writing, supporting them to achieve well across the curriculum and meet the age-related expectations for Year 6.

UKS2 Handwriting Sequence

Phase 1: Apply to statutory words

Ladder Letters	**l & I** Words: leisure, lightning, identity, individual **t & u** Words: temperature, average, curiosity, variety **j & y** Words: suggest, symbol, system, vehicle
Curly Caterpillar Letters	**c & a** Words: accommodate, accompany, achievable, category **o & d** Words: opportunity, recommend, according, awkward **g & q** Words: language, signature, sequence, frequent **e & s** Words: environment, existence, conscience, conscious **f** Words: sufficient, familiar, foreign and frequently
One-Armed Robot Letters	**r & n** Words: relevant, recognise, necessary and neighbour **h & m** Words: hindrance, mischievous, muscle, rhythm **k & p** Words: profession, pronounciation, privilege, programme **b** Words: bargain, bruise, cemetery, convenience
Zigzag Monster Letters	**v & w** Words: variety, vehicle, weight, yacht **x & z** Words: exaggerate, existence, explanation, zone (non-statuory but useful) **n (revision as zigzag pattern in joins)** Words: environment, government, equipment, development

Alongside teaching and modelling handwriting expectations, we also ensure the following is in place to support development:

- **Pencil/Pen Grip** – We encourage and reinforce the expectation that the pen or pencil should be held comfortably between the forefinger and thumb, with the second finger below to provide support.

Right-handed pencil grip

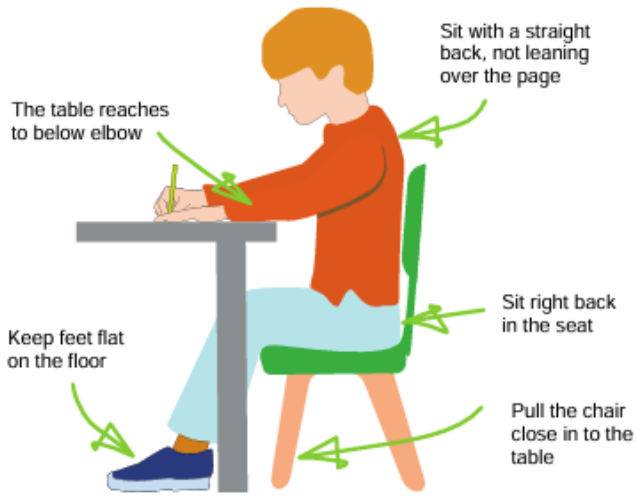


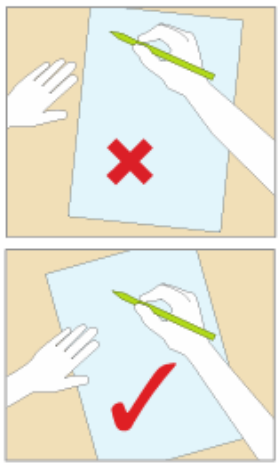
Left-handed pencil grip



Posture – Children are encouraged to sit upright with both feet flat on the floor. They are supported to use their non-writing hand to steady the paper or book.

Sitting Position

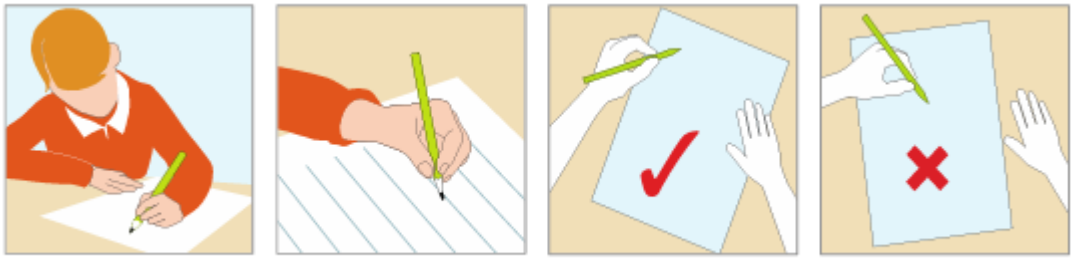




Paper position for right-handed children.

- **Pencil Guidance** – We ensure children use pencils with a rounded nib that are reasonably sharp to support clear writing.
- **Right-handed children** – Children are taught and reminded to hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and forefinger, around 3 cm from the tip. They are encouraged to position the paper slightly to the right and tilt it to the left, using their left hand to steady the paper.

- **Left-handed children** – Children are seated to the right of right-handed peers to avoid competing for space. They are supported to position the paper to the left, with an appropriate tilt to aid comfort and fluency. Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.



Paper position for left-handed children.

Expectations
All teaching staff are encouraged to consistently model the printed or cursive handwriting style designated for each year group in our school, whether writing on whiteboards, displays, or in pupils' books.

Handwriting frequency
Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Pen Pass
Handwriting is monitored regularly and pupils who consistently demonstrate correct joins and legible handwriting are awarded a pen pass. Outstanding and consistent penmanship is further recognised with the award of a fountain pen. These achievements are celebrated during our whole-school assembly each Monday.

Marking and Feedback
Handwriting feedback should be timely and relevant. Staff are encouraged to give immediate feedback during handwriting lessons, modelling correct formation and joins in pupils' books before giving children opportunities to practise.

Progression:
The National Curriculum specifies that primary school children should work towards mastering handwriting that is fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy.

There are specific targets for each year group:

EYFS
- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

Year One
- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- 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' and to practice these.

Year Two
- 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 and orientation in relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Leave the correct space between words.

Years Three and Four

- 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.
- Join their handwriting in their independent work to increase fluency in order to support their composition and spelling.

Years Five and Six

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether to join specific letters and choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.
- Increase the speed at which they are writing.
- Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.
- To maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.

Interventions:

Interventions are carefully considered and purposefully planned to support targeted children across all classes. Children requiring additional handwriting support are identified and interventions are tailored to meet their specific needs. These may include focused work on individual letter formation and addressing consistent letter heights before progressing to joining letters within words.

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed or have special educational needs, appropriate additional support will be provided.

Assessment

Teachers assess handwriting and presentation as part of their regular writing assessments, using the outcomes to inform future planning and target setting. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, handwriting is assessed as part of the national SATs, with examples of expected standards available in the SATs guidance documents.

Impact

Our English curriculum is carefully designed with clear goals and a structured approach, ensuring all children develop a broad range of knowledge and skills.

Through this rich curriculum, children are equipped to become lifelong learners who appreciate and enjoy literature in all its forms. By mastering speaking, reading and writing, pupils gain the essential tools to participate confidently and effectively in society, setting them up for future success.

The impact of our curriculum is evident as children progress from EYFS to Year 6, demonstrating consistent growth, sustained learning, and the development of transferable skills. We measure attainment through teacher assessments in writing. As children continue their education, we hope they carry forward their passion for English and high aspirations.