

Policy for

Handwriting

Reviewed: Summer 2026



Ash Grove Academy Handwriting Policy

1. Rationale and Intent

At *Ash Grove Academy*, we recognise handwriting as a **core transcription skill** that underpins pupils' ability to write fluently and independently. In line with the **2025 Writing Framework**, we understand that secure handwriting enables pupils to focus on **composition, spelling and vocabulary**, rather than the physical act of writing.

Our handwriting curriculum is **systematic, explicit and progressive**, ensuring continuity from **Reception to Year 6** through the use of:

- **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised** (Reception and Year 1)
- **Letter-join** (Year 2 - 6)

Our intent is that all pupils develop **legible, fluent handwriting**, applying it confidently across the curriculum.

In Reception and Year 1, handwriting teaching is aligned with **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**.

Letter-join resources are used to support consistency and progression in Year 2 – Year 6.

As part of our commitment to developing fluent and independent writers, pupils are encouraged to select an appropriate writing implement that supports comfort, control and the development of effective handwriting.

2. Aims

We aim to ensure that pupils:

- are encouraged, from Nursery
- are taught handwriting **explicitly from Reception**
- form letters correctly using the agreed school style
- develop fluency, consistency and stamina
- join letters appropriately and consistently
- take pride in the presentation of their work
- apply handwriting skills independently in all subjects.

3. Teaching and Learning (Implementation)

Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception)

In Nursery, children follow a carefully planned and sequenced curriculum for physical development that lays the foundations for effective handwriting. Teaching focuses on the development of both gross and fine motor skills, ensuring children build the strength, control and coordination needed for future writing. Through a range of purposeful, play-based activities, children develop core strength, shoulder stability, hand strength and dexterity. These skills are supported through opportunities such as mark making, manipulation of tools

and materials, and whole-body movement activities. There is no expectation of formal handwriting in Nursery; instead, emphasis is placed on readiness for writing and developing positive attitudes towards early mark making.

Handwriting teaching in Reception is fully aligned with **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**.

- Strong emphasis is placed on **gross and fine motor development** (dough disco, waving scarves, etc.)
- Pupils are taught correct:
 - posture
 - pencil grip
 - writing position
- Letter formation is taught **alongside phonics but separately**, following Little Wandle guidance
- Letters are introduced in letter families and practised using:
 - correct starting points
 - consistent direction
- Children write using **print letters**, not joined
- Handwriting is practised **daily** through short, focused activities and within purposeful writing opportunities across the week.

Transition from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Key Stage 1

- Clear expectations for handwriting are communicated between Reception and Year 1 staff to ensure continuity and progression.
- Information about pupils' physical development, posture, pencil grip, control and letter formation is shared as part of the transition process.

Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2)

Handwriting teaching continues to follow **Little Wandle** principles in Year 1 and **Letter-join** in Year 2.

- Handwriting is taught **explicitly and regularly**
- Teachers model correct letter formation clearly and consistently across all areas of the curriculum, including on displays. This might be under the visualiser, on the IWB, on flipchart and in children's books.
- Pupils practise:
 - accurate letter formation
 - correct orientation and size
 - clear spacing between words

- When pupils demonstrate secure letter formation and good control in Year 2, they are **introduced to joining letters**.
- Pupils are encouraged to apply handwriting skills in **all writing tasks**, not just handwriting sessions
- Practice remains **short, frequent and purposeful**

Transition to Key Stage 2

- Expectations for handwriting are clearly communicated between Year 2 and Year 3 staff
- Pupils enter KS2 with a secure understanding of:
 - letter formation
 - basic joins
 - consistent size and spacing

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

Handwriting teaching in KS2 follows the **Letter-join** programme.

- Letter-join is used to:
 - consolidate joining patterns
 - develop a fluent cursive style
 - improve speed, consistency and legibility
- Handwriting is taught:
 - explicitly
 - reinforced across all curriculum areas
- All worksheets to be printed using the Letter-join font
- Teachers model correct letter formation clearly and consistently across the curriculum and on displays using the Letter-join font. This might be under the visualiser, on the IWB, on flipchart and in children's books.
- Pupils are expected to:
 - write with increasing fluency and stamina
 - maintain consistent joins and letter size
 - present work neatly and independently
- Targeted intervention is provided for pupils who have not yet achieved handwriting automaticity.

4. Frequency and Practice

- Handwriting is practised:
 - **daily in Reception and KS1**
 - **3 times a week in KS2**, with additional practise as required
- Sessions are:
 - short
 - focused
 - clearly modelled
- Handwriting skills are applied consistently in **all subjects**

5. Inclusion and SEND

We are committed to inclusive handwriting practice.

- Expectations are adapted where appropriate.
- Support may include:
 - adapted resources (writing slopes, wobble cushions, foot rest)
 - alternative writing tools (ergonomic pens/pencils, etc.)
 - additional motor skill development (sand, foam, glitter, paint, etc.)
- Where appropriate, alternative methods of recording may be used.
- The priority is enabling pupils to **communicate effectively**, in line with their individual needs.

6. Assessment and Monitoring

- Handwriting is assessed through **everyday written work** so that successes are celebrated and gaps are identified
- Teachers monitor:
 - letter formation
 - joins
 - legibility
 - fluency and stamina
- Subject leaders monitor progression and consistency across year groups.
- Handwriting contributes to writing assessment but does not outweigh composition and content.

Handwriting styles Reception – Year 6

Reception – Year 1

Letter-join Print Plus

A printed font with simple exit strokes in keeping with the DfE's phonics guidance.

bright sun

Year 2 – Year 6

Letter-join Air No-lead

A pre-cursive font with a lead-out line, but no lead-in line, to teach cursive letter shapes.

bright sun

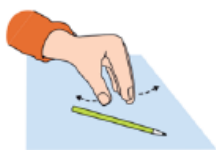
Letter-join No-lead

A continuous cursive font with no lead-in line but with a lead-out line for joining to the next letter.

bright sun

Tripod Grip Rhyme

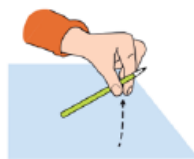
Left handed grip



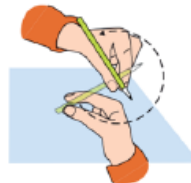
1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.

Right handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.

'Ready to write routine' and agreed mantra (4 Ps)

Children complete 5-minute fine motor warm-ups before each handwriting session, as well as before extended writing sessions. Teachers model consistent cursive joins (diagonal/horizontal) and ensure correct posture and pencil grip.

P1 - Posture – fist away from the table

P2 – Pencil – point, pinch, flip and grip

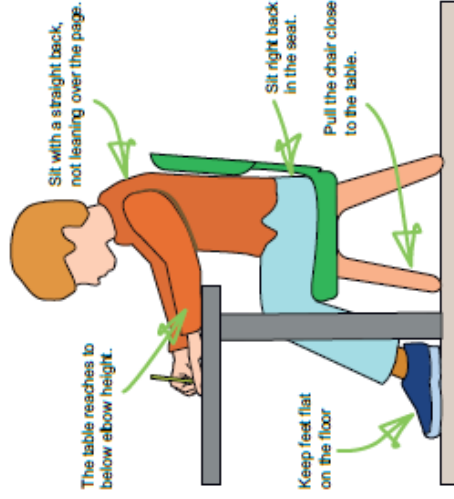
P3 – Paper – slanted

P4 – Pressure

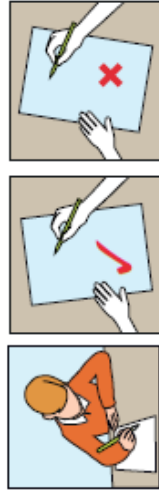
Comfortable Sitting Position and Correct Paper Position

Right-handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

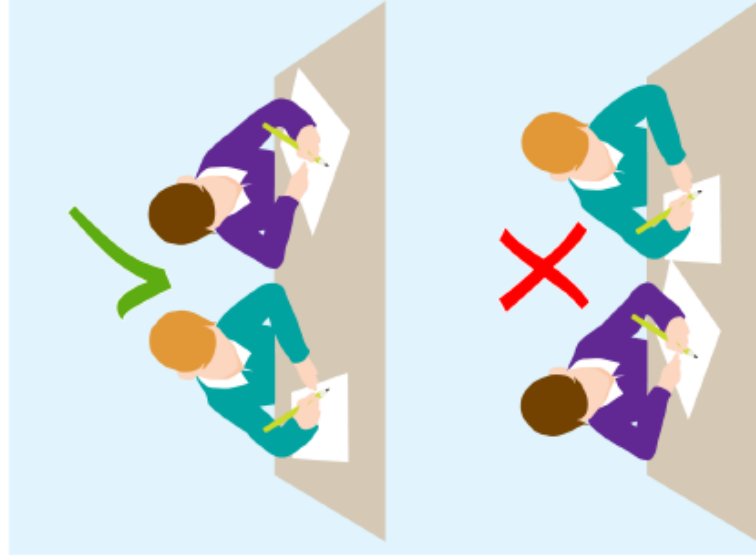


How to hold and position the paper



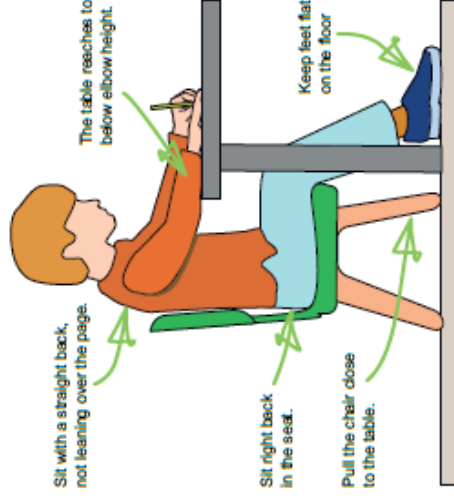
Sitting position

Sit left-handed children to the left of their partner so they have plenty of room to write.



Left-handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.



How to hold and position the paper



Handwriting Progression Overview (Reception-Year 6)

Nursery

- Develop gross motor skills - build core strength and shoulder stability through climbing, balancing, crawling, and large-scale movements to support later writing
- Develop fine motor skills - strengthen hand and finger muscles through play (e.g. threading, playdough, puzzles, peg boards)
- Explore a range of mark-making tools and materials - crayons, chalk, paint, sand, water, large brushes
- Begin early mark-making - random marks, lines, circles, and patterns
- Develop hand-eye coordination and control when making marks

Reception (Little Wandle)

- Continue to develop **gross and fine motor skills** - further strengthen core stability, shoulder control and hand muscles to support sustained writing
- Develop a **comfortable and effective pencil grip** (tripod grip) and correct sitting posture
- Form lower-case and capital letters correctly
- Letters taught in letter families
- Print letters only (no joins)

Year 1 (Little Wandle)

- Secure correct letter formation
- Consistent size and orientation
- Clear spacing between words
- Increased control and confidence
- Print letters; no expectation to join

Year 2 (Letter-join)

- Consistent, accurate letter formation
- Improved fluency and control
- Introduction to **joining letters** when ready
- Begin to write with light, consistent joins
- Apply handwriting across subjects

Year 3 (Letter-join)

- Consolidate correct joins
- Develop a fluent cursive style
- Improve consistency of size and spacing
- Apply joined handwriting across the curriculum

Year 4 (Letter-join)

- Increased fluency and speed
- Consistent joins and letter shapes
- Improved stamina for longer writing tasks
- Neat, legible presentation expected

Year 5 (Letter-join)

- Confident, fluent handwriting
- Automatic joins and consistent style
- Sustained writing with minimal fatigue
- High expectations for presentation

Year 6 (Letter-join)

- Fluent, legible handwriting at speed
- Consistent application across all subjects
- Writing is automatic and supports composition
- Ready for secondary expectations

