

Handwriting Policy

It is essential that our approach to handwriting is accessible to all learners, regardless of background or need.

We are committed to inclusive practice and ensuring that all children develop fluent, legible handwriting through explicit teaching, systematic progression and high expectations. Additional strategies, adaptive equipment and targeted interventions support children with physical, sensory or motor difficulties.

Transcription and the Simple View of Writing

At Greenacres, we recognise transcription (handwriting and spelling) as a fundamental component of writing development. The Education Endowment Foundation emphasises that when children must concentrate on handwriting, they have less capacity to think about composition.

Fluent handwriting:

- reduces cognitive load and frees working memory
- supports motivation by reducing effort and frustration
- ensures writing is legible and valued
- supports stamina and writing fluency

Our aim is for handwriting to become automatic so children can focus on composition and communication.

Why handwriting matters

Fluent handwriting is a strong predictor of successful writing. A lack of fluency can:

- hinder composition by increasing cognitive demand
- reduce motivation and confidence
- prevent others from understanding written work

Children gain satisfaction and pride when handwriting is taught explicitly, cumulatively and successfully.

Foundations for handwriting

To build strong foundations, handwriting development begins in Nursery and formal instruction begins in Reception.

Provision develops:

- core strength and shoulder stability
- gross and fine motor control
- hand–eye coordination
- pencil control and mark making

This includes:

- Write Dance and movement programmes
- vertical mark making and large-scale drawing
- pattern making and continuous provision opportunities
- manipulation activities to build hand strength

Early instruction may include air writing and large motor movements before writing on paper.

Daily teaching is:

- explicit and carefully sequenced
- taught in small steps
- practised frequently
- consolidated before progression

Teaching handwriting explicitly

Handwriting must be taught discretely in addition to writing in phonics and across the curriculum.

Teaching focuses on:

- correct formation and movement patterns
- starting and finishing points
- letter size and orientation
- spacing and alignment
- posture and pencil grip

Teachers model handwriting clearly and prevent children from practising incorrect formation.

Copying, tracing dotted letters or unsupervised repetition does not build accurate motor memory and should not replace direct teaching and modelling.

Teachers' handwriting provides a high-quality model across all subjects.

Physical development, posture and pencil grip

Fluent handwriting depends on both physical and cognitive development.

Teachers explicitly teach Ready to Write routines.

Children are taught to:

- place feet flat on the floor
- sit with bottom to the back of the chair
- keep forearms supported on the table
- hold the pencil with a relaxed tripod grip
- steady paper with the non-writing hand

Teachers explain why posture matters and model both correct and incorrect positions. Children are reminded using pupil-friendly prompts.

We understand poor posture, inefficient grip or fatigue can lead to slow writing, discomfort and reduced output.

Paper position and writing surface

Children are taught to position paper correctly:

- right-handers: tilt slightly anti-clockwise
- left-handers: tilt slightly clockwise

Paper should rest on a flat surface to support forearm movement and fine motor control.

Children learn handwriting using pencil and paper because the friction supports control and stroke formation.

Writing implements

Writing tools must be appropriate to hand size and support correct grip. Pencil grips or adaptive tools are used where necessary.

We prioritise writing tools that promote comfort, control and fluency.

Guidance for left-handed children

Approximately 10% of children are left-handed and may face additional challenges.

Teachers must ensure left-handed children:

- sit to the left of right-handed peers to avoid arm collision
- have sufficient writing space
- tilt paper to the right
- hold the pencil slightly higher for visibility
- avoid excessive pressure
- use softer pencils where helpful

Adults model positioning and monitor comfort and visibility.

Handwriting Progression

Year Group	Teaching Focus	Children Learn To	Key Expectations	Adaptations and Support
Pre-Nursery	Early physical development and exploratory mark making.	• develop core strength and shoulder stability • use whole-arm movements • grasp and release objects • explore marks using hands and tools • develop hand-eye coordination	No expectation of letter formation. Exploration, movement and sensory development are prioritised. Focus is on building the physical foundations required for later handwriting.	Large-scale mark making (easels, floor, outdoor surfaces), chunky crayons and brushes, sensory trays, water and sand play, dough manipulation, vertical surfaces, hand strengthening activities, adult modelling of directional language, close supervision and encouragement.
Nursery	Foundations for writing and controlled mark making.	• develop shoulder strength and stability	Movement, strength and control are prioritised over letter formation. Children	Large tools and chunky crayons, vertical surfaces, sensory materials,

		• use whole-arm and elbow-driven movements • hold tools with increasing control • create lines, circles and repeated patterns • develop hand-eye coordination • begin using directional language (up, down, round) • make intentional marks to represent meaning	experiment with marks and begin to control direction and pressure.	hand strengthening activities, sensory and motor play.
Reception	Early formation and writing readiness.	• sit correctly and position paper appropriately • hold a pencil using a comfortable tripod grip • use dominant hand consistently • form recognisable lower-case letters • begin forming letters in the correct direction • form letters linked to phonics learning • write their name from memory • control size through large and small movements	Daily explicit teaching in small steps. Correct formation and direction are prioritised over speed. Letters are taught alongside phonics.	Pencil grips, triangular pencils, large-scale formation practice, sand trays and air writing, dotted formation guides, motor skill interventions, additional modelling and guided practice.
Year 1	Secure letter formation.	• sit correctly and hold a pencil comfortably • form lower-case letters correctly and consistently • start and finish letters in the right place • form capital letters and digits 0-9	Daily explicit teaching; unjoined script is used. Formation, orientation and spacing are secure before increasing speed.	Midline guides, coloured line guides, visual formation prompts, guided practice, finger spacing tools, additional modelling, targeted fine motor support.

		• practise letter families for efficient movement • leave appropriate spaces between words • align writing on the line		
Year 2	Consistent size, spacing and introduction to joins.	• form letters of correct size relative to one another • maintain consistent spacing between words • position capitals and digits correctly • begin diagonal and horizontal strokes needed for joining • understand which letters are best left unjoined	Joining strokes are introduced but full joining is not expected. Legibility and consistency remain priorities.	Join cue cards, small group support, line guides, spacing tools, reduced copying load where needed.
Year 3	Developing joined handwriting.	• join letters legibly and consistently • use diagonal and horizontal joins appropriately • maintain correct letter size and orientation when joining • write on the line with clear ascenders and descenders • increase fluency through regular practice	Joined writing where appropriate. Legibility remains more important than speed.	Scaffolded practice, slowed pace, sloped boards, adapted pens.
Year 4	Fluency and consistency.	• maintain consistent size, spacing and alignment • write legibly when producing longer pieces • maintain joins across extended writing	Speed increases with clarity. Writing becomes more fluent while maintaining clarity and presentation standards.	Stamina support, sloped writing boards, pen grips, structured handwriting warm-ups, targeted support for stamina and control.

		• develop writing stamina and control		
Year 5	Automaticity and adaptation for purpose.	• write fluently and efficiently with consistent joins • adapt handwriting for different purposes (drafting vs presentation) • maintain legibility at increased speed • sustain handwriting over longer tasks	Handwriting is automatic and supports composition and note-taking.	Ergonomic supports, chair height and position (workstation adjustments), foot rests, writing slopes, reduced copying, targeted fluency practice, alternative recording methods where appropriate.
Year 6	Independence, speed and personal style	• write with speed, fluency and legibility under timed conditions • maintain a consistent and mature handwriting style • present work neatly across the curriculum • choose the most appropriate style for audience and purpose	Children write confidently and legibly in all contexts, including timed writing. Presentation expectations remain high.	Individual adaptations to ensure legibility and stamina, writing slopes, ergonomic pens, assistive technology where needed.

Teaching joins and cursive development

In the Early Years and Year 1, we use a print script and follow Little Wandle's letter formation phrases. The alphabet reads as this:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z

From Year 2, children begin learning the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters.

Children are not expected to join all handwriting until:

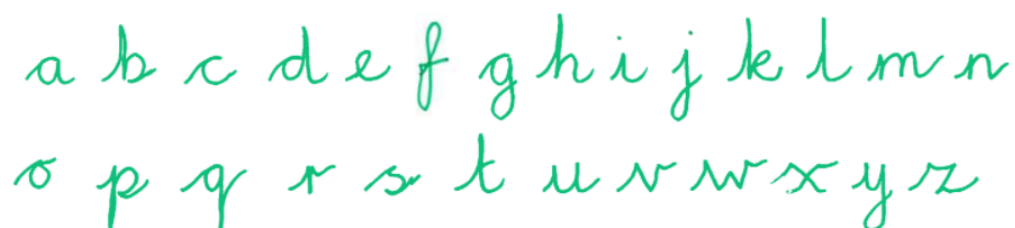
- letter formation is secure

- spacing is consistent
- letters start and finish correctly

Capital letters never join.

Joined handwriting is practised discretely to develop fluency.

The cursive alphabet script reads as:



Structure of handwriting lessons

Handwriting sessions are short, focused and frequent. Consistency across the school supports the longer-term application of high quality handwriting so sessions adhere to this structure:

MODEL	The teacher models the letter or spelling pattern / letter joins explicitly articulating the process.
PRACTISE	The children mirror the model with pertinent feedback and articulation of expectation as the adults walk the room. Successes must be identified and issues rectified through remodelling.
APPLY	Application is expected within every session.
CHECK	Both children and adults should check the success of the session. Children can ✓ their best example and teachers can green ✓

Sessions last 10–15 minutes and occur daily until fluency is achieved.

For the structure to be the most effective, we ensure:

- children are calm, concentrating and focussed
- children are seated so they can easily see the teacher modelling (this could mean some come to sit on the carpet to achieve this whilst others are forward facing at desks)
- left-handed children are seated together and right-handed children are seated together; left-handed children are seated to the left of right-handed children
- pencils are sharp

- the teacher models clearly articulating the letter formation
- children practise following the modelled, mirrored approach. During this time, adults are walking the room checking the accurate formation, sizing and joining (from Y2 upwards) of letters
- adults are intervening and remodelling at the point of teaching, as necessary.
- opportunities for application of the handwriting practise into whole words and sentences are sought

Supporting children with additional needs

Handwriting is taught whole-class with additional support during practice.

Support may include:

- adaptive grips or tools
- sloped boards or alternative seating
- targeted fine motor programmes
- reduced writing load
- alternative recording where appropriate

Ensuring consistency and high standards

All staff are trained to ensure consistency.

Teachers:

- model the agreed script
- maintain expectations across the curriculum
- prevent incorrect formation habits
- ensure regular practice

Assessment and monitoring

Assessment ensures children develop fluency and legibility.

Assessment for Learning is used to:

- correct formation in lessons
- identify children needing support
- ensure learning is secure before progression

Leaders monitor handwriting through work scrutiny, observation and pupil voice.

Promoting pride and presentation

We promote pride in presentation across the curriculum. Fluent handwriting enables children to express ideas confidently and take pride in their written outcomes.

As children gain fluency, handwriting becomes automatic, supporting composition and independence.