

Ladywood Primary school



Ladywood
Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Reviewed: July 2025

Next Review: July 2026

Aims

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
 - Ensure children take care and pride in their work and adults to make expectations clear.
 - Ensure any adult writing both in books and around the classroom is in line with the handwriting policy.
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increase in fluency and speed by:
 - Having a correct pencil grip.
 - Forming all letters correctly.
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters.

Handwriting intent

Classroom Organisation

All children will have a good view of teacher modelling during handwriting lessons. Children will be either facing the boards or sideways on to it. Pupils have enough desk space when they are writing and desks remain uncluttered. Left-handed children are always taken into consideration. Where children are sitting in pairs, the left-hander should be sitting to the left.

Establishing Good Habits

Establishing good working habits is essential in order to consistently achieve high quality handwriting and excellent presentation of work in every class. We aim to have these habits in place across every class in the school, during every lesson across the curriculum.

One hand on the paper.

Children are encouraged to use two hands when writing: One hand to hold the paper or exercise book and one hand to write with.

Correct Posture

Good posture and correct seating position are vital components of developing good handwriting. There are three ways in which we ensure the correct seating position. RWinc management signals are used to remind children of the correct position.

1. Six feet on the floor - the child's two feet and the four feet of the chair. Children are discouraged from kneeling on a chair or to sit cross legged on the chair. The chair's four feet stay on the floor so that children do not rock forward or forward on the chair.
2. BBC Children should be expected to sit at tables in the BBC position. Bottom Back in Chair This means that children do not sit with their chairs sticking out, making the classroom half its real size, with bottoms on the front edge of the chair. They pull the chair towards the table, so bottoms are at the back of the chair.
3. TNT - tummy Near table Children are expected to sit with their tummy near the table, but not squashed up to the table. This prevents sitting with the chair a long way from the table so that the child needs to slouch forward to do their work.

Paper Position

When writing, the paper or exercise book should be placed in an upright position. A slight angle is acceptable; however, this should not be more than 45 degrees.

Presentation of children's work books

Presentation of all children's work needs to be a high priority in all classes. Adults need to provide models for children to follow. Children's work books have lines to help children scaffold their letter shapes, ascenders and descenders and joins.

In FS1: children engage in a variety of mark making activities both indoors and out. Motor skills are developed and children begin to hold a pencil using the correct grip.

In FS2: children are taught how to write letter shapes correctly using the Read Write Inc mnemonics (see appendix two). Children hold a pencil with the correct grip and sit correctly at a table when writing.

Year 1: children and continue to write letter shapes correctly using the Read Write Inc mnemonics.

Year 2: It is expected that by the end of year 2 all children are writing the long date in English books (Monday 6th January) and the short date in maths books. It is also expected that punctuation marks are formed correctly.

KS2: The expectation is for children to write the long date (Monday 6th January) in all writing books and short date in maths books. The date needs to be underlined neatly with a ruler.

Teaching time

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete teaching.

- In EYFS and KS1 correct formation is taught in RWInc sessions when a new sound is introduced. In KS1 two 30-minute handwriting sessions per week taught alongside spellings.
- In lower KS2 correct formation is taught through spellings and two 30-minute handwriting session each week.
- In upper KS2 practice of correct formation is practiced alongside spellings for 30 minutes per week and is embedded through regular writing sessions and modelled by the teacher in shared writing.
- Handwriting practice will be in handwriting books with lines that match English books.

The six joins – see appendix three

1. **Horizontal joins with letters with no ascenders or descenders (year 2)**
ow ou on om or oo oi ov
2. **Diagonal joins with letter with no ascenders or descenders (year 2)**
ai ui oi in im ar um an am au
3. **Horizontal joins with letters with descenders (year 3/4)**
og oy op
4. **Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders (year 3/4)**
ot ol oh od
5. **Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders (year 3/4)**
ul ut it il at al
6. **Diagonal joins to letters with descenders (year 3/4)**
ay ap

Differentiation and Support

Teachers will provide additional support and guidance to students who require extra assistance in handwriting development. For children facing significant challenges with handwriting, staff will implement targeted intervention programs to address their specific needs.

Left-handed children can sometimes struggle with their handwriting. We need to remember that many slight differences in writing for left-handers can make handwriting even more of a challenge. Class teachers need to consider this. See appendix three to understand how we can support them in the classroom.

Assessment

Points to consider:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the letters joins listed above made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are punctuation marks formed correctly?

See appendix one (writing overview) for year group expectations.

Monitoring and Review

The staff at Ladywood will review this policy biannually. The SLT may determine that this policy needs to be reviewed earlier for example if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the SLT receives recommendations on how the policy and practice might be improved.

Policy updated by Sue McQuillan in July 2025

Appendix 1 handwriting overview

FS1

- To use anti-clockwise movement and retrace vertical lines.
- Begins to form recognisable letters.
- Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements.
- Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole hand grasp.
- Holds pencil between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
- Can copy some letters, e.g. letters from their name.

FS2

Shows a preference for dominant hand.

- Uses a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly

Year 1 - Pupils should be taught to:

- 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'.

Guidance (non-statutory)

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement should not be too large for a young child's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the child to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Year 2 - Pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters.
- Year 2 children learn to join as soon as they can form letters fluently and this is consistent.
- 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.

Guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Year 3 and 4 - Pupils should be taught to:

- 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.

Guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This in turn will support their composition and spelling.

Year 5 and 6 - Pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
 - Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters.

- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about the standard of handwriting that is appropriate for a particular task i.e. quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should be taught to use an unjoined style i.e. labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters for example, for filling in a form.

Appendix two

Rhymes for letter formation - taken from Read Write Inc.

a  Around the apple and down the leaf.	b  Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	c  Curl around the caterpillar.	d  Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	e  Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	f  Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g  Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	h  Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	i  Down the body and dot for the head.	j  Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	k  Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	l  Down the long leg.
m  Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	n  Down Nobby and over his net.	o  All around the orange.	p  Down the pirates plait and around his face.	qu  Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.	r  Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
s  Slither down the snake.	t  Down the tower, across the tower.	u  Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	v  Down a wing, up a wing.	w  Down, up, down, up.	x  Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y  Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	z  Zig-zag-zig.				

Appendix three

Appendix three

Handwriting samples

Lower case letters

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

Upper case letters

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

Horizontal joins

ow ou on om or oo oi or ow

Horizontal joins with descenders

og oy op

Horizontal joins with ascenders

ot ol oh od

Diagonal joins

ai ar an am au im in ui er

Diagonal joins with descenders

ay aj ap up ep ip

Diagonal joins with ascenders

at al ul ut it il el et

Appendix four

Supporting left-handed children

Common Left-Handed Writing Problems:

Writing with a hooked or arched hand - Left-handed children need a slightly different grip on their pen or pencil than right-handed children. This is because their hand needs to be in a different position so they can see what they're writing.

Smudging words - As a left-handed child writes, their hand can very easily drag over the words they've just written, causing them to smudge the words.

Letter formation - Left-handed children are "pushing" their pen across the page to write from left to right. This means they might use certain tricks to make things a little easier for themselves. This might mean they write their letters backwards. If you're right-handed, think of the way your pen would move when you write a capital N. Some left-handed children will form the same letter but by doing it in the opposite direction. This is very common, and as long as the child is finding ways to write more comfortably, it's not something that necessarily needs to be corrected.

Not being able to use certain pens - Writing for left-handers is different than it is for right-handers, and that means different pens. Like we mentioned earlier, left-handed people have different grip and also write across their body rather than away from it. Using pens with quick-drying ink can help with smudging and there are certain pens that are designed to help left-handed children with grip.

Restriction of movement - Left-handed people are drawing their hand and arm towards their body, which can restrict their movement.

Not being able to see what they're writing - Due to the positioning of the hand, left-handed children might not be able to see what they're writing very clearly when their paper is straight.

Ways to support Left-Handed Children

1. Get the right tools

In the beginning, when a child is writing with a pencil, you can get a pencil grip that helps your child to hold their pencil in the correct place - about 3cm above the nib.

2. Help them master grip

When children write with their left hand, they tend to have a different grip to right-handed children. This is usually in an attempt to be able to see what they're writing but can result in a hooked or arched hand. We want to avoid this because these grips can cause strain on the wrist, and we don't want to add any extra tension to learning how to write. Using the right tools as we mentioned in the first tip can help with this.

3. Tilt the paper to the right

Left-handed child, need to tilt their paper clockwise. Tilting the paper between 30-45 degrees will keep the child's hand underneath the writing line, which gives them a clear view of what they're writing.

4. Give them space

Make sure children have enough space to move. Left-handed writer's movement is already a little more restrictive, so it's important we give them space. This might mean you place them further away from right-handed children or on the left side to avoid bashing elbows.

Helpful video: [How to support left-handed pupils' handwriting \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)