Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School

Learning for the Head, Heart and Hand

Handwriting Policy

We want to ensure your needs are met. If you would like this document in any other format, please contact us: office@ladyj.kent.sch.uk

Date reviewed	June 2026
Date of next review	June 2027
Reviewer	Mrs D-M Kemp, Writing Lead
Chair of Governors	James Coumbe

(This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures)

Rationale:

At Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School, we believe that the ability to write legibly, fluently and at speed is a vital skill for all children to master. Handwriting is a fundamental component of writing and has a significant impact on children's ability to communicate effectively across the curriculum.

When handwriting becomes automatic and fluent, children are able to devote more of their cognitive capacity to composition, vocabulary selection and sentence construction rather than the mechanics of transcription. Fluent handwriting therefore supports both academic achievement and children's confidence as writers.

As a Little Wandle school, children are initially taught to form letters in a printed style. This supports letter recognition and avoids placing unnecessary demands on fine motor development during the earliest stages of writing. As children become secure in their phonic knowledge and letter formation, they progress to a pre-cursive style before developing a fully cursive handwriting style.

Cursive handwriting forms an integral part of a multisensory approach to literacy development because it:

- Supports left-to-right movement across the page.
- Aids sequencing and reduces letter reversals, inversions and omissions.
- Improves legibility and spacing between words.
- Provides a structured motor programme that supports children with motor and spatial difficulties.
- Improves writing speed and spelling through continuous motor movement.
- Strengthens links between spoken and written language.
- Supports children with dyslexia by reducing the need to consciously sequence letters.

We aim to ensure that handwriting never becomes a barrier to accessing learning or demonstrating understanding.

Policy Aims:

We aim:

- To ensure all children understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in communicating meaning effectively.
- To ensure all children form letters correctly with the appropriate shape, size and orientation.
- To ensure all children develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and writing posture.
- To ensure all children make steady progress in handwriting throughout their time at school.
- To provide a consistent whole-school approach to handwriting instruction, modelling and feedback.
- To ensure all children leave Year 6 able to write legibly, fluently and at speed.

Essentials:

All children should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table with good posture.
- Hold a pencil using an effective tripod grip.
- Position paper appropriately, including the correct angle for left- and right-handed writers.
- Use their non-writing hand to stabilise the page.
- Form letters with the correct size, orientation and starting point.

- Follow the school's agreed letter formation patter.

Teachers should ensure that they:

- Consistently model correct handwriting.
- Use the agreed letter formation language and vocabulary.
- Correct inaccurate letter formation at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote high expectations for presentation across all curriculum areas.
- Use the agreed school handwriting font for printed resources, displays and labels wherever possible.
- Are aware of pupils who require additional support and provide appropriate adaptations and resources.

Whole-School Handwriting Practice:

Handwriting is taught explicitly throughout the school.

Children from Year 1 to Year 6 participate in regular handwriting practice. These sessions focus on:

- Correct letter formation
- Letter size and proportion
- Joins
- Spacing
- Fluency
- Dictation activities linked to spelling patterns
- Handwriting conferencing and feedback

Teachers model good handwriting in all shared writing, marking and classroom displays.

Progression of skills:

EYFS and Year 1:

Children in Reception should be taught to:

- *Sit properly at a table and hold a pencil correctly.*
- *Form lower-case and upper-case letters correctly by printing.*
- *Form the digits 0-9.*

In Reception and Year 1, children are taught phonics through the Little Wandle Reading program. The graphemes are displayed using the Sasson Infant font (standard printed form). As such, children are taught to form letters in a printed style using the letter formation phrases from the Little Wandle program.

Additional support and/or intervention will be provided for those children struggling with the development of fine motor skills, marking making, letter and/or number formation and pencil grip.

From Term 4 onwards, Reception children will be introduced to lead-ins and lead-outs within their handwriting lessons as and when they are ready, ensuring a developmentally appropriate approach. In Year 1, children will either be introduced to cursive handwriting for the first time or will continue to develop their cursive skills if they began learning it in Reception. This progression supports consistency and confidence in handwriting across the early years.

Children should have frequent opportunities to write on paper and other textured surfaces. Whilst whiteboards can be used as a supplementary tool, they should not be the primary medium for handwriting instruction. Paper provides greater resistance and allows children to develop greater control over letter formation.

Year 2:

Children in Year 2 should be taught to:

- *Begin writing in a cursive style as soon as they can correctly form and orient letters.*

In Year 2, children are taught to write in a cursive style. Children are taught to correctly form letters in a cursive style through use of letter patter closely linked to that which they have already learnt from Little Wandle for forming printed letters.

Year 2 children have discrete handwriting lessons daily (15 minutes) in order to ensure that they rapidly master the horizontal and diagonal strokes needed for joining.

By the end of Year 2 all children should be writing in a cursive style.

Additional support and/or intervention will be provided for those children who are not likely to achieve a cursive writing style by the time they leave Year 2. Teachers will use a combination of whole class intervention (for example handwriting conferencing) and targeted intervention where appropriate (for example, additional support with fine motor skills development).

Lower Key Stage 2:

Children in Years 3 and 4 should be taught to:

- *Continue writing in a cursive style.*
- *Use a cursive style in all of their independent writing.*
- *Increase the consistency and legibility of their handwriting.*

In Year 3/4, children are taught to write in a cursive style. Teachers continue to use the same letter patter as in Year 2 whenever they model how to join letters.

Year 3 children will continue to have discrete handwriting lessons 3-5 times per week (15 minutes) as required, in order reinforce the correct way to join letters.

From Year 4, handwriting will be taught whole class, using dictations linked to our spelling programme 3 times per week. Teachers will use this opportunity to teach targeted letter formation, based on the needs of the class, and complete handwriting conferencing.

By the end of Year 3, all children should be writing in a cursive style in all of their writing in foundation subjects.

In Term 6, Year 3 children should begin using handwriting pens, excepting individual children if their teacher feels that this is not yet appropriate. From Year 4 onwards, the majority of children should be using handwriting pen rather than pencil. However, there may be instances where this is not considered appropriate or writing in pen hinders the fluency of a child's writing and hence pencil is preferred. Left-handed children may need access to different pens/pencils, to be provided by the class teacher in conjunction with the SENCO if required.

Additional support and/or intervention will be provided for those children not able to write in a cursive writing style at a suitable speed. Teachers will use a combination of whole class intervention (for example handwriting conferencing) and targeted intervention where appropriate (for example, additional support with fine motor skills development).

Upper Key Stage 2:

Children in Years 5 and 6 should be taught to:

- *Write at speed in a cursive style.*
- *Increase the consistency and legibility of their handwriting*
- *Make choices about what shape letters to use.*
- *Make choices about whether or not to join specific letters*
- *Recognise what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a given task (e.g. notes may not need to be as beautifully presented as a best copy of written work but should still be clearly legible)*
- *Recognise when it is appropriate to write in an unjoined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or for writing an email address).*

In Years 5 and 6, children are taught to write at an increasing speed in their cursive style. Teachers should encourage this through means of dictation activities (see below) and note taking tasks.

Handwriting will continue to be taught whole class, using dictations linked to our spelling programme 3 times per week. Teachers will use this opportunity to teach targeted letter formation, based on the needs of the class, and complete handwriting conferencing.

Teachers talk explicitly about handwriting expectations for different tasks with the children and encourage them to make choices about their writing.

The majority of children should be using handwriting pen rather than pencil. However, there may be instances where this is not considered appropriate or writing in pen hinders the fluency of a child's writing and hence pencil is preferred. Left-handed children may need access to different pens/pencils, to be provided by the class teacher in conjunction with the SENCO if required.

Additional support and/or intervention will be provided for those children not able to write in a cursive writing style at a suitable speed. Teachers will use a combination of whole class intervention (for example handwriting conferencing) and targeted intervention where appropriate (for example, additional support with fine motor skills development).

Letter Families:

The basic letter shapes are introduced using handwriting families.

The l Family

l t i u y j

The c Family

c a d g o q s

The r Family

r p n m h k b

Additional Letters

e f

v w

x z

Teachers use agreed letter formation patter when teaching these groups.

Additional support:

Whilst high-quality classroom teaching should meet the needs of most children, some pupils may require additional support.

Wave 1 – Quality First Teaching

- Explicit daily teaching
- Consistent modelling
- Handwriting conferencing
- Adaptive resources and classroom strategies

Wave 2 – Targeted Group Support

- Small-group intervention
- Fine motor warm-ups
- Targeted letter formation practice
- Tracing and over-learning activities

Wave 3 – Individual Support

- Personalised intervention
- Individual targets
- Occupational therapy recommendations where appropriate
- Individual monitoring and review

Support may include:

- Fine motor development activities
- Pencil control programmes
- Visual tracking activities

- Handwriting conferencing
- Success with Scissors activities

For some pupils with identified SEND, alternative recording methods may be appropriate where handwriting difficulties significantly impede access to learning.

Writing Books and Resources:

Book Expectations

Year Group	Book Type
EYFS	Large-lined books and handwriting guidelines
Year 1	Large-lined A4 books
Year 2 (Terms 1–3)	Large-lined A4 books
Year 2 (Terms 4–6)	Narrower lined books where appropriate
Years 3–6	Narrower lined books unless additional support is required

Available Resources

- Handwriting pens
- Pencil grips
- Writing slopes
- Wobble cushions
- Easy Grip pencils
- Easy Graph triangular pencils
- Left-handed pens and pencils
- Fine motor development resources
- Success with Scissors materials

Left-Handed Writers

Teachers should ensure that:

- Left-handed children are seated to the left of right-handed peers where possible.
- Appropriate writing equipment is available.
- Paper positioning is explicitly taught.
- Additional modelling and support is provided where required.

Assessment and Monitoring:

The Writing Sequence of Learning and our internal writing assessment framework both include handwriting and show the progression of skills and assessment measures for teachers to use in supporting its development.

Teachers are responsible for monitoring children's cursive handwriting development (for example through whole class handwriting conferencing). Children who are not meeting the relevant progression of skills should be identified for additional support, either in class or as part of a small group or 1:1 intervention. This may for part of early morning learning, or be completed at another time in the day. Targeted support should be identified on the whole class provision map or an individual child's personal plan (for those with HNF and/or an EHCP), monitored by the SENCO and subject leader.

The presentation of work is monitored through regular work scrutinies by subject leads and senior leaders.

Appendix:

Agreed Fonts

The agreed fonts are as follows:

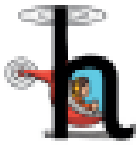
Sassoon 6 (Years R and 1) - The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

Comic Sans (Years 2 -6) - The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

Little Wandle Letter Formation Phrases (for use by Years R and 1):

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
s s	 snake	Show your teeth and and let the **s** hiss out **ssssss ssssss**	Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
a a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the 'a' sound at the back of your mouth **a a a**	Around the astronaut's helmet, and down into space.
t t	 tiger	Open your lips, put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press **t t t**	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.
p p	 penguin	Bring your lips together and push them open and say **p p p**	Down the penguin's back, up and round its head.
i i	 iguana	pull your lips back and make the 'i' sound at the back of your mouth **i i i**	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.
n n	 net	Open your lips a bit,put your tongue behind your teeth and make the **nnnnn** sound **nnnnn**	Down the stick, up and over the net.
m m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the **mmmmm** sound **mmmmm**	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
d d	 duck	Put your tongue to the top and front of your mouth and make a quick **d** sound **d d d**.	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
g g	 goat	Give me a big smile that shows your teeth. Press the middle of your tongue to the top and back of your mouth and push your tongue down and forward to make the sound **g g g**	Round the goat's face, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin.
o o	 octopus	Make your mouth into round shape and say **o o o**	All around the octopus.
c c	 cat	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say **c c c**	Curl around the cat.
k k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say **k k k**	Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner.
ck ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say **c c c**	c Curl round the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and round, back and down and to the corner. **Catchphrase:** Rock that sock!
e e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say **e e e**	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 u	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say **u. u. u**	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick
 r	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a **rrrr** sound **rrrrr rrrrr**	From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.
 h	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply **h. h. h.**	Down, up and over the helicopter
 b	 bear	Put your lips together and say **b** as you open them **b. b. b**	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.
 f	 flamingo	Open your lips a little, put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound **fffff fffff**	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.
 l	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little, put your tongue up to the top of your mouth behind your teeth and press **lll. lll**	All the way down the lollipop.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
j	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say **j j j**	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.
v	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing **vvvv vvvv**	Down to the bottom of the volcano, and back up to the top.
w	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say **w w w**	From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.
x	 box	Mouth open then push the **cs/x** sound through as you close your mouth **cs cs cs (x x x)**	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.
y	 yoyo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say **y** without opening your mouth	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.
z	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the **z** sound **zzzzzz zzzzzz**	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase Catchphrase
qu qu	 queen	Pucker your mouth, then open it as you say **qu qu qu**	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. qu Quick, it's the queen!
th th	 thumb	**Voiced:** Tongue on your teeth, teeth almost closed to make a 'buzzing' th th th **Unvoiced:** Tongue on your teeth push the air out **th th th**	th Thumbs up, we're having fun.
sh sh	 shells	Show me your teeth and push the air out **shshshshsh shshshshsh**	sh Share the shells.
ch ch	 cherries	Pucker your lips and show your teeth. Use your tongue as you say **ch ch ch**	ch Chew the cherries, children.
ng ng	 ring	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say **ng ng ng**	Bling on a ring.
nk nk	 pink panda	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say **ngk ngk ngk**	n I think I am pink.

Cursive Letter Formation Phrases (for use by Years 2-6):

Curly 'c' letter family

c touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round and down and flick

o touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round and down and all the way round and go out straight

a touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round and down and go up, down, and flick

d touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round and down and all the way up nearly to the top, back down and flick

g touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round and down and up, back down but slide underground and give it a tail and loop it across

q touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round and down and up, back down but slide underground and flick

s touch the line, lead in, go up and over the top and back round but half way down, curve out and down and flick

The 'l' letter family

l touch the line, lead in, go straight up nearly to the top and back down to the line and flick

t touch the line, lead in, go straight up nearly to the top and back down to the line and flick -take your pencil off and cross the line

i touch the line, lead in, go up halfway and back down to the line and flick-take your pen off and give it a dot

u touch the line, lead in, go up halfway and back down to the line and go around the bottom corner go up half way/back down and flick

y touch the line, lead in down, go up halfway and back down to the line and go around the bottom corner go up half way/back down but slide underground and give it a tail and loop it across

j touch the line, lead in, go up halfway and back down to the line and slide underground and loop it across –take your pen off and give it a dot

The 'r' letter family

r touch the line, lead in, go straight up halfway and back down to the line and back up and go out in a wiggle

p touch the line, lead in, go up halfway, back down to the line but slide underground, back up to the top and go around the top corner, go down back to the other line and flick

n touch the line, lead in, go up halfway and back down to the line then go back up and over to the line and flick

m touch the line, lead in, go up halfway and back down to the line then go back up and over to the line and go up and over and back down to the line and flick

h touch the line, lead in, go straight up nearly to the top and back down to the line, go back up halfway then go out round the corner, then down to the line and flick

k touch the line, lead in go straight up nearly to the top and back down to the line, go,half way up, look around and kick out and flick

b touch the line, lead in, go straight up nearly to the top and back down to the line, go back up halfway then go out round the corner back to the other line and flick

Other letters

e touch the line, lead in, go up a bit then straight out then back round the corner and flick

f touch the line, lead in, go up and over at the top, come back , go straight down, slide underground and make a loop

n touch the line, lead in, go up halfway, go diagonally down to the line then diagonally up and go straight out

w touch the line, lead in, go up halfway, go diagonally down to the line then diagonally up then diagonally down, then diagonally back up and go straight out

x touch the line, lead in, curve down and curve back around.

z touch the line, lead in, go straight out, diagonally down to the line, straight out along the line

Capital Letter Formation Phrases (for use by all year groups):