

## Handwriting Policy

### School Context

Walkeringham Primary School is a small primary setting where:

- Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are taught together in one mixed-age class.
- Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught together in one mixed-age class.

Due to this structure, handwriting progression is carefully adapted to meet pupils' developmental needs:

- Print formation is taught consistently from Nursery to Year 2, ensuring strong foundations before any joining.
- Cursive joining is not introduced until Year 3, ensuring developmental readiness and consistency when moving into the KS2 class.
- All pupils receive equitable, age-appropriate teaching using a whole-school approach.

Our policy fully incorporates the Little Wandle Handwriting programme and including Reception and Key Stage 1 guidance, and reflects statutory National Curriculum requirements.

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### Intent

At Walkeringham Primary School, we recognise that handwriting is a fundamental life skill and a key component of successful written communication. High-quality handwriting teaching ensures pupils develop fluent, legible and automatic transcription skills. These skills free working memory for composition and support success across the curriculum.

Our aims are to:

- Provide a consistent whole school approach to handwriting.
- Ensure all pupils develop legible, fluent and efficient handwriting.
- Embed high expectations of written presentation in all subjects.

- Ensure all staff model high-quality handwriting.

Handwriting is a movement skill that must be taught explicitly, sequentially, and regularly, with frequent review and opportunities for overlearning. Little Wandle guidance emphasises direct teaching, strong modelling and the use of the 'Ready to write' checklist.

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## Implementation

### 1. Explicit, Regular Teaching

- In EYFS and KS1 there is daily or frequent short lessons (e.g., 10–15 minutes, at least 4× per week).
- Lessons follow the Little Wandle model: **review → direct modelling → guided practice → independent practice → feedback.**
- Handwriting lessons are separate from phonics lessons, to ensure focused transcription teaching.

### 2. Strong Teacher Modelling

All adults:

- Explicitly model correct posture, pencil grip, paper position and pressure (*the Little Wandle "four Ps"*).
- Demonstrate correct letter formation using Little Wandle formation phrases.
- Ensure letter starting points, orientation and directionality are consistent.
- Provide immediate, precise and corrective feedback.

### 3. Ready to write: The Four Ps

The Little Wandle 'Ready to Write' checklist is used at the start of every handwriting lesson from Reception to Year 6:

- Posture: Feet flat on the floor, hips and knees at 90°, back supported, space between body and desk.
- Pencil grip: Secure tripod grip taught and reinforced; pencil grips or triangular pencils used where appropriate.
- Paper position: Correctly tilted for left- or right-handed pupils; non-writing hand holds the page steady.
- Pressure: Children are taught to apply appropriate pressure (not too hard, not too light).

The Little Wandle 'Ready to Write' rhyme is used to reinforce correct habits (see appendix).

#### 4. Linking Handwriting, Phonics and Spelling

- Formation phrases used consistently across EYFS and KS1.
- Application of print formation in phonics sessions, but handwriting is taught in separate dedicated lessons.

#### 5. Developmentally Appropriate Progression

- EYFS: strong emphasis on gross and fine motor foundations, pre-writing patterns and establishing correct grip and posture.
- KS1: secure print formation, accurate size and spacing.
- KS2: joining introduced in Year 3 when print is secure.

#### 6. Warm-Up Routines

Before every handwriting lesson, pupils complete short hand exercises (e.g., finger taps, finger stretches, palm presses) following Little Wandle guidance.

#### 7. Environment and Resources

- Lessons must be taught at tables with appropriate chair/table height.
  - Children must have a clear view of adult modelling.
  - Left-handed children positioned to the left of right-handed peers.
  - Resources prepared in advance to maximise lesson focus and learning time.
  - Use of lined paper or handwriting books appropriate to age/need.
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### Progression: Nursery to Year 6

#### Nursery

- Focus on gross/fine motor skills.
- Mark-making and early patterns.
- No formal letter formation, joining or entry strokes.

#### Reception

- Pre-writing patterns during initial weeks.
- Teaching of letter families (not phonics order).
- Capital letters later in the year.
- Correct starting point and direction of letters.
- Accurate letter formation and orientation.
- Formation phrases used consistently.
- Correct grip, posture and paper position.
- No lead-ins or cursive.

Provision includes:

- Four short handwriting sessions per week (approximately 15 minutes).
- Teaching delivered through whole-class, half-class or small-group sessions as appropriate.
- Use of Little Wandle style paper or books and sequence:
  1. Patterns
  2. Lower-case letters
  3. Capital letters
  4. Digraphs and trigraphs

By the end of Reception, pupils should:

- Hold a pencil using a secure tripod grip.
- Form lower-case letters correctly, starting in the right place and following the correct direction.
- Begin to form capital letters accurately.

No cursive joins or lead-in strokes are taught.

## Year 1-2

**In Year 1 and 2, handwriting focuses on:**

- Consolidation of correct lower-case letter formation.
- Formation of capital letters and digits 0–9.
- Developing appropriate letter size and spacing.
- Practice linked to phonics learning.
- Secure correct size and spacing of letters.

Teaching meets all statutory National Curriculum requirements for handwriting.

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## Key Stage 2

### Years 3-4

- Formal introduction of continuous cursive joins in Year 3.
- Developing fluency, speed and legibility.

### Years 5–6

- Established fluent, joined handwriting.
  - Development of a personal but efficient style.
  - Increasing stamina for extended writing.
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## Teaching Expectations

Teachers must:

- Teach handwriting explicitly and regularly.
- Use Little Wandle handwriting pedagogy and routines.
- Maintain consistent formation, posture and grip modelling.
- Include warm-ups and the four-Ps check.
- Provide precise, immediate feedback.
- Keep expectations consistent across their own modelling, marking and displays.

## Learning Environment

- Letter families, formation posters and joining guidance displayed.
  - Children have access to appropriate writing tools.
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## Inclusion and SEND

- Early identification of children with motor or coordination difficulties.
  - Adaptations may include: pencil grips, triangular pencils, sloping boards, chunkier tools.
  - Targeted intervention sessions for pupils who need additional practice.
  - Specific guidance for left-handed pupils.
  - Use of Little Wandle fine-motor development suggestions.
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## Assessment

### Objective Criteria

- Correct formation.
- Size, spacing and orientation.
- Accurate joins (when taught).
- Speed and fluency.

### Subjective Criteria

- Legibility.
- Consistency.
- Presentation.

### Assessment Approaches

- Ongoing teacher assessment.

- Regular moderation across the school.
  - Periodic handwriting review in both English and wider curriculum books.
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## Communication with Parents and Carers

- Parents informed of the school's handwriting expectations and style.
  - Guidance shared on how to support handwriting at home.
  - Where appropriate, individual advice shared for pupils needing additional support.
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## Resources

- Little Wandle Handwriting Programme.
  - Formation phrase posters and letter family displays.
  - Pencil grips, triangular pencils and other adaptive tools as needed.
  - Handwriting books, and appropriate lined paper.
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## Monitoring and Review

Leadership ensures:

- A coherent, progressive handwriting curriculum.
  - CPD for staff in Little Wandle handwriting pedagogy.
  - Monitoring of lessons and written work.
  - Annual review of the policy or earlier if guidance changes.
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Letter Families

**Curly letter family:** c, a, d, g, o, q, e, s, f

**Long letter family:** l, i, t, j, u, y

**Bouncy letter family:** m, n, r, b, p, h

**Zig-zag letter family:** v, w, x, z, k

### Appendix B: Formation Phrases (Little Wandle Examples)

- a – "Around the apple and down the leaf"
- b – "Down the laces, up and over the boot"
- c – "Curl around the caterpillar"

- d – "Around the dinosaur's bottom, up his tall neck, and down to his feet"
- e – "Lift off the top and scoop around"
- f – "Down the stem and draw the leaves"
- g – "Around the girl's face and give her the hair"
- o – "All around the orange"
- s – "Slither down the snake"

## 'Ready to write' rhyme

Let's sit up straight, feet nice and flat,  
Tilt your paper – just like that!  
Pinch your pencil, give it a flip,  
Check your hold and then your grip.  
Now we can begin to write,  
But not too hard and not too light.

