



**Prescot Primary
School & Nursery**
Empower today. Prepare for tomorrow.

Our Approach to Handwriting



Our Approach to Handwriting

Empower today. Prepare for tomorrow.

Why Handwriting Matters

At Prescott Primary School & Nursery, we recognise that handwriting is a fundamental skill that enables children to communicate their ideas, express themselves and demonstrate their learning with confidence. Developing fluent, legible and increasingly automatic handwriting reduces the cognitive demands of writing, allowing children to concentrate on vocabulary, sentence construction, composition and creativity. We believe that every child should develop a handwriting style that is comfortable, efficient and personal, whilst maintaining high standards of presentation and pride in their work.

Our approach is carefully planned and progressive, beginning with the development of gross and fine motor skills, coordination and early mark-making in Nursery, and building towards fluent, confident and independent handwriting by the end of Year 6. Through our chosen Letter-join handwriting scheme, we provide a consistent, structured approach to teaching letter formation, positioning, spacing and joining. We recognise that handwriting is a skill that requires explicit teaching, regular practice and opportunities for application across the curriculum.

Our Progressive Approach: Nursery to Year 6

We understand that children develop handwriting skills at different rates and that strong foundations are essential for future success. Our approach combines physical development, direct teaching, modelling, repetition and purposeful opportunities to write.

Nursery – Building the Foundations

In Nursery, our priority is to develop the physical foundations needed for successful handwriting. Children are provided with rich opportunities to strengthen their gross motor skills, fine motor control, hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness through play, movement and practical experiences.

Activities such as climbing, balancing, painting, threading, construction, dough modelling and large-scale mark-making help children develop the strength, coordination and control needed for writing. Children are encouraged to experiment with different tools and materials, make meaningful marks and begin to develop a comfortable and increasingly controlled pencil grip.

Reception – From Mark-Making to Letter Formation

In Reception, children build upon these early experiences as they begin to form recognisable letters with increasing accuracy and confidence. Through our Letter-join approach, alongside

our phonics teaching, children learn correct starting points, letter shapes, direction of movement and appropriate letter sizing.

We place particular emphasis on developing good writing habits from the outset, including posture, paper positioning, pencil control and consistent letter formation. Children experience handwriting through a combination of practical, multisensory activities, adult modelling and short, focused practice sessions.

All children are learning to form letters with lead-in and lead-out strokes, in preparation for joined-up (cursive) handwriting.

Key Stage 1 – Developing Accuracy and Consistency

Throughout Years 1 and 2, handwriting is taught explicitly and systematically using Letter-join. Children consolidate accurate formation of lower-case and capital letters, develop consistent letter sizing and orientation, and learn to position letters correctly in relation to the writing line.

As children become increasingly secure, they are introduced to appropriate joining patterns in line with their readiness and the school's handwriting progression. Regular opportunities for practice enable children to develop greater control, accuracy and fluency, whilst maintaining an emphasis on legibility and presentation.

Lower Key Stage 2 – Building Fluency and Automaticity

In Years 3 and 4, our focus shifts towards developing a more fluent and increasingly automatic handwriting style. Through continued Letter-join teaching and practice, children consolidate their understanding of letter families, joins, spacing, proportion and consistency.

We encourage children to write with increasing speed without compromising legibility. Handwriting expectations are reinforced across the curriculum, ensuring that children recognise the importance of presenting their learning clearly and taking pride in their written work.

Upper Key Stage 2 – Developing a Personal Style

By Years 5 and 6, our ambition is for children to have developed a fluent, legible and efficient handwriting style that enables them to write confidently and independently across all subjects.

Whilst continuing to reinforce the principles of Letter-join, we recognise that children will begin to develop their own individual handwriting style. We encourage this personalisation, provided that handwriting remains clear, consistent, comfortable and appropriate for its purpose.

Children are supported to make informed choices about presentation, writing speed and when joined or unjoined handwriting may be most appropriate. Our ultimate aim is for every

child to leave Year 6 with the handwriting skills, confidence and independence needed for the next stage of their education.

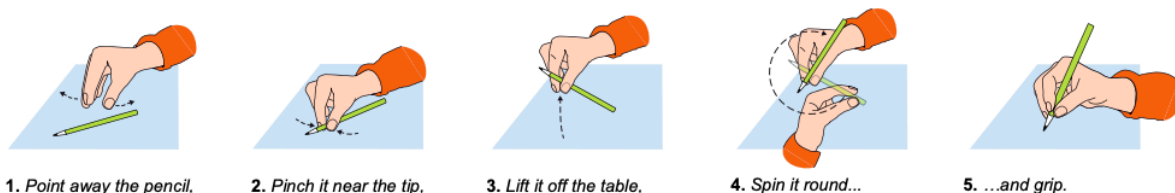
The Importance of Pencil Grip, Posture and Control

We recognise that establishing an efficient and comfortable pencil grip is an important part of early handwriting development. From Nursery onwards, adults model and encourage a relaxed, functional pencil grip, with the dynamic tripod grip taught as a useful starting point. Alongside this, we promote good posture, appropriate paper positioning, controlled movements and the development of hand strength and dexterity.

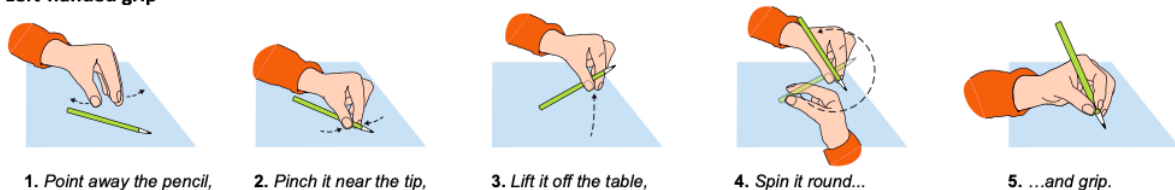
Tripod Pencil Grip

How to hold a pencil correctly for handwriting.

Right-handed grip



Left-handed grip



Our emphasis is therefore on ensuring that children can hold and control their pencil comfortably, efficiently and without unnecessary tension or fatigue, rather than insisting upon one rigid grip for every child. Where a child's grip is affecting their comfort, control or ability to write fluently, staff provide additional modelling, adaptations and targeted support.

We believe that positive habits established early, alongside regular opportunities to practise, help children develop the physical confidence and automaticity needed for successful handwriting.

The Role of Letter-join and Technology

As an Apple Distinguished School, we recognise the value of technology in enhancing teaching and learning. Our Letter-join scheme provides a consistent handwriting model, supported by digital resources, demonstrations and interactive opportunities for practice.

Teachers use Letter-join to model accurate letter formation and joining patterns, enabling children to see and understand the movements required before applying them

independently. Digital technology complements traditional pencil-and-paper practice, providing opportunities for children to revisit demonstrations, receive feedback and practise at an appropriate pace.

Whilst we embrace the opportunities offered by technology, we remain committed to ensuring that handwriting continues to be explicitly taught, regularly practised and valued as an essential life skill.

Inclusion – Handwriting for ALL

We recognise that children develop handwriting skills at different rates and that some pupils, particularly those with SEND, may require additional support to develop control, coordination and fluency.

Our inclusive approach ensures that all children can experience success through appropriate scaffolding, adapted writing tools, alternative paper formats, additional practice and targeted interventions where necessary.

We also recognise that for some children, alternative methods of recording, including typing, dictation and the accessibility features available on their iPads, are essential in enabling them to communicate their knowledge and ideas without unnecessary barriers.

Our ambition is for every child to develop handwriting skills to the best of their ability, whilst ensuring that difficulties with handwriting never prevent them from accessing an ambitious curriculum or demonstrating what they know.

Practice, Progress and Pride

We believe that handwriting, like any other skill, improves through high-quality teaching, regular practice and meaningful application. Our expectations are consistent across the school, with staff modelling handwriting and encouraging children to take pride in their presentation.

Children are supported to recognise their own progress, celebrate improvements and develop the confidence to write independently.

Our ultimate aim is not simply for children to produce neat handwriting, but to develop a fluent, automatic and personal handwriting style that empowers them to communicate effectively, express their creativity and approach written tasks with confidence.

Research Underpinning Our Approach

The Education Endowment Foundation highlights the importance of developing automatic transcription skills, including handwriting, so that pupils can concentrate on the content and composition of their writing. It also emphasises the importance of regular, purposeful practice.

Useful research references for the document include:

- [EEF – Speed and fluency as important as accuracy for good writing.](#)
- [EEF – Physical development, mark-making and letter formation.](#)
- [Schwellnus et al. \(2012\) – Effect of pencil grasp on handwriting speed and legibility.](#)