

Statement of Practice: Handwriting



At Wolverham Primary and Nursery School we are committed to ensuring that every pupil develops fluent, legible and consistently joined handwriting by the end of Year 6. Strong transcription skills, including handwriting and spelling, are essential foundations for successful writing.

Once handwriting is secure and automatic, pupils can focus on expressing their ideas with creativity, purpose and clarity. Our handwriting curriculum builds confidence, fluency and stamina from the very start of school life. It provides clear progression from early mark-making in pre-School to fluent joined writing in Key Stage 2.

By the time pupils leave Year 6, they are able to meet the expectations of the National Curriculum and The Writing Framework (DfE, 2025) and they take pride in the presentation of their work across all subjects. We do acknowledge that there are some children who find handwriting a challenge and aim that all children make strong progress from their starting points, taking into account additional needs and reasonable adjustments.

Progression of Skills

Pre-school and Nursery

There is no formal teaching of handwriting in our Pre-school or Nursery classes. However, any adult modelling (in provision) should be completed using correct letter formation using the Little Wandle formation guides.

Children aged 2 years should:

- Explore making marks using fingers, hands and whole-arm movements
- Enjoy sensory and messy play experiences
- Be encouraged to make random or repeated marks without intention to represent
- Be shown books, pictures and environmental print
- Be encouraged to associate meaning with their marks (e.g. naming their drawing)

There is **no expectation** for children of this age to form letters, hold a pencil correctly, or sit for sustained writing activities.

Children aged 3 years should:

- Begin to make more controlled marks such as lines, dots and circles
- Use a range of mark making tools with increasing confidence
- Develop a preferred hand
- Demonstrate increasing hand–eye coordination
- Talk about and attribute meaning to their marks

Formal handwriting, letter formation and writing on lines are **not taught** at this stage. Mark making opportunities are available through continuous provision to develop children's fine motor skills using a range of tools and materials (fingers, chinks, crayons, paintbrushes etc) however these do not consist of handwriting sheets or writing. Across all of our EYFS classes, children are provided with

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opportunities for developing their fine and gross motor skills to develop hand strength, control and co-ordination that are necessary for later writing. These could include:

- Climbing, crawling, balancing and outdoor play
- Large-scale movements such as painting on walls or floor
- Activities that develop core strength and shoulder stability
- Playdough, clay and malleable materials
- Threading, posting, tearing and squeezing
- Using tools such as tongs, pipettes and spoons

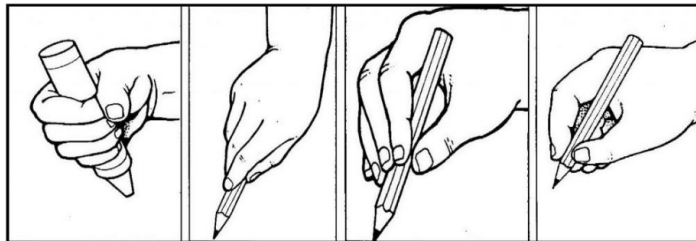
All adults will encourage early handwriting development by modelling marking making naturally during play, encourage children to talk about their mark making and provide narrative as appropriate. They will not require children to trace, copy or form letters unless this is led by the child.

Developing a child's pencil grip

We aim to develop a child's physical readiness to ensure they naturally emerge to a mature tripod grip as they progress through school. This is as a result of strong shoulders and core, stable wrists, good hand strength and finger independence.

In Pre-school and Nursery we will not use thin pencils, thin paintbrushes or mark-making implements. We will also not use standard length writing pencils too early. This encourages a fist grip.

The 4 expected grips:



1. **Palmar grip (whole hand)**
2. **Digital pronate grip (fingers pointed downwards)**
3. **Five finger/pincer grip**
4. **Tripod grip**

Stages 1 – 3 are developmentally appropriate for Nursery aged children. Grip will develop at different rates and will not be corrected unless it is causing discomfort or preventing mark-making.

We will not use any forms of worksheets for children or use pencil grips.

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Progression of Skills: Reception

By the end of EYFS children should:

- Be able to correctly hold a pencil using a tripod grip (though different developmental stages may still be used as above)
- Form lower case letters beginning at the correct starting point and follow the correct directions
- Begin to form capital letters correctly

In Reception, we follow the Little Wandle handwriting program (since January 2026) and it is taught separately to phonics. It is based on the principle of direct teaching of transcription skills. All staff will model handwriting to a high standard ensuring:

- Each letter must be correctly formed (**Capital I and G are to be modelled from Wolverham progression document and not Little Wandle**) Consistent in size
- Clear starting and finishing points will be evident in modelled writing
- The pencil grip used by adults must be appropriate

The Little Wandle 'Ready to Write' rhyme will be used and referred to during handwriting lessons. All handwriting lessons will be monitored and children will not be left independently. The Little Wandle letter formation phrases will be used.

'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.



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Key Stage 1

Children continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multisensory activities through continuous provision in year 1 and targeted intervention. Handwriting should be discussed regularly as part of live marking and linked to phonics sessions through reminding the children about the letter formation.

Teachers and support staff continue to guide children how to form letters correctly using the Little Wandle letter formations, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Sessions are taught discreetly 3 – 5 times weekly.

National Curriculum statutory requirements for handwriting: Year 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- 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' and to practise these.

Year 2: As appropriate and following the Nelson programme, children will be taught the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.

In year 2, they will work on the correct size and orientation of their letters and begin to use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

We will begin the Little Wandle handwriting programme in 2026 when it is fully released.

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Key Stage 2

During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. Sessions are taught discreetly 3 times weekly using the Little Wandle letter formations (for those children at the earlier stages of handwriting) and following the Nelson joins detailed in the school progression document. The Nelson books can be used to support.

By the end of Year 3 and 4 children should:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters
- be able to explain which letters are break letters
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting

By the end of Year 5 and 6 children should:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by choosing which shape of letter to use and also choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Additional teaching points:

- Key Stage 1 children will write the day of the week and the short date when it is felt appropriate for them to do so
- Key Stage 2 children will write the long date
- All staff modelling in the children's books should be using the handwriting lines
- Only when children have consistently demonstrated a neat, joined handwriting style will they be able to move onto books without guidelines

All to be read in conjunction with the school progression document in handwriting to identify where children are being taught from.

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Appendix 1

Outlines positioning and common handwriting problems

Guidance for Left-handers

Special rules apply for left-handers. They should sit on the left-hand side of double desks or tables. They must be able to rest their left forearms on the edge of the desk. The book or paper must slope in line with the left forearm. As writing is completed down the page, the paper must be moved away from the body in the same line. The aim is to keep the left arm in much the same position at all times to avoid the elbow being cramped by the chest. Moving the paper away from the body prevents writing becoming cramped at the foot of the page. The right hand must be used to control the movement of the page. The left hand should end up below the line of writing to avoid smudging and to give a clear view of what is being written. Children should be discouraged from hooking their left hand above the line of writing to avoid smudging.

Guidance for Right-handers

Right-handers do not face the same problems as left-handers, but many children will find it helpful to slope the paper slightly and to move it away from the body as the page is completed.

Pen Grip

The pen or pencil should be gripped comfortably between forefinger and thumb with the second finger below to steady it. If you pick up a pen which is lying on the table in front of you with its nib towards you in line with your forearm, you instinctively pick it up in the correct grip.

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Appendix 2

Checklist for teachers and support staff

If a child's handwriting is to develop into a pleasing and consistent style, it is helpful to examine each piece of writing in the light of the following criteria:

1. Shape
Are all letters properly formed and clear?
2. Joining
Are as many letters as possible joined consistently?
3. Evenness
Are letters of a consistent and reasonable size? Capitals can be too big, tall letters too tall, small letters too small.
4. Floating and Sinking
Do letters sit on the line? Words sometimes float above or sink below the writing line. This happens because the writing hand is not moving steadily across the page.
5. Particular Letters
Which letters are really well formed? Which ones need careful practise?