Handwriting Policy

Handwriting is a fundamental skill that underpins children's ability to communicate effectively. It is a priority for our school as:

- Legible handwriting allows children to express their thoughts and ideas clearly, which is essential for academic success.
- High standards of written presentation are crucial in all subjects, fostering pride in work and encouraging a positive attitude towards learning.
- The new writing framework and the National Curriculum emphasise the importance of handwriting as a key skill in literacy development. Children in Reception and Year 1 should be taught to sit correctly at a table, hold a pencil comfortably, and form lower-case letters in the correct direction, among other expectations. In Year 2, the focus shifts to beginning to join letters and ensuring correct sizing and spacing, which aligns with the framework's goal of developing fluent and efficient handwriting.
- Studies indicate that effective handwriting instruction can lead to improved writing fluency and overall academic performance. The new writing framework supports this by providing structured guidance on teaching handwriting, ensuring that children develop the necessary skills to succeed in their writing tasks.

At Herne View CofE Primary School, we have adopted both the Little Wandle Handwriting programme that supports the phonics and spelling programme for both Reception and KS1, and Schofield and Sims Write Well approach to continue to teach and develop our KS2 children's handwriting. This approach develops fluency, legibility and eventually speed, so that by the end of KS2, children can write their ideas confidently across the curriculum.

Using both Little Wandle and Write Well programme ensures that there is a systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting across our school.

Aim

The aims of this handwriting policy are to:

- Establish **consistent teaching and expectations** for handwriting across all classes from Reception through to Key Stage Two.
- Ensure that **all children develop legible, fluent, and efficient handwriting**.
- Promote **high standards of written presentation** across the curriculum.

Progressive Stages of Handwriting Development

1. **Core Strength and Motor Control**: Activities to develop core strength and fine motor skills are essential for handwriting readiness.
2. **Fine Motor Control Skills**: Children will refine their fine motor skills through targeted activities.
3. **Correct Pencil Grip and Posture**: Emphasis on the tripod grip and correct sitting posture.
4. **Formation of Letters**: Instruction on the correct formation of lower-case and capital letters, including starting and ending points.
5. **Sizing and Spacing of Letters**: Focus on appropriate sizing and spacing to enhance legibility.
6. **Joins and Progression to Cursive Writing**: Introduce joins as children progress, leading to cursive writing.
7. **Fluency and Personal Style**: Encourage children to develop their own handwriting style while maintaining legibility.

Expectations for Reception and KS1

Reception: Focus on correct pencil grip, forming letters with correct starting and ending points, and ensuring correct directionality. The Little Wandle Handwriting scheme will be implemented, beginning with preparation and practice activities. Children will also learn how to form numbers correctly using the Little Wandle number formation rhymes.

Year 1: Handwriting builds on the foundations laid in Reception, continuing to use The Little Wandle Handwriting scheme by consolidating letter formation, sizing and spacing of letters, formation of punctuation marks, digits 0–9 and capital letters. Children who still have not mastered correct letter formation will have additional handwriting practise.

Year 2: Children will initially be assessed on letter formation, with targeted interventions to address any difficulties using units 2-5 of the Little Wandle programme. The Year 2 programme teaches children when and how to join letters. They are taught precisely, focusing on the correct starting point, height and smooth join. Penguin Land provides children with visual support to help them with the two types of joins: diagonal and horizontal joins. In Little Wandle Handwriting, the following letters are break letters and should not be joined to the following letter: b, g, j, p, q, x, y, z. Capital letters are also written separately and are not joined to the following letter.

Expectations for KS2

Write Well's four stages are split into discrete modules that take the form of eleven pupil books. These offer clear guidance and progression. In KS2, children will be assessed at the start of the year. Those that are ready, will begin to use The Write Well units from Stage 3 onwards. Children in KS2 will progress onto each stage once each stage is complete. For children who have not mastered correct letter formation by the time they leave KS1 will need to use Stage 2

Stage 3 (The joins): This is the most detailed stage, in which children are systematically introduced to the basic diagonal and horizontal joins. Throughout this stage, children also build confidence by using joins to join longer words and to develop a consistent joining style.

Stage 4: Once joining is secure, the focus shifts to developing a personal style that is fast, fluent and legible and can be adapted for different purposes and tasks. Children are encouraged to adopt a slanted style and to experiment with changes to their joined style, such as looping.

Teaching Approach

- Handwriting lessons will be conducted regularly, with a minimum of four sessions per week for KS1 and up to three sessions per week in KS2, each lasting 15-20 minutes.
- In Reception, handwriting will be taught in smaller groups after the phonics lesson following the Little Wandle Handwriting lesson structure.
- Handwriting will be taught through direct, explicit instruction, including modelling by teachers followed by guided practise in Phonics/Handwriting books or in the back of children's English books.
- At the start of each English writing lesson, children will practice letter formation.
- Teachers will incorporate warm-up activities to prepare children's hands for writing in both English writing lessons and in Handwriting lessons.
- Teachers and support staff will consistently model good handwriting in all written communication, including marking and displays. Printed in Reception and KS1 so that children can see accurate letter formation and cursive in KS2.

Posture, Paper Position, and Pencil Grip

Correct Sitting Position: Feet flat on the floor, knees at 90 degrees, and back supported by the chair.

Paper Position: Correct tilt and placement of around 20 - 30° for both righthanded and left-handed children.

Non-Writing Hand: Encourage the non-writing hand to hold and steady the paper. Use the left hand to steady the paper. For left handers, use the right hand to steady the paper.

Pencil Grip: Promote the tripod grip as the recommended method. Children should write with a pencil (or pen when ready) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil for right handers. Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point. The hand should be kept below the writing line.

It is very important that a right-handed child is NOT seated on the left-hand side of a left-handed child as their elbows will collide!

We use the 'P Checks' with pupils in KS2. This is to help focus staff and pupils on important features of the physical writing process and establish good practice.



Inclusion, Adaptations, and Intervention

Children with Special Educational Needs may experience difficulties making good progress in their handwriting development. They may need additional support with their fine motor development, pencil grip or letter formation. The class teacher will liaise with the Inclusion Team to put into place the most appropriate form of support.

- Specific strategies to assist left-handed learners.
- Teachers will provide resources and support for children with motor control difficulties, dyspraxia, or dysgraphia.
- Teachers will provide a use of pencil grips, slanted boards, and other resources to support handwriting development.
- Implement interventions for children experiencing specific handwriting difficulties.

Assessment, Monitoring, and Feedback

- Regular monitoring of handwriting progress will be conducted.
- Handwriting will be assessed based on letter formation, spacing, consistency in size, correct joins, and fluency using the Little Wandle Assessment guidance at the end of each unit.

- Live feedback using green pen, focusing on strengths and areas for improvement.
- Teachers in Reception and KS1 to stop and reteach letters where less than 90% of children have mastered correct letter formation.
- Live feedback on letter formation should be a priority in all lessons.

Standards for Written Presentation

Handwriting is to be completed in a writing practise book in Reception with the picture of the grapheme stuck in for children to trace with their finger. Handwriting will be completed in the back of English Books or a handwriting book that has standard lines. It is expected that standards of handwriting will be consistent in all areas of the curriculum and seen in all books.

Resources

- Teachers will implement the Little Wandle Handwriting and the Write Well programme, following the guidance and progression of skills.
- Teachers will make sure that each child has their own sharp pencil and that pencils are sharp, where appropriate special handwriting pencils and pencil grips.
- **Teachers to model using** lined paper or the handwriting repeater website https://www.handwritingrepeater.org/ using the lined background.
- **Visualisers** will also be used in lessons to demonstrate handwriting.
- *See **Appendix 1 and 2** for letter formation and joins.*

Engaging Parents and Carers

- Teachers will provide information about handwriting expectations and styles through dojo posts and parent meetings.
- Teachers will offer guidance on how parents can support their children's handwriting practice at home.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The handwriting policy will be monitored by the writing lead and senior leadership team. The policy will be reviewed annually by the writing lead, with revisions made as necessary based on feedback and assessment outcomes.

Next review date September 2027

Appendix 1 – Little Wandle Letter formations:

Little Wandle Handwriting

WriteWell

Unit 2: Curly letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Curl around the cat.
	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
	Around the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
	Around the goat's face and curl under its chin.
	All around the octopus.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Around the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end.
	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.
	Down the snake from head to tail.
	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.

Unit 3: Long letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down the lollipop stick.
	Down the iguana and dot the leaf.
	Down the tiger and across its neck.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down the jellyfish and dot its head.
	Down and around the umbrella and back to the ground.
	Down, around the yo-yo and curl around the string.

Unit 4: Bouncy letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.
	Down, up and over the net.
	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down the bear's back, up and around its tummy.
	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
	Down, up and over the helicopter.

Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
	Down and up and down and up the waves.
	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again, across the box to the bottom.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.
	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.

Little Wandle Handwriting

WriteWell

Appendix 2 – Write Well Joining guidance:

There are two main types of join – **diagonal joins** and **horizontal joins**. These basic joins are divided into three sub-groups to distinguish between joining to letters with different starting points and formations.

Diagonal joins

- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to short straight letters and letters with descenders (starting at the short letter height) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**



- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**



- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**



Horizontal joins

- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to short straight letters (starting at the short letter line) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**



- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**



- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**



Some letters (e.g. **e, s, r, f**) require a variation on these joins and are introduced separately.

Break letters (letters that do not join to the next letter) are letters that finish with a descender (**y, g, j, q**), letters that finish on the left (**s, x, b, p**) and the letter **z**.

(Note: Optional joins from break letters are introduced in **Stage 4** to aid speed or as a stylistic choice.)