



Weston Schools Federation

Handwriting Policy 2025-2027

Date of last review: September 2025 Date of next review: September 2027



Rationale:

At Weston Schools Federation, we recognise handwriting as a fundamental element of pupils' overall writing development and a key contributor to their success across the curriculum. We are committed to ensuring that every child develops fluent, legible and confident handwriting in line with national expectations and evidence-based practice.

Handwriting is prioritised because it forms the foundation of pupils' ability to express ideas clearly and effectively. The Department for Education's *Writing Framework (2025)* emphasises that transcription skills, handwriting and spelling must become automatic to free pupils' working memory for higher-level composition, enabling them to write more fluently and construct meaningful ideas.

For these reasons, Weston Schools Federation places handwriting as a school-wide priority to ensure that all pupils:

- Develop fluency, legibility and stamina as writers
- Access the full curriculum without handwriting creating barriers
- Build strong foundations from EYFS through Key Stage 2
- Are prepared for the increasing academic demands of later schooling

Aims:

At Weston Schools Federation, we believe that children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. When handwriting presents a barrier, it limits fluency and can inhibit both the quality and quantity of work produced across the curriculum. We therefore aim for handwriting to become an automatic skill requiring minimal effort, helping reduce cognitive load so that pupils can focus their creative and physical energy on the content of their writing, rather than the act of writing itself.

We are committed to supporting any child who has trouble with handwriting in line with this policy, making adaptations where necessary and providing targeted intervention as appropriate.

In EYFS and Year 1, we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Systematic Synthetic Phonics Handwriting programme. Little Wandle provides a clear and evidenced-informed sequence for developing early letter formation, including pattern work, lower-case and capital letter formation, and application in words and digraphs. From Year 2 through to Year 6 we follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme (Oxford University Press), a structured whole-school progression programme.

At Weston Schools Federation, we aim for:

- Pupils to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed, developing automaticity through structured progression.
- Pupils to develop handwriting skills progressively, producing legible writing at each stage of development.
- Pupils to establish an effective and comfortable pencil grip, in line with good-practice guidance from the National Handwriting Association.

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- Pupils to understand correct starting points for all letters, acknowledging that most letters begin at the top, apart from *d* and *e*, which begin in the middle.
- Pupils to form letters correctly, understanding size, orientation, and the relationship between upper- and lower-case letters.
- Pupils to produce legible handwriting that can be joined by the end of KS1, following Nelson’s sequenced introduction to joins.
- Pupils to appreciate the importance of clear and neat presentation to communicate meaning effectively across the curriculum.
- A consistent, high-quality approach to handwriting and presentation throughout the school, with all staff modelling accurate and fluent handwriting in books, on whiteboards, displays and learning resources.

EYFS Provision and Progression:

The Early Learning Goal for the Foundation Stage Profile (2020) states:

Children at the expected level of development will:

Physical Development – Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

Literacy – Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Within Early Years, there is a strong emphasis on the development of both gross and fine motor skills. The Early Years team ensure that fine and gross motor skills are planned for in every area of the curriculum.

Throughout Reception, children experiment with the concept of clockwise and anticlockwise, using large equipment and gross motor movements. This develops hand-eye coordination and helps support control of a variety of writing tools. Children are given the opportunity to mark make using large sugar paper, large pens, chalk, shaving foam, sand and water etc.

All learning is carefully planned to ensure that children are given daily opportunities to develop fine motor skills. Opportunities to mark make, use tweezers, threading, lacing, nuts and bolts, wind-up toys and puzzles are carefully planned according to need. Cutting skills are explicitly modelled and taught.

Children are taught to form letters using the Little Wandle mnemonics. Children are given access to the writing tools that are differentiated to their ability or needs. For example, some children will practise letter formation on whiteboards and others may continue to practise in the many writing opportunities found within the environment.

In Reception, pupils participate in Little Wandle Handwriting lessons at least 4 times a week for fifteen minutes. These lessons are structured following the

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Little Wandle lesson structure and unit guidance. Little Wandle Handwriting lessons in Reception focus on:

- correct pencil grip
- correct starting point for each letter
- letter formation and orientation
- families of letters
- capital letters
- reinforcing the link between letters and sounds.

The correct formation of lower-case letters is the key priority for our pupils in Reception. Lower-case letter formation is taught in letter families. It is then practised again when capital letters are introduced and further embedded later in the year by practising with digraphs and trigraphs.

The emphasis in Early Years is to enable children to form all letters correctly, knowing exactly where each letter should start and where it should end. Correct letter formation will be modelled by all teaching staff during whole class learning and will be displayed around the classroom.

Key Stage One

In Key Stage One, all pupils participate in whole class handwriting sessions at least four times a week, for 15 minutes. All pupils will use a formal handwriting book with designated guidelines to follow on from the Little Wandle Handwriting Practice Workbooks that they used in Reception.

The National Curriculum (2014) sets out the following aims for Key Stage One:

In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught:

- how to hold a pencil/pen
- to write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
- to start and finish letters correctly
- to form letters of regular size and shape
- to put regular spaces between letters and words
- how to form lower- and upper-case letters
- how to join letters

Year 1

The National Curriculum (2014) sets out the following objectives for the teaching of handwriting in Year 1:

Pupils should be taught to:

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- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

In Year 1, pupils participate in Little Wandle Handwriting lessons at least 4 times a week for fifteen minutes. These lessons are structured following the Little Wandle lesson structure and unit guidance. Handwriting lessons build on the foundations laid in Reception and progresses to focus on:

- consolidation of letter formation
- sizing and spacing of letters
- formation of punctuation marks and digits 0–9
- practice linked to phonics.

When children start in Year 1, they will continue to practise the formation of lower-case and capital letters. This will continue throughout the year until children are forming all letters correctly in preparation to start joining.

In the Summer term, those children who are confident at forming letters accurately, will start by looking at how digraphs are joined. Each digraph is taught as a stand-alone grapheme, and children will be given opportunities to practise writing it individually and within words.

Correct letter formation will be modelled by teaching staff during whole class learning and will be displayed around the classroom. Teaching staff will ensure that any misconceptions in letter formation are addressed and corrected as soon as possible.

Year 2

The National Curriculum (2014) sets out the following objectives for the teaching of handwriting in Year 2:

Pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

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In Year 2 the pupils participate in handwriting lessons at least four times a week for 15 minutes. These sessions follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and are structured in the following way:

- Each teaching session begins with reminders about physical preparation, getting ready to write, seating and posture, and encouragement to sit up straight.
- A 5 minute 'Warm Up' follows, developing hand and finger strength using specific exercises, games and resources selected from Nelson Handwriting Scheme.
- Teachers then model the weekly handwriting focus as outlined in Long-Term Planning.
- Pupils then have time (10 minutes) of independent practise in a calm environment.

Pupils use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines and written examples and models written by teaching staff.

In the Autumn term, children learn, consolidate and re-cap:

- How to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- They re-cap lower case letters in the correct direction
- Re-cap starting and finishing in the right place.
- Pupils also consolidate their handwriting practice to form capital letters and digits 0-9.

In the Spring term, pupils are taught which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways).

In the second half of Spring term pupils begin forming diagonal joins and horizontal joins using these sets. The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters:

In the Summer term the four joins and the following are reviewed:

- Break letters are the 8 letters after which no join is made.
- Joins are not made to or from the letter z b g j p q x y z.
- Capital letters and numerals are never joined.

In Year Two, children will continue to practise the joining of both digraphs and trigraphs. They will continue to practise these both individually and within words. As the year progresses, children will practise joining common exception words within their handwriting sessions. Once children start to join confidently during handwriting sessions, they will then be expected to join digraphs, trigraphs and common exception words that have been taught in their writing across all areas of learning.

Correct letter formation will be modelled by teaching staff during whole class learning and will be displayed around the classroom. Teaching staff will ensure that any misconceptions in letter formation are addressed and corrected as soon as possible.

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Key Stage 2

Year 3 and 4

The National Curriculum (2014) sets out the following objectives for the teaching of handwriting in Year 3 and 4:

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency, and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).

In Year 3 and 4, pupils participate in handwriting lessons at least three times a week for 15 minutes. These sessions follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and are structured in the following way:

- Each teaching session begins with reminders about physical preparation, getting ready to write, seating and posture, and encouragement to sit up straight.
- A 5 minute 'Warm Up' follows, developing hand and finger strength using specific exercises, games and resources selected from Nelson Handwriting Scheme.
- Teachers then model the weekly handwriting focus as outlined in Long-Term Planning.
- Pupils then have time (10 minutes) of independent practise in a calm environment.

Children in Year 3 will each be given a handwriting book. Children in Year 4 who need extra support with handwriting, will also have access to a specific handwriting book to help pupils to develop correct letter formation.

Joins are explicitly modelled in whole class learning and errors in joining are corrected by teaching staff at the point of misconception or during pupil conferencing sessions.

Using the joins they have learnt in Key Stage One, pupils will be expected to join all words in a sentence across all areas of learning. Joins will be reinforced during weekly spelling rule lessons.

Correct letter formation will be modelled by teaching staff during whole class learning and will be displayed around the classroom. Teaching staff will ensure that any misconceptions in letter formation are addressed and corrected as soon as possible.

Year 5 and 6

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The National Curriculum (2014) sets out the following objectives for the teaching of handwriting in Year 5 and 6:

Pupils should be taught to:

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Year 5 and 6 are expected to join handwriting fluently. After assessing pupils handwriting, they will only continue with practise 3 times a week if necessary.

Pupils who require this additional practice will recap handwriting strokes previously taught and learn to recognise letters which should or should not be joined.

Correct letter formation will be modelled by teaching staff during whole class learning and will be displayed around the classroom. Teaching staff will ensure that any misconceptions in letter formation are addressed and corrected as soon as possible.

Supporting the process of handwriting

Right and left-handed support:

- The left hand should be used to steady the paper for right handers with the paper placed to the right, slightly tilted to the left.
- Paper should be tilted to the right for left handers with the right hand used to steady the paper.
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of their partners where possible.
- All handwriting should be modelled to the class with a right-hand example as well as a left-hand example by the teacher using a flip chart or 'drawing in the air' with the hand.

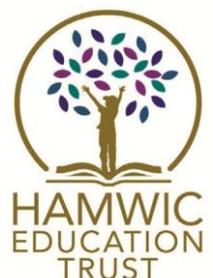
Support strategies, resources and adaptations:

Where a pupil struggles to physically grip their pencil or form the required movements to form letters correctly, support will be given and resources should be adapted. It may be more effective for a pupil to consolidate on their use of print until clear and legible as the introduction of joins may be unnecessary.

The agreed school pencils should be replaced with triangular pencils to enable pupils who require extra support with their pencil grip to hold a pencil correctly.

Pencil grips and tools should be selected appropriately for pupils with significant difficulty mastering an effective pencil grip. These should be chosen with guidance from the school SEND team and should be made available during all teaching sessions and areas of the curriculum.

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Pupils who struggle to form letters in the correct direction and orientation should receive additional modelling of the letter formation and be given further opportunities to practise the movement in the correct direction 'in the air' with their finger or writing the letter on their palm with their finger. They should then trace over patterns and letters shapes in order to gain confidence and 'muscle memory' in order to attempt the written form independently in a handwriting book.

Lined paper should be chosen in relation to the current ability of the pupil to form letters of the appropriate size and in accordance with the pupil's speed of writing. A pupil may make more effective progress using larger lines and can therefore be given different handwriting books and core / foundation books to support this.

Teaching staff can select the most appropriate focus resource sheets for a pupil and may decide to take further time to consolidate upon pupil's letter formation using the Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds letter formation sheets used in EYFS and Year 1.

Pupils may be given additional resources and handwriting packs to practise at home in replacement of other home learning, where appropriate. These packs should be discussed and made in consultation with parents and the SEND team.

Teaching staff should discuss significant needs with the SEND team and should act upon any advice given by outside agencies for pupils with an EHCP.

Assessment of Handwriting

When assessing the quality and effectiveness of children's handwriting teachers should question:

- Is the writing legible?
- Are letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are capital letters taller than lower case letters?
- Are joins made correctly?
- Are spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is size of writing appropriate?

Children are observed closely as they write. The teacher and LSA circulates, monitors and intervenes at the point of misconception. Support or further scaffolding is then given when pupils are unable to fully access the handwriting taught within a session independently.

Handwriting outcomes are assessed mainly using verbal feedback which happens 'live' within the lesson. We emphasise re-modelling of the written form by teaching staff where misconceptions or incorrect formation is evident.

It is important that incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation are identified and corrected at the point it occurs.

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Handwriting Progression of Knowledge and Skills – Sequence of Teaching

Reception

Following Little Wandle Handwriting



We aim for the children to:

- use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- write their first name correctly, beginning with a capital letter
- form lower case letters using the correct sequence of movements, aided by the Little Wandle mnemonics
- form capital letters in the correct direction
- form digits 0-9

Unit 1: Practising patterns

Horizontal lines, Vertical lines, Wavy lines, Circles

Up curves, Down curves, Mixed-height curves, Letter C

Spirals, Crosses, Turrets, Diagonals

Zig-zags, Sideways V, Letter X, Triangles

Unit 2: Curly letter family

c, a, d

g, o, q

e, s, f

Unit 3: Long letter family

l, i, t

j, u, y

Unit 4: Bouncy letter family

m, n, r

b, p, h

Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family

	<p>v, w, x z, k</p> <p>Unit 6: Capital letters Cc, Aa, Dd Gg, Oo, Qq Ee, Ss, Ff Ll, Ii, Tt Jj, Uu, Yy</p>
<p>Year 1 Following Little Wandle Handwriting</p> 	<p>We aim for the children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • begin to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place • form capital letters correctly • form digits 0 to 9 correctly • understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these <p>Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review</p> <p>Teach lower-case letter formation Teach the lower-case letters in families Teach capital letters Review lower-case letters alongside capitals</p> <p>Assess and review lower-case and capital letters as needed</p> <p>Practise letter formation in digraphs and trigraphs Practise letter formation in words</p>

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	<p>Unit 7: Digraphs and trigraphs ff, ll, ss zz, ck, qu ch, sh, th ng, nk, ai ee, igh, oa Assess and review oo, ar, or ur, ow, oi ear, air, er plus Assess and review</p> <p>Assess and review all letters as needed</p>
<p>Year 2 Following the Nelson Handwriting Scheme</p> 	<p>We aim for the children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another • start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters <p>Letter families set 1- c o a d g f s q e letter families,</p> <p>Set 2 (i l t j u y) letter families,</p> <p>Set 3 (b h k m n p r) letter families,</p> <p>Set 4 (v w x z)</p>

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capital letters: 'E F H I T L'
capital letters: 'A K M N V W X Y Z'
capital letters: 'B D C G O Q S P R U J'

formation of numbers 1-10

Practising consistent size and height of letters

Trace and write break letters: b p g q y j z x

Diagonal joins ig ar aw

Diagonal joins to the top ef il ck

Form and join from w wa

Horizontal joins oo or

Horizontal joins to the top of wl

Practising joining to the top ai, ay, ey

Practising the join from the letter e ee, ea, ey

Practising joining from the letter i ie, ide, igh

Practising the horizontal join oa, ow, oe

Practising the size and height of letters oo, ue, ew

Practising joining from the letter o oi, ou, oy

Practising capital letters

Practising joining to the letter a ea, ear, ead

Practising joining to the letter r er, ir, ur

Practising the horizontal join ou, out, ow

Practising small letters: same height and size or, aw, au

Practising joining to the letter r ar, air, are

Practising joining to ascenders al, all, alk

	<p>Practising joining from the letter o ot, on, oe</p> <p>Practising printing whole alphabet</p> <p>Practising joining to/from the letter c ice, ace, cel</p> <p>Practising writing the letter g age, dge, nge, gen</p> <p>Practising the diagonal join le, el, al, il</p> <p>Practising the two ways of joining the letter s sh, as, es</p> <p>Practising joining to the letter y ky, hy, ly</p> <p>Practising joining to the letter g ting, ring, king</p> <p>Reviewing the four handwriting joins kn, mb, wr, wh</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter w war, wan, wap</p> <p>Practising correct height and size of letters ily, ely, kly</p> <p>Punctuation I'm, I'll, he's, she's</p> <p>Practising joining to/from the letter i cian, sion, tion</p> <p>Practising joining to/from the letter s less, ness</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter e er, ier, est, iest</p>
<p>Year 3</p> <p>Following the Nelson Handwriting Scheme</p>  	<p>We aim for the children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch) • increase the fluency with which they are able to write what they say <p>Forming descenders accurately sp, spr, pri, pru</p> <p>Forming ascenders accurately al, all, at</p> <p>Practising the diagonal join to a small letter ci, cir, cer, cen</p> <p>Practising the diagonal join to a tall letter mb, imb, umb, amb</p> <p>Practising joining to and from the letter l ale, dle, ele, tle</p>

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	<p>Practising joining to the letter y ly, lly, iky, iny</p> <p>Practising forming the letter s correctly es, ies, ses, eys</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter i ie, in, il, ill</p> <p>Practising spacing between letters ed, ned, hed, ked</p> <p>Practising writing with a slant</p> <p>Practising forming capital letters whole alphabet</p> <p>Practising writing the letter t at the correct height ti, tio, cti, ati</p> <p>Practising spacing letters consistently ew, ev, ex</p> <p>Practising forming double letters correctly ii, ll, tt, rr, nn, mm, cc, oo, dd, ss, ff, ee</p> <p>Practising joining to the letter e he, we, re Practising joining to the letter k ick, uck, ack</p> <p>Practising the second join ch, che, cho, cha, chi</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter e ey, ei, eig</p> <p>Practising the horizontal join ous, mous, ious</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter a ap, ar, an</p> <p>Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ ” , ‘</p> <p>Practising diagonal joins to the letter y ly, ky, ny</p> <p>Practising joining to and from the letter r ure, sure, ture</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter w who, wha, whe, whi</p> <p>Practising forming numerals correctly 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p> <p>Practising writing silent letters wra, wri, kni</p> <p>Practising joining from the letter f fte, fir, fin</p>
<p>Year 4 Following the Nelson Handwriting Scheme</p>	<p>We aim for the children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch) • increase the fluency with which they are able to write what they say

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Practising joining from the letter e eat, eac, ead
Practising joining to and from the letter s ask, asp, ast
Practising writing letters at the correct size and height ried, ries, rief
Practising writing double letters tt, ll, rr, ee
Practising consistency in spacing sce, sca, sci
Practising using a diagonal join un, unn, inn, imm
Practising the horizontal join rep, rem, rea, reo
More practice joining to the letter y ly, ily, ity, ify
Practising speedwriting speedily, quickly, swiftly, briskly
Practising the size and height of letters ous, ious, eous
Practising spacing within words constellation, station, relaxation, education, habitation, nation
Practising joining to and from the letter w owf, owb, owm, owd
Practising joining from the letter m circumnavigate, circumstance, circumvent, circumference
Practising joining to the letter a from the letter w wan, was, wav, wax
Practising using a diagonal joining line ship, ment, ness, less
Practising speedwriting department, ten o'clock, accident and emergency, as soon as possible
Practising joining from the letter i lig, rig, tig, mig
Practise the diagonal join to ascenders al, all, alt, afl
Practising joining to and from the letter f ff, lfs, lfe, ife
Practising joining to and from the letter e rec, red, ved, ves
Practising punctuation . ' ! ?
Practising consistency in forming and joining letters ear, are, rew, new
Practising joining to and from the letter v live, tive, sive, five
Practising break letters bl, pl, gl
Practising speedwriting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten
Practising printing to make a poster Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Year 5 and 6



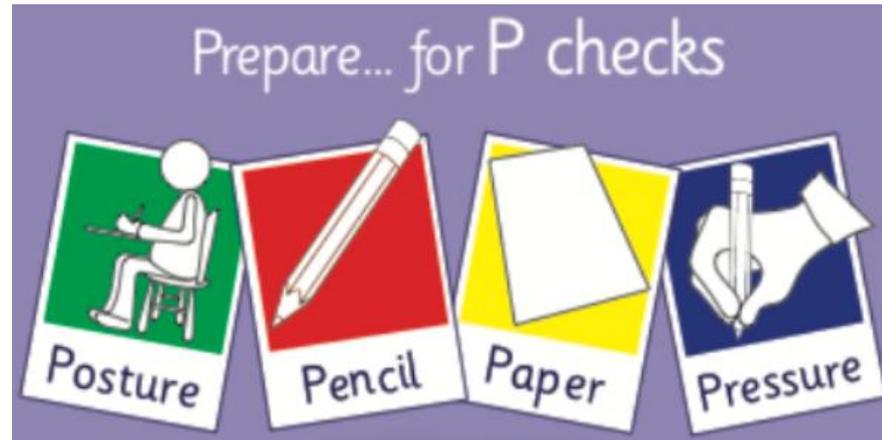
We aim for the children to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Handwriting is not taught in bespoke lessons but is considered in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils should now write legibly, fluently and with increased speed.

Handwriting intervention to be put in place is necessary for some pupils.

Appendix 1 – Good Practice for Handwriting



POSTURE - Poor posture can be a root cause of common handwriting difficulties, resulting in pain or fatigue. It will also present as a reluctance to write, poor presentation or legibility, slow writing speed and reduced output.

PENCIL GRIP - Children and adults use a wide range of different pencil grasps, often because they have not learnt differently or as compensation for postural instability. An inefficient pen/pencil grasp can cause discomfort, impact motivation, fluency and legibility and create difficulty in sustaining speed.

PAPER POSITION - Correct paper position is vitally important during the early years of handwriting development. Bad practice can lead to compensatory strategies, such as a hooked-wrist in left-handers. These behaviours are difficult to remedy in later years.

PRESSURE - When learning to write, pencil pressure is likely to vary depending on the demands of the task and stage of development. Most children will learn through experience how much pressure they should exert through the pencil onto paper. The shape of the writing tool and the way it is held, affects the amount of pressure exerted onto the paper. Trialling a range of pens, pencils and grips can be a good place to start.

Appendix 2

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Signed Chair of Governing Body:

[date]

Signed Headteacher:

[date]

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