



Together we grow, achieve and become R.I.C.H.E.R everyday

Respect, Inclusion, Care, Honesty, Empathy, Resilience

Hawthorn Tree Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Date approved: March 2026

Date of next review: March 2030

Control Sheet

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At Hawthorn Tree Primary School, we recognise the importance of good handwriting as an essential skill in the quest to spell and write fluently, confidently and competently. The ability to write neatly can improve self-esteem and provides a motivating factor to written work. We have high expectations of handwriting at Hawthorn Tree Primary School, and this is taught progressively and linked to Read Write Inc and in-line with the guidance outlined in the Writing Framework.

The policy refers to information outlined in the following documentation:

- The National Curriculum
- Strong Foundation document – Ofsted 2024
- Writing Framework – DFE July 2025

1. Aims

We aim for all children to develop:

- A comfortable, efficient pencil grip
- Fluent, joined handwriting by the end of KS2
- Legible, consistent and appropriately sized writing
- An understanding of when to use different styles (e.g., notes vs published work)
- A positive attitude to presentation across the curriculum

2. Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is taught:

- **Through repeated practice daily**
- **Linked to phonics** in EYFS/KS1
- **Linked to spelling** in KS2
- Through modelling, guided practice and application in writing across the curriculum

Teachers use a range of strategies including demonstration, modelling, verbal explanation, scaffolding, and guided practice.

3. Teaching Practice

- Ensure pupils regularly practise handwriting in every year group to build physical skill, control, fluency, and legibility.
- Routinely model accurate, fluent handwriting during writing lessons so pupils can clearly see how letters and numbers should be formed.
- Reinforce accurate formation of all letters and numbers in every writing task.
- Where possible, link handwriting teaching to spelling patterns to strengthen muscle memory and reinforce phonics/spelling learning.

4. Posture, Grip and Equipment

All pupils are taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, feet flat on the floor, paper tilted appropriately
- Hold a pencil using a tripod grip
- Maintain good control and fluency in movement

Left-handed pupils receive explicit guidance on posture, paper position and letter orientation.

Equipment:

- EYFS/KS1: sharp pencil
- KS2: blue handwriting pen (once secure)
- Rulers used for underlining from Year 3

Working Conditions

- Ensure pupils are seated at a desk or table
- Ensure there is good lighting
- An environment conducive to focused writing

5. Expectations of staff

All adults working with pupils must:

- Consistently uphold high standards of handwriting across the curriculum a
- Model handwriting that aligns with the school's agreed style
- Correct and model to all children the correct letter and number formations

6. Expectations for Presentation

Across all year groups:

- All work must have a **date** on the left-hand side
- **Long date** used for English and most subjects
- **Short date** used for maths
- One line skipped before the title
- Mistakes crossed out with **one neat line**
- Scribbling is never acceptable
- Diagrams and charts drawn in **pencil**, labelled clearly
- Worksheets trimmed and stuck in neatly (without overhang)

7. Assessment

Teachers assess handwriting:

- Against milestones for each year group

- Through observation during lessons
- Using writing across the curriculum
- With focus on posture, grip, fluency, spacing, orientation, joins and consistency

If a child is not meeting expected milestones:

- Teachers adapt teaching
- Additional practice is provided
- Interventions may target fine-motor development
- Concerns are shared with the **SENDCo**

8. Monitoring

Monitoring is carried out by:

- Headteacher
- English / Literacy Lead
- SENDCo
- SLT
- Class teachers (self-monitoring and peer moderation)

Monitoring includes:

- Book looks / work scrutiny
- Lesson observations
- Pupil voice

Inconsistencies must be addressed promptly, with follow-up monitoring to ensure improvements.

9. Year Group Expectations and Milestones

9.1 Reception

Aims

Children will:

- Hold a pencil with an efficient grip
- Write their name correctly
- Form lower-case letters using Read Write Inc. formation phrases
- Form capital letters and digits 0–9 in the correct formation
- Develop early fine and gross motor skills

Letter Families

- Around letters: **c a o d g q**
- Curly letters: **e f s**
- Zigzag letters: **v w x z**
- Down letters: **l t b p k h i j m n r u**

Strategies

Children make the best progress when they experience a range of strategies to practise handwriting, including:

- Tracing
- Copying under teacher writing
- Sky writing
- Modelling with formation phrases
- Handwriting books
- Varied fine-motor activities

9.2 Year 1

Aims

Children will:

- Sit correctly and hold a pencil comfortably
- Form lower-case letters in correct direction
- Form digits 0–9 and capital letters accurately
- Recognise handwriting families and practise them

Letter Families (as above)

Handwriting requires **frequent, discrete and direct teaching**. Pupils should develop accuracy, confidence and consistency in letter formation. Writing implements should be an appropriate size for young children so they can grip them correctly and avoid developing poor habits. Left-handed pupils must receive explicit, tailored guidance to ensure good posture, grip and letter orientation.

9.3 Year 2

Aims

Children will:

- Form lower-case letters of correct size
- Begin using diagonal and horizontal strokes to join
- Understand letters best left unjoined
- Apply correct spacing
- Form capitals and digits of correct size and orientation
- Sit correctly at a table holding the pencil comfortably and with control

Beginning Joins

Pupils will begin forming simple diagonal joins, such as:

- arm → boat
- arm → sun
- arm → sister

Application

- Use correct formations when writing independent words of their own choice.

Handwriting requires **frequent, discrete and direct teaching**. Pupils should develop accuracy, confidence and consistency in letter formation. Writing implements should be an appropriate size for young children so they can grip them correctly and avoid developing poor habits. Left-handed pupils must receive explicit, tailored guidance to ensure good posture, grip and letter orientation.

9.4 Years 3 & 4

Aims

Children will:

- Write using joined handwriting in independent work
- Improve legibility, consistency and quality
- Ensure parallel downstrokes and appropriate spacing
- Maintain fluency and develop writing stamina
- Hold pencil correctly and position paper to aid posture

Beginner joins – as above

Further Joins

- washing line → boat
- washing line → sun
- washing line → sister]

Application

- Form letters **accurately and consistently** during independent writing tasks.

Handwriting is taught in discrete sessions daily. Teaching is closely linked to spelling, and while milestones remain consistent across Years 3 and 4, teachers assess progress each year to ensure secure achievement.

Pupils should be using **joined handwriting** in all independent writing. Handwriting continues to be taught explicitly, with the aim of improving fluency to support composition, spelling, and overall written communication.

9.5 Years 5 & 6

Aims

Children will:

- Maintain fluent, neat and joined handwriting
- Write increasingly quickly without losing legibility
- Develop a consistent personal style
- Decide when to join or not (e.g., diagrams, forms)
- Select appropriate writing implements

- Demonstrate excellent letter and number formation

Understanding Purpose and Presentation

- Recognise the standard of handwriting expected for different tasks, such as:
 - Quick notes
 - Final handwritten versions
 - Work requiring precision and clarity

Appendix A: Handwriting Assessment Rubric (Reception–Year 6)

Scoring Key

- 1 = Emerging
- 2 = Developing
- 3 = Secure
- 4 = Mastery

1. Pencil Grip and Posture

Criteria	Description	Score
Grip	Holds pencil using tripod grip with control	
Posture	Sits with good posture, paper correctly angled	
Pressure	Writes with even, controlled pressure	

2. Letter Formation

Criteria	Description	Score
Lower-case letters	Formed accurately and consistently	
Capital letters	Correct size, shape and orientation	
Ascenders/descenders	Clear, consistent height and length	
Directionality	Letters formed using correct sequences	

3. Size, Spacing and Alignment

Criteria	Description	Score
Size	Appropriate and consistent	
Word spacing	Reflects size of letters	
Line alignment	Writing sits correctly online; parallel downstrokes	

4. Joins (Year 2+)

Criteria	Description	Score
Use of joins	Uses taught joins correctly	
Fluency	Joins consistently, without strain	
Understanding	Knows which letters should/not be joined	

5. Legibility and Fluency

Criteria	Description	Score
Legibility	Writing can be read easily by others	
Speed	Writes fluently without loss of quality	
Personal style (Y5–6)	Consistent and appropriate	

6. Application Across Curriculum

Criteria	Description	Score
Independence	Uses correct handwriting in all subjects	
Adaptation	Adjusts style based on task (notes vs final work)	
Care and pride	Maintains high standard across books	



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