

Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust Framework for Handwriting Policy

Ullesthorpe CE Primary School 2025-26

This document provides a light-touch Trust framework for handwriting. Each school within Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust is required to complete the sections below so that leaders can clearly demonstrate:

- Curriculum intent
- Consistent implementation
- Impact on pupils' outcomes

The Trust does not prescribe a handwriting scheme or approach. Schools are expected to articulate their own practice, ensuring that handwriting provision is clearly understood, consistently applied, and embedded in daily practice.

1. School Context and Handwriting Intent

The Importance of Handwriting within Our Curriculum

Ullesthorpe CE Primary School is a small village of school of 99 pupils. We believe that handwriting is a fundamental skill within our curriculum and it is taught explicitly, systematically, and consistently across the school.

We recognise that fluent, legible handwriting is essential not only for effective written communication but also for supporting pupils' wider learning and academic success. Our intent is for all pupils to develop a fluent, legible, and efficient handwriting style.

Handwriting instruction begins early and builds progressively, ensuring pupils develop correct letter formation, orientation, spacing, and consistency. As pupils move through the school, expectations increase, with a focus on speed, presentation, and stamina while maintaining legibility.

2. Early Writing Preparation and Letter Formation

By securing handwriting skills early, pupils are better able to engage with higher-level writing demands as they progress through the curriculum. Fluent and legible handwriting therefore underpins success across subjects, supporting pupils to demonstrate their learning clearly and effectively.

Pupils are prepared for the early stages of writing in a variety of ways. As well as daily, systematic RWI teaching, other activities to develop fine and gross motor skills may include: funky fingers, mark-making activities in a variety of ways using a variety of mark-making tools. Activities such as threading, block play, playdough and access to a

variety of outdoor gross motor equipment such as building bricks, mud kitchens and large climbing frame equipment to strengthen muscles in hands and fingers.

From EYFS, children are taught expectations for posture, pencil grip and paper placement such as sitting with their back against the chair, angling the paper and ensuring they use their fist to show ideal placement between their bodies and their desk.

In EYFS, children have daily RWI handwriting practise and opportunities are provided for children to be introduced to correct number shapes through maths lessons and resources and also via opportunities in the continuous provision, providing tactile resources and puzzles. We display numbers and number lines visibly in the provision.

Children in Reception are introduced to **Stage 1 of the RWI handwriting programme:**

In stage 1a children practise correct letter formation in handwriting letter groups

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

In stage 1b children learn where to place the letters on the writing line.

3. Progression, Joins and Expectations Over Time

We promote a consistent approach to handwriting across the school, including agreed letter formation, posture, pencil grip, and writing position. This consistency supports pupils in forming secure habits and enables staff to model high-quality handwriting effectively.

EYFS and children beginning Y1 will follow RWI letter formation:

m	a	s	d	t
Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.
i	n	p	g	o
Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.
c	k	u	b	f
Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.
e	l	h	r	j
Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.
v	y	w	z	qu
Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.	Make the shape. Start at the top.
x				
Make the shape. Start at the top.				

For the progression of their handwriting skills, in Year 1 children continue to practise correct letter formation in order to achieve an improved consistency of relative letter sizing, positioning on line, distinction of ascenders and descenders and finger spacing.

At the end of Year 1 or start of Year 2, handwriting joins will be taught according to the systematic RWI sequence:

There are four different joins taught in this order:

1. Diagonal join (the 'arm' join) to letters without ascenders e.g. ai ar un in am ear aw ir hu ti ki du up ag
2. Horizontal join (the 'washing-line' join) to letters without ascenders ou vi wi op ow ov ri ru ve we re fe fu ob ol wh rk rt ot of fl ft
3. Diagonal join to letters with ascenders ab ul it ib if ub th ck ch it
4. Horizontal join to letters with ascenders ol wh ot ft fl of rt rk wh ol ob

By the end of Y2, all letter joins will have been taught and the children should be demonstrating a 'casual cursive' (defined by the *National Handwriting Association* as a combination of joins and pen lifts in handwriting) joined writing style. They should be taught that some letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.

In Y3 and Y4, children will refine their writing, revising the stage 3 joins and ensuring a more fluent 'continuous cursive' (defined by the *National Handwriting Association* as writing joined in a flowing manner) style is adopted whereby the vast majority of letters are joined. They should be taught to increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Y5-Y6 children will continue to practice these skills across all areas of the curriculum. They should progress to writing legibly, fluently and with increasing speed, by choosing whether or not to join specific letters, which letter shapes to use when given choices e.g. lower case letter 'f' shaping, and choosing which writing implement is best suited to the task. They should also be taught that there are situations when an unjoined style is more appropriate, for example, data recording or for algebra, or filling in a form in capitals.

All staff know the policy and progression expectations and these are made clear to children at each stage.

4. Teaching, Practice and Support

Teachers model handwriting explicitly, and pupils are taught to take pride in the presentation of their work.

Handwriting is taught through regular, short, focused sessions that prioritise practice and repetition.

In EYFS handwriting is taught discretely and daily within RWI sessions.

In KS1 handwriting is taught as a discrete session at least twice a week.

In Y3/4 and Y5/6, handwriting is typically taught at least once a week to explicitly model handwriting/joins. This is linked to spelling sessions, so that children can develop "motor memory" or muscle memory, where the hand learns to produce common letter patterns in a single, fluid movement to aid both spelling retention and handwriting.

Handwriting development against the expected milestones is tracked and monitored by teachers and school leaders. Targeted support and intervention are provided where necessary to ensure that all pupils can succeed, including those with additional needs. For example, in KS1 this may consist of extra handwriting practice alongside group phonics sessions. In KS2 this support may become more specific, for example, by joining a handwriting intervention group, by using coloured line guides for independent writing in-class, or bubble writing resources, or a similar handwriting intervention. Adaptive resources such as pencil 'grips' or ergonomic pens/pencils may be used to support children whose handwriting is not yet at age-related expectations.

We recognise that handwriting automaticity plays a crucial role in pupils' wider writing development. When handwriting is automatic, it reduces cognitive load, allowing pupils to focus on learning new content, composing ideas, selecting vocabulary, and applying spelling and grammatical knowledge. This enables pupils to write more fluently, at greater length, and with increased confidence. **Consequently handwriting is an expectation across all subject areas and handwriting in foundation subject books is expected to be of the same quality as seen in core subjects.**

5. Feedback, Assessment and Resources

Errors are identified in pupils' written work and teachers may model in books or ask for certain letter formations / joins to be practised again.

Feedback reinforces correct formation and consistency, helping pupils to refine their skills over time and be aware of consistency of expectations.

Handwriting is assessed along with all our writing standards using the CUSP writing indicators (LA exemplification is used for end of KS2 writing assessment). High emphasis is placed on appropriate levels of handwriting in order for pupils to reach the required standard for their year group. Internal moderation and wider Trust moderation ensures handwriting expectations are shared, maintained and are seen as a high priority.

6. Staff Awareness, Monitoring and Review

Our policy and expectations are shared with staff and all staff are encouraged to be part of the monitoring of handwriting. Regular book studies take place in which aspects such as handwriting are checked for adherence to the policy alongside progression within years and across key stages. Provision is reviewed within moderation meetings and with discussions with the SENDCO regarding in class provision and specific SEND provision.

Changes are made when needed and when specific adaptations are required.

7. Policy Status

Date approved: January 2026

Next review date:

Named lead: Jodie Allen