

Handwriting Policy

Thomas Jolyffe Primary School

To be the best we can be!



Approved by: Ben Phipps

Date: September 2025

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by: September 2026

Intent

At Thomas Jolyffe Primary School, we acknowledge that writing is a challenging and complex process.

We aim to instill a positive attitude towards handwriting, and to support each child to develop a handwriting style which is cursive, joined, and legible. We understand that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards and gives children a sense of ownership of, and pride in, their work. Children are encouraged to take great pride in their presentation and positive reinforcement underpins our teaching of handwriting.

Although we have many opportunities to practise handwriting skills generally across the curriculum, we also provide regular lessons for the specific teaching and revising of these skills. The frequency and length of these lessons varies according to the age and competence of children:

EYFS: Daily handwriting instruction including 'getting ready for handwriting', 'Pre-writing patterns', 'Easy letters and words' and 'Harder letters and words'

Year 1 & 2: a minimum of 30 minutes of handwriting in 10 minutes blocks during the course of the week, each week.

KS2: handwriting skills are taught in a 30- minute session weekly: if teachers feel there has been a slip in handwriting and presentation, more time is allocated to individual children.

Focus children are given extra, follow-up, handwriting practise during morning task time (8:45am until 9:00am). For children who need support with strengthening their fine motor skills in using the muscles in their hands and arms, handwriting intervention takes place twice weekly.

All members of staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supply teachers and students) are provided with appropriate cursive handwriting models and are expected to promote this agreed cursive handwriting style (with the 'lead ins' evident and taught) by their own example when writing in books, on display or on the board. See appendix for example of cursive letter formation.

National Curriculum Requirements - Key Stage 1

The National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 1 for handwriting states that Year 1 children should be taught to:

- 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. Here at Thomas Jolyffe we have added to this that the children start all their letters formation by printing them to prepare them for when they come to join in Year 1 and begin teaching pre-cursive handwriting in Year 2.
- 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. See appendix for handwriting 'families' example.

Year 2 children should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another, again doing this using the 'lead in' and exit 'flick' we have implemented ensures they are easily prepared for joining.

- 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 eg g, j, y, f and q.
- 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.

National Curriculum Requirements - Key Stage 2

The National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 2 for handwriting states that Year 3 and 4 children 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; eg g, j, y, f and q.
- 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 can touch the top of the line and descenders head down towards the line below.

In Years 5 and 6, children 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. For example, when cursive writing is used exceptionally well a handwriting pen maybe used in display work.

Implementation

In the early years, children have access to a range of writing media and experiences and have the opportunity to practise with implements of different size, weight and type in order to develop the necessary skills. Activities might include painting, to develop fine motor skills and imaginative role play areas with a range of writing implements. Meetings are held at the start of each year to enable parents to support their children at home with accurately-formed print handwriting. As children make progress with handwriting skills and are engaged in formal handwriting sessions, pencils should be the only implement used for formal writing sessions.

Posture of having both feet firmly on the floor, sitting up straight, with shoulders down and arm placed in the correct position, rotating from the shoulder when writing and using the tripod grip form part of our teaching methods when teaching handwriting as is modelled by the teacher and TA.

In Key Stage 1, teachers and TAs are expected to frequently model the correct formation of letters to individuals, small groups and the whole class. Observation of children, to check posture, grip of the implement and movement is also crucial. Children are taught to begin letters with a 'lead in' upward stroke and end letters with exit strokes in Year 2, in preparation for joining letters later.

By the end of Key Stage 2, the mechanical process of handwriting should become automatic. Children should be aware of the need to use a sharp pencil, and are allowed to use a clean rubber to erase mistakes. Blue handwriting pen is to be used for display work

only and not until children are confident and competent in using neatly-formed and equally-spaced cursive script. Teachers use a programme called 'LetterJoin' which is used on the IWB to show children how different joins are completed.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils have difficulty with fine motor skills and need additional support. In these cases, a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SENDCo. Thicker triangular pencils, pencil grips and wider lines are used by children experiencing challenges with writing, alongside other activities to develop their fine motor skills.

Teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child, so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Handwriting assessment

In the early stages of handwriting, teachers observe closely to ensure letters are correctly formed, and intervene appropriately. Later, assessments are made against criteria which may include the following:

- Is the writing legible and generally presentable?
- Do tall letters touch the top line?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins correctly made?
- Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of writing appropriate?
- Is the writing correctly aligned?

Student expectations

- Print letters Reception-Year 2.
- Introduce joins from Year 2, optional then becoming an expectation.
 - (formation of lead-ins introduced to children in year 2)
- Capital letters must reach the top of the line, along with b, d, h, k, l
 - t should be slightly taller than other letters, but not necessarily reach the top of the line.
 - All other letters should be consistently sized within the word/sentence, with descenders as needed.
 - Numbers should also reach the top of the line
- Students should use a pencil throughout EYFS and KS1. They can use pen (except Maths) in KS2. This will be at the teacher's discretion through evidence of neat presentation and conversations with the pupil. Pupil's whose presentation regresses may be asked to write in pencil in order to correct mistakes.

Teacher expectations

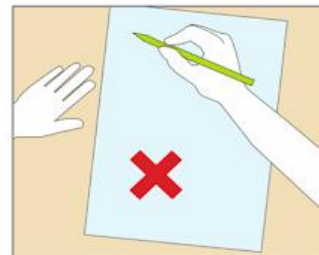
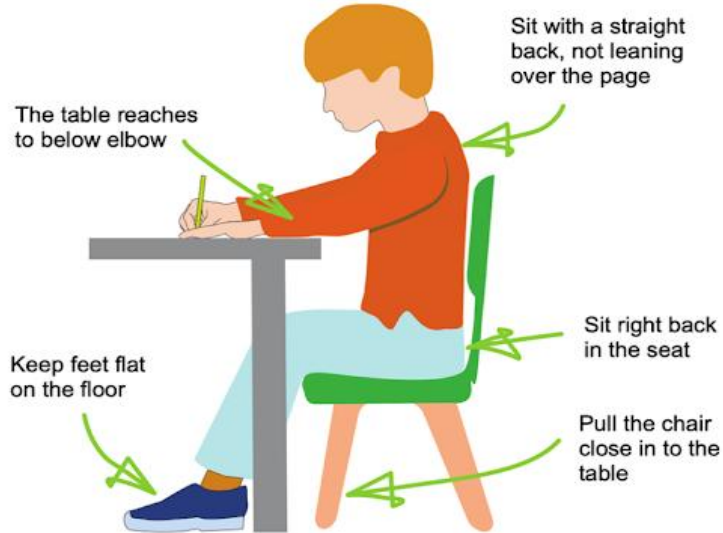
- Handwriting can be taught at any time, when modelling a task.
- Use the **visualiser** and the same line heights that children have, i.e. use the same handwriting book they have.
 - Live modelling is far more valuable than relying on the animations or pre-written fonts
 - Using the visualiser, and tilting the camera, shows the children how you move your pen/hand. It is much more effective than writing on a whiteboard or flipchart.
 - If you need a 'scaffold', live modelling for a student in their book is your best bet, or provide a diagram with arrows.
- Model your writing, thoughts and reflections - what is good about your writing? What could be improved? *Example: I have noticed my "o" is going below the line.* Make deliberate mistakes and reflect on these together. Support students to reflect on their own handwriting, e.g. through circling their best letter and giving peer feedback
- Make the practise purposeful, e.g. asking them to write just 3 letters/words after modelling
- Focus on the letters and joins they need with careful word choices - e.g. Common Exception Words, recently taught vocabulary, or engaging 'silly' sentences.
- Float around the room and give students feedback while they are doing handwriting, both positive and constructive. Give live corrections. Try and see everyone in the act of writing over the course of each week.
- Make handwriting valued and give it a good status: show great work and great progress under the visualiser, for example, and make a point of expecting good handwriting in their work across the curriculum
- Teach a mature grip (e.g. tripod) and support those who need further work on developing their grip
- Provide a clear and regular progression from letter/join, to word(s), to full sentences in your sessions

Do not:

- *Only* teach handwriting as an intervention: everyone needs it
- Use it as a morning/busy work activity - the children will not have the right modelling or the right kind of feedback
- Ask them to write endlessly without purpose, e.g. a whole line of a letter or word

Appendix:

SITTING POSITION




Paper position for right-handed children.

Pencil Hold - Left-handed	Pencil Hold - Right-handed
<p>Wrist bent.</p> <p>Pencil lies across hand.</p> <p>Holding fingers face each other with a bit of colour in between.</p> <p>Resting fingers make a base.</p> <p>Pillow finger underneath.</p> <p><small>© Copyright Margaret Wilkinson and David Wilson 2014</small></p>	<p>Pencil lies across hand.</p> <p>Wrist bent.</p> <p>Holding fingers face each other with a bit of colour in between.</p> <p>Pillow finger underneath.</p> <p>Resting fingers make a base.</p> <p><small>© Copyright Margaret Wilkinson and David Wilson 2014</small></p>

Numbers

0 1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8 9

Letter-join  Joined-up handwriting made easy – www.letterjoin.co.uk

+ - × ÷ =

() # % &

@ / £ \$ €

Capital Letters

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

Printed Lowercase letters:

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z

Cursive Lowercase Letters:

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z