



Nurtured we thrive

Handwriting Policy

Compassion, Responsibility, Justice, Forgiveness

Member of Staff Responsible	Miss N Saunders
Position	Early Writing Lead
Dated	September 2025
Date of next review	September 2027

Aims

To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.

To write legibly in with increasing fluency and speed by;

- Having a correct pencil grip
- Knowing the size and orientation of letters
- Forming all letters correctly
- Knowing that all cursive letters start from the line

Teaching Time

It is recommended that children have regular handwriting practise. At Thurnham Church of England Infant School handwriting will be taught daily. Handwriting will be modelled on the writing book paper by teaching staff in each handwriting writing session. Children who find handwriting difficult will be targeted for regular intervention.

Handwriting in EYFS is part of Little Wandle Phonics teaching. It is covered through Stages 1 and 2 below.

National Curriculum Guidance

Stage 1:

Pre-writing development:

Posture and Postural Control -

In order to write a child needs to be able to keep their balance when sitting without using their hands to support themselves. They need to have strong control of their core muscles, their trunk and their shoulder muscles in order to be able to reach forward in a controlled manner.

When sitting on a chair, the child's feet should be flat on the ground, their bottom should be square in the chair and be right back in the seat with their knees and hips being bent to approximately 90°. The desk should be just above the height of the child's elbows. The paper should be tilted to the side rather than straight on in front of the child (for RH children the page should be closer to their right hand and tilted to the left, for LH children the page should be closer to their left hand and tilted to the right).

Signs of poor postural control include: fidgeting constantly, wrapping feet/legs around the chair, sliding forward in their seat, leaning to the side, leaning forwards onto the desk, resting their head on the desk, using their arms to prop themselves up, keeping their arms pressed into their sides.

A sloping board can support a child who leans, this may also help wrist position.

Activities to improve postural control include: playing on large equipment like swings, obstacle courses including crawling and climbing, playing with balls/beanbags while sitting, kneeling, squatting, freeze games where a child needs to stop quickly, rolling out dough with a rolling pin and using cutters to shape dough, hand prints, cleaning tables, painting on large easels/walls, chair press ups or wall sitting.





Fine Motor Skills including Developing Finger Strength, Grasp, Pincer Movement –

A child needs to have a well-developed hand use, grasp and fine motor skills in order to manipulate and control a pencil accurately. Signs that this is developed effectively include that they are able to grasp objects with their whole hand, manipulate objects by turning them over and moving them over their fingers, pick up small objects using a pincer grip (tips of thumb and index finger), pick up object and manipulate them using a tripod grip (thumb, index and middle fingers).

There are four main grasps that a child will likely progress through including: Palmar Supinate Grasp, Digital Pronate Grasp, Static Tripod Grasp and the Dynamic Tripod Grasp. A child will need to be able to use either the Static Tripod or the Dynamic Tripod Grasp in order to write.

This means that they:

- Hold the pencil between the tips of the thumb, index and middle fingers

			
1-1½ years Palmar Supinate Grasp	2-3 years Digital Pronate Grasp	3½-4 years Static Tripod Grasp	4½-6 years Dynamic Tripod Grasp

- Hold the pencil in a relaxed way without too much pressure being applied
- The pencil rests on the hand between the thumb and the index fingers (on the webspace)
- The webspace gap should be rounded and open like a circle
- The ring and little fingers are held away from the pencil and lightly bent into the palm.

Should they find it difficult to correct their grip, pencil grips may help.

Activities to support the pencil grip development includes playing tiddlywinks, sorting coins, playing connect four, placing clothes pegs or bulldog clips around a container, picking up small objects using tweezers, threading beads, picking up cards, filling a dropper with paint and dropping it out, playing with a triggered water gun, using sticker, popping bubble wrap, making paper clip chains, colouring with very short crayons (cannot use a whole hand grip on this).

Activities to improve fine motor control include: building blocks, lacing or threading, puzzles, marbles, keyboard activities, origami, using a pegboard to develop a pattern, sewing and weaving activities, chopping, peeling and cooking activities, woodworking including using pliers, screwdrivers and hammers, Finger rhymes, counting using fingers, play with small construction toys, sand and water play including sieving, pouring, picking up things using tools, tweezers to pick up beads, pom poms etc., finger painting, clay and playdough for modelling, tracing.

Stage 2:

Learning to print:

Letters are modelled and taught alongside the phonetic order.

Children are offered a regular choice of implements that vary shape, size and colour.

Children often use a triangular pencil and are guided in using a tripod grip in regular writing practice.

At this stage, developing and maintaining Gross-Motor, Fine-Motor and Core strength is essential for the continued improvement of handwriting.

Year 1 Handwriting

Pupils 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
- 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.

It is covered through Stages 3 and 4 below.

Stage 3:

Pre-cursive Introduction:

Posture –

Pupils should be taught

- how to sit correctly (bottom back in the seat, square in the chair, feet flat on the floor)
- how to hold a pencil both comfortably and correctly
- forearms on the table
- non-writing hand supporting the paper
- 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.

Pupils' writing during year 1 will generally develop at a slower pace than their reading. This is because they need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), **develop the physical skill needed for handwriting**, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.

Stage 4:

Cursive Introduction:

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.

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

A child is only ready to start learning to join their handwriting when:

- They have learnt to form all 26 lower-case letters correctly using pre-cursive.
- Letters are of a consistent and suitable size (not necessarily the perfect size, remember big is beautiful).
- Letters are positioned appropriately on the writing line as well as in relation to one another.

Year 2 Handwriting

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 printed.
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters

It is covered through Stages 5 and 6 below.

Stage 5:

Cursive Rehearsal:

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 un-joined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. 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

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Joined handwriting should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.

Stage 6:

Cursive Mastery:

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, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters
 - choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an un-joined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form).

To have mastered cursive handwriting at Thurnham, pupils need to be able to:

- All letters are formed correctly with clear descenders and ascenders which are consistent in size. Handwriting is neat, joined and legible.
- All capital letters and lower-case letters are clear and used correctly. Letters are joined appropriately.
- All letters are written on the line with a regular space between words.
- Punctuation is the correct size in relation to the text.
- The writer writes with good pace.
- Titles use capital letters correctly.
- All written work starts from the margin.
- Any mistakes are rubbed out neatly or crossed out with one neat line.

Year Group Aims

Although each child should be treated as an individual (and will, therefore, need to work at their own stage) we recognise that the majority of the children in a year group will be working at roughly the same point. The following are guidelines and expectations for each year group.

EYFS

In Early Years, the emphasis is on recognising and recording each letter. Pupils are taught phonics and shown print letter formation. They are taught to hold a pencil in a comfortable grip and how to sit appropriately to write. Following the whole school scheme, they are taught to form individual letters in print and they are introduced to the idea of exercising control over the size of letters and the spacing between letters and words. As children are ready they are introduced to the seven early handwriting patterns, this continues into Year 1.

Year 1

Continue the early 7 seven handwriting patterns as required, see Write from the Start resources. Children are introduced to pre-cursive writing and are explicitly taught the basic leading in and out lines for each letter. Letters are taught in families of like-formed letters: curly caterpillar letters (c, a, d, g, q, e, s, f, o), ladder letters (l, I, t, j, y, u), one armed robot letters (r, b, n, h, m, k, p) and zigzag monster letters (v, w, x, z). and are encouraged to start writing in a pre-cursive script on a line as soon as they are able to. Children should be taught to name and write the capital letters.

Year 2

Children are introduced to joining letters and are explicitly taught how to join basic letters, continuing to follow the letter families and formation rules.

By the end of Year 2

All children are expected to be writing in a legible, cursive script.

Handwriting statements in the End of Key Stage 1

Working Towards the Expected Standard

- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another in some of their writing

Expected Standard















- Form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters















Greater Depth Standard













- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some letters.













Teaching Sequence

We follow the Little Wandle teaching sequence for letter formation, starting in Term 1 of Year R.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 s	 snake	Show your teeth and let the s hiss out ssssss	Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
 a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the a sound at the back of your mouth aaa	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
 t	 tiger	Open your lips, put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press ttt	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.
 p	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say ppp	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
 i	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the i sound at the back of your mouth iii	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leg) at the top.
 n	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the nnnnn sound nnnnn	Down the stick, up and over the net.
 m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the mmmm sound mmmm	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 d	 duck	Put your tongue to the top and front of your mouth and make a quick d sound ddd	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
 g	 goat	Give me a big smile that shows your teeth, press the middle of your tongue to the top and back of your mouth, push your tongue down and forward to make the g sound ggg	Round the goat's body, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin.
 o	 octopus	Make your mouth into round shape and say ooo	All around the octopus.
 c	 cat	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say ccc	Curl around the cat.
 k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say kkk	Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner.
 ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say ccc	c Curl round the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and across, back and down to the corner. Catchphrase: Rock that sock!
 e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say eee	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 j	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say jjj	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.
 v	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing vvvvv	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 w	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say www	From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.
 x	 box	Mouth open, then push the cs sound through as you close your mouth cs cs (x x x)	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.
 y	 yo-yo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say y without opening your mouth yyy	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.
 z	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the z sound zzzzz	Zip across, zig down and across the zebra.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 u	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say uuu	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.
 r	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a rrrrr sound rrrrr	From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.
 h	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply hhh	Down, up and over the helicopter
 b	 bear	Put your lips together and say b as you open them bbb	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.
 f	 flamingo	Open your lips a little, put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound fff	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.
 l	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little, put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press lllll	All the way down the lollipop.

Year 1

By Year 1, most children should be secure forming individual letters. However, some may still need small group support.

Single letters following similar directions

• c a d g q o

• e s f

• i l t

• u y j k

• r n m

• h b p

• v w x z

The formation of all capital letters and numbers should be taught in Year 1.

Letter formation: Capital letters

Use this document to ensure correct letter formation when you are teaching children to form capital letters.

Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.

Year 2

Lead in and lead out strokes will be taught in Terms 1 and 2, followed by the introduction of the four handwriting joins.

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders

e.g. un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung

2. Diagonal join to letters with ascenders

e.g. ch sh th tl ll ill shi shu ck ack st sti ink

3. Basic horizontal joins

e.g. od re ve oon oom

4. Horizontal joins with ascenders

e.g. nt nt of ff fl flo

Further Y2 Joins

- in ine
- ut ute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s)
- ri ru ry (practising joining from the letter r)
- oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)
- ee ea ed (practising joining from the letter e)
- ow or ox (practising joining from the letter o)
- ky hy ly (practising joining to the letter y)
- ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)
- od oo og (practising joining from the letter o)
- er ir ur (practising joining to the letter r)
- ai al ay
- oy ou oi
- re oe fe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)
- fu fu ru (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)
- ot ol ok (practising joining to ascenders)
- ai al ow ol (practising all the joins)

Recording

Children in Year R will have Clever Fingers sessions and other practical kinaesthetic activities. They will follow the Little Wandle Progression sequence of letters, learning to form letters outside the daily phonics lesson.

As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease. In Year 1 and 2 children will use the new writing books which contain a yellow band for the letters to be formed within. Year 2 progress onto narrow lines with a red band during the year as they are ready.

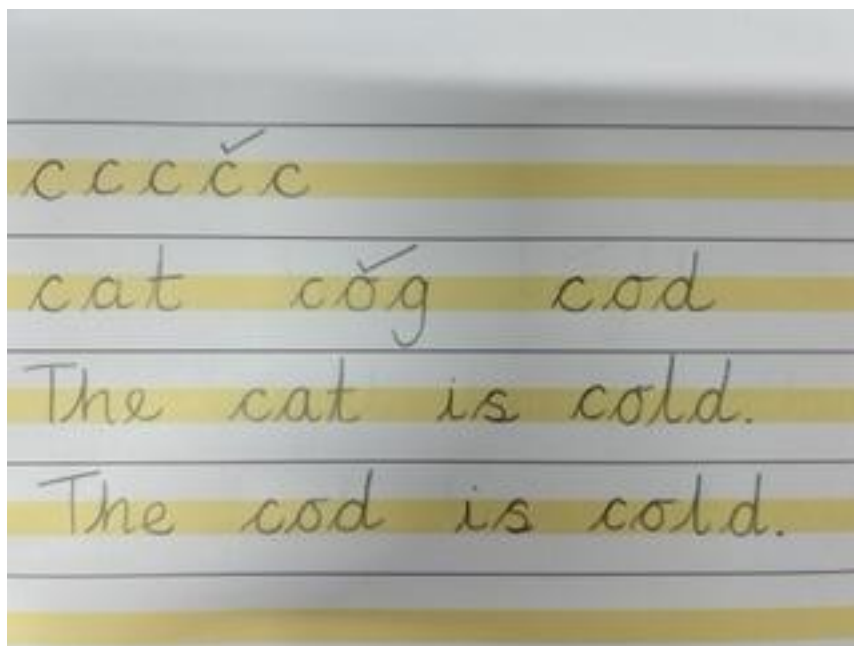
Handwriting lessons to be taught at the rear of the writing books in Years 1 and 2.

The Structure of a Handwriting Lesson

Handwriting lessons will happen for 5 minutes daily in Key Stage 1. In EYFS the children complete Clever Fingers activities and have opportunities within provision for motor development.

It is necessary to teach the skills required so the specific join and focus should be modelled prior to the pupils independently rehearsing the skill.

Year 1 lesson



Line 1: Five of the taught letter then tick above the best.

Line 2: Write the three words and tick the best.

Line 3: Copy the sentence.

Line 4: Fast finishers to write their own sentence.

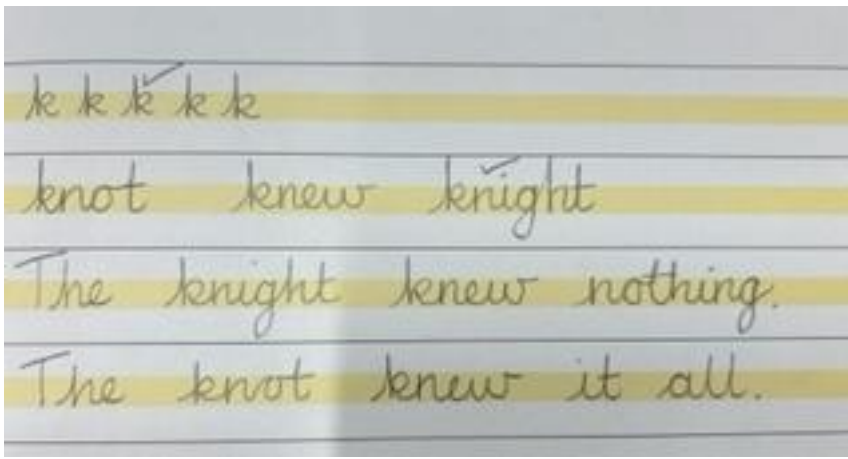
Year 2 lesson

Line 1: Five of the taught letter then tick above the best.

Line 2: Write the three words and tick the best.

Line 3: Copy the sentence.

Line 4: Fast finishers to write their own sentence.



Techniques for Teaching Letter Formation

- Good handwriting and handwriting techniques will be modelled all the time.
- The handwriting process will be talked through and discussed.
- Children will be encouraged to verbalise the process.
- Children will form letters in the air.
- They will use fingers to trace over tactile letters.
- They may write in sand with a finger or stick or write on a chalkboard with chalk.
- Wax resist letters may be used.
- Letters may be formed with pegs on pegboard or with beads in plasticine.
- They may use fingers to trace the outline of letters on the back of another person.

Getting Ready to Write

Seating and posture

- Children must sit up straight, with both feet firmly on the floor.
- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height.
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor.
- Rooms should be well lit.
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

Pencil grip

- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.



Different styles of pencil grips and slope boards are available for those who would benefit from them.

For Right Handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For Left Handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper.

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

Links to Spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting will be practised using letters, digraphs and high frequency words so that patterns are internalised.

Remember to use: **Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check**

Assessment

Class teachers will continually monitor pupil progress in comparison with the age appropriate order of teaching. Examples of handwriting from each year group will be reviewed and discussed at whole school writing moderation.