Handwriting Policy

"Enjoying learning and growing together."



Respect



Persevere



Achieve

Coordinators:	Curriculum and English Lead (ER and SS)
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Vision

At West Denton Primary School, we believe handwriting is a vital communication skill that supports learning across the curriculum. We aim for every child to develop a fluent, legible, joined and confident handwriting style, enabling them to communicate effectively and take pride in their work.

To support this, we follow the **Read, Write Inc. Handwriting scheme in EYFS and Year 1** before progressing to the **PenPals for Handwriting programme in Years 2 to 6**. This provides a clear progression from early mark-making and letter formation through to fluent, joined handwriting. Our approach ensures consistency across the school while meeting the needs of all learners.

Through high expectations, regular practice and effective modelling, pupils develop handwriting that is automatic, efficient and supports the quality of their written composition.

Aims

We aim for all pupils to:

- Develop correct posture and pencil grip.
- Form letters accurately and consistently.
- Understand correct letter orientation and size.
- Progress through the developmental stages of handwriting.
- Develop a neat, legible and joined handwriting style.
- Increase fluency, speed and stamina.
- Take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Apply their handwriting skills across all curriculum subjects.

Our Handwriting Approach

At West Denton Primary School, we follow the Read, Write Inc. Handwriting scheme in EYFS and Year 1 before progressing to the PenPals for Handwriting programme in Years 2 to 6.

The Read Write Inc. (RWI) handwriting approach is designed to teach handwriting alongside phonics, so children learn correct letter formation as they learn letter sounds.

In **Reception**, children:

- Develop gross and fine motor control.
- Engage in mark-making activities.
- Learn how to hold a pencil correctly and sit in the correct writing position.
- Practise pre-writing and pre-cursive patterns.
- Learn each letter using a formation phrase (mnemonic) linked to the phonics sound.
- Practise writing letters in the air, on paper and in handwriting sessions.
- Focus on correct letter formation before worrying about joins.

Examples of RWI handwriting phrases:

- a: "Round the apple, down the leaf."
- b: "Down the laces, over the toe and touch the heel."
- m: "Maisie, mountain, mountain."
- n: "Down Nobby and over his net."
- r: "Down the robot's body, back up and over his arm."

RWI groups letters into formation families, such as:

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

In **Year 1**, children continue to practise accurate letter formation and begin to develop fluency and consistency. They:

- Strengthen pencil control and grip.
- Consolidate correct letter formation.
- Form letters so they will later flow into joined handwriting.
- Learn correct letter size and positioning on lines.
- Use the RWI “jam sponge" system:
- Letters stay in the middle ‘jam’ space (e.g., a, c, e, m, n).
- Letters go below the ‘sponge’ line (e.g., g, j, p, q, y).
- Letters are tall above the ‘sponge line’ (e.g., b, d, h, k, l, t, f).

Once children are secure in their letter formations, they progress to the RWI Letter Village programme, which develops a more mature handwriting style and prepares children for joining.

From **Year 2 onwards**, children will follow the structured and progressive PenPals Handwriting scheme that:

- Teaches handwriting through clearly sequenced stages.
- Links handwriting development with phonics and spelling.
- Supports a smooth progression from printing to joined writing.
- Encourages correct formation from the earliest stages.
- Promotes consistency across all year groups.

Handwriting is taught regularly and explicitly across the school, with opportunities provided for pupils to apply their developing skills in all written work.

Year 2 marks the transition to the PenPals for Handwriting programme. Children begin learning joins systematically and develop a fluent joined style. Pupils will:

- Learn diagonal and horizontal joins.
- Join letters to and from ascenders and descenders.
- Develop consistent letter sizing and spacing.
- Begin using joined handwriting in everyday writing.
- Build confidence, accuracy and fluency.

In **Year 3**, pupils develop greater control and consistency in joined handwriting through the PenPals programme. They will:

- Secure joins through whole words.
- Develop joins involving more complex letter combinations.
- Improve spacing, presentation and legibility.
- Increase handwriting fluency.
- Consolidate the use of capital letters alongside joined writing.

In **Year 4**, pupils focus on improving presentation, consistency and speed. They will:

- Refine joins involving more challenging letter combinations.
- Improve proportion and relative size of letters.
- Develop consistency in spacing.
- Increase writing speed whilst maintaining legibility.
- Embed joined handwriting across the curriculum.

In **Year 5**, pupils develop a more mature and fluent style of handwriting. They will:

- Develop a consistent sloped handwriting style.
- Increase speed and efficiency.
- Maintain legibility in extended pieces of writing.

- Explore how handwriting can be adapted for different purposes and audiences.
- Begin using pen in handwriting books and final published pieces when standards are secure.

In **Year 6**, pupils build automaticity, speed and a personal handwriting style suitable for secondary education. They will:

- Develop fluent and efficient handwriting.
- Use a joined style automatically across subjects.
- Learn when alternative styles such as note-taking, annotation and print are appropriate.
- Refine presentation, spacing and consistency.
- Write confidently in pen across the curriculum.

In **mixed-age classes**, handwriting is taught through a whole-class approach based on a shared learning objective. Rather than teaching each year group separately, all pupils receive the same direct instruction and modelling, with activities differentiated according to pupils' stage of development, level of independence, fluency, accuracy and application. This enables all children to access the same handwriting focus while ensuring appropriate challenge and progression for individual learners.

Inclusion

We recognise that pupils develop handwriting skills at different rates. Appropriate adaptations may include:

- Alternative writing tools.
- Pencil grips.
- Enlarged or modified line guides.
- Additional handwriting intervention.
- Occupational therapy or SEND recommendations.

Where adaptations are required, expectations will be personalised to meet individual needs whilst promoting progress and independence.

Teaching and Learning Expectations

Teachers will:

- Model the agreed handwriting style consistently.

- Provide regular handwriting lessons.
- Reinforce correct formation across the curriculum.
- Address misconceptions promptly.
- Celebrate improvements and high standards of presentation.
- Use the following fonts when creating resources for books and displays:
    - EYFS and Year 1: Sassoon Infant Std
    - Year 2 – Year 6: Twinkl Cursive Unlooped

Handwriting will be modelled through:

- Board work.
- Shared writing.
- Marking and feedback.
- Classroom displays.
- Learning resources.

Presentation Expectations Across the Curriculum

Neat and well-presented handwriting is expected in all written work.

Pupils should:

- Write on the line.
- Use the agreed handwriting style.
- Present work carefully and neatly.
- Take pride in their books and learning.

Exceptions may be made where:

- A specific adaptation is in place.
- A task requires printing, labelling or diagram work.
- Individual SEND needs require an alternative approach.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The English and Curriculum Lead will monitor the implementation of the handwriting policy through:

- Lesson visits.

- Learning walks.
- Book scrutiny.
- Pupil voice.
- Staff discussion.

This ensures that the Read Write Inc. and PenPals Handwriting programmes are implemented consistently and that pupils make strong progress in handwriting throughout their time at West Denton Primary School.