WOOLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

HANDWRITING POLICY

2026–2027

BELIEVE • BELONG • BECOME

Accuracy • Fluency • Confidence • Independence

A consistent, inclusive approach to developing fluent, legible and efficient handwriting for every child.

Document owner	English Subject Leader
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Review cycle	Annual

Believe in every child. Belong to a strong community. Become the best we can be – together.

1. Policy Statement and Rationale

At Woolton Primary School, handwriting is a fundamental life skill and an essential component of writing development. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils develop fluent, legible and efficient handwriting so that they can communicate their knowledge, ideas and creativity confidently.

Handwriting is a transcription skill requiring explicit instruction and systematic practice. When letter formation becomes accurate and automatic, pupils can devote greater attention to spelling, sentence construction and composition.

- Automaticity and independence: pupils can write without concentrating excessively on forming individual letters.
- Writing fluency: pupils can record ideas efficiently while maintaining legibility.
- Confidence and pride: pupils develop positive attitudes to writing and presentation.
- Physical control: handwriting draws upon posture, coordination, fine motor control and pencil control.
- Curriculum access: pupils can communicate learning effectively across subjects.

We recognise that physical readiness develops through core strength, balance, gross and fine motor coordination, posture and pencil control. Our approach combines these foundations with direct instruction and is informed by the DfE Writing Framework (2025).

2. Aims

- Develop clear, legible, fluent and increasingly automatic handwriting for all pupils.
- Foster pride in presentation and written work.
- Ensure consistent, progressive handwriting teaching across school.
- Develop the physical and fine motor skills needed for comfortable writing.
- Establish secure letter formation before introducing joins.
- Reduce the cognitive demands of transcription so pupils can focus on composition.
- Provide responsive support and intervention where handwriting is difficult.
- Promote independent application of handwriting across the curriculum.

3. Handwriting Schemes

EYFS and Year 1 – Read Write Inc.

In EYFS and Year 1, handwriting is taught using Read Write Inc. (RWI) letter formation, consistent with our systematic synthetic phonics programme. Children learn letter formation alongside phonics through familiar visual mnemonics and verbal formation rhymes.

- Consistency: phoneme–grapheme learning and letter formation share familiar language and routines.
- Reduced cognitive load: known prompts help pupils recall formation movements.
- Multisensory reinforcement: seeing, saying and performing movements strengthens recall.
- Automaticity: regular explicit practice develops secure individual letter formation.
- Shared modelling: adults reinforce consistent patterns and expectations.

The priority is secure, accurate individual letter formation and effective writing habits before joining.

Year 2 onwards – Ready Steady Handwrite

From Year 2, pupils refine the knowledge established through RWI using Ready Steady Handwrite. This builds on rather than replaces earlier formation learning. Appropriate joins are introduced progressively when individual letter formation is secure and the pupil is ready, not solely because of their year group.

Ready Steady Handwrite complements Ready Steady Spell and Ready Steady Write, providing a coherent approach to handwriting, spelling and composition. Shared progression, explicit transcription teaching and opportunities to apply handwriting within purposeful writing support fluency and reduce cognitive load.

4. Whole-School Handwriting Progression

The following expectations describe the intended progression, not rigid age-related requirements. Teachers assess readiness and adapt teaching to pupils' needs.

Year group	Focus	Expected progression
EYFS	Getting ready to write	Develop core strength, coordination, fine motor control and pencil control; explore mark making; begin accurate RWI letter formation.
Year 1	Securing letter formation	Form letters correctly and consistently; develop appropriate size, orientation, spacing and increasing automaticity using RWI.
Year 2	Introducing joins	Consolidate accurate formation; introduce appropriate Ready Steady Handwrite joins when ready; apply skills in sentences and writing.
Year 3	Developing joined handwriting	Consolidate appropriate joins, letter size and spacing; increase consistency, legibility and independence.
Year 4	Developing fluency	Consolidate joins; increase speed and control while preserving legibility and consistency across tasks.
Years 5–6	Handwriting for independence	Sustain fluent, legible and increasingly automatic handwriting; adapt appropriately to purpose and apply independently across subjects.

Accurate and secure individual letter formation must precede joined handwriting. Teachers will continue explicit formation teaching for pupils who need further consolidation. Legibility, comfort and accuracy take priority over speed or joining.

5. Teaching and Learning

- Direct, daily and explicit instruction, with clear adult modelling.
- Visual patterns and oral patter to reinforce accurate movements.
- Small, progressive steps and cumulative revision.
- Regular focused practice of letter formation and, when appropriate, joins.
- Guided and independent application across the curriculum.
- Specific feedback on formation, size, spacing, orientation, joins and presentation.

Principles of effective practice

- Correct formation comes before joining.
- Practice is purposeful, short and frequent enough to support retention and automaticity.
- Comfortable, functional pencil control is prioritised over a rigid grip.
- Adults address inaccurate formation promptly before it becomes habitual.
- Feedback values effort, progress, accuracy and fluency, not neatness alone.
- Staff handwriting provides a consistent model across the curriculum.

6. Physical Readiness, Posture and Positioning

Effective handwriting relies on postural stability, core strength, gross and fine motor coordination, balance and pencil control. These skills are particularly emphasised in EYFS and for pupils experiencing difficulties.

- Sit comfortably, with feet supported where possible and shoulders relaxed.
- Position paper to support natural writing movement.
- Use an effective, comfortable grip and appropriate pencil pressure.
- Use the non-writing hand to stabilise the page.
- Develop core strength, fine motor control and hand-eye coordination through appropriate provision.

Where needed, staff adapt seating, paper position, writing tools, recording demands and practice duration. Short, focused practice is preferred to lengthy repetition that may cause fatigue or reinforce errors.

7. Support for Left-Handed Pupils

Left-handed pupils will receive appropriate guidance and adaptations to ensure comfortable, controlled and efficient handwriting.

- Paper: position slightly to the left and angle clockwise where comfortable.
- Grip: encourage a relaxed grip, slightly further from the tip if this improves visibility.
- Wrist: encourage a relatively straight wrist and a hand position below the writing line where possible.
- Seating: provide space for the writing arm and avoid elbow clashes with neighbours.
- Equipment: provide suitable writing implements or additional support where required.
- Modelling: demonstrate movements and positioning appropriate for left-handed writers.

Staff will not force a particular grip or position where a comfortable, functional alternative works effectively. Left-handed pupils must not be disadvantaged in comfort, confidence or progress.

8. Resources and Presentation Expectations

Pupils have access to age-appropriate pencils and pens, RWI letter formation prompts in EYFS and Year 1, Ready Steady Handwrite resources from Year 2, and additional support materials where required.

- Take pride in presenting work clearly and legibly.
- Follow agreed school expectations for presentation and handwriting.
- Use writing tools appropriate to the pupil's stage and needs.
- Apply taught handwriting skills across all subjects.
- Show increasing accuracy, consistency and fluency over time.

Expectations remain appropriate to each pupil's developmental stage and individual needs.

9. Assessment and Monitoring

Teachers assess handwriting regularly through observation of practice and written work, using findings to plan teaching, determine readiness for joins and identify additional support.

- Ongoing teacher assessment and appropriate summative review.
- Observation of formation, pencil control, legibility, fluency and application.
- Opportunities for pupils to review and improve their own handwriting.
- Review of writing outcomes across the curriculum.
- Early identification of pupils needing targeted teaching or intervention.

The impact of handwriting teaching is evaluated through pupils' independent application, not only during discrete handwriting lessons.

10. Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

Woolton Primary School is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access handwriting instruction and make progress from their starting points. Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with SEND, fine motor difficulties, physical disabilities or medical conditions affecting writing.

Support may include adapted tools, posture or seating arrangements, additional modelling, smaller teaching steps, targeted practice, reduced recording demands or individualised approaches. Pupils will not be required to join letters before their formation is secure, or at the expense of comfort and legibility.

Where appropriate, alternative recording methods may be considered in consultation with relevant staff, parents/carers and external professionals. Handwriting difficulties must not prevent pupils from demonstrating their learning.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Teaching staff

- Teach the agreed handwriting progression and model formation accurately.
- Provide regular opportunities for practice and curriculum application.
- Assess progress and readiness for joins.
- Maintain consistent, age-appropriate expectations.

- Identify barriers and provide appropriate adaptations and support.

Senior leaders

- Support consistent implementation of the policy and programmes.
- Monitor handwriting standards and progression across school.
- Ensure appropriate professional development.
- Support staff in identifying and addressing barriers to progress.

12. Monitoring and Review

Implementation and impact will be monitored through work scrutiny, learning walks, pupil voice and staff discussion. Monitoring will consider consistency of modelling and teaching, adherence to progression, pupil outcomes and the effectiveness of adaptations and interventions.

Findings will inform professional development, curriculum refinement and school improvement priorities. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to relevant guidance, research or changes to provision.

Policy approved by: _____

Date: _____ Review date: _____

Reference documents: DfE Writing Framework (2025); Read Write Inc. letter formation resources; Ready Steady Handwrite progression and Home Support Booklet.