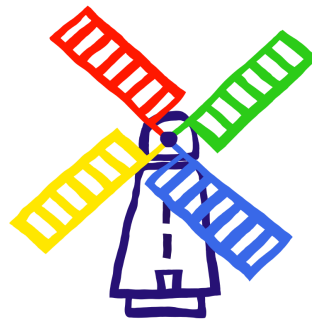


Handwriting Policy

Unity
Trust
Courage
Curiosity
Respect
Kindness



A community for learning. Raising expectations. Fulfilling high standards.

Policy Revised: **September 2026**
Policy Review Date: **September 2027**
Headteacher: **Mrs Gemma Hillier**



Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

Handwriting Policy

The importance of handwriting in developing pupils' writing cannot be overstated. Fluent handwriting is a significant predictor of positive writing outcomes. A lack of fluency can:

- Hinder composition (cognitive demands of handwriting divert attention from planning, composing and revising)
- Reduce motivation
- Prevent others from understanding what has been written

Our key objective is for pupils to achieve automaticity in handwriting.

Pupils are taught handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from Reception.

Handwriting in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception year plays a vital role in building the foundations for writing. These foundations support children throughout primary school and prepare them for secondary education.

To ensure children get the best start in writing, we focus on building strong foundations in:

- Transcription (handwriting and spelling)
- Oral composition

As well as the main phonics programme, we also use the RWI writing and handwriting scheme in the Early Years to ensure children benefit from a complete literacy programme where core elements are 'interconnected and mutually supportive'.

Handwriting Instruction

Handwriting instruction begins in Reception, when they know Set 1 sounds, in addition to phonics teaching. We provide:

- Daily, explicit handwriting lessons taught by trained teachers **using the new RWI handwriting programme**
- Teaching in small steps with lots of opportunity for practice - different stages taught when children are ready (see below for detail)
- Cumulative teaching that builds on what pupils have learned previously - children learn correct letter formation using the exact same picture mnemonics they have already learned in their Speed Sounds lessons. For instance, when learning the sound 's', they use the same snake imagery to write it
- 'Ready to write' routines including correct pencil grip (tripod grip), comfortable sitting position, and paper positioning



Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

Handwriting Policy

- Regular practice of letter formation, focusing on where to start each letter, the direction of formation, its shape, position and spacing

In the first few weeks of Reception, phonics lessons include:

- Learning the movements needed to form letters (practising in the air, on surfaces)
- Learning how to hold and control a pencil
- Developing correct writing posture
- Understanding directional words such as 'up', 'down', 'round' and 'back'

Supporting physical development

Alongside explicit handwriting instruction, we provide, both inside and outside of the classroom:

- Activities to develop fine and gross motor skills (threading, playdough, cutting, tweezers, water play)
- Opportunities to develop body strength, co-ordination, core strength, stability and spatial awareness
- Intentional play opportunities

RWI handwriting in more detail

As soon as children can read Set 1 sounds, they take part in a daily 10-minute handwriting lesson. Throughout the programme, pupils are taught correct posture, pencil grip and letter formation to develop automaticity and confidence.

The RWI handwriting programme is taught in four stages:

Stage 1 (Reception)

Children learn correct letter formation through letter families that share common movements. Lessons focus on starting and finishing letters correctly and developing consistency in size and shape.

Stage 2 (Year 1 and beyond as needed)

Children learn the relative size and position of letters and develop a handwriting style that prepares them for joining. Visual stories and picture prompts help children remember letter formation patterns.

Stage 3

Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins, known as the 'hill' join and the 'bridge' join. They practise joining letters and applying these joins in words.



Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

Handwriting Policy

Stage 4

Children refine their joined handwriting style, increasing fluency, consistency and speed. Regular practice enables pupils to write automatically and efficiently across the curriculum.

The Read Write Inc. approach emphasises daily practice, careful modelling, self-evaluation and partner feedback. Through explicit and cumulative teaching, pupils develop a fluent, legible handwriting style that supports their overall writing development and helps them communicate their ideas confidently.

Teachers expectations

All classteachers and teachers of phonics from Year 1 onwards model handwriting using neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwritten tasks including writing on the boards and marking in books.

Frequency of practice

All handwriting sessions happen outside of the main phonics lessons.

RWI Stage	Duration of lesson	Frequency	How many lessons (minimum)
1	10 mins	Daily	26
2	10 mins	Daily	26
3	10 mins	Daily	30
4	10 mins	Daily	60

Handwriting in KS1 & KS2

Handwriting is:

- Taught explicitly and regularly across the school to all pupils using the correct writing position, paper position and pencil grip.
- Additional to any handwriting that forms part of teaching phonics
- Daily in EYFS, Year 1 and 2, until pupils can write legibly and easily; then 3 x per week in LKS2 and once weekly in UKS2 (unless children are still on RWI handwriting stages higher up the school)
- Taught in small steps, with lots of opportunity for practice



Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

Handwriting Policy

- Cumulative: teachers build on what pupils have learned previously
- Consolidated before teaching moves on, so pupils do not practise letters incorrectly
- Demonstrated by all teachers in school and correct formation modelled on main whiteboards and when marking books (using RWI letter formation)
- Handwriting practice resourced higher up the school using the Letterjoin package

Progression in handwriting

In Reception and Year 1, pupils:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters and digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (letters formed in similar ways)

In Year 2, pupils:

- 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
- Understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters

Joined handwriting is not taught until pupils can form unjoined letters (print forms) correctly and consistently.

In Key Stage 2:

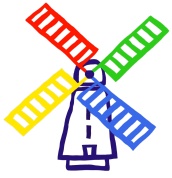
- The focus is on increasing legibility, consistency and quality, with the aim of increasing fluency and speed
- Once pupils are fluent writers, teachers make expectations clear about the nature of handwriting appropriate for a particular task (e.g., quick notes vs. final handwritten version)

Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils and we aim for all children to get the best start in writing from the very beginning of their journey with us. We quickly identify those children who need adaptations in order to succeed with their handwriting through regular observations.

Pupils who struggle with handwriting are identified early and:

- Receive individual support during handwriting lessons



Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

Handwriting Policy

- Will be streamed according to ability - this could mean using the RWI scheme higher up the school if necessary
- Have access to appropriate resources and equipment
- Are observed as they write so teachers can provide feedback and prevent incorrect letter formation

Teachers seek advice from the SENCO and other specialists when adaptations or further support are required.

Left-handed pupils receive specific demonstration and adjustments, including:

- Space to write
- Sitting to the left of right-handed pupils
- Paper slanted to the right
- Softer pencils
- Gripping the pencil at a slightly higher point