

Handwriting Policy

(To be read in conjunction with our policy on English)

October 2026

Version 3

Review Date: October 2029

Version Control

Handwriting Policy – Version 3 - October 2026

Date	Version	Status / Comments / Description
Autumn 2020	1.0	Original Policy – agreed by Governors.
Feb 2023 March 2023	2.0	Policy reviewed – Charlotte Clarkson English Leader / Assistant Headteacher 1. Equality Statement (new section added) 2. Aims and objectives (updated section) 3. Handwriting Progression (new section added) 4. Support strategies, resources and adaptations (new section added) 5. Assessment of Handwriting (updated section added) Approved by Headship Team, uploaded to Governor Hub and school website. Noted as updated at FGB 13/03/23. Policy shared with all staff.
October 2026	3.0	Policy reviewed due to change in Handwriting Scheme – Charlotte Clarkson Writing Leader. Approved by Subject Leader and noted as approved at Curriculum meeting 16/11/2026.

"Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible."

(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Equality Statement for Park Hill Infant School

At Park Hill Infant School, we continue to teach our children about what it means to be strong, positive and productive members of society. We have always taught our pupils about equality and this remains an important part of our curriculum. We ensure that we always celebrate diversity, promote equality, demonstrate respect and stand together to challenge all forms of discriminatory language and behaviour.

We recognise that education is a vital tool for powerful, permanent and informative change. Our continuously evolving curriculum demonstrates our determination to use education to tackle issues of racism and inequality. We strive to ensure our curriculum and supporting resources reflect values of inclusivity, diversity, equality and belonging. We do this by planning to meet the needs of gender, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more-able, gifted and talented, of children with disabilities, of children from all socio-economic backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, religion and cultural backgrounds, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Sustainability and the Curriculum

We aim for pupils to understand their role in caring for the natural world. Our curriculum provides opportunities to develop knowledge of nature, sustainability and climate change, and enables pupils to translate this learning into positive action across all subjects.

1. Rationale; The importance of efficient handwriting

At Park Hill Infant School, we believe that efficient, clear and accurate handwriting is key in order for children to communicate effectively across the curriculum. We believe that the regular practice of Handwriting supports pupils to;

• Develop the brain

Writing by hand activates multiple areas of the brain associated with memory, attention, language and problem-solving. It promotes neural connections (including those which are not fully engaged when typing).

• Improve fine motor skills

Handwriting builds strength and coordination in the hands and fingers. This fine motor control is essential for many daily activities beyond writing, like using cutlery and scissors, buttoning clothes or tying shoelaces.

• Boost learning and retention

The automaticity of effective handwriting allows time for thinking and processing, aiding comprehension and memory. Clear handwriting is also required to communicate to a high standard.

• Achieve higher-level writing skills

Fluent, legible handwriting that requires little conscious effort, allows children the cognitive space in their working memory to concentrate on the content of their writing and higher-level writing skills.

• Achieve higher academic performance

Slow or unclear handwriting can hinder performance and limit academic achievement. Fluent handwriting allows children to focus on completing the assessment.

• Enhance literacy skills

Handwriting contributes to reading and spelling development. The process of writing letters helps children recognise and remember letter shapes and sounds more effectively.

• Encourage focus and attention

Writing by hand requires more concentration than typing. It can help children slow down, organise their thoughts and think more deeply about what they are writing.

• Develop practical life skills

Handwriting is necessary for tasks like filling out forms, signing documents, taking notes or writing thank you cards.

2. Aims and Objectives

At Park Hill Infant School we follow the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme (Wandle Learning Trust).

We aim for:

- pupils to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed
- pupils to develop their handwriting skills progressively and to be able to write legibly at each point in their development
- handwriting to become automatic in order to reduce overload of their working memory
- pupils to develop an effective and comfortable pencil grip
- pupils to know that all letters start from the top (except d and e which start in the middle)
- pupils to form letters correctly; knowing the size, orientation and placement of letters
- pupils to produce legible handwriting with the ability to join letters by the end of KS1

- pupils to demonstrate high standards of written presentation across the curriculum
- a consistent pedagogy for handwriting, including consistent modelling of writing in children's books, on the whiteboard, on hand written displays and resources.

3. Teaching Handwriting in Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, writing skills are encouraged through physical play and mark making. The development of fine motor skills is planned for within continuous and enhanced provision. Handwriting following the **Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme** is taught explicitly three times a week.

In addition to Handwriting sessions, children also take part in weekly, adult directed writing tasks which connect transcription processes and writing composition. In daily **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds** Phonics Sessions, children also learn formation phrases to accurately write letters and to transcribe words and dictated sentences under the guidance of the class teacher.

3.1 Preparation for writing

It is especially important that children develop the correct **pencil grip** from the start of their writing process in order to eliminate 'bad habits'. Children who require additional support with forming an effective pencil grip, receive guidance and adaptation from school staff. (**See section 6 – Support strategies, resources and adaptations)**

Establishing the 'correct habits' early also promotes consistency and confidence from the outset. We use the **Little Wandle Handwriting** *'Ready to write' rhyme* to prepare children for handwriting:



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The children are taught consistent routines and expectations for writing within Handwriting sessions. These include; listening carefully, returning to the table promptly, lining up quietly, following instructions, and handling resources responsibly.

Children are taught the expected **posture, paper position and pencil grip:**

- *Sitting position; feet flat, knees at 90 degrees, back supported by a chair*
- *Correct paper tilt and placement for right-handers and left-handers*
- *Encouragement of non-writing hand to hold and steady the paper*
- *Correct grip (tripod grip)*

Each Handwriting session begins with a **Little Wandle Handwriting** hand warm-up routine. These hand exercises help the brain increase awareness of where the hands are, improve coordination, prepare the body for controlled movements, and furthermore aid precision, ready for the writing task.

3.2 Handwriting Progression in Early Years Foundation Stage

EYFS Little Wandle Handwriting lessons are taught three times a week and progress through Handwriting 'Units', which focus on:

- Unit 1: correct pencil grip
- Unit 2: correct starting point for each letter
- Unit 3: letter formation and orientation
- Unit 4: families of letters
- Unit 5: capital letters
- Unit 6: reinforcing the link between letters and sounds.

Handwriting lessons begin with a 'Revisit and review' of previous handwriting formation and then new content is modelled during a 'Teach and practise' part of the lesson to the whole class. Teaching staff then work around the room with children seated at tables. Teaching staff observe children's outcomes closely and provide support, redirection and guidance as needed.

The teaching sequence for introducing a new pattern/letter is:
1. Introduce the letter and formation phrase.
2. Form the letter in the air.
3. Form the letter on the palm of the hand.
4. Trace the mnemonic with a finger.
5. Write the letter.

Teachers model handwriting on the smartboard and may use flip charts and handwriting posters to support pupils. Each child transcribes into a Little Wandle Handwriting Workbook.
There are four pupil workbooks for Handwriting lessons in Reception:

- Workbook 1: Patterns
- Workbook 2: Lower-case letters
- Workbook 3: Capital letters
- Workbook 4: Digraphs and trigraphs

The workbooks contain line guides to support children and demonstrate appropriate letter size and correct positioning. The darker baselines will support children with positioning the letters on the line. There are fainter lines to further guide children who are at the stage of being able to control the size of their letters. However, in Reception, the main emphasis should be on ensuring children start their letters in the right place and follow the correct direction to form each letter accurately.

3.3 Outcomes in Early Years Foundation Stage

By the end of the EYFS, all pupils are expected to be able to use effective handwriting in order to:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others (this includes via dictation as well as during guided writing with an adult)

4. Teaching Handwriting in Year One

In Year One the children take part in handwriting sessions three times a week, following the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme. The children work through the following units:

- Unit 1: Lower-case letters
- Unit 2: Applying capital letters
- Unit 3: Forming digits
- Unit 4: Digraphs and trigraphs
- Unit 5: Useful words
- Unit 6: Words with Phase 5 GPCs
- Unit 7: Days of the week
- Unit 8: Sentences with punctuation
- Unit 9: Sentences with useful words

Year One Handwriting lessons begin with hand warm-ups, then the children 'Revisit and Review' previous handwriting and then new content is modelled during a 'Teach and Model' part of the lesson to the whole class. Teaching staff then work around the room with children seated at tables during an 'Apply and Practise' session. Teaching staff observe children's outcomes closely and provide support, redirection and guidance as needed.

Each child transcribes into a Little Wandle Handwriting Workbook. There are three pupil workbooks for Handwriting lessons in Year One:

- Workbook 5: Applying Capital Letters
- Workbook 6: Forming Digits and words
- Workbook 7: Writing Sentences

By the end of Year One, all pupils are expected 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.

5. Teaching Handwriting in Year Two

In Year Two the children take part in handwriting sessions two or three times a week, as required, following the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme. The children work through the following units:

- Unit 1: Diagonal joins from the baseline to short letters
- Unit 2: Diagonal joins from the baseline to tall letters
- Unit 3: Diagonal joins from the baseline to curly letters
- Unit 4: Horizontal joins from the mid-line to short letters
- Unit 5: Horizontal joins from the mid-line to tall letters
- Unit 6: Horizontal joins from the mid-line to curly letters
- Unit 7: Punctuation
- Unit 8: Days of the week
- Unit 9: Months of the year

- Unit 10: Word families

Year Two Handwriting lessons begin with hand warm-ups, then the children 'Revisit and Review' previous handwriting and then new content is modelled during a 'Teach and Model' part of the lesson to the whole class. Teaching staff then work around the room with children seated at tables during an 'Apply and Practise' session. Teaching staff observe children's outcomes closely and provide support, redirection and guidance as needed.

Each child transcribes into a Little Wandle Handwriting Workbook. There are two pupil workbooks for Handwriting lessons in Year Two:

- Workbook 8: Joining Letters
- Workbook 9: Develop Fluency in Joining Letters

By the end of the Year Two, all pupils are expected to be able to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Use 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.

6. Support strategies, resources and adaptations

6.1 Right and Left handed support

- The left hand should be used to steady the paper for right handers with the paper placed to the right, slightly tilted to the left.
- Paper should be tilted to the right for left handers with the right hand used to steady the paper.
- Left handers may need to use a different pen to avoid smudging on the page (Used in Year Two for 'over-lining' and for editing).
- Left handed pupils should sit to the left of their partners where possible.
- All handwriting should be modelled to the class with a right-hand example as well as a left hand example by the teacher using a flip chart or 'drawing in the air' with the hand.

6.2 Adaptation

For children needing extra support, scaffolding within Little Wandle Handwriting is provided through pattern drawing and tracing before progressing to independent writing. Children may also be given additional practise using letter formation practice sheets and adult modelled examples on handwriting paper. Children with more advanced pencil control and letter formation skills may be encouraged to bypass tracing sections and practise forming letters independently after explicit teacher modelling.

- Where a pupil struggles to physically grip their pencil or form the required movements in order to form rounded letter shapes, support will be given and resources should be adapted.
- It may be decided that it is more effective for a pupil to consolidate on their use of print until letters are clear and legible before beginning to introduce joins in their writing.
- The usual *Staedtler HB* school pencils may be replaced with thicker, triangular pencils to enable pupils who require extra support with their pencil grip to hold a pencil correctly.
- Pencil grips and tools should be selected appropriately for pupils with significant difficulty mastering an effective pencil grip. These should be selected with guidance from the Writing Leader and Inclusion

Team and should be made available during all teaching sessions and areas of the curriculum. (Guidance for SEND pupils may also be sought from outside agencies where appropriate).

- Pupils who struggle to form letters in the correct direction and orientation should receive additional modelling of the letter formation and be given further opportunities to practise the movement in the correct direction 'in the air' with their finger, in resources such as sand trays and on a large scale using chalks etc. They should then trace over patterns and letters shapes in order to gain confidence and 'muscle memory' in order to attempt the written form independently in a handwriting book.
- Lined paper should be chosen in relation to the current ability of the pupil to form letters of the appropriate size and in accordance with the pupil's speed of writing. A pupil may make more effective progress using larger lines and can therefore be given different Handwriting books and Topic Work books to support this.
- Teaching staff can select the most appropriate focus resource sheets for a pupil and may decide to take further time to consolidate upon pupil's letter formation using Little Wandle Handwriting formation sheets.
- Teaching staff should discuss significant needs with the Inclusion Team and should act upon any advice given by outside agencies for pupils with an EHCP.
- It may also be appropriate for a pupil with significant needs to work within the guidance 'GETTING READY TO WRITE' from Croydon Occupational Therapy Services (Croydon NHS) (Appendix A) before beginning practice following the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme. This should be decided in consultation with the SENDco, Inclusion Team and Writing Leader and should be conveyed to parents.

7. Assessment of Handwriting

Children are observed closely as they write during handwriting sessions – the teacher circulates, monitors and intervenes. Support or further scaffolding is then given when pupils are unable to fully access the handwriting taught within a session independently.

Handwriting outcomes are assessed mainly through the use of verbal feedback which happens 'live' within the session. We emphasise re-modelling of the written form by teaching staff where misconceptions or incorrect formation is evident. It is important that incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation are identified and corrected at the point it occurs. During Handwriting lessons, teachers may re-model handwriting in the child's Handwriting Book if they begin to lose focus on accurate formation.

Initial letter formation is assessed using the School's letter placement and formation forms in Early Years. These are used in order to inform teacher's next steps for pupils within the class and ensure that all pupils learn the correct letter formation as early as possible in the writing process.

When assessing the quality and effectiveness of children's handwriting, teachers follow the half termly key outcomes and assessment criteria in the Little Wandle Handwriting Scheme. Children complete a half termly Handwriting assessment sheet following the scheme which teachers then use to plan next steps for the class and individual pupils.

8. Monitoring and review

The co-ordination and planning of the English curriculum including Handwriting are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping abreast of current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the Headteacher an annual Subject Overview and action plan in which they evaluate the strengths and areas for development in English in the school, and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's learning, and to observe and review English lessons across the school.

- Monitors effectiveness and challenge of handwriting provision across the school in order to ensure consistency in teaching and learning and to enhance creativity and enthusiasm for the subject for all teaching staff.

A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of English, including Handwriting.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if necessary.

Signed:

Print name: Charlotte Clarkson

Date: 20th October 2026

(Appendix A) 'GETTING READY TO WRITE' from Croydon Occupational Therapy Services (Croydon NHS)

CHILDREN'S OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CROYDON

Croydon Health Services NHS
NHS Trust

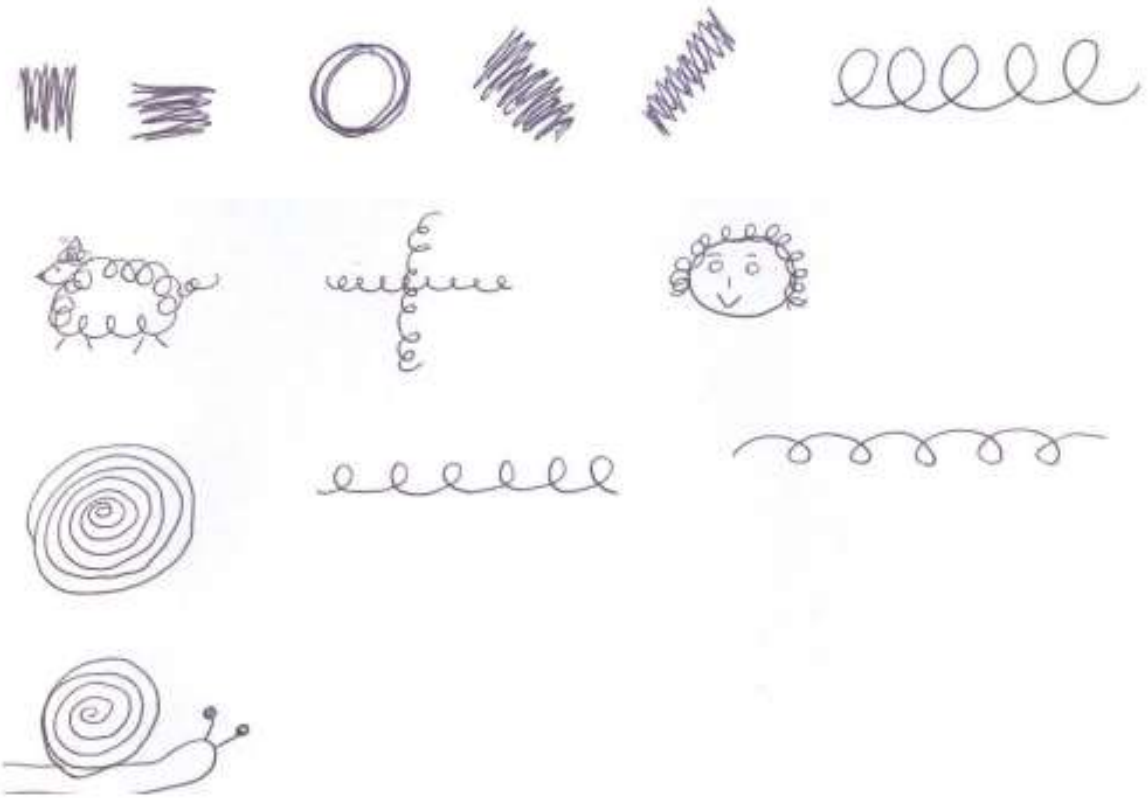
Crystal Children's Development Centre
Malling Close,
Croydon
CR0 7YD

Direct line: 020 8274 6854

GETTING READY TO WRITE

Developing interest and attention for writing / drawing activities

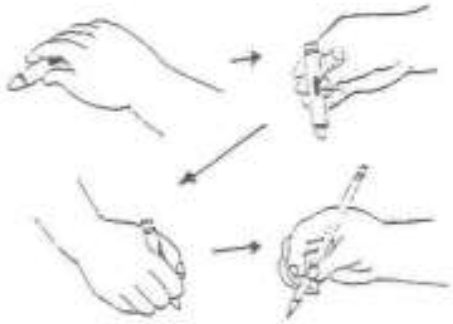
- ☐ Use different tactile pre-writing media; sand, finger paints, play dough, shaving foam
- ☐ Painting with stubby brushes and large movements and scribbling
- ☐ Drawing with crayons (will need to apply more pressure with these). This can be done later but for the present continue to use crayons to give the child the idea of making marks on paper.
- ☐ Finger painting. Encourage large movements of the arm.



Movements can then become more refined by scribbling up and down and from side to side, while their hand is resting on the paper. This strengthens the small muscles of the hand. Other patterns are shown above.

Developing a functional pencil grip

- The development of a functional pencil grip depends on the stage of hand dominance and hand grasp development. Usually a child will progress from one type of grip to another, see below:



- Use shorter crayons or chalk to encourage a tripod grasp. Sometimes triangular shaped pencils or crayons help.

- There are a wide range of wide barrelled felt tip pens available commercially, many of them with a non-slip grip area for your finger. The handhugger range of pens, crayons and pencils by Berol are usually available in larger WH Smith stores and Early Learning Centres.

- Always make sure that a child is holding a pencil properly before starting drawing.

- It may be easier to start with a board writer/marker pen and do doodles on a large sheet of lining paper. Working on a vertical surface helps to develop strength in shoulder and wrist muscles, which are needed for writing. It also allows you to feel the weight of the arm as it moves up and down and across the paper.



- As pencil control develops progress to making circles for flowers and the sun etc.

- Children learn first through imitation. Demonstrate first tracing a maze with your index finger, and then encourage a child to trace a maze with their index finger. Hold a child's



finger if necessary while tracing. After tracing with a finger, encourage a child to trace a maze with their crayon.

- Many children would also benefit from doing drawing and writing tasks in a variety of positions. The picture below shows a child lying on their tummy leaning through their elbows and drawing. This improves shoulder strength and stability which is important for handwriting. A child could also benefit from drawing or colouring whilst in a crawling position on hands and knees.





Children should be able to draw the following shapes which are components of letters of the alphabet before they are ready to start letter formation:

