



Handwriting and Presentation Policy

January 2026

Statement of Intent

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

Pupils at Thurlstone Primary School will leave Year 6:

- writing with confidence, fluency, accuracy and speed, using a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct;
- with a love of writing and a desire to write for enjoyment;
- with an interest in words and their meanings; developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- understanding how to create a range of text types, media types and genres;
- able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation;
- using their developing imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness;
- having a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

Grow together, learn together, feel loved!

Handwriting is a complex activity requiring the use of many different processes at once. Some children quickly learn to write but other children may struggle to make writing an automatic process. This means that they concentrate more on how to write, and focus much less on what to write. This prevents the child from reaching their academic potential and can cause academic, self esteem and behavioural problems. (*Helping Handwriting Shine – EEF Project*)

Introduction

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.” (Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child’s handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, rather than upon the act. By the time that children leave Thurlstone Primary School, they should be confident cursive writers.

The key advantages are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children’s hands develop a ‘physical memory’ of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

Handwriting Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting by the time they leave Year 6
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations

Teaching and Learning

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced in the Early Years, using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using ‘Fred Talk’; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.
- The cursive font, without lead-ins, is taught as a specific skill, at least three times a week for about 15 minutes from Year 2 to Year 3 (when children are ready), with additional, individual or group practise where necessary.
- The four Ps – Pencil Grip, Paper, Posture and Pressure are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.

- Children will draw spirals, circles, straight lines, crosses and dots as part of a 'Warm Up' to handwriting.
- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught to children working within Set 3 Read, Write, Inc.
- Number formation will be taught through handwriting sessions.
- Children will write dictated sentences by the class teacher to develop speed and fluency in *Sentence Crafting sessions* and through the Spelling lesson which happens weekly from Year 2 to Year 6.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear handwriting as well as other fonts.
- Older children are expected to develop and use their own style of joined handwriting by the time they leave Year 6.

Handwriting Progression

Reception Children

Are to take part in activities that develop fine and gross motor skills initially.

Moving on, the children are introduced to new letters through the Read Write Inc scheme of work – see Read, Write, Inc Progression Document and The Fine Motor Policy.

Year 1 Children should be taught to:

- 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.

Year 2 Children should be taught to:

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

N.B. When they are ready, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.

Year 3 and Year 4 Children should be taught to:

- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch

N.B. When the children are producing consistently formed, sized and joined handwriting, they will be encouraged to write in pen where appropriate.

Year 5 and Year 6 Children 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 whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the right implement that is best suited for a task

Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins

- Always model good handwriting
- Demonstrate formations
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or a stick

Basic structure of a handwriting session: (15 - 20 Minutes)

- Preparing for handwriting - Reminder of the 4Ps – Pen grip (tripod grip encouraged but grip must be comfortable for child), Paper (45-degree angle), Posture (legs on the floor, sitting comfortable), Pressure (just right), physical movements from the list in Appendix 3.
- Gross and fine movement warm up linked to Helping Handwriting Shine activities or those from the appendix (Spirals, Circles, Free Form Lines, Crosses)
- Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair.
- Teacher modelling of main writing session – Handwriting Activity.
- Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory.

The daily phonics session in Reception and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to encourage pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

Provision for left handed children – ensure enough space so that children's elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers comfortably holding their pencil.

Resources and writing materials

Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools. Pens (handwriting pens not biros) should be used by those who have achieved a consistent, cursive style. All children should write in black ink. The children are to practise their handwriting in a handwriting book chosen for this specific purpose.

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

The SENCO will provide resources for those who have difficulty with fine motor skills – pencil grips, fine motor control programmes and referrals where necessary.

A small group intervention may be necessary for children past Year 4 who still require support to form letters and numbers consistently accurate.

Presentation

Pupils will learn that different levels of presentation are appropriate for different pieces of work and different circumstances.

However, pupils are expected to:

- Look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them
- Increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented
- Not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or not fit for purpose
- Use rulers to draw straight lines
- Set out, number and annotate work appropriately
- At appropriate times, pupils may be encouraged to experiment with alternative means of presenting their work for specific reasons.
- Cross through mistakes or editing alterations with a single line.

Teachers are expected to:

- Ensure that classrooms are well equipped with the essential tools that will assist pupils to create work with a high presentational standard
- Organise the classroom in such a way that materials and resources are easily accessible and systems for their return and maintenance are robust (self- service classroom)
- Ensure that children look after resources and materials so that they learn to respect equipment and good value for money is assured.

Policy Success Criteria

We know Thurlstone Primary School's Handwriting and Presentation Policy is effective if:

- A scrutiny of work confirms the appropriate development in handwriting skills
- Specific difficulties are addressed in the marking of handwriting tasks
- A scrutiny of work confirms that the presentation protocol is adhered to

Equality Statement

Thurlstone Primary School provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is committed to equality and reflects and values diversity.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the English Lead, Early Years Lead and Head teacher within the processes of school self-evaluation. The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner should National Policy change.

Appendix 1 – Progression of letters

Warm Up Activities

- Lines
- Crosses
- Shading
- Circles
- Spirals
- Free-Form Lines

Letter Families

Lit Family	l i t j
Curly caterpillar club	a c d g o q
Mr Hip Bin	b h k m n p r
Tricky Letters	e s u v w x z
Ascenders	b d h k l t
Descenders	f g j p q y

Progression

Reception	Year 1 and Year 2	Year 3 and Year 4	Year 5 and Year 6
All lower-case letters taught.	All lower-case letters.	Top / horizontal joins (ou, ov, ow, op, re, ri, rt, rk, ob, ol, ot, of, ve, we, wh, fi, fe, fu etc)	Joining onto ascenders
All numbers 0-9.	Child's full name.	Joining onto Curly Caterpillar Club.	Double ff
Child's first name.	Capitals.	Joining onto an e.	qu
	Baseline joins using combinations from the families.	Descenders	Developing own style.

	Start to use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters ll il it li an al ai ar aw hi in mi ine th		
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Appendix 2 – Tables for letters and joins to cover

Baseline Joins

ll	all	ar	lp
li	in	aw	up
ti	un	iv	ib
il	an	hu	ub
it	im	ti	th
ill	um	ki	ck
ut	am	du	ch
at	ine	ay	ent
ull	ime	ey	ant

Horizontal Joins

ou	re	ve	fe
ov	ri	we	fi
ow	rt	wh	fu
op	rk		fl
ob	ot		ft
ol	of		

Curly Caterpillar Club

ac	oa	fa	ea
ad	od	fo	ed
ag	og	va	ha
ca	oo	wa	da
la	to	ws	

Reception

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Fine Motor Activities (pre-writing – see Fine Motor Policy) Teach letter formation linked to RWI order of letters as taught – m a s d t i n p g o c k u b f e l h r j v y w z x Child's first name.	All lower-case letters in this order. Lit Family Curly Caterpillar Club Mr Hip Bin Tricky Letters Ascenders Descenders Capital I, A, T Child's first name. Numbers 0-9 – copy from a teacher model.	Gaps in lower-case letters Capitals. Child's full name. Numbers 0-9 – write in random order.

Year 1

Autumn	Spring	Summer									
All lower-case letters in this order. Lit Family Curly Caterpillar Club Mr Hip Bin Tricky Letters Ascenders Descenders Capital I, A, T Child's full name. Numbers 0-9 – copy from a teacher model.	Gaps in lower-case letters Capitals. Child's full name. Numbers 0-9 – write the numbers from memory.	Gaps in lower-case letters and capitals. Begin to teach baseline joins using combinations from the families. <table><tr><td>ll</td></tr><tr><td>li</td></tr><tr><td>ti</td></tr><tr><td>il</td></tr><tr><td>it</td></tr><tr><td>ill</td></tr><tr><td>ut</td></tr><tr><td>at</td></tr><tr><td>ull</td></tr></table> Child's full name. Numbers 0-9 – write in random order.	ll	li	ti	il	it	ill	ut	at	ull
ll											
li											
ti											
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Year 2

Autumn	Spring	Summer																																				
Gaps in lower-case letters Capitals. Child’s full name. Numbers 0-9 Baseline joins using combinations from the families. <table><tr><td>ll</td></tr><tr><td>li</td></tr><tr><td>ti</td></tr><tr><td>il</td></tr><tr><td>it</td></tr><tr><td>ill</td></tr><tr><td>ut</td></tr><tr><td>at</td></tr><tr><td>ul</td></tr></table> Write words with these letter joins.	ll	li	ti	il	it	ill	ut	at	ul	Baseline joins using combinations from the families. <table><tr><td>all</td></tr><tr><td>in</td></tr><tr><td>un</td></tr><tr><td>an</td></tr><tr><td>im</td></tr><tr><td>um</td></tr><tr><td>am</td></tr><tr><td>ine</td></tr><tr><td>ime</td></tr></table> Write words with these letter joins.	all	in	un	an	im	um	am	ine	ime	Baseline joins using combinations from the families. <table><tr><td>ar</td></tr><tr><td>aw</td></tr><tr><td>iv</td></tr><tr><td>hu</td></tr><tr><td>ti</td></tr><tr><td>ki</td></tr><tr><td>du</td></tr><tr><td>ay</td></tr><tr><td>ey</td></tr><tr><td>lp</td></tr><tr><td>up</td></tr><tr><td>ib</td></tr><tr><td>ub</td></tr><tr><td>th</td></tr><tr><td>ck</td></tr><tr><td>ch</td></tr><tr><td>ent</td></tr><tr><td>ant</td></tr></table> Write words with these letter joins.	ar	aw	iv	hu	ti	ki	du	ay	ey	lp	up	ib	ub	th	ck	ch	ent	ant
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Year 3

Autumn	Spring	Summer	
Start to use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters	Top / horizontal joins	Top / horizontal joins	
ll, il, it, li, an, al, ai, ar, aw, hi, in, mi, ine, th	ou	ve	fe
	ov	we	fi
	ow	wh	fu
	op		fl
	ob		ft
	ol		
Write words with these letters.	re	Write words with these letter joins.	
	ri		
	rt		
	rk		
	ot		
	of		

	Write words with these letter joins.	
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Year 4

Autumn	Spring	Summer																				
Joining onto Curly Caterpillar Club.	Joining onto Curly Caterpillar Club.	Joining onto an e.																				
<table><tr><td>ac</td><td>oa</td></tr><tr><td>ad</td><td>od</td></tr><tr><td>ag</td><td>og</td></tr><tr><td>ca</td><td>oo</td></tr><tr><td>la</td><td>to</td></tr></table>	ac	oa	ad	od	ag	og	ca	oo	la	to	<table><tr><td>fa</td><td>ea</td></tr><tr><td>fo</td><td>ed</td></tr><tr><td>va</td><td>ha</td></tr><tr><td>wa</td><td>da</td></tr><tr><td>ws</td><td></td></tr></table>	fa	ea	fo	ed	va	ha	wa	da	ws		Joining descenders f g j p q y
ac	oa																					
ad	od																					
ag	og																					
ca	oo																					
la	to																					
fa	ea																					
fo	ed																					
va	ha																					
wa	da																					
ws																						
Sentences – Write a four-word sentence using some of these joins. Write top threes – favourite foods, colours, activities, jokes, holiday moments etc.	Sentences – i.e. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy fox. With a different colour pencil put an O in the finger spaces to check for size.	Write own sentence on a topic of their choice – put an O between the finger spaces to check for sizing.																				

Year 5

Autumn	Spring	Summer																		
Joining onto ascenders b d h k l t Sentences – Linked to the wider curriculum.	Double ff qu Sentences – Linked to the wider curriculum.	Developing own style. Revisit baseline joins with precision, speed and accuracy. <table><tr><td>ll</td><td>all</td></tr><tr><td>li</td><td>in</td></tr><tr><td>ti</td><td>un</td></tr><tr><td>il</td><td>an</td></tr><tr><td>it</td><td>im</td></tr><tr><td>ill</td><td>um</td></tr><tr><td>ut</td><td>am</td></tr><tr><td>at</td><td>ine</td></tr><tr><td>ull</td><td>ime</td></tr></table> Sentences – Linked to the wider curriculum.	ll	all	li	in	ti	un	il	an	it	im	ill	um	ut	am	at	ine	ull	ime
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ut	am																			
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ull	ime																			

Year 6

Autumn	Spring	Summer																																																												
Developing own style.	Developing own style.	Developing own style.																																																												
Revisit baseline joins with precision, speed and accuracy.	Revisit horizontal joins with precision, speed and accuracy.	Revisit Curly Caterpillar Club with precision, speed and accuracy.																																																												
<table><tr><td>ar</td><td>lp</td></tr><tr><td>aw</td><td>up</td></tr><tr><td>iv</td><td>ib</td></tr><tr><td>hu</td><td>ub</td></tr><tr><td>ti</td><td>th</td></tr><tr><td>ki</td><td>ck</td></tr><tr><td>du</td><td>ch</td></tr><tr><td>ay</td><td>ent</td></tr><tr><td>ey</td><td>ant</td></tr></table>	ar	lp	aw	up	iv	ib	hu	ub	ti	th	ki	ck	du	ch	ay	ent	ey	ant	<table><tr><td>ou</td><td>re</td></tr><tr><td>ov</td><td>ri</td></tr><tr><td>ow</td><td>rt</td></tr><tr><td>op</td><td>rk</td></tr><tr><td>ob</td><td>ot</td></tr><tr><td>ol</td><td>of</td></tr></table> <table><tr><td>ve</td><td>fe</td></tr><tr><td>we</td><td>fi</td></tr><tr><td>wh</td><td>fu</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>fl</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>ft</td></tr></table>	ou	re	ov	ri	ow	rt	op	rk	ob	ot	ol	of	ve	fe	we	fi	wh	fu		fl		ft	<table><tr><td>ac</td><td>oa</td></tr><tr><td>ad</td><td>od</td></tr><tr><td>ag</td><td>og</td></tr><tr><td>ca</td><td>oo</td></tr><tr><td>la</td><td>to</td></tr></table> <table><tr><td>fa</td><td>ea</td></tr><tr><td>fo</td><td>ed</td></tr><tr><td>va</td><td>ha</td></tr><tr><td>wa</td><td>da</td></tr><tr><td>ws</td><td></td></tr></table>	ac	oa	ad	od	ag	og	ca	oo	la	to	fa	ea	fo	ed	va	ha	wa	da	ws	
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Sentences – Linked to the wider curriculum.	Sentences – Linked to the wider curriculum.	Sentences – Linked to the wider curriculum.																																																												

Appendix 3

Warm up Materials

Shoulders	Elbows
• Lift, shrug shoulders up and down. • Circle shoulders forwards and backwards. • Shake shoulders. • Hold edges of the chair – push self up and down. • Raise one shoulder then the other. • Circle wrists – clockwise and anti-clockwise. • Shake two hands in the air, shake one hand in the air. • Shake hands with neighbour.	• Straighten elbows, bend again. • Cross arms, fists on shoulders, alternate. • Tap fists on the table, clap in the air. • Intertwine fingers, elbows on the table, hands up. • Clap palms in rhythms.
Wrists and Fists	Flat Hands
• Shake wrists. • Shake wrists up and down and sideways. • Thumbs out, thumbs in. • Thumbs up, wriggle them, circle them. • Climb fists upwards, thumbs in (as in one potato, two potato).	• Two flat hands on the table – thumbs out. • Spread fingers, thumbs touching. • Clap hands to rhythms. • Chant to rhythms.
Fingers and Thumbs	Pencil Power
• Wriggle fingers in the air. • Wriggle fingers up and down. • Shake hands with neighbour. • Tap thumbs, tap all fingers. • Tap in 1s, 2s and 3s. • Incy Wincy Spider. • Rub hands together. • Keep hands clasped, clap palms to rhythms.	• Good sitting feet flat, back straight. • Head up, bottom on chair. • Turn a pencil round in the air. • Hold pencil with pincer grasp. • Swing and twizzle a pencil to one side. • Walk fingers up and down a pencil. • Thread pencil between alternate fingers.
Grasp and Grip	
• Pick up pencil. • Change to pincer, change back. • Speed up and try with other fingers. • Flex and extend fingers. • Hold thumb with first and second fingers.	Add your own ideas too!