



THORNGUMBALD

PRIMARY

Handwriting Policy

Issue Date: Summer 2026
Review Date: Summer 2027

Please read in conjunction with the

- *English National Curriculum*
- *English Action Plan*
- *English Policy*
- *Phonics and Spelling Policy*
- *Teaching and Learning Policy*
- *Marking Policy*

Aims:

At Thorngumbald Primary School, we believe that clear, neat and fluent handwriting is an essential life skill. Handwriting is a key part of written communication and supports children in expressing their ideas effectively across the curriculum.

We aim for all children to:

- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation.
- Develop a legible, fluent and efficient handwriting style.
- Use a correct pencil grip and posture.
- Form letters accurately and consistently.
- Develop confidence, pride and independence in their written work.
- Increase the speed and fluency of handwriting as they progress through school.

Teaching and Organisation

Throughout EYFS and Key Stage 1, children will receive regular handwriting teaching and practice.

At Thorngumbald Primary School, handwriting sessions will take place at least three times per week for approximately 20 minutes.

In Years 3 and 4, handwriting will continue to be taught through discrete lessons 2–3 times per week, alongside high expectations for presentation across the curriculum.

In Years 5 and 6, pupils will continue to apply and refine their handwriting style, developing greater fluency and consistency in preparation for secondary school. Handwriting expectations remain high across all subjects.

Teachers will monitor handwriting and presentation through live marking and verbal feedback to ensure children continue to improve and take pride in their work.

Posture and Pencil Grip

Good posture and pencil grip are essential for effective handwriting. Poor posture can lead to discomfort, fatigue, reduced writing speed and poor presentation.

Children will be taught to:

- Sit with both feet flat on the floor or supported on a stable surface.
- Keep knees bent at approximately 90 degrees.
- Sit with hips and back supported by the chair.
- Maintain a small gap between their stomach and the table.
- Rest forearms comfortably on the table surface.
- Keep the writing surface uncluttered to allow free arm movement.



When teaching correct pencil grip, staff will use the consistent prompt:



“Pinch, pinch, pinch, flip.”

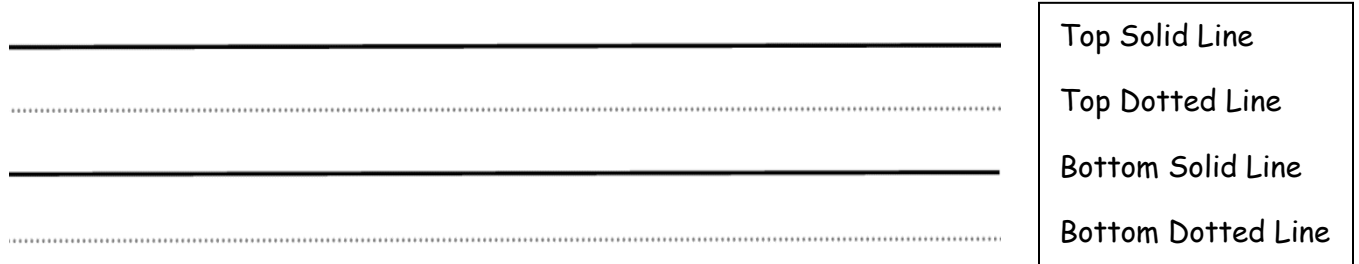
(Thumb and index finger pinch the pencil, then flip it into the soft crease between the thumb and index finger.)

Consistent Language for Letter Formation

To ensure consistency across school, all staff will use the same language when teaching handwriting.

Handwriting Line Vocabulary

- Top solid line
- Top dotted line
- Bottom solid line
- Bottom dotted line (EYFS and Year 1 only)



Letter Groups

Children will learn about the different sizes of letters using the following terminology:

Tall letters

b, d, h, k, l

Short letters

a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z

Tail letters

g, j, p, q, y

Teenage t

t

Greedy f

f

Letter formation is taught using the **Little Wandle** handwriting formation approach.

The following shows the formation of lower-case and upper-case letters at Thorngumbald Primary.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

YZ

Handwriting in EYFS

At Thorngumbald Primary School, we recognise that Reception is crucial in developing the foundations for writing. Children are provided with many opportunities to strengthen their gross and fine motor skills through purposeful play and structured activities.

Children take part in daily **Dough Disco** sessions from Week 2 to develop fine motor strength and coordination. Weekly “morning jobs” also provide additional opportunities for fine motor development.

Children begin handwriting by practising patterns and learning the **Ready to Write Checklist**, which focuses on:

- Correct posture
- Pencil grip
- Paper position
- Appropriate pencil pressure

Once children are secure with patterns, they begin letter formation using Little Wandle handwriting resources. Letter formation is also reinforced through Phase 2 phonics teaching using a range of multi-sensory approaches, including:

- Air writing
- Whiteboard practice
- Large-scale movements
- Interactive activities

Handwriting in Year 1

In Year 1, handwriting teaching builds upon the foundations established in EYFS and focuses on:

- Consolidating correct letter formation
- Accurate sizing and spacing of letters
- Formation of punctuation and digits 0–9
- Handwriting practice linked to phonics

Letter Formation Families

Curly Letter Family

c, a, d, g, o, q, e, s, f

Long Letter Family

l, i, t, j, u, y

Bouncy Letter Family

m, n, r, b, p, h

Zig-Zag Letter Family

v, w, x, z, k

EYFS and Year 1 children use the same handwriting line format to support consistency and progression.

Handwriting in Year 2

In Year 2, children continue to build fluency and consistency while learning to join letters. Teaching focuses on:

- Accurate sizing and spacing
- Joined handwriting using the four joins
- Practice linked to spelling patterns

Join 1

Up, over, stop, reverse
Examples: ac, co, ed, ma, is, ta

Join 2

Join across the top
Examples: om, vy, ws, oo, op, fu

Join 3

Diagonal join to the top solid line

Examples: ab, il, eh, uf, ml, th

Join 4

Diagonal join to the top dotted line

Examples: ai, my, ar, ev, in, de

During Year 2, the bottom dotted line is removed and the spacing between lines becomes smaller to prepare children for Key Stage 2 exercise books.

Children are also taught the “break letters”:

b, p, g, j, y, q, s

These letters do not join to the following letter.

Handwriting in Years 3 and 4

In Years 3 and 4, handwriting lessons continue regularly to develop fluency, consistency and stamina. Children are encouraged to apply joined handwriting across all curriculum subjects.

Teachers reinforce high expectations for presentation and provide immediate feedback through live marking and verbal guidance.

The focus is on:

- Secure joins
- Consistent sizing and spacing
- Increased fluency and speed
- Presentation across the curriculum

Handwriting in Years 5 and 6

In Upper Key Stage 2, children continue to refine and develop their own fluent handwriting style. While discrete handwriting lessons may occur less frequently, high standards of presentation remain expected in all written work.

Teachers continue to monitor handwriting and provide targeted support where necessary. Pupils are encouraged to develop a comfortable, efficient and legible style in preparation for secondary education.

Lesson Organisation

In Years 1 and 2, handwriting lessons are typically taught three/four times per week for 10–15 minutes.

- Year 1 practice links closely to phonics learning.
- Year 2 practice links to spelling patterns and joins.

Where possible, children should be seated so they can clearly see the teacher's modelling. Children requiring additional support should be positioned where adults can provide close guidance and monitoring.

In Years 3 and 4, handwriting is taught through discrete lessons 2–3 times per week. Sessions focus on developing fluency, consistency, accurate joins and presentation skills. Children are encouraged to apply their handwriting skills across all curriculum areas, and teachers provide regular verbal feedback and live marking to reinforce high expectations.

In Years 5 and 6, handwriting teaching becomes more personalised as children develop their own fluent and efficient style. Although discrete lessons may take place less frequently, expectations for neat, joined handwriting remain high across all subjects. Teachers continue to monitor handwriting and presentation closely, providing additional support and intervention where necessary to ensure all pupils maintain legibility, fluency and consistency in preparation for secondary school.

Inclusion and Support

At Thorngumbald Primary School, handwriting teaching is adapted to ensure all pupils can access learning and make progress.

Support may include:

- Additional adult modelling
- Scaffolding and pre-teaching
- Pencil grips
- Wider-lined paper
- Writing slopes
- Fine motor interventions
- Short targeted handwriting sessions

Where handwriting presents a significant barrier, reasonable adjustments such as alternative recording methods or assistive technology may be used.

Our aim is for every child to develop confidence, independence and pride in their written presentation.

Supporting Left Handed Writers

Left-handed children will be encouraged to:

- Position their paper at an approximate 40-degree clockwise angle.
- Use their right hand to steady the paper.
- Hold the pencil approximately 2–3 cm from the tip to improve visibility and reduce smudging.

Staff will ensure left-handed pupils are supported in developing a comfortable and effective writing position.