



Gateway Primary School Policy Cover Sheet

Policy Name:	Handwriting Policy
Adopted at / by:	FGB
Signed on behalf of the Governing Board	
Name:	Kevin Moyes
Date:	September 2026
Signed on behalf of Headteacher:	pp. 
Name:	Kayleigh Anstee
Date:	September 2026
Review period:	1 year
Date of next Review	September 2027

Policy Statement

At Gateway Primary School, we believe that fluent, legible handwriting is an essential life skill that supports communication, learning and achievement across the curriculum. Effective handwriting enables pupils to record their ideas confidently and efficiently, reducing cognitive load and allowing greater focus on composition and content. The act of forming the letters helps children physically remember spellings and how to read the words.

We are committed to providing a consistent, progressive approach to handwriting throughout the school. Through explicit teaching, regular practice and high expectations, pupils will develop handwriting that is accurate, fluent, legible and increasingly automatic.

This policy outlines the school's approach to handwriting from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Year 6 and establishes clear expectations for teaching, learning, assessment and presentation.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Develop correct pencil grip, posture and letter formation from the earliest stages of learning.
- Ensure a consistent approach to handwriting across the school.
- Provide clear progression in handwriting skills from EYFS to Year 6.
- Enable pupils to develop fluent, joined handwriting.
- Promote pride in presentation across all curriculum areas.
- Support pupils with additional needs through appropriate adaptations and interventions.
- Ensure handwriting is assessed and monitored effectively throughout a pupil's school journey.

Principles of Effective Handwriting Teaching

At Gateway Primary School:

- Handwriting is taught explicitly and systematically.
- Teachers model correct letter formation and joins.
- Handwriting is practised regularly through short, focused sessions.
- Expectations are consistent across all classes.
- Once taught, handwriting skills are applied across all curriculum areas.
- Individual needs and developmental differences are recognised and supported.
- Legibility, fluency and efficiency are prioritised over rigid uniformity.

The school uses the Letter-join website to support handwriting teaching and progression.

Posture and Pencil Grip

All staff are responsible for reinforcing correct posture and pencil grip.

Pupils should be encouraged to:

- Sit with their feet flat on the floor.
- Sit with their back against the chair and their bottom at the back of the seat.
- **Position paper appropriately for their dominant hand.**
Pupils should position and angle their paper to support a comfortable, efficient writing posture. Right-handed pupils should place the paper slightly to the right and tilt it slightly to the left, while left-handed pupils should place the paper slightly to the left and tilt it slightly to

the right. This helps maintain a relaxed wrist position, promotes correct letter formation, improves visibility of written work, and supports fluent, legible handwriting.

- Hold their pencil using a tripod grip wherever possible.
- Use their non-writing hand to steady the paper.

Correct positioning should be taught, modelled and reinforced regularly by all staff. Adults should make adjustments sensitively, recognising that some pupils, particularly those with SEND or established handwriting habits, may require adaptations to achieve comfort and efficiency.

Writing surfaces and seating should be appropriate to the size of the child, enabling forearms to rest comfortably on the table and shoulders to remain relaxed. Poor positioning can impact letter formation, stamina and writing fluency.

We will remind children of the acronym 'BBCFFF'; (Bottom back of chair, feet flat on floor) to help support their posture when handwriting.

Pencil grip will be monitored regularly, particularly in EYFS and Key Stage 1, and support provided where required. An assessment grid is used in the front of writing books in EYFS and Year 1 to track pencil grip and identify changes.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Intent

In EYFS, the focus is on developing the physical foundations necessary for successful handwriting alongside secure letter formation.

Teaching Approach

Autumn Term

Formal handwriting lessons are not taught during the first term.

During this period:

- Children develop fine and gross motor skills.
- Letter formation is introduced through phonics teaching.
- Children practise writing their names.
- Adults model correct letter formation consistently.

Motor Skills Development

From September, all EYFS pupils will participate in twice-daily 'corefulness' sessions to develop:

- Core strength
- Balance
- Postural control
- Crossing the midline
- Fine motor coordination
- Gross motor coordination

Spring and Summer Terms

After Christmas:

- Daily five-minute handwriting sessions are introduced.
- Teachers explicitly model letter formation.
- Pupils practise groups of letters, particularly those requiring additional consolidation.
- Letter formation is taught by encouraging pupils to write the letters independently rather than through tracing over pre-written letters.

Assessment

Pencil grip and handwriting development are assessed termly using the following graphic:

Name:

Date:

☐  Dynamic Tripod Grasp	☐  Static Tripod Grasp	☐  Static Quadropod Grasp	☐  Four Finger Grasp	☐  Index Grasp
☐  Interdigital Brace Grasp	☐  Thumb Wrap Grasp	☐  Thumb Tuck Grasp	☐  Transpalmar Grasp	☐ Other

Information is shared with Year 1 teachers to ensure continuity of support during transition.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2)

Year 1

The priority in Year 1 is secure letter formation. Teachers will ensure that pupils develop secure formation of all lower-case and capital letters before introducing joins. Particular attention will be given to starting and finishing letters in the correct place, maintaining consistent size, and distinguishing between commonly reversed letters such as b/d and p/q.

Autumn Term

Pupils will:

- Consolidate correct letter formation.
- Develop understanding of ascenders and descenders.
- Practise writing on lined paper.
- Build confidence and consistency in letter size and orientation.

Spring Term Onwards

Pupils begin to learn pre-cursive handwriting through:

- Lead-in strokes
- Exit strokes
- Preparation for joining

Handwriting remains a discrete skill until pupils demonstrate sufficient confidence and accuracy.

Year 2

Pupils continue to:

- Develop pre-cursive and joined handwriting.
- Use handwriting books which are lined for ascenders and descenders.
- Improve consistency in letter size and spacing.
- Apply handwriting skills across the curriculum.
- Build fluency and stamina.

Letter-join lessons will be delivered systematically, beginning with the easiest joins before progressing to more complex joins and word-level application. Pupils will be given regular opportunities to practise joins in meaningful writing contexts as well as discrete handwriting sessions. By the end of year 2, cursive handwriting will become the expected style for written work.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

Years 3 and 4

Teaching focuses on embedding and securing joined handwriting.

Pupils will:

- Revisit joining techniques.
- Practise challenging joins.
- Improve consistency of size, spacing and alignment.
- Increase fluency and automaticity.

Handwriting will be taught through a "little and often" approach, with regular short practice sessions integrated into literacy teaching.

By the end of Year 4, most pupils are expected to write fluently using a joined cursive style.

Year 3 and 4 will work through the joins section of letterjoin using these joins in words alongside the joins.

Years 5 and 6

Teaching focuses on refinement and efficiency.

Pupils will:

- Consolidate fluent cursive handwriting.
- Address individual areas for development.
- Improve writing speed while maintaining legibility.
- Develop a personal handwriting style where appropriate.

Teachers recognise that individual handwriting styles naturally emerge and that legibility and effectiveness remain the primary considerations.

Expectations for Handwriting Across the Curriculum

Handwriting expectations apply across all curriculum subjects, including English, mathematics, science, humanities and foundation subjects. Pupils should be encouraged to view handwriting as an integral part of communication rather than a discrete skill taught only during handwriting lessons.

Teachers will maintain high expectations whilst recognising that presentation standards may vary according to the purpose of the task. Drafting, note-taking and working mathematically may require different levels of presentation from published or final pieces.

Teacher Modelling

Consistent adult modelling is essential in developing effective handwriting habits.

Staff will:

- Use the agreed school handwriting style when modelling writing.
- Model correct letter formation using agreed language.
- Demonstrate appropriate joins and spacing.
- Draw pupils' attention to posture, pencil grip and paper position during handwriting activities.
- Provide immediate corrective feedback where misconceptions arise.

All handwritten displays, examples and resources should reflect the agreed Gateway Primary School handwriting style wherever possible.

Exercise Book Progression

The school adopts the following progression:

Year Group	Book Type
EYFS	Wide-lined paper
Year 1	12mm lined books, progressing to 10–12mm as appropriate
Year 2	8mm handwriting books when ready
Years 3–6	Standard school exercise books

Movement between book types may be adjusted according to individual pupil needs.

Assessment and Monitoring

Handwriting forms part of ongoing teacher assessment.

Teachers will assess pupils using the school's assessment language and consider:

- Letter formation
- Orientation
- Consistency of size
- Spacing between letters and words
- Quality of joins
- Alignment on the line
- Fluency and writing stamina
- Overall legibility

Assessment outcomes will inform future teaching, intervention planning and transition discussions.

Handwriting information will be:

- Included in transition meetings.
- Shared between teachers annually.
- Used to identify pupils requiring additional support.

For pupils experiencing persistent difficulties beyond Year 4, further assessment may be undertaken using recognised screening tools to identify barriers such as:

- Letter formation difficulties
- Spacing issues
- Alignment difficulties
- Fine motor challenges

Support and Inclusion

Gateway Primary School is committed to ensuring all pupils can experience success in handwriting. Early identification of handwriting difficulties is important. Where concerns persist despite quality-first teaching, staff may seek advice from the SENDCo, occupational therapists or other relevant professionals as appropriate.

Additional Support

Interventions may include:

- Additional handwriting practice
- Alternative recording approaches
- Grapheme-focused activities
- Adapted resources

SEND

Where appropriate, adaptations may include:

- Larger lined paper
- Alternative writing tools
- Pencil grips
- Visual prompts
- Coloured line guides

Professional judgement will determine appropriate expectations for individual pupils.

Left-Handed Pupils

Staff will provide support tailored to the needs of left-handed writers, including:

- Appropriate paper positioning
- Suitable seating arrangements
- Alternative writing equipment where necessary
- Modelling the letters or words on the left hand side of the page.

Established handwriting habits will not be unnecessarily altered where handwriting remains effective and legible.

Resources

The following resources support handwriting teaching:

- Letter-join
- Handwriting Repeater
- Word generation tools
- Teacher modelling
- Classroom handwriting displays – each class to have the same alphabet from letterjoin to be displayed in the classroom.
- Individual pupil reference sheets
- Tabletop handwriting prompts

All resources used within school should reflect the agreed Gateway Primary School handwriting style.

The English Lead will monitor external resources to ensure consistency with school expectations.

Classroom Environment

All classrooms will maintain consistent handwriting displays.

Displays will:

- Use the agreed school handwriting style.
- Present two letters per page.
- Be produced using matte finishes or non-laminated materials where possible to reduce glare.
- Include clear examples of letter formation and joins.

All pupils will have access to:

- Personal handwriting reference sheets.
- Tabletop handwriting prompts in writing areas.

Where appropriate, reference sheets may also be included in homework books to support parents.

Pen Use

Gateway Primary School does not operate a formal pen licence system.

From Year 5 onwards, teachers may permit pupils to use pen when they consistently demonstrate:

- Fluent cursive handwriting
- Good presentation
- Appropriate handwriting control

The decision remains at the professional discretion of the class teacher.

Excellent handwriting will be recognised through the school's wider reward systems.

Pens may be used as a publishing opportunity across the curriculum.

Parental Engagement

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting handwriting development.

The school will:

- Share information about the school's handwriting approach.
- Provide guidance on correct letter formation where appropriate.
- Signpost parents to suitable Letter-join resources.
- Encourage consistency between home and school handwriting practices.

Where pupils require additional support, teachers may provide specific activities or advice for home practice.

Monitoring and Review

The English Lead will monitor implementation of this policy through:

- Learning walks
- Book scrutiny
- Pupil discussions
- Staff feedback
- Assessment information

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

Gateway Primary School believes that high-quality handwriting supports high-quality learning and effective communication. Through consistent teaching, clear expectations and appropriate support, all pupils will develop handwriting that is fluent, legible, efficient and fit for purpose, equipping them with a valuable lifelong skill for education and beyond.

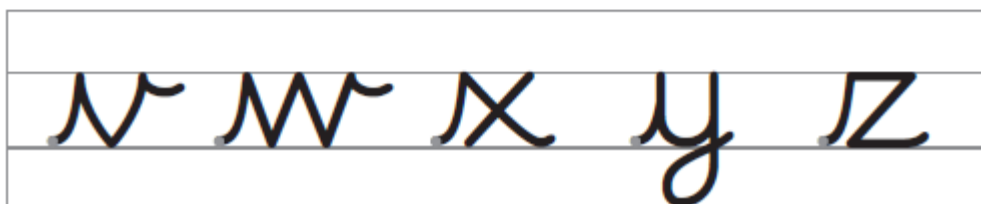
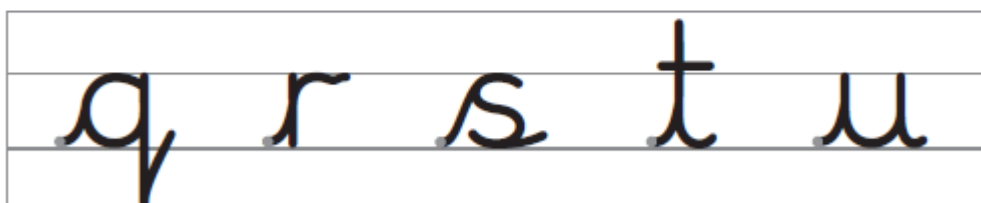
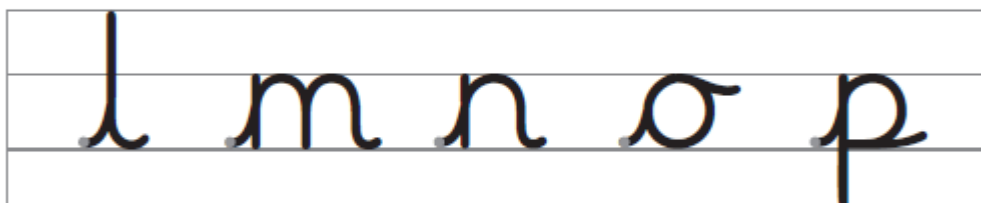
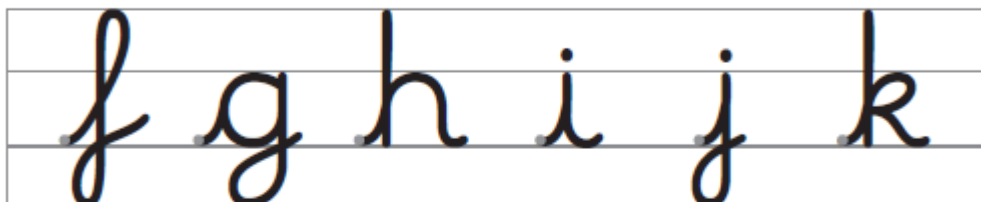
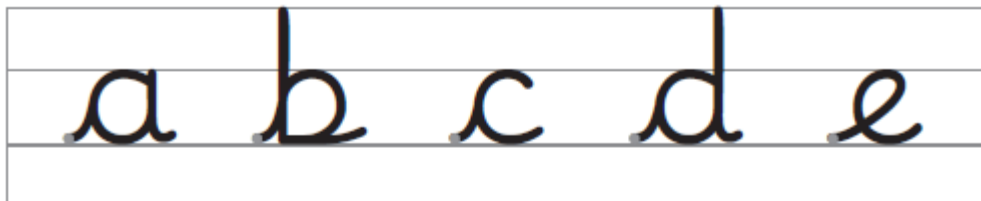
Appendices

<https://corefulness.com/programmes/#theprogramme>

<https://www.letterjoin.co.uk/>

Agreed letter formation.

Cursive lowercase letters



Letter-join 

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z