



Ireby Church of England Primary School

English handwriting

Signed by:

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_____ Head Teacher

Date: 15th November 2025

Next review date: November 2026 or sooner if required

School Governance:

Responsibility of the school leadership

Christian vision: 'Created to do Good' Ephesians 2:10

By instilling our values through our learning and play, it is our hope that our children develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. We want our children to know that they are part of our local, national and global community and that, in their own way, they can help to make our world better place.

Our Aim

To build children's English skills and knowledge towards specific '**end points**' at each key stage of their learning, and commit this learning to their long-term memory, enabling them to know more and do more and fulfil our Christian vision of being healthy, active citizens who can contribute positively to making our world a better place both during their time at Ireby and beyond.

English Handwriting

Our Intent:

At Ireby, we want our children to be able to write with confidence – able to join letters and write with fluidity, accuracy and legibility. Even in our computerised world, we believe that handwriting is still relevant – whether it is jotting down a shopping list, writing a birthday card, taking down a phone message, completing a form at the bank or writing extended pieces of work across the curriculum... handwriting is part of our daily lives. We want our children to embrace handwriting tasks with enthusiasm and confidence – producing quality work across the curriculum that they are proud of.

Implementation

At Ireby Church of England Primary School, we follow the RWI programme for the early stages of taught handwriting and aim to make the physical process of writing – handwriting – enjoyable from the start, so that children can see themselves as 'writers'.

We use the RWI mnemonics – memory pictures – to help children visualise the letter or join before they write it down. Therefore, children learn the letter formation alongside learning the sound.

We ensure that children practise handwriting under the guidance of a teacher so they do not develop habits that will be difficult to undo later. In addition to this, we place emphasis on being 'writing ready' by teaching the children how to adopt an appropriate writing posture. We encourage writing to take place with:

feet flat on the floor
bottom at the back of the chair
body one fist from the table
shoulders down and relaxed
back leaning forward slightly
left/right hand holding the page
left/right hand ready in a tripod grip

In order to support our children in learning to write, we ensure that the classroom environment allows for them to stay focused and attentive to their task.

In addition to practising writing, we recognise and value the importance of developing children's fine and gross motor skills to enable them to have the strength required for pencil grip accuracy and posture.

We ensure that children have opportunities to target their fine motor skills with purposeful tasks in the

learning environment, as well as engaging in whole class activities like 'Funky Fingers.' To support children's gross motor development, we have a variety of active opportunities for body strengthening in the outdoor learning environment.

Read Write Inc stages of Handwriting development:

There are 3 stages of handwriting using the Read Write Inc programme.

Stage 1a:

During Stage 1 children learn correct letter formation using the same picture mnemonics they have already learnt in the Set 1 sound lessons.

These letters are taught in handwriting groups:

'Around' letters: c a o d g q

'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y

'Curly' letters: e f s

'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x.

During these early stages, children write on plain paper.

Stage 1b:

Once children can form the letters correctly, they learn how to place the letters on the line and of relative size. Children are encouraged to continue using the picture mnemonics help children to visualise the size and placement.

The Read Write Inc programme uses the boat and waterline as a guide for children to learn to form their letters within size and orientation. See below:

Some small letters are called 'boat letters': a c e i m n o r s u v w x z

Letters that are written below the line are called 'water letters': g j p q y

Tall letters are called 'sun letters': b d h k l t f

At this stage, children are encouraged to write on wide-lined paper.

Stage 2

During Stage 2, children are now taught that they are going to use new characters to help them develop a grown-up style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing. New pictures will help them to visualise the new shapes.

The children are introduced to the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.

The six sisters – Annie, Dina, Gabi, Olivia, Carina and Queenie – all look the same. Their mother tells them that they must all have a different haircut so people can tell them apart!

The uncles – Uncle Umberto and Uncle Yaseen – look just like the sisters, except they are bald on the top of their heads.

The family have a dog and a bunny whose faces are very similar too, but they have long ears.

(See Read Write Inc Stage 2 Handwriting document for further guidance and explanation).

Stage 3

The final handwriting stage within Read Write Inc, introduces the children to two joins:

The arm join (diagonal)

The washing line join (horizontal)

Both joins have three variations.

(See Read Write Inc Stage 3 Handwriting document for further guidance and explanation).

In EYFS, children are supported from the earliest stages of learning to write. Children are taught letter formation in conjunction with their **daily RWI Phonics programme**. Children are taught phrases (as set out by RWI) to aid retention and skill when forming each letter.

Handwriting is taught daily within RWI sessions. There are also additional handwriting sessions where children use a workbook, when appropriate, to support letter formation. A clear focus on posture, pencil grip, fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination is planned for and provided within these lessons and the wider curriculum.

The formation of numbers 0 - 9 are also taught.

In Year 1, conditions are clearly set and created for good writing: atmosphere, seating and posture, and pencil grip, as well as continuing to develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Each pupil has a workbook that has a flap on the front cover which reminds children how to prepare for writing. Handwriting is actively taught and teachers model how children should sit, how they should hold their pencil and how they should position their paper on the desk.

All of the lower-case and capital letters are covered with clear and consistent instructions about how to start and finish letters.

The digits 0-9 are clearly taught and the letters are grouped into sets based on how they are formed, and children practise these in a cumulative manner.

In Year 2, children revise the previously-learned joins with an emphasis on relative height. Children recap their learning of lower-case and capital letters and practise forming them with consistency. Children are also given the opportunity to continue to practise using print letters, and are reminded that some letters are best left unjoined when next to other letters.

In Years 3 and 4, children continue to practise and develop their handwriting skills. The idea of writing with a slant is introduced for the first time. Pupils are provided with practice in joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes as well as the 'break letters' that are best left unjoined. There is an emphasis on spacing letters consistently and on keeping ascenders and descenders in proportion. The teaching of handwriting is linked heavily to our Read, Write, Inc spellings and teachers use [handwriting repeater app](#) to model effective handwriting. Pupils are taught to self-assess their own writing against set criteria and use specially purchased handwriting books to work in. As pupils travel through KS 2, so there is an expectation that standards reached in these handwriting books, transfer in to all writing.

At Years 5-6

Time allocated for Handwriting:

Children in EYFS and Key Stage One have daily 10 minutes handwriting sessions a week.

Children in KS2 have 5x 10 minute handwriting session a week throughout Key Stage 2.

Handwriting expectations are reinforced daily in every lesson.

Impact

Our expectation is that all children reach our required handwriting standard by the end of lower Key Stage 2. In upper Key Stage 2, specific support will be targeted as required and teachers will model and reinforce handwriting expectations in every lesson.

Organisation

EYFS are taught in their class, Year 1 – 3 are taught together, Year 4 to 6 are taught as a class.

Handwriting endpoints: Key Stages 1 and 2

	Statutory Requirements	Non-Statutory Notes and Guidance
Year 1, Age 5–6	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.	<p>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.</p> <p>Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</p>
Year 2, Age 6–7	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 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.	<p>Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.</p>
Years 3–4, Age 7–9	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined• increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).	<p>Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>
Years 5–6, Age 10–11	<p>Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters	<p>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task. 	style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra; and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.
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Monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of this policy

The headteacher and English subject leader are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy towards meeting our stated vision and aims. This will be achieved through:

Activity	Frequency
Lesson observations	Our English leader will sample English lessons during the year
Pupil voice	Samples on English during year, Governors reading to children weekly including PPG
Collecting and evaluating summative assessment	Termly Teachers will review learning towards 'end points' and record data on Scholarpack for evaluation by the subject leader

The role of governors

Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning;
- check teaching methods in the light of health and safety regulations;
- seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management both promote good-quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-review processes, which include reports from the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, and a review of the continuing professional development of staff.

Monitoring and review of this policy

Senior leaders monitor the school's English policy so that we can take account of new initiatives and research or any changes in the English curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years or sooner if required.