WOODMANSEY CE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Building Strong Foundations · Unlocking Potential · Inspiring a Generation

Handwriting Policy

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Approved by: Governing Body

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Next Review: September 2029

1. Relationship Between Charter, Policy and Planning

Handwriting supports Woodmansey's vision by giving pupils the physical fluency to communicate ideas, participate in learning and present work with confidence and pride.

This policy sits beneath the Handwriting and Writing Charters and should be read alongside the Early Reading & Phonics, Spelling and Writing policies. The handwriting progression is the long-term sequence; year-group expectations and practice plans provide unit-level detail; classroom modelling and feedback enact that progression.

2. Subject Overview

Handwriting is a transcription skill. Correct habits in posture, grip, movement and letter formation reduce cognitive demand so pupils can concentrate on composition, spelling and meaning.

Woodmansey teaches handwriting explicitly, cumulatively and frequently. In Reception, formation is coordinated with the adopted phonics programme and the Little Wandle handwriting sequence where used. Thereafter, pupils develop secure print, appropriate joins, consistent size and spacing, speed and an individual legible style.

3. Intent

Our intent is that every pupil writes comfortably, legibly and with sufficient automaticity for handwriting not to restrict learning or expression.

- develop core strength, shoulder stability and fine-motor control
- establish an efficient pencil grip, posture and paper position
- form lower-case letters, capitals and digits in the correct direction
- develop consistent orientation, size, proportion and spacing
- introduce joining only when individual letter formation is secure
- build fluency and stamina through short, regular practice and authentic writing
- provide timely adaptations for pupils whose physical or sensory needs create barriers.

4. Implementation

i. Progression from Movement to Fluency

The progression moves from gross-motor patterns and pre-writing strokes to lower-case letter families, capitals, digits, digraphs and trigraphs, secure print, joins and fluent application. Teachers do not accelerate pupils into joining when this would consolidate poor formation.

ii. Explicit Teaching and Modelling

Adults model from the pupil's viewpoint, naming the movement, start point, direction and finish. Pupils watch, rehearse through large movement or tracing where useful, practise with feedback and then apply in words or sentences. Models match the agreed school script.

iii. Practice and Application

Practice is short, focused and frequent. It targets a precise movement or family and is followed by application in meaningful writing. Excessive copying or decorative presentation is not a substitute for direct teaching.

iv. Posture, Grip and Equipment

Pupils are taught to sit with stable feet, an upright but relaxed posture and the non-writing hand stabilising the paper. Paper angle, pencil choice, line spacing and writing surface are adjusted where necessary. Adults address tension, fatigue or pain rather than praising endurance through discomfort.

v. Links with Phonics and Spelling

In early reading, letter formation uses the graphemes and language of Little Wandle so pupils are not asked to reconcile competing models. In later spelling, handwriting practice may reinforce patterns and morphemes, but spelling instruction remains focused on word structure rather than repeated copying.

vi. Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

Adaptations may include a sloped board, alternative pencil or grip, larger line spacing, reduced copying, movement breaks, explicit occupational advice, assistive technology or an alternative recording method. Adaptation aims for efficient communication and independence, not a cosmetic standard.

vii. Challenge and Individual Style

When handwriting is secure, pupils develop speed, consistency and an efficient personal style. Greater attainment is not shown by elaborate joins; it is shown by legibility, control, fluency and the ability to adapt presentation to purpose.

viii. EYFS Foundations

EYFS provision develops bilateral coordination, hand strength, manipulation, crossing the midline, pattern and purposeful mark-making. Direct formation teaching begins alongside phonics, with multi-sensory practice supporting rather than replacing pencil-and-paper learning.

5. Impact

Pupils should leave Woodmansey able to write for sustained periods with a legible, consistent and increasingly fluent hand, selecting presentation appropriate to the task and using technology when it is the most effective reasonable adjustment.

Pupils should be able to:

- form letters and digits accurately from the correct starting point
- use an efficient posture, grip and paper position
- control size, proportion, spacing and alignment
- join appropriately without sacrificing legibility
- write at a functional speed with growing stamina
- present work clearly and take informed pride in improvement.

6. Assessment

Assessment is diagnostic and practical. Teachers observe movement, posture, grip, formation, spacing, speed, fatigue and application in ordinary work. The purpose is to identify the next teaching point or necessary adaptation.

Presentation is not confused with subject understanding. A pupil's scientific, historical or mathematical attainment is not reduced because handwriting is difficult when another recording method demonstrates the learning.

7. Leadership, Monitoring and Review

The English subject leader supports staff in understanding the curriculum, maintaining consistency and securing strong outcomes for all pupils. Leadership is developmental: monitoring identifies strengths, tests whether the intended curriculum is being learned and leads to precise support, coaching or curriculum refinement.

Monitoring will include:

- reviewing handwriting practice and ordinary writing across subjects
- checking consistency of models, language and progression
- observing posture, grip and teaching routines
- identifying pupils requiring targeted practice or specialist advice
- supporting staff with modelling and reasonable adjustments
- evaluating whether transcription supports rather than restricts composition.

This policy is reviewed every three years, or sooner when statutory expectations, the adopted programme, school priorities or evaluated pupil need require a change. Any revision must remain aligned with the relevant charter, long-term planning and unit-plan hierarchy.

8. Subject Specific Pedagogy and Non-Negotiables

The following expectations preserve the distinctive quality of handwriting at Woodmansey. They should be read alongside the relevant charter, long-term plan, unit or medium-term planning and agreed teaching resources.

Correct Formation before Joining

Letters are taught with consistent start points and movement. Joining begins only when lower-case formation and orientation are secure.

Model from the Pupil's Viewpoint

Teachers model live, large enough to see, using the agreed script and verbal movement cues. Displayed alphabets match classroom teaching.

Short, Frequent, Focused Practice

Practice has a named focus and immediate feedback. Long copying tasks, handwriting as punishment and indiscriminate rewriting are not used.

Comfort and Access

Pain, persistent fatigue or significant motor difficulty prompts adaptation and, where appropriate, liaison with the SENDCo and specialists. Neatness is never pursued at the expense of access or wellbeing.

Application Matters

Pupils are expected to carry taught habits into ordinary writing, while teachers distinguish between a formation lesson and a composition lesson so feedback remains manageable.