



Handwriting Policy 2026

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The Oxhey Handwriting Policy in respect of the Children First Learning Partnership has been discussed and adopted by the Local Advisory Board.

Chair of Local Advisory Board:

Mrs. Wendy Parrott

Responsible Officer:

Head of School Mrs K. Proffitt

Agreed and ratified by the Local Advisory Board on:

11.05.26

To be reviewed:

May 2028



Oxhey First School

Handwriting Policy 2026

The overall intent of our school curriculum is to:

Recognise Uniqueness: in our pupils, staff, resources and whole school community.

Be Inclusive: recognising learning styles, learning needs at all levels and providing solutions to any barriers to learning we encounter.

Engage and Inspire: through knowledge rich, highly enriched, progressive and purposeful contexts.

Promote Aspiration: offering challenge, accountability and responsibility for their learning.

Create Citizens of the Future: who thrive on responsibility, see difference as a strength of our community and use democracy to embed their own values and beliefs.

Our English curriculum strives to drive all of these intentions and links very closely to the achievement and development of them all.

Intent:

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All teachers prioritise the teaching of handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Our school uses Penpals for Handwriting to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole-body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting (see appendix 1 and 2).
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked to grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practise and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

Implementation:

We use the National Curriculum programme of study for Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation alongside The Writing Framework guidance (July 2025).

Progression:

Penpals enables us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities and whole-body movement (EYFS - YN and YR).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (YR/Y1).

- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically. At the end of Year 1, children will begin to join some pairs of letters within words.
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y4).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words.

In using Penpals, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children’s handwriting should be ‘sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum’ and that ‘problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say’.

- In **Nursery**, handwriting begins with the development of gross and fine motor skills, which are essential for building the strength, coordination and control needed for effective writing. Fine and gross motor development opportunities are planned for throughout the year and interwoven within the curriculum. Enhancements within continuous provision, as well as more structured activities, such as Dough Disco and Squiggle While You Wiggle, develop children’s vital fine and gross motor control ready for writing.
- In **Reception**, children will focus on developing the necessary fine and gross motor skills in readiness for handwriting. Initially, children practise a range of patterns including dots, waves, and zig-zags, progressing on to practise forming individual letters. The enabling environment, both indoors and outdoors, offers plentiful opportunities for mark-making, letter formation and writing through dedicated formation stations and writing areas. These areas encourage children to practise and apply their skills independently and creatively across the curriculum. Staff provide high-quality modelling of correct letter formation and use assessment to give timely feedback and corrections to ensure children develop accuracy and fluency, offering repeated practice where necessary.
- In **Year 1**, handwriting teaching builds on the foundations established in the Early Years and focuses on developing accuracy, fluency and stamina. In Year 1 correct letter formation should become an automatic habit. At the end of the Year 1, children will begin to join some pairs of letters within words. Staff provide high-quality modelling of correct letter formation and use assessment to give timely feedback and corrections to ensure children develop accuracy and fluency, offering repeated practice where necessary.
- In **Year 2**, once secure in accurate letter formation and orientation, children will learn all of the basic handwriting joins. Children will gradually be introduced to more pairs of letters that are joined in the same way. Frequent revision and practice of correct letter formation remain a priority, with teachers providing direct instruction and modelling to reinforce consistency. Pupils also practise transcriptional fluency through dictated sentences, reducing cognitive overload and supporting automaticity in writing. Adjustments and targeted support are provided where needed to ensure all pupils can progress confidently towards fluent, joined handwriting.
- In **Years 3 and 4**, children will be introduced to the idea of joining most of the letters in a word and to trickier joins such as joining from r, s and f. As the movement for joins becomes more familiar and fluent, the focus moves to develop a neat and even style by looking at size and proportion, parallel downwards strokes and spacing. By the end of Year 4, pupils should demonstrate a legible, joined handwriting style that is efficient and sustainable for longer writing tasks.

Inclusion and Accessibility:

Oxhey First School is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that all pupils, including those with SEND, have access to high-quality handwriting instruction. Reasonable adjustments are made to support pupils with physical, sensory or learning needs, including the use of adapted equipment, alternative writing tools and adaptive teaching approaches and strategies. Children who are working significantly below their year group expectations will follow handwriting objectives that are appropriate to their developmental stage and where relevant, linked to their Personal Learning Plan (PLP) targets. These pupils will not be expected to join their writing until they have secured accurate letter formation. Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children and appropriate resources are available. Where appropriate and where handwriting is a barrier to writing outcomes, some children will be given increased access to word processing facilities. However, discreet handwriting instruction interventions remain a priority to ensure that gaps close. In addition, suitable resources such as pencils designed to promote a correct grip, pencil grips or other adaptations will be provided to meet individual needs.

Handwriting Non-Negotiables at Oxhey:

The teaching of handwriting is a priority and all staff have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Handwriting is a fundamental life skill and an essential foundation for learning. Expectations for handwriting apply in **all** subjects and on **all** occasions.

- Handwriting sessions follow the intended sequence of teaching: Teach, Practise, Assess, Apply.
- All staff place emphasis on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Staff reinforce our agreed handwriting rules:
- Sit looking at the board
- Sit with both feet and all a four chair legs on the ground
- Place the paper at a comfortable angle.
- Always use a sharp pencil when writing.
- All letters should sit on the line, except those that have a descender.
- Lower case letters should all be the same height, unless they have ascenders.
- Capital letters should be the same size as ascenders.

Assessment:

Beginning of year assessments will (Y1-4) will be used to assess the previous year's work and give an indication of what needs to be consolidated. End of term checks will be used to judge progress and celebrate success. Incorrect letter/number formation will be addressed in the moment through marking and feedback and through handwriting sessions. Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it. Penpals assessment tools will also be used to track progress and inform planning, intervention and reporting.

Impact:

We aim for our children to leave in Year 4 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practised in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities across the

curriculum. Handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and we know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Role of Leaders

- Plan an effective and varied schedule of monitoring including moderation, which is triangulated through our internal school, leader and triad moderation, so that the desired outcomes and impact is achieved.
- Respond quickly and in a supportive manner to overcome barriers to implementation and impact.
- Use assessment information to provide effective CPD and challenge.
- Provide clear updates to the Local Advisory Board, Headteacher and SLT.

Version Control and History

Version	Review Date	Changes Made	By