Handwriting Policy

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1. Purpose

Handwriting is a core part of writing. Clear, fluent handwriting allows pupils to record ideas efficiently, communicate meaning and take pride in the presentation of their work. Ashton Primary School teaches handwriting explicitly and systematically, while reinforcing it whenever pupils write across the curriculum.

The school uses two aligned approaches. In EYFS and Year 1, handwriting is taught through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised and uses Sassoon Infant font. From Year 2 onwards, pupils follow the Letter-join handwriting scheme and school materials use the appropriate Letter-join font.

2. Aims

- develop correct letter formation, orientation and placement from the earliest stages.
- build an efficient pencil grip, appropriate posture and control of writing tools.
- enable pupils to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed and stamina.
- develop a consistent joined style when pupils are developmentally ready.
- help pupils adapt their handwriting for different tasks, including quick notes, labels, forms and polished final pieces.
- establish high and consistent expectations for presentation across the curriculum.
- ensure that pupils who experience difficulty receive suitable adaptations, practice and intervention.
- develop confidence, independence and pride in written work.

3. Whole school approach

Consistency is essential. Pupils should see the same letter shapes and language modelled in teaching, feedback, classroom resources and displays. Staff must follow the approach for the phase in which they are working.

Phase	Teaching approach	Font for resources	Expected handwriting style
EYFS	Little Wandle	Sassoon Infant	Print formation matched to Little Wandle
Year 1	Little Wandle	Sassoon Infant	Secure, correctly formed print
Years 2 to 6	Letter-join	Letter-join	Progression towards fluent, legible joined handwriting

4. Expectations for staff

All staff who work with pupils are responsible for reinforcing the agreed handwriting approach. Staff must:

- model the correct phase-appropriate handwriting whenever they write on whiteboards, interactive boards, flip charts or other shared surfaces.
- use the correct phase-appropriate handwriting when marking or providing written feedback in pupils' books.

- use Sassoon Infant font for EYFS and Year 1 displays, labels, worksheets and materials placed in pupils' books.
- use the appropriate Letter-join font for displays, labels, worksheets and materials placed in pupils' books from Year 2 onwards.
- use Letter-join font for shared whole-school displays unless the material is specifically intended for EYFS or Year 1.
- teach letter formation and joins using the vocabulary, demonstrations and progression of the relevant scheme.
- correct inaccurate formation sensitively and promptly so that unhelpful habits do not become embedded.
- maintain high but inclusive expectations and make reasonable adaptations where needed.

5. Teaching progression

EYFS

In Reception, pupils develop the physical foundations of handwriting alongside learning the Little Wandle letter formation phrases. Teaching is short, explicit and frequent, and is reinforced during phonics and independent provision. Activities may include gross-motor movement, shoulder and wrist strengthening, dough and tweezer work, pattern making, air writing, sensory trays, large-scale mark making and writing with increasingly precise tools.

Adults model lowercase and capital letters in line with Little Wandle. Pupils learn where to begin each letter, the direction of movement and how letters sit on a line. The emphasis is on secure formation, control and confidence; pupils are not expected to join letters.

Year 1

Year 1 continues the Little Wandle approach and uses Sassoon Infant font. Pupils consolidate correct lowercase and capital letter formation, orientation, spacing between words and the accurate placement of letters on the line. They develop consistency in letter size and the relationship between ascenders, descenders and x-height letters. Letters remain unjoined so that handwriting supports, and does not conflict with, the school's phonics teaching.

Year 2

In Year 2, pupils transition to Letter-join. Teachers revisit posture, grip, letter families, correct formation, relative size and spacing before introducing joins in line with the Letter-join sequence. Joining is introduced only when individual letter formation is sufficiently secure. Pupils practise the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed for joining and learn which letters are not joined.

Years 3 and 4

Pupils develop a consistent, legible joined style through regular practice. Teaching focuses on accurate joins, even spacing, appropriate letter size, parallel ascenders and descenders, writing on the line, increasing fluency and maintaining quality during longer pieces. Handwriting is reinforced through spelling, dictation and curriculum writing.

Years 5 and 6

Pupils refine a personal style that remains legible, fluent and efficient. Teaching develops speed, stamina and the ability to maintain presentation during sustained writing. Pupils learn to select an appropriate style for purpose, including joined handwriting for extended work and unjoined print or capitals for labels, diagrams, forms and other specific tasks. Targeted teaching continues for any pupil whose handwriting is not yet secure.

6. Lesson structure and frequency

Handwriting is taught through planned, discrete sessions at the frequency set out in the relevant scheme and year-group planning. Additional short practice is provided where assessment shows that it is needed. A typical session includes:

1. preparation through posture, grip and a brief physical or pattern warm-up.
2. clear teacher modelling, including the starting point, movement and verbal formation cue.
3. guided practice using appropriately lined paper or another suitable surface.
4. independent application to letters, words, sentences or curriculum content.
5. brief review and precise feedback linked to the teaching focus.

7. Posture, grip and paper position

Pupils are taught and reminded to:

- sit with their body facing the table, shoulders relaxed and both feet supported where possible.
- keep the non-writing hand on the paper to steady it.
- hold the pencil comfortably using an efficient grip that allows controlled movement without excessive pressure.
- position the paper at a slight angle and far enough from the body to allow the writing arm to move freely.
- maintain an appropriate distance between the eyes and the page.

<u>Left-handed pupils</u>

Left-handed pupils receive explicit modelling and may be taught individually or in a small group where helpful. They should normally sit to the left of a right-handed pupil to avoid competing for space. The paper should be placed slightly to the left and angled clockwise, with the hand kept below the writing line where possible. Pencils should be held far enough from the point to maintain a clear view of the writing. Resources and seating must be adjusted to the individual pupil rather than requiring an uncomfortable position.

8. Writing tools and resources

Pupils begin with developmentally appropriate tools, including chunky crayons, chalks, paintbrushes and soft pencils. As control develops, they move to standard pencils and appropriately lined paper. A suitable pencil should normally be used while formation and control are being established. Progression to a school-approved handwriting pen is based on consistent legibility, control and readiness rather than age alone.

Pencil grips, sloping boards, adapted paper, larger writing spaces, alternative pens or pencils and assistive technology may be used when these help a pupil write comfortably and successfully.

9. Presentation across the curriculum

The agreed handwriting expectations apply in every subject whenever pupils write by hand. Expectations should be appropriate to the task: a quick note may not require the same finish as a published piece, but writing should always be legible. Teachers explicitly teach pupils how presentation choices communicate meaning, including the use of headings, labels, lists, diagrams, printed letters and capital letters.

When pupils copy text, complete worksheets or use material placed in books, the typography must reinforce the phase approach. Resources must be checked before use so that letter shapes do not contradict those being taught.

10. Inclusion and SEND

All pupils are entitled to handwriting teaching that is ambitious and accessible. Difficulty with handwriting may arise from needs relating to fine-motor control, coordination, muscle tone, sensory processing, attention, vision, language, cognition or physical disability. Staff should identify the barrier before selecting support. Adaptations may include:

- additional modelling, overlearning and shorter practice periods.
- larger movements or surfaces before reducing the scale.
- pencil grips, alternative writing tools, sloping boards or adapted seating.
- paper with clearer lines, highlighted baselines, wider spacing or visual prompts.
- reduced copying demands and access to printed material.
- fine-motor or gross-motor activities linked to an assessed need.
- specialist advice or assistive technology where appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments must not lower expectations for communication or progress. Where handwriting creates a substantial barrier to recording, alternative methods may be used alongside continued development of functional handwriting, in line with the pupil's support plan and professional advice.

11. Assessment and feedback

Teachers assess handwriting through everyday work and focused practice. Assessment considers formation, orientation, size, spacing, alignment, joins, legibility, fluency, speed, stamina, posture and grip, as appropriate to the pupil's stage. Feedback should be brief, specific and modelled in the correct school style.

Where a pupil is not making expected progress, staff should check teaching consistency, attendance, opportunities for practice and any physical or learning barriers. A short, focused intervention may then be planned, reviewed and adjusted. Persistent or significant difficulty should be discussed with the English subject leader and SENCo.

12. Home school partnership

The school may share formation guidance and practice resources with parents and carers. Home practice should use the same approach as school: Little Wandle and Sassoon Infant in EYFS and Year 1, and Letter-join from Year 2 onwards. Practice should be short, encouraging and focused on accuracy rather than volume.

13. Roles and responsibilities

<u>The governing body and headteacher</u>

The governing body and headteacher ensure that the policy is implemented, resourced and reviewed appropriately.

<u>The English subject leader</u>

- maintains a clear progression and supports staff understanding of both schemes.
- ensures that the required fonts and teaching resources are available.

- monitors teaching, books, displays and pupil outcomes.
- identifies professional development and reports strengths and priorities to leaders.

Class teachers and support staff

Class teachers plan and teach the agreed programme, model it consistently, assess progress and arrange support where needed. Teaching assistants and other adults follow the teacher's direction and use the same formation, vocabulary and presentation expectations.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage positively with handwriting teaching, use the posture and grip that have been taught, respond to feedback, care for resources and take increasing responsibility for the legibility and presentation of their work.

14. Monitoring and review

Implementation will be monitored through lesson visits, discussion with pupils and staff, scrutiny of handwriting practice and curriculum books, and checks of classroom displays and resources. Monitoring will pay particular attention to consistency at the Year 1 to Year 2 transition and to the progress of pupils receiving additional support.

This policy will be reviewed every year, or sooner if national guidance, the school's chosen schemes or the needs of the school change.