

# Bethany School Writing Policy

## (February 2026)

### Intent

At Bethany School we value communication in all its forms and see it as a gift of God to be nurtured and developed. We recognise that God is a communicator, and one of the key ways that he communicates is through words, and in particular the written word. He also created us in His image, and one way that we see this is in our ability to communicate through language, speech, reading and writing. Therefore we recognise that writing is one of God's blessings to us and it is a privilege to be able to share this with children and foster a real love of this great gift.

We teach writing through a **biblical, topic-based curriculum** rooted in our nine core topics:

Beginnings, Work, Water, Dry Land, Living Things, People, Earth in Space, Communication and Nations

Through these topics, we ensure that pupils encounter a rich variety of texts, genres, purposes and audiences, aligned with the moral, spiritual, and intellectual formation we pursue as a Christian community.

While we do not follow the National Curriculum, our writing curriculum is designed to meet or exceed the expectations of the National Curriculum for English.

The underlying principles underpinning this policy are:

- Writing is built on strong transcription and sentence construction. Pupils learn clear letter formation, handwriting, and spelling before being expected to write at length. We ensure pupils master foundational skills early so that writing becomes fluent and automatic. (see Appendix A - teaching of handwriting).
- We understand that children who are fluent in both transcription and composition are the most successful writers, and teach both of these skills systematically.
- Writing instruction is explicit, sequenced, and developmental. We teach the writing process from oral composition → transcription → sentence-level mastery → extended composition. Pupils are given high-quality models, opportunities to rehearse, and structured practice. Teachers model writing regularly and thoughtfully, across subjects.
- Writing is strengthened through talk. Oral rehearsal, structured discussion, paired dialogue and group talk are embedded throughout our topics.
- Early identification and support for pupils who struggle is essential. We provide timely and targeted intervention based on ongoing assessment.
- Writing is for purpose, audience, and meaning. Across our biblical topics, pupils engage with authentic writing tasks with purpose and creativity.

### Implementation

Our nine biblical topics provide meaningful and coherent contexts for writing. In each topic, pupils encounter a rich variety of genres, including narrative, poetry, explanation, instruction, non-fiction, persuasive writing, and Biblical writing.

We ensure the following across all topics:

- Exposure to high-quality texts (Scripture and wider literature)
- Opportunities for modelling, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing
- Clear pathways for developing composition skills

- Writing tasks tied to real purposes (explaining, persuading, evaluating, reflecting, informing)
- Integration of Christian worldview throughout the teaching of writing in line with our school ethos
- transcription and composition skills are taught systematically

Although topic-based and biblically framed, our curriculum:

- Covers or exceeds all expected composition, spelling, grammar, and handwriting outcomes of the National Curriculum
- Follows the core progression expectations of the Writing Framework

### **Early Years (Reception)**

- Systematic teaching of letter formation, phonics-linked writing, oral composition, and fine-motor development
- Structured sentence writing using a mix of learned tricky words and taught phonics both through dictation and structured writing activities
- Opportunities to write in provision during play.
- Opportunities to write using topic contexts and for a range of purposes.

### **Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2)**

- Regular teaching of handwriting and spelling
- Structured sentence writing using a mix of learned tricky words and taught phonics both through dictation and structured writing activities
- Emphasis on sentence construction: capital letters, full stops, conjunctions
- Writing for purpose within topics: e.g., simple explanations, short narratives, psalms, recounts
- Mastery of print handwriting before introducing joins when pupils are ready

### **Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)**

- Consolidation of fluent, legible handwriting (joined if appropriate)
- Development of varied sentence structures, cohesive paragraphs, and purposeful vocabulary choices
- Exposure to increasingly complex genres: reports, biography, persuasive texts, scientific explanations, reflective Christian writing
- Explicit teaching of grammar and spelling following a clear progression
- Explicit teaching of note-taking skills
- Expectation that full sentences will be used for answering questions across the curriculum, with exceptions only for specific task types or SEND adaptations.

### **Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)**

- Writing across subjects with increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and structure
- Emphasis on clarity, evidence, reasoning, and accuracy
- Handwriting: pupils may continue with joined or print script depending on speed, fluency, and legibility
- Preparation for analytical, discursive, and extended writing genres
- Explicit strategic note taking techniques taught.
- Expectation that full sentences will be used for answering questions across the curriculum, with exceptions only for specific task types or SEND adaptations.

## **Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11)**

See also

- Bethany Systematic Synthetic Phonics Scheme
- English Curriculum Grid

## **Inclusion and SEND**

We believe every child is made in God's image and capable of growth. In order to ensure that all children are able to reach their potential and develop their writing skills fully we provide:

- Early identification of writing difficulties
- Tailored interventions (fine motor, handwriting support, spelling boosters, sentence construction programmes)
- Flexibility in tools: typing, dictation, alternative recording methods when needed
- Personalised targets on individual plans

## **Assessment and Monitoring**

- Frequent formative assessment in lessons of independent writing
- It is made clear in books if writing is 1:1 / guided / independent
- Monitoring of transcription and composition separately
- Internal moderation within departments to maintain consistency
- Learning walks
- Book Scrutinies
- Pupil progress meetings for identified children

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **School Leaders**

- Ensure curriculum alignment with Writing Framework and NC expectations
- Provide staff training in writing instruction
- Monitor teaching and learning

### **Teachers**

- Deliver explicit writing instruction
- Model high-quality writing and handwriting
- Provide purposeful writing opportunities within topics
- Use assessment to inform planning

### **Support Staff**

- Deliver interventions as directed
- Support transcription practice and writing rehearsals

## **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as appropriate.

Approved by Governors on: 9th February 2026

Review date:2029

## **Appendix A: Teaching of Handwriting**

We aim to:

- ensure a consistent, whole-school approach to handwriting and written presentation.
- support all pupils in achieving legible, fluent, and efficient handwriting throughout their schooling.
- enable students to develop automatic transcription skills (handwriting + spelling), freeing working memory for composition, creativity, and higher-order writing tasks.
- identify and support pupils (including those with additional needs / SEND) who require extra help with handwriting and transcription.

Core principles underlying the teaching of handwriting at Bethany School:

- Handwriting is a core component of writing — from Reception onwards at Bethany School we teach explicit teaching of handwriting and spelling.
- At Bethany School we teach handwriting in a sequenced, developmental way: beginning with pencil strokes, then letter formation, then moving to consistency, spacing, joining, fluency and speed.
- In early years and Year 1 we prioritise quality over quantity: training children to master transcription and sentence construction before being expected to write at length.
- Writing (composition) builds on transcription, and is not taught in isolation. We prioritise oracy, and ensure that oral composition is explicitly taught for strong foundations.
- A whole-school writing culture: all staff model good handwriting and high expectations for presentation. School leaders monitor high standards through learning walks and book scrutinies.

This policy applies to all pupils from Reception through Year 11, covering both primary (EYFS, KS1, KS2) and secondary phases where handwriting is required (especially in years before prevalent use of ICT / typing).

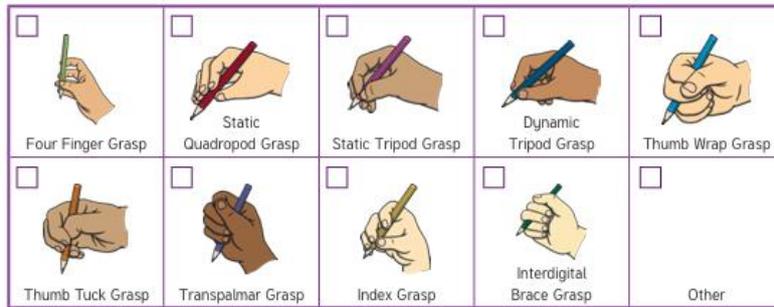
It applies to all written work across the curriculum (English and non-English subjects), unless an alternative medium (e.g. typed work) is agreed (e.g. for SEND, accessibility).

### **Implementation: Handwriting Progression & Teaching**

#### **Early Years & Key Stage 1 (Reception, Years 1–2)**

- Discreet handwriting instruction begins in Reception, with letter formation, posture, pencil grip, paper positioning taught explicitly.
- There are opportunities throughout the indoor and outdoor provision for children to develop body strength and coordination as well as fine motor skills.
- We systematically teach pencil movement to master the horizontal, diagonal, vertical and circular strokes needed for writing.
- In order to support motor memory and consistency we teach letters within ‘families’. The families that we use are ‘curly caterpillars’ (c,a,o,d,g,q,s,e); ‘long ladders’ (l,i,t,j, f), ‘one armed robots’ (r, h,b,p,n,m, k) and zig zag monsters (z,v,w,x).
- We provide frequent, discrete handwriting lessons (in addition to phonics/spelling work). In Reception handwriting is taught daily, initially on blank paper, and then moving onto wide lined books. This is in addition to fine motor skills which are developed in provision as well as guided activities. Letter formation and the main families are also taught using gross movements, using paints and other media in the outdoor area. In Year 1 handwriting continues to be taught in wide lined books. In Year 2/3 handwriting is taught using narrow lined books as children become ready.
- From Reception letters are taught as print letters (non cursive) with an exit stroke, focussing on correct formation, sizing, spacing, orientation. Joining letters is taught as children are ready from Year 2.

- Tripod grip is taught, and pencil grip is assessed using the following.



- Where appropriate pencil grips/ triangular pencils are used to assist children to use a tripod grip.

## Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

- When print formation is secure, joined handwriting is gradually introduced with discrete lessons in Y3/4 for joining, focusing on consistent size, spacing, legibility, and letter joins. Joined handwriting is the expectation for most children, but if children are unable to join and still maintain fluency and legibility, then print is allowed.
- Throughout these year groups there are regular opportunities for handwriting practice across the curriculum, in morning work and spelling practice in addition to discreet weekly lessons. Handwriting expectations are embedded into all subjects.
- We maintain emphasis on transcription fluency so pupils can shift cognitive load from handwriting to composition, planning and editing.
- In cases where children need extra support, this is addressed through the use of handwriting interventions and extra support within class.
- In the junior classes children are encouraged to write with either pen or pencil according to what helps them the most with successful transcription.

## Seniors (Years 7–11)

- At Bethany School we recognise that these principles are also relevant to our senior children: automatic transcription supports written work under time constraints (e.g. exams), and legible handwriting remains important for presentation and clarity.
- Teachers model good handwriting and maintain high expectations for presentation in all hand-written work. There are planned transition sessions at the end of each year and staff are able to look at books and previous work to see the expected standards for each child.
- In the seniors pupils are encouraged to use the handwriting style that gives them the greatest clarity, fluency and speed. Pupils who already use a joined script are encouraged to maintain it. Pupils who have more legible or efficient print handwriting are not required to join.
- For pupils with persistent handwriting difficulties (e.g. speed, legibility, SEND), Bethany School uses appropriate interventions: extra practice time, handwriting support, or, where appropriate, use of alternative media (e.g. typed work). Exam access arrangements are made in the light of individual need and are assessed and logged over time.

## Assessment, Monitoring & Intervention

- Leaders conduct regular book scrutinies across school where handwriting and presentation is considered.
- Teachers use both formative and summative assessment to track progress and identify pupils who are not achieving expected handwriting standards.

- We provide targeted interventions for pupils with weaknesses in the form of 1:1 intervention, extra handwriting practice, fine motor activities, differentiated teaching, or additional time / support.
- All staff use agreed handwriting style when writing on whiteboards, marking pupils' work, or modelling writing in order to reinforce expectations and provide clear models for pupils.

### **Inclusion & SEND / Accessibility**

- We recognise that handwriting difficulties may disproportionately affect pupils with SEND or motor coordination difficulties. We provide appropriate support, accommodations, and alternatives as needed.
- We are able to offer flexibilities where necessary: extra time, alternative media (typing), modified tasks — but maintain high expectations for content, composition and written expression (even if handwriting is adapted).
- We monitor progress carefully for pupils receiving support, and review regularly to adjust provision.

### **Staff Training, Resources & Curriculum**

- All teaching staff have received training on the expectations of the Writing Framework (handwriting, transcription, progression, letter formation, joined handwriting where used, inclusive practices) as part of their ongoing CPD.
- We provide the appropriate resources for effective handwriting instruction: lined handwriting books, guidelines for posture, pencil grips, paper positioning; regular dedicated handwriting lessons.
- Handwriting expectations are embedded into wider curriculum planning — not only in English lessons, but across all subjects, so pupils practise handwriting regularly in meaningful contexts (note-taking, written tasks, cross-curricular work).

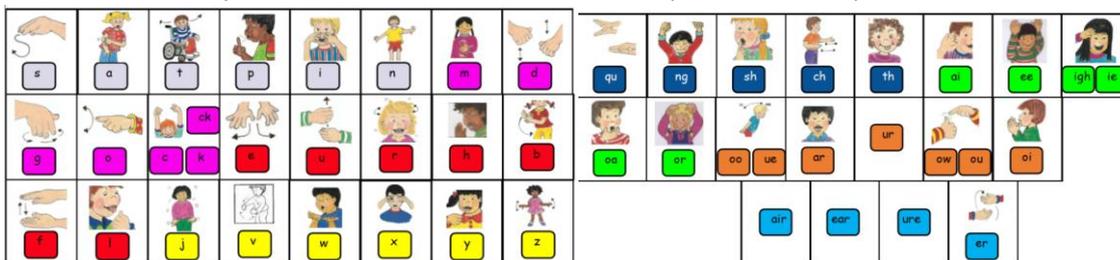
## Appendix B: Guidance on teaching writing in the Reception class

Supporting writing in the Reception Year

### Resources

- Throughout the year the children will be learning graphemes (the letters and the alphabet and also when we put 2 or more letters together to make a new sound e.g th) . By the end of the year they will know one way to spell each sound.

These are displayed on a double sided sound mat (see pic below) and also on the mezzanine phonics wall.



- They also learn tricky words throughout the year and these are displayed on the word walls on both the lower and upper floors, and on the word mats (see pic below) .

I	go	no	to	do	the	as	of
me	you	he	look	was	we	be	my
she	her	his	said	all	are	they	have
for	like	here	so	some	come	little	one
there	were	when	what	why	where	who	it's
I'm	by	want	saw	your	day	says	told
every	everyone	our	very	does	goes	play	could
couldn't	live	love	open	baby	can't	friend	once
school	only	nice	would	should	could	many	their
people	because	other	two	any	Mr	Mrs	don't
called	give	before	mother	father	also	always	Monday
Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	eight	house

- mats are kept on the writing table on the mezzanine and on the purple trays downstairs by the construction area
- if possible it is good for the reception children to work upstairs as their phonics lessons are here and they know exactly where the relevant sounds and tricky words are.

Points to note:

- When supporting children with writing we don't write a sentence / words for them to copy down. We are aiming for them to understand the structure of a sentence as being made up of words which are made up of sounds, that words are separated by finger spaces and that it needs to make sense.
- We are also beginning to teach that a sentence ends with a full stop and starts with a capital letter. The use of capital letters at the start of a sentence is not a priority in reception, but is beginning to be introduced.
- We encourage correct letter formation as it is easier to correct as they are younger than after getting into bad habits.

### Stages in supporting writing a sentence in Reception

- ask the child to orally say their sentence.
- together with the child repeat the sentence back counting the words on your fingers.
- ask 'how many words in your sentence?'



- In some cases we will give children a difficult word / technical word by writing it in their dictionary (on



the correct page alphabetically) so that they can copy.  
many words as we are also encouraging them to write fluently and don't want them to keep stopping to ask for spellings.

We don't do this with too

Year 1 children often struggle most with knowing where to put in the full stop when they are writing a longer piece. Orally saying the sentence beforehand is really helpful with this. They also need to read their writing back every so often to check. We say in Year 1 that we can extend a sentence with the word 'and' 'so' 'but' and 'because', but we would only have one 'and' in a sentence. When supporting a child to read their work back and put in full stops, we can point out where they have multiple 'ands' and show how we can use a full stop instead. We can also read aloud and exaggerate the pause at the end of the sentence.