GREAT LEIGHS PRIMARY SCHOOL

A Guide to Writing for Parents and Carers

How writing develops from Reception to Year 6 — and how you can help at home

Grow • Learn • Persevere • Succeed

Our aim Every child becomes an increasingly fluent, confident and purposeful writer who can communicate clearly for different audiences and reasons.

Writing at Great Leighs

Children learn to write by reading and discussing high-quality texts, exploring ideas aloud, studying how authors make choices, and writing for meaningful purposes. Writing is taught explicitly in English and applied across the wider curriculum. Teachers model the process and gradually help pupils to write with increasing independence.

The two foundations of writing

Transcription	Composition
Spelling and handwriting: forming letters, encoding sounds, learning spelling patterns and writing fluently enough to concentrate on ideas.	Developing, organising and communicating ideas: vocabulary, sentence construction, text structure, audience, purpose, drafting and editing.

Alongside these foundations, children learn grammar, punctuation and vocabulary in context so that they can make deliberate choices and explain their effect.

What a writing sequence may include

- Immersion in a quality text, image, film, experience or curriculum topic.
- Talk, drama, oral rehearsal and vocabulary development.
- Close reading to notice how a text is organised and how language works.
- Teacher modelling and shared writing, followed by guided and independent practice.
- Planning, drafting, revising, proofreading, publishing and sharing where appropriate.

Important The process is not always linear. Skilled writers move backwards and forwards: rereading, changing ideas, improving word choices and correcting errors.

How writing develops

Progress is cumulative. Children revisit important knowledge and use it with greater control, independence and sophistication. The examples below describe the main direction of travel; every child develops at a different rate and receives appropriate support and challenge.

Stage	Typical development
Reception (EYFS)	Enjoy stories, rhymes and information texts; build spoken language; develop fine-motor control; give meaning to marks; hear and record sounds; begin to write words, captions and simple sentences.
Year 1	Say a sentence before writing it; sequence sentences; use capital letters, full stops and spacing; apply phonics to spelling; form lower-case and capital letters; reread writing to check it makes sense.
Year 2	Write narratives and real-event accounts; organise ideas; use expanded noun phrases and different sentence forms; use a wider range of punctuation; spell increasingly accurately; evaluate and improve writing with support.
Years 3–4	Plan from models and research; organise paragraphs around themes; develop settings, characters and plots; use headings and other organisational devices; choose vocabulary and grammar for effect; proofread and edit; increase handwriting fluency.
Years 5–6	Write effectively for a wide range of audiences and purposes; control formality; select vocabulary and sentence structures deliberately; create cohesion within and across paragraphs; integrate dialogue and description; revise independently; maintain legible, fluent handwriting.

The building blocks children revisit

Ideas and purpose: What do I want to say? Who is my reader? What response do I want?

Organisation and cohesion: How will ideas be ordered, grouped and linked so the reader can follow them?

Vocabulary and sentences: Which words and sentence structures communicate meaning precisely and create the intended effect?

Grammar and punctuation: How can grammatical choices and punctuation make meaning clear?

Spelling and handwriting: Can I record my ideas accurately, legibly and with increasing fluency?

Revision and proofreading: Can I improve content and organisation, then check spelling, punctuation and grammar?

Grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting

These are essential tools for making meaning—not isolated tricks or a checklist to force into every piece. Teachers introduce terminology and conventions explicitly, then help children apply them appropriately in their own writing.

Grammar and punctuation in context

- Children learn how words, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs work together.
- They study punctuation as a way to guide the reader and make meaning unambiguous.
- They compare possibilities and discuss the effect of an author's choices.
- Technical vocabulary is used accurately, but the goal is always better communication.

Spelling

In the early stages, children use phonics to segment spoken words and choose graphemes. Across the school they learn common exception words, statutory word lists, morphology (such as roots, prefixes and suffixes), spelling rules and useful strategies. Children are expected to apply known patterns in independent writing and to use dictionaries and other resources appropriately.

Handwriting and presentation

Children develop a comfortable pencil grip, correct letter formation, consistent size and spacing, and then a fluent, legible style. Joining is introduced when children are ready and when it supports fluency. Presentation matters, but it should not prevent a child from taking risks with vocabulary and ideas.

A helpful distinction Revising means improving ideas, vocabulary, sentence construction, organisation or effect. Proofreading means finding and correcting errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

How writing is assessed

Teachers assess writing through day-to-day observation, discussion and a broad range of work produced over time and across the curriculum. Feedback identifies what is successful and the most useful next step. Children are given opportunities to respond and apply learning in later work.

- At the end of Key Stage 1, national teacher assessment is optional; schools may use the non-statutory framework alongside their own assessment approach.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, English writing is assessed by teachers using the statutory national framework and evidence from pupils' independent writing.
- A framework is an end-of-key-stage assessment tool, not a complete writing curriculum or a checklist for every individual piece.
- Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support enable pupils with additional needs to demonstrate what they know and can do.

How families can help at home

Keep it positive Short, purposeful writing and rich conversation are more valuable than lengthy worksheets. Praise effort, ideas and improvement—not only neatness and accuracy.

Talk and read

- Read aloud and talk about interesting words, characters, information and how the author affects the reader.
- Tell stories, explain processes, debate ideas and encourage children to give reasons.
- Visit places, cook, build, play and explore: experiences give children something genuine to write about.

Create real reasons to write

- Shopping lists, labels, recipes, cards, invitations and thank-you notes.
- A diary, comic, poem, review, family newsletter or instructions for a game.
- An email or letter to a relative, club, author, organisation or local representative.
- Captions for photographs, a fact file about an interest, or notes for a short presentation.

Support without taking over

- Invite your child to say the sentence aloud before writing.
- Ask what they want the reader to know, think, feel or do.
- Let ideas flow first; choose one or two checks afterwards rather than correcting every error at once.
- Prompt your child to use what they already know: sounds, spelling patterns, word families, punctuation and rereading.
- If handwriting is effortful, allow oral rehearsal, shared scribing or typing for some activities while continuing the school's handwriting practice.

Useful questions to ask

What are you most pleased with?	**Which word or sentence works especially well?**
Where might the reader need more information?	**What is one change that would make this clearer or more effective?**

When to speak to school

Please talk to your child's class teacher if writing regularly causes distress, if you notice persistent difficulty with handwriting, spelling or organising ideas, or if you would like advice about an appropriate next step. Working together helps us give consistent, manageable support.

A concise parent glossary

Term	Meaning
Audience	The person or group a text is written for.
Purpose	The reason for writing: for example, to entertain, inform, explain, persuade or instruct.
Genre / text type	A recognised kind of text. Real writing often blends features, so purpose and audience remain central.
Composition	Developing, organising and communicating ideas.
Transcription	Turning language into written form through spelling and handwriting.
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a word.
Grapheme	A letter or group of letters representing a sound.
Morphology	How meaningful word parts—roots, prefixes and suffixes—help form and spell words.
Clause	A group of words containing a verb; clauses can be combined in different ways.
Cohesion	The links that make ideas flow within and across sentences and paragraphs.
Register	The level and style of language chosen for a situation, from informal to formal.
Draft	A version of writing that can be developed and improved.
Revise / edit	Improve meaning and effect by changing ideas, vocabulary, sentences or organisation.
Proofread	Check and correct spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.

National guidance used for this parent guide

- Department for Education: National curriculum in England — English programmes of study (including spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation appendices).
- Standards and Testing Agency: non-statutory teacher assessment frameworks at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Standards and Testing Agency: teacher assessment frameworks and 2026 guidance at the end of Key Stage 2.

Prepared for Great Leighs Primary School • August 2026 • This guide is written for families and should be read alongside the school's current curriculum overview and class information.