



St Mary's Voluntary Catholic Primary Academy
Handwriting and Presentation Policy

Aims of the teaching of handwriting

The teaching of handwriting is most successful when a progressive and sequential approach is adopted, with each stage of development building on the child's previous experience.

We aim for children to:

- Form all letters correctly, knowing the size and orientation of letters.
- Develop a clear, fluent and legible cursive style of handwriting.
- Adapt their writing to suit particular circumstances such as rapid jottings when taking notes, drafting and redrafting and presenting neatly finished work.
- Take pride in their writing and present work for a variety of audiences to a high standard.

Development of learning and teaching handwriting

We strive for consistency between key stages and a continuity of approach to letter formation and therefore handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically from Reception to Year 6 through the use of the St Mary's devised handwriting scheme. Cursive Handwriting is taught once the children are able to form the basic letter shapes confidently.

We aim for the children's letter formation to naturally flow into each other, it becomes impossible to write separate letters without joining. We believe that this raises standards throughout the school and will help developing confidence, accuracy, fluency and improved presentation.

Organisation

Handwriting is timetabled in short, regular sessions and where possible, is integrated across the curriculum. In Foundation stage, handwriting is taught in conjunction with our phonics teaching, meaning that as the sound is taught the children are taught the correct formation for each letter.

In all classes, handwriting is taught, at least, on a weekly basis. The session lasts for no more than 15 minutes and is led by the teacher.

All handwriting activities are undertaken as a whole class teaching activity to enable the teacher to model writing patterns or phonemes and to instruct pupils on how to develop effective and efficient pen control. Additionally, whole class instruction provides the class teacher with the opportunity to develop in pupils

the habit of concentration which is crucial to good handwriting, and to assess pupil progress during the lesson and monitor areas requiring reinforcement.

In addition to discrete handwriting lessons, children are expected to apply their learning in their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work. Regular opportunities for children to produce presentation work are also planned, for example in topic books or for display.

Progression in Handwriting Development

St Mary's has developed a progressive list of key skills to be covered within the key stages of education.

Foundation Stage – During their Nursery and Reception years, pupils are involved in a variety of activities to develop essential pre-writing skills in line with the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. Initial emphasis is given to the development of gross motor skills in both the indoor and outdoor environments. When appropriate, the focus then shifts to the development of fine motor skills and then letter and number formation. This may be developed through tracing in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, mark-making with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media. The 'Dough Disco' and 'Squiggle while you wiggle' strategies are also used to support the development of Fine Motor Control.

For those children that are ready for handwriting practice, individual letter formation is taught, modelled and practised using the basic handwriting patterns in the order that follows the teaching of the phonic sounds. (see appendix 1)

Pupils are taught the following 'basics':

- Write from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Start and finish letters correctly.
- Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words.
- Have the correct pen/pencil grip.
- Have the correct posture and position.

By the end of the Reception year, children will have been introduced to:

- A comfortable and efficient pencil grip.
- Writing letters using the correct sequence of movements.
- Pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media.

- All letters of the alphabet.
- More independent writing.

Key Stage 1 - During Key Stage One, handwriting is taught alongside the development of pupils' fine and gross motor skills through a range of multi-sensory activities. Children are encouraged to form all letters from the correct start point and begin to exhibit greater control over size and orientation. Consolidation of both lower case and capital letter formation is a primary focus, as is awareness of ascender and descender letters. Children are also reminded to space their handwriting accurately in order that it can be easily read.

During Year 1 and 2, children are introduced to joined writing techniques. This is started once children seem secure in the coordinated movements associated with each letter and who have a good control over letter orientation, formation and proportion.

Handwriting may be linked to the daily phonics session, or used in conjunction with spelling and independent writing.

Key Stage 2 - During this stage pupils continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear and fluent style and by the end of Key Stage 2, be able to adapt their handwriting for the following different purposes:

- A neat legible hand for finished, presented work.
- A faster, more informal script for notes, rough drafts.
- Print for labelling maps or diagrams.
- Capital letters for posters, title pages, headings etc.

In KS2 children move to writing in pen, children may require additional time and practise to help them with this transition

Supporting writing development

St Mary's Primary Academy acknowledges three integral elements in supporting good handwriting which include: posture, pencil grip and paper position (The Three Ps).

Posture

- The child's chair and table should be at a comfortable height. The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor;
- Children should be encouraged to sit up straight and not slouch;
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and the feet are flat on the floor;

- Tables should be free of clutter and large enough so that children do not jostle each other as they write;
- Adequate light to allow children to see what they are doing;
- Children should have a clear view of the teacher/board.

Pencil Grip

– If children are to develop a fluid and rapid writing style then they must learn how to hold a pencil with a grip which is relaxed but allows for efficient pencil control.

Right-hander – a tripod grip is generally accepted as the most efficient way of holding a pencil. It should be lightly held between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support.

Left-handers – The tripod grip should be the most favoured method of pencil holding but children should be aware that when making joining strokes the letters are pushed, not pulled. Encourage left handed children to hold their pencil far enough away from the point to allow them to read what they are writing.

* Care should be taken that children do not grip the pencil too tightly as this produces tenseness in the arm and shoulder and also increases pressure on the paper.

Paper position – Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper/book and bear some body weight. The position of the paper/book should also vary according to the preferred writing hand.

Resources and Writing Materials

Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools, including whiteboard markers, pencils and ‘fine-writers’.

Specifically for handwriting practice, blue Berol ink pens are used by all pupils. We believe that writing in pen is less restrictive and aids fluency. Unlike a ‘blunt’ pencil, ink pen also improves overall ‘precision’ and quality of presentation.

A black fine pen is used within RE books for biblical quotes. In Foundation Stage and KS 1 ‘broader’ ‘jumbo’ pencils or triangular pencils may be adopted provisionally. In other classes, standard pencils are adopted. Children should be encouraged to always write with a sharp pencil and to use rubbers to correct mistakes, or cross through with a single line. Pencil grips will be used to support pupils adopt the correct pencil grip if necessary.

Pencils should continue to be used throughout the school for notes, drafting, all maths work, diagrams, charts and maps.

Pens may be used for writing across the curriculum. For consistency, biros, gel pens or pupils' own pens are not used at any time.

Handwriting exercise books with coloured lines to assist with accuracy and consistency in size and form are used throughout the school. Handwriting sheets may be used to reinforce letter formation or to be sent home as homework. Interactive whiteboards may be set with handwriting paper in order to clearly model letter formation and size to children.

A variety of styles of font are available using word-processing programmes on the computer. Children will be able to select the most appropriate one for their style of work. However, if a cursive style is required then the use of Lucida Handwriting will produce a reasonable facsimile of a cursive style. (See Appendix 2)

Expectations for Standards of Presentation

- Pupils are expected to look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them.
- The full date (on the right) and title of all work (in the middle of the second line) must appear at the top of the page and must be neatly underlined in pencil.
- In Numeracy, the short date may be used.
- From Y1 onwards, pupils must use rulers to draw straight lines.
- Children should increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented.
- They should not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or fit for the purpose.
- Pupils should set out, number and annotate work appropriately.

At appropriate times pupils may be encouraged to experiment with alternative means of presenting their work for aesthetic or educational reasons.

Teachers are expected to:

- Ensure that classrooms are well equipped with the essential tools that will assist pupils to create work with a high presentational standard.
- Organise the classroom in such a way that materials and resources are easily accessible and systems for their return and maintenance are robust.
- Ensure that children look after resources and materials
- Set a positive example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when marking children's books. Teachers strive to model the St Mary's style and use appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style.

Provision for left handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys.

Left-handed children

- should sit on the left side of right-handed children, so their elbows don't bump. They are encouraged to
- find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of centre of their body, and to
- have their fingers about 1.5 cm from the point of their pencil.

Differentiation

It is appreciated that some children, for a variety of reasons, have problems with legible, correctly formed and orientated handwriting. Children needing additional support are given short bursts of handwriting practice, one-to-one with a Teaching Assistant, or Class Teacher, as often as possible. Sometimes handwriting may form part of an IEP.

Exceptionally able pupils may progress at different rates at the discretion of the class teacher. For those children who have mastered a fluent, neat style continual practise may not be necessary and alternative provision will be made for these pupils.

Assessment and Monitoring

Class teachers will use subjective broad assessment, based on a perusal of children's work or on observation of pupils when writing.

Criteria for broad assessment:

- The writing is legible when written at different speeds as appropriate to different purposes.
- The writing is pleasant to look at and leads to the development of individual styles.
- All letters appear to be started in the correct place and formed correctly.
- The writing instruments are held correctly.
- Letters are of consistent size with ascenders and descenders appropriately differentiated.
- Verticals down stroke are parallel, either slightly slanted, preferably to the right, or upright.
- Diagonal joins are parallel, either slightly slanted, preferably to the right, or upright.
- Spaces between words are appropriate and consistent.

Diagnostic assessment of individuals may be used when concern arises with a specific child or group of children.

Appendix 1

Phonics teaching order FS

s, a , t ,p ,i, n, c k, e,r, l, m, d, o, u, h, g, b, y, f, j, w, x, v, z, qu
sh, ch, th, ee, or, ng, oa, ai, igh, er, ar, oi, ow,

Appendix 2

Joined script

Handwriting

a b c d e f g h i

j k l m n o p q r

s t u v w x y z

Appendix 3 -

Types of joins

- **Diagonal join** (e.g. *at*): this is the most common join. It starts from the final flick on the baseline (or 'curl' in the case of the letter *t*).

- Letters that come before a diagonal join are:

a, b, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, u

- (and *q* in which the flick begins below the baseline).

- **Horizontal join** (e.g. *op*): this join is formed from letters that finish at the top of the letter rather than at the baseline.

- Letters that come before a horizontal join are:

f, o, r, v, w

St Mary's Primary Academy - Progression of handwriting

Foundation Stage

Developing Gross Motor Skills

- The vocabulary of movement
- Large movements
- Responding to music

Developing Fine Motor Skills

- Hand and finger play
- Making and modelling
- Links to art
- Using one-handed tools and equipment

Developing patterns and letter movements

- Pattern making
- Responding to music
- Investigating straight line patterns
- Investigating loops
- Investigating circles
- Investigating angled patterns
- Investigating eights and spirals

Development of correct basic letter formation

- Correct starting position and flicks

Key Stage 1

Year 1 - Term 1

- Letter formation practice: long ladder family
- Letter formation practice: one-armed robot family
- Letter formation practice: curly caterpillar family
- Letter formation practice: zig-zag monster family
- Practising the vowels: i
- Practising the vowels: u
- Practising the vowels: a
- Practising the vowels: o
- Practising the vowels: e
- Letter formation practice: capital letters

Term 2

- Introducing diagonal join to ascender: joining *at all*
- Practising diagonal join to ascender: joining *th*
- Practising diagonal join to ascender: joining *ch*
- Practising diagonal join to ascender: joining *cl*
- Introducing diagonal join, no ascender: joining *in im*
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender: joining *cr dr tr*
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender: joining *lp mp*
- Introducing diagonal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter: joining *id*
ig
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter: joining *nd*
ld
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter: joining *ng*

Term 3

- Practising diagonal join, no ascender: joining *ee*
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender: joining *ai ay*
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender: joining *ime, ine*
- Introducing horizontal join, no ascender: joining *op, oy*
- Practising horizontal join, no ascender: joining *one ome*
- Introducing horizontal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter: joining *oa*
og
- Practising horizontal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter: joining *wa*
wo
- Introducing horizontal join to ascender: joining *ol ot*
- Practising horizontal join to ascender: joining *wh oh*
- Introducing horizontal and diagonal joins to ascender, to an anticlockwise letter: joining *of if*

Year 2 Term 1

- Practising diagonal join to ascender in words: *eel eet*
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender, in words: *a_e*
- Practising diagonal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter in words: *ice ide*
- Practising horizontal join, no ascender, in words: *ow ou*
- Practising horizontal join, no ascender, in words: *oy oi*
- Practising horizontal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter in words: *oa ode*
- Practising horizontal join to ascender in words: *ole obe*

- Practising horizontal join to ascender in words: *ook ool*

Term 2

- Practising diagonal join to r: *ir ur er*
- Practising horizontal join to r: *or oor*
- Introducing horizontal join from r to ascender: *url irl irt*
- Introducing horizontal join from r: *ere*
- Practising joining to and from r: *air*
- Introducing diagonal join to s: *dis*
- Introducing horizontal join to s: *ws*
- Introducing diagonal join from s to ascender: *sh*
- Introducing diagonal join from s, no ascender: *si su se sp sm*
- Introducing horizontal join from r to an anticlockwise letter: *rs*

Term 3

- Practising diagonal join to an anticlockwise letter: *ea ear*
- Introducing horizontal join to and from f to ascender: *ft fl*
- Introducing horizontal join from f, no ascender: *fu fr*
- Introducing *qu* (diagonal join, no ascender)
- Introducing *rr* (horizontal join, no ascender)
- Introducing *ss* (diagonal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter)
- Introducing *ff* (horizontal join to ascender)
- Capital letter practice: height of ascenders and capitals

KS 2

Year 3 - Term 1

- Revising joins in a word: long vowel phonemes
- Revising joins in a word: *le*
- Revising joins in a word: *ing*
- Revising joins in a word: high frequency words
- Revising joins in a word: new vocabulary
- Revising joins in a word: *un de*
- Revising joins to and from s: *dis*
- Revising joins to and from r: *re pre*
- Revising joins to and from f: *ff*
- Revising joins: *qu*

Term 2

- Introducing joining b and p: diagonal join, no ascender, *bi bu pi pu*
- Practising joining b and p: diagonal join, no ascender, to an anticlockwise letter, *ba bo pa po*
- Practising joining b and p: diagonal join to ascender, *pl ph*
- Relative sizes of letters: silent letters
- Parallel ascenders: high frequency words
- Parallel ascenders: adding *y* to words
- Relative size and consistency: *ly less ful*
- Relative size and consistency: capitals
- Speed and fluency practice: *er est*
- Speed and fluency practice: opposites

Term 3

- Consistency in spacing: *mis anti ex*
- Consistency in spacing: *non co*
- Consistency in spacing: apostrophes
- Layout, speed and fluency practice: address
- Layout, speed and fluency practice: dialogue
- Layout, speed and fluency practice: poem
- Layout speed and fluency practice: letter

Year 4 Term 1

- Revising joins in a word: *ness ship*
- Revising joins in a word: *ing ed*
- Revising joins in a word: *s*
- Revising joins in a word: *ify*
- Revising joins in a word: *nn mm ss*
- Revising parallel ascenders: *tl ll bb*
- Revising parallel ascenders and descenders: *pp ff*
- Revising joins to an anticlockwise letter: *cc dd*
- Revising break letters: dictionary work and alphabetical order
- Linking spelling and handwriting: related Words

Term 2

- Parallel ascenders: *al ad af*
- Parallel descenders and break letters: *ight ough*
- Size, proportion and spacing: *ious*

- Size, proportion and spacing: *able ful*
- Size, proportion and spacing: *fs ves*
- Speed and fluency: abbreviations for notes
- Speed and fluency: notemaking
- Speed and fluency: drafting
- Speed and fluency: lists

- **Term 3**

- Size, proportion and spacing: *v k*
- Size, proportion and spacing: *ic ist*
- Size, proportion and spacing: *ion*
- **Size**, proportion and spacing: *its it's*
- Speed and fluency: *ible able*
- Speed and fluency: diminutives
- Print alphabet: captions, headings, labels
- Print capitals: posters

Year 5 Handwriting

- Revision: practising the joins
- Developing style for speed: joining from *t*
- Developing style for speed: looping from *g, j and y*
- Developing style for speed: joining from *f*
- Developing style for speed: joining from *s*
- Developing style for speed: writing *v, w, x and z* at speed
- Developing style for speed: pen breaks in longer words
- Different styles for different purposes

Practise longer projects to continue to develop a fluent and joined style.

Year 6 Handwriting

To practise fluent and joined up handwriting for all writing except when other special forms are required