

St John's Catholic Primary School



Handwriting Policy

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

Rationale

The ability to write fluently and legibly gives children a means to communicate their thoughts and ideas efficiently. Handwriting is a skill which must be learnt in order to provide a style which becomes simple to produce and easy to read.

Cursive handwriting helps children to learn and remember spelling patterns. It is an integral part of the multisensory technique enabling pupils to make the automatic symbol-sound relationship for spelling. All children are introduced to Cursive Handwriting from the start of Early Years Foundation Stage. We believe this raises standards in handwriting throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy and fluency and improved presentation.

Cursive writing helps:

- It aids the left to right movements through each word across the page and helps develop a child's visual memory
- It helps sequencing and prevents reversals, inversions and omissions.
- It aids legibility, especially for those with motor and spatial difficulties, providing a motor training programme.
- Letters naturally flow into each other, it is impossible to write separate letters without joining, therefore it will eventually help them to increase the speed of their writing.
- Form spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness.

A cursive style of handwriting is recommended by the British Dyslexia Association.

Aims

Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride. We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy joined handwriting style with correct ascenders/descenders and letter size that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing by:

- providing equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting.
- producing clear, concise, legible handwriting in all areas of the curriculum.
- developing accuracy and fluency.
- helping children recognise that handwriting is a form of communication and as such should be considered important in order for it to be effective.
- promoting confidence and self-esteem.
- encouraging children to take pride in their work.
- helping children recognise that handwriting as a life-long skill and will be a fundamental element of all forms of written communication throughout their lives.
- adopting a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the IWB or on displays/resources.
- having a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of handwriting.

To Achieve These Aims We Will

Statutory Requirements:

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2013) which details specific requirements and expectations for the teaching of handwriting from Year 1 to Year 6. At EYFS requirements and expectations for writing development are detailed in the Physical Development and Literacy section of the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

In Early Years Foundation Stage children will access a range of learning opportunities to develop essential prewriting skills.

Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.

Development of balance skills/upper body strength puzzles or crayons and paper on the floor while on stomach, puzzles, crayons and paper on all fours on floor encourages shoulder/hand strengthening, squeezing wet sponges, finger painting, water play, sand play, play dough, rice play, gloop, cooking, cornflour and water.

They will develop fine motor skills, fastening, buttons, pull up a zip, threading, tweezers, cutting, pinching clay. The children will access a range of activities that requires them to grasp small objects: Making collage pictures using pieces of wool or string, decorating iced biscuits with small cake decorations, posting small items into narrow necked bottles.

The children will access a range of learning opportunities that will support the development of their shoulder, elbow, wrist stability and bi-lateral use of their hands. They will also develop control of writing implements and develop hand eye co-ordination and fine motor strength. They will learn directional sequences and movements.

The children will learn to sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib. They will hold a pencil using a tripod grip for writing and will be encouraged to correct any errors in grip.

The children will understand that letters are written on a base line and that letters are part of "Letter Families" and will begin to form recognisable joined-up cursive letters, capital letters and numerals.

Children's name cards and self-registration cards will be in cursive script. Teachers will use a range of script for displays but will also handwrite in cursive for classroom display. In Reception high frequency words will be displayed in cursive script.

When learning letter sounds we use the Letters & Sounds program. Children need to know that there are

different types of font as books, computers etc all produce a wide range of writing styles. For the purposes of learning letter sounds – recognition of the letters - children will be shown regular print but when the formal writing takes place this will be in cursive.

Pencil grips and triangular pencils are used to encourage a good grip, and children are monitored so that they do not hold the pencil too tightly which produces tension in the arm and shoulder. Children who are left handed are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise.

Children are provided with a designated 'writing area' to give status to their early independent writing and develop a positive attitude to the act of writing and left-right orientation is encouraged.

By the end of the foundation stage, most children are able to use a pencil, holding it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed using cursive handwriting.

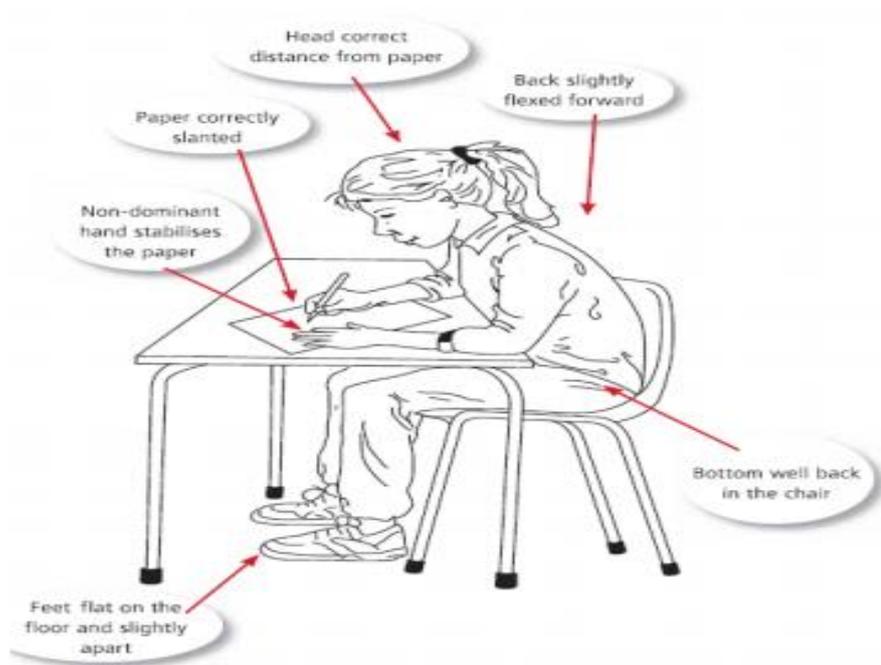
Lower case letters:

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

Capitals: 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

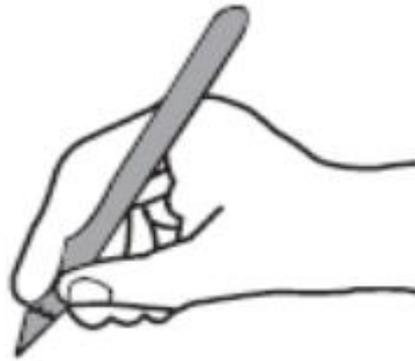
Numbers: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Correct sitting position:



Correct Pencil Grip:

Tripod Grip



Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, building on the Foundation Stage, pupils develop a legible style. This is achieved by reinforcing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportions are taught in line with our agreed handwriting style. Children use joined handwriting for all writing, except where other special forms are required.

Formal handwriting practice is undertaken daily in Year 1 and individual letter formation is consolidated and similarly formed letters are joined together.

Formal handwriting practice is undertaken at least twice a week in Year 2, and spelling patterns and letter strings are rehearsed to reinforce and improve spelling skills.

Handwriting practice can be included in homework in Year 1 and 2.

Specific needs of individual pupils are met through individual or small group support with the teacher or teaching assistant.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 pupils handwriting speed, fluency, and legibility are built up through practice. Children use joined handwriting for all writing unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, note taking, posters etc - appropriateness to the task being paramount.

Children will be issued a handwriting pen when they can clearly demonstrate a consistent style of handwriting across all subject areas.

Teaching generally occurs outside the English lesson, although shared and guided writing provides many opportunities for modelling and monitoring of handwriting. There are times at both key stages when this aspect of writing is a focus for attention and more time is devoted to the objectives relating to handwriting and presentation.

Y3/Y4 - Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Y5/Y6 - Pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Learning environment:

A mixture of print and cursive writing should be displayed around each classroom and on display boards around the school.

Discrete Handwriting Lesson:

Discrete teaching requires clearly structured and focused teaching and learning. School uses the Nelson handwriting Scheme from Reception -Y6 It involves explanation, demonstration and practice of the skill of handwriting. This skill can then be applied or used in contexts across the curriculum. Discrete teaching can help to prevent poor handwriting by clearly indicating the relationships between letters and the relationship of each letter to the writing base line

In the discrete teaching of handwriting, each lesson should have a clear and simple focus (eg the correct formation of a single letter, revision of a group of letters such as those requiring clockwise movements, the introduction of a particular aspect of linking such as hooks, or the practice of linking letters in commonly found patterns). Letters should be taught in letter family groups and their similarities and differences should be stated clearly as this reduces the amount of new information to be learned as each new letter or type of linking is introduced.

Expectations of All Adults:

All adults in school are the most important role model for presentation and high expectations. They are responsible for modelling good practice, ensuring all children understand and follow handwriting expectations and intervene to ensure all children present their work to the best of their ability.

Therefore, **all staff must:**

- Have high expectations of children's work and the way it is presented;
- Regularly remind children of expectations for handwriting and presentation.
- Communicate clearly to children expectations for the presentation of their work;
- Monitor children's handwriting daily and provide adequate time for them to respond to feedback and marking.
- Encourage children to monitor their handwriting, presentation, edit their own work and provide strategies for presenting it appropriately.
- Ensure that children are following the school handwriting policy in **all** pieces of work;
- Model the school handwriting script at all times including on the board and in marking.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All children will have the opportunity to develop their handwriting skills of legibility and fluency. However, some pupils may need more support and a specific individual, (Individual Education Plan) or group programme would be implemented and monitored closely by the class teacher and SENDCO. Outside agencies, such as Occupational Therapy would be consulted as necessary.

It is recognised that it is essential for all children, especially those pupils with specific learning difficulties, to be closely observed when learning the correct formation of individual letters. This will ensure that posture, pencil grip and pressure, letter formation and placement are monitored and supervised to avoid the development and reinforcement of unhelpful habits.

Pupils who experience difficulties in fine motor movement will be given lots of opportunities to develop control through rehearsal with large body movements.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision. It is particularly important that left-handed children are seated on the left of a right-handed child so they are not competing for space. Teachers are aware that it is difficult for left handed children to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers or Teaching Assistants demonstrate to lefthanders on an individual or group basis using their left hand as appropriate.

Pencil grips, thicker pencils, triangular pencils and wider lines will be used by children who experience problems writing.

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

The handwriting skills developed in this policy must be applied to all pieces of writing the children do.

Teachers ensure the application of handwriting skills by:

- Reminding children of standards of writing and presentation at the beginning of lessons across the curriculum
- Sometimes having handwriting as a lesson objective across the curriculum
- Comparing handwriting in handwriting books with writing in other books across the curriculum
- Ensuring children improve the presentation of their work if it falls below school expectations
- English Subject Leader and/or Senior Leadership Team to monitor handwriting and presentation in books from across the curriculum regularly and provide feedback to teachers
- Teachers always model good handwriting skills. They follow the handwriting policy when writing comments in children's books.
- Children are rewarded by their teacher with a sticker if handwriting is consistently good in their books and referred to the Head Teacher to receive their Pen Licence.
- Children are rewarded by the Head Teacher with a certificate if handwriting and presentation is consistently good across a range of books.
- Focused handwriting lessons are planned for target groups and/or individuals who require additional support. The amount of lessons needed is dependent upon the needs of the children.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors

January 2019