

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL



Life in all its fullness

Encouragers, Resilience, Self-Discipline, Love

Handwriting Policy November 2023

- An inclusive place that nurtures children's individual talents
- A creative, inspiring school

Thessalonians 3:18; 'This is my handwriting. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all'

St John the Baptist Primary School Handwriting Policy

Intent

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”

Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association

“Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. It needs to be systematically taught.”

In an ever increasing technological world why teach handwriting? There is increasing scientific evidence that suggests that children who write better and faster achieve more highly. Therefore, at St John’s, handwriting is considered to be an imperative part of the learning and presentation process. We believe that after speaking, handwriting is the most accessible and versatile way for children to express their thoughts, feelings and demonstrate knowledge and understanding. It is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it usually takes some time to perfect. As children progress through school the requirement to write legibly and fluently, at speed, increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases.

At secondary school, children are obliged to write almost constantly, taking notes to dictation, writing essays, and copying down the homework required for the next day. For the child who has learned to form letters without apparent deliberation or effort, such tasks are straightforward. In contrast, for the child who is still struggling with the basic elements of the skill then even copying down homework may present a problem. It is expected that children will be able to write in a fluent and joined style and therefore, we aim and teach children to be able to do this.

The difficulty with writing stems from the complexity of the task which involves a combination of different skills, including the physical co-ordination required for handwriting. There is a need for automaticity, and how the component skills, such as joining up letters and spelling, need to be in place by 11 years. Creativity will suffer if the child has to focus on the mechanics of writing. As a group, reluctant writers lacking practice will trail behind their more-able classmates whose skills improve rapidly just because they write more.

Whole School Approach

Please note the following important points:

1. Handwriting requires dexterity and sufficient fine-motor skills. Therefore, children should be encouraged to experience activities to support this, especially in the early years. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum focuses develops such

skills through gross and fine-motor provision.

2. Such activities include playdough, using scissors, painting and mark-making.

3. Changing handwriting takes a lot of time and effort.

4. Encouragement is essential.

5. Short, regular, frequent periods of practice are much more effective than long sessions.

6. Make sure that any teaching at home does not set up conflicts for the child between home and school

(National Handwriting Association)

Aims

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line
- Learn the conventional ways of forming letter shapes, both lower case and
- Capitals where the size and shape of letters is consistent
- Understand the importance of clear presentation in order to communicate
- meaning
- Take pride in the presentation of work, developing handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting
- Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.
- Develop a fluent, comfortable, legible, continuous joined handwriting style.

Guidelines for Handwriting Policy

Children at St Johns are taught the correct letter formation of letters upon entry to school during daily phonics lessons. Each phoneme in set sounds of read, write, Inc. phonics (see phonics policy), has a supporting picture hook with a letter formation rhyme (appendix A). Children are taught how to form these letters correctly and inaccuracies are addressed from this point to encourage correct letter formation from the very initial stages of their school learning journey. Self-assessment and review are a natural part of these lessons. By the time children are at the end of Year 1, letter formation should be correct. From this point, children will be taught how to join 'special friends', acting as a natural progression to beginning to join if all single letters are formed correctly. By the end of Key Stage 1, children's letter writing should be correctly formed and orientated, ready for a greater focus upon joining throughout Key Stage 2. Any children who require further support in fine-motor development or letter formation will receive this. In order to support children's handwriting we use the Read, Write Inc supporting handwriting documents.

Implementation

Upon entering school and throughout the foundation stage, the majority of children should have had experience and opportunity to:

- Develop gross motor control (See appendix B)
- Develop fine motor control (See appendix B)

- Use large equipment to make marks e.g. big chalks, large paint brushes, shaving foam, finger painting etc.
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, etc with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements

As children develop appropriate gross and fine motor control, they should be gradually introduced to letter formation and encouraged to learn how to write their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation.

At Foundation Stage the majority of children will:

- Receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip or formation are seen.
- Be given ample opportunities to 'write' with a variety of resources.
- Use a range of mediums to practice handwriting.
- Be exposed to print and how it conveys meaning.

At Year One the majority of children will:

- Write letters correctly, with clear ascenders, descenders.
- Write with spaces between words accurately.
- Develop speed and stamina.
- Use a range of mediums to practice handwriting.
- Be exposed to the modelling of joining special friends and where ready, given opportunity to practise these.

At Year Two the majority of children will:

- Write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words.
- Form ascenders and descenders consistently and correctly.
- Practice writing at speed.
- Beginning to join more letters.

At Year Three the majority of children will:

- Develop joined handwriting
- Further develop writing speed and stamina
- Produce writing which sits on the line most of the time.
- Use neat, joined handwriting across the curriculum

At Year Four the majority of children will write with:

- Use joined handwriting most of the time and across the curriculum
- Ascenders and descenders in the correct place and on the lines.
- Automatically use joined handwriting or letter formation

At Year Five and Six the majority of children will write with:

- Competency at a steady dictation speed

Teaching and Learning

We teach handwriting as a specific skill, little and often to then be embedded across the whole curriculum.

Basic structure of a handwriting session in KS1:

- Relaxation and exercise
- Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair
- Warm up exercises
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory.

Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory: write letters in the air, on backs or on hands (first backs then palms); orally describe letter shapes and joins with children

A variety of writing materials including books, whiteboards, chalk, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, shaving foam etc. are used to continue to develop fine motor and necessary muscle control.

The daily phonics session provides opportunities to develop handwriting and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct e.g. pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc at this time.

Children following the Read, write Inc spelling programme will have one of their lessons each week with a handwriting focus.

The Joining Style

“Joins between letters are only worthwhile if they increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility”

‘keep it simple, do it well’

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and necessary provision will be made for this in class time with the teacher or another adult. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) may also be used. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc.

Teachers should be aware of the specific needs of **left-handed pupils** and make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils’ line of vision;
- Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not

- competing for space;
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- Letters which have a cross-stroke such as T, t and f may be formed slightly differently by left handers, where the cross is formed right to left rather than left to right.

Teachers should be alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers may demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

Equal Opportunities

We ensure that each individual child receives an equal learning experience regardless of ability, culture and gender.

We are committed to equal opportunities for all irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, disability or religion. We will monitor the impact of this policy to ensure that no group is adversely affected.

Children with SEND will be given support through individual provision maps to develop skills.

Modelling

- All teaching adults in school should model the agreed style appropriate to age they are teaching
- The teacher should use modeling of both right and left handed movements and vocalise the size, shape and movement of the pencil
- Children should be encouraged in self and peer assessment
- The teacher should tour the classroom during exercises to 'see' and comment on everyone's work assisting individuals as needed
- Any inaccuracies should be identified and modelled correctly

Rewards

As a whole school, effort in handwriting is non-negotiable and forms part of the high expectations of presentation. Children will be awarded for this effort in a range of ways.

Recommendations

- Handwriting must be regarded as valuable and time must be found to teach it effectively and successfully.
- All teachers and support staff should become familiar with the expected handwriting style.
- Display copies of high quality handwriting on walls, and interactive whiteboards to act as reward, motivation and as a statement of the quality expected.
- Move children from pencil to pen only when they are ready with the reward of a pen license.
- Use a correct print and continuous script whenever writing for children to see, setting a role model for them. This is obviously in accordance with age being taught.
- There should be a balance between handwritten and printed vocabulary in

classroom display.

Impact

Assessment and Recording

Teachers assess handwriting when assessing writing and determine future targets for improvement. Teachers aim to ensure that when marking written work, comments about neatness are kept in proportion in relation to those about content and/or meaning.

It is an essential part of this policy to assess handwriting at several levels:

1. Whole school assessment
2. Class assessment
3. Individual assessment
4. Self assessment
5. Peer assessment

Whole school assessment and class assessment

1. Is the writing generally legible and pleasant?
2. Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
3. Are joins made correctly?
4. Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
5. Is the writing properly aligned?
6. Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with year group expectations.

Criteria for individual assessment – for use with those who have particular problems

1. Does the child adopt the correct posture?
2. Does the child hold the pen/pencil correctly?
3. Does the child use the correct movement when forming and joining letters?
4. Does the child reverse or invert any letters?
5. Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
6. Is the writing easily legible?
7. Is the writing appropriate?
8. Is the writing in line with the year group expectations?
9. Does the child require any support with fine motor development?

Review

This policy will initially be reviewed in 2 years (when all policies are reviewed) and thereafter every year in line with the school's policy review program. The Subject Leader is responsible for reporting to the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Governing Body about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Reviewed: November 2023

Review Date: November 2025

Reviewed by Staff: C Charlesworth

Governor :

Appendix A

Letter Formation Rhymes

<p>a</p>  <p>Around the apple and down the leaf.</p>	<p>b</p>  <p>Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.</p>	<p>c</p>  <p>Curl around the caterpillar.</p>	<p>d</p>  <p>Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.</p>	<p>e</p>  <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.</p>	<p>f</p>  <p>Down the stem and draw the leaves.</p>
<p>g</p>  <p>Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.</p>	<p>h</p>  <p>Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.</p>	<p>i</p>  <p>Down the body and dot for the head.</p>	<p>j</p>  <p>Down his body, curl, dot for his head.</p>	<p>k</p>  <p>Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.</p>	<p>l</p>  <p>Down the long leg.</p>
<p>m</p>  <p>Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.</p>	<p>n</p>  <p>Down Nobby and over his net.</p>	<p>o</p>  <p>All around the orange.</p>	<p>p</p>  <p>Down the pirates plait and around his face.</p>	<p>qu</p>  <p>Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.</p>	<p>r</p>  <p>Down the robots back and curl over his arm.</p>
<p>s</p>  <p>Slither down the snake.</p>	<p>t</p>  <p>Down the tower, across the tower.</p>	<p>u</p>  <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.</p>	<p>v</p>  <p>Down a wing, up a wing.</p>	<p>w</p>  <p>Down, up, down, up.</p>	<p>x</p>  <p>Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.</p>
<p>y</p>  <p>Down a horn, up a horn and under head.</p>	<p>z</p>  <p>Zig-zag-zig.</p>				

Appendix B

Activities and exercises to develop Motor Control

Activities and exercises to develop Gross Motor Control:

Gross Motor Control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Cycling
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering

Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as, *going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements*

- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music
- Rolling hoops
- Running with hoops
- Chalking
- Painting on a large scale
- IWB.

Fine Motor Control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes).

Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
- Drawing in sand and sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring
- and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving
- Peeling fruit
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on

- small, large boards and easels and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of lines
- Tracing
- Colouring within guidelines and pictures
- Pattern work
- Using glue spreaders in small pots
- Painting with the tips of fingers
- Threading
- Separating beads into colours.
- Hold a pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using a whole hand grasp.
- Hold pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and use it with good control
- Can copy some letters eg. Same letters from name
- Show a preference for a dominant hand
- Begin to use anti-clockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognizable letters
- Use a pencil and hold it efficiently to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Learn to print letters, forming each letter correctly, in the correct direction.