St Mary's
Catholic Primary School

Handwriting
Policy

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HANDWRITING POLICY



We are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care with our handwriting style. We ensure that children are beginning their handwriting journey with Little Wandle Handwriting (to ensure fidelity with our phonics programme), before progressing into Letter Join.
In line with the Writing Framework 2025, handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly across the school beginning in EYFS and Year 1 (Little Wandle), in addition to writing in phonics lessons. We use Letter-join's whole school handwriting scheme for Years 2-6 as the basis of our handwriting policy, which enables us to meet National Curriculum requirements through a structured teaching programme.

OBJECTIVE

Handwriting is a core skill which influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and speedy joined handwriting, and to understand that different styles of handwriting are used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

AIMS



- Develop neat, legible and speedy handwriting where letters and words are automatically produced in independent writing.
- Establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- Understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different handwriting styles (joined, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

EXPECTATIONS

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books. This is embedded through specific staff CPD and support from the English Lead.

CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the teaching and learning of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in their work. We want to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting, so they feel a sense of achievement and pride.

HANDWRITING FREQUENCY

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure key stage targets are met throughout learning, as emphasised in the 2025 Writing Framework. Handwriting is explicitly taught for 15 minutes each day in every year group to ensure that all pupils are consistently developing their legibility and fluency of writing.

PENS AND PENCILS

Pupils will first learn to write with chunky crayons, chalk or soft pencils while developing a proper grip before exploring with large scale drawing and writing to build fine motor skills, then moving to smaller, more precise writing tools.

When their fine motor skills are established, pupils may progress to using a handwriting pen before using a handwriting pen consistently in Year 6. This may be adapted where necessary to meet any child's individual needs.

INCLUSION



For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and/or with special educational needs, appropriate additional support will be put in place. Letter-join's Lesson Planners include differentiation activities for extra practice/challenge and their Handwriting Recovery Programme is used as an intervention for our key stage 2 pupils to give structured support if they find handwriting challenging.

HANDWRITING AT HOME

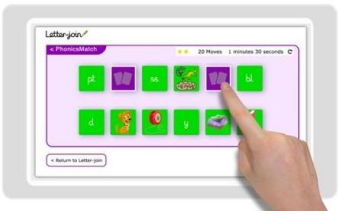


Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home using the Letter-join Pupil login.

Teachers may set Home Learning Tasks, but children can also explore Letter-join's handwriting resources, including watching and practising letter and word animations (with parents) and playing online interactive games. Letter-join's online games and activities include:

Year 2

- **Magic Patterns** - supports the development of fine motor skills through tracing patterns, shapes and mazes.
- **Magic Words** - gives children the freedom to practise handwriting by tracing their own choice of letters and words.
- **Write it Right!** - awards stars for practising and improving letter shapes and joins.
- **When I Grow Up** - lets learners select fun characters while learning to write their names.
- **LetterMatch** - helps children learn the sounds and names of letters.
- **LetterLotto** - rewards pupils when they correctly recognise and trace letters.
- **Letter Families** - is a fun activity for learning which letter family each letter of the alphabet belongs to.



Year 3 - 6

- **Write in Time!** - is a fun, timed activity to support the development of fast and fluent handwriting.
- **Remember Write** - helps boost spelling and writing while testing pupils' memory skills.

All Key Stages:

- **Word Bank** - a bank of words created by a teacher to support the learning of spelling and vocabulary for pupils to practise.
- **Word Search** - pupils have fun finding words while learning tricky spellings.
- **Spelling lists** - pupils practise high frequency, common exception and statutory words.

KEY STAGE TEACHING

Early Years

Little Wandle Handwriting

Little Wandle Handwriting lessons in Reception focus on:

- correct pencil grip
- correct starting point for each letter
- letter formation and orientation
- families of letters
- capital letters
- reinforcing the link between letters and sounds.

The correct formation of lower-case letters is the key priority in Reception handwriting. Lower-case letter formation is taught in letter families in Units 2 to 5. It is then practised in Unit 6, when capital letters are introduced, and further embedded in Unit 7 by practising with digraphs and trigraphs.

By the end of Reception, children should be able to hold their pencil with correct pencil grip, form lower-case letters beginning at the correct starting point and follow the correct direction. They should be beginning to form capital letters correctly.

Lesson organisation in Reception

The 'Revisit and review' and 'Teach and practise' parts of the lesson are taught to the whole class. The teacher then works with one group at a time, seated at the table, revisiting the modelling and guiding the children in the 'Practise and apply' part of the lesson, while closely observing and providing support as needed. Each child receives 15 minutes of handwriting teaching and practice daily.

Children enter school with varying motor skill proficiency and develop handwriting skills at different rates. The workbooks are thoughtfully designed to be flexible, to accommodate children's needs. **For children needing extra support, scaffolding is provided through tracing letters before progressing to independent writing.** Children with more advanced pencil control and letter formation skills can bypass tracing and practise forming letters independently after teacher modelling.

YEAR 1

Little Wandle Handwriting

In Year 1, Little Wandle Handwriting is taught in daily 15-minute whole-class lessons, to enable regular practice, address errors before they become a habit and embed correct letter formation. To support children with the accurate sizing of letters in a fun and friendly way, Penguin Land is introduced. The content is organised in units that have been carefully chosen to build the children's skills in handwriting and link to key learning for the year group. Within the units, each lesson builds on what has been learned previously and begins with a recall of the previous lesson to check and reinforce the children's understanding. Strong modelling by the teacher is essential to every lesson. This includes modelling the correct formation followed by a review to identify how the formation could be improved.

Assess and review

Regular Assess and review weeks are built in to the planning to target identified areas to secure learning.

Pace and progression

Our expectations of progression are aspirational yet achievable if schools maintain pace, practice and participation by all children. However, the programme has been designed to be flexible so that it can be used to meet the pace of learning appropriate to your class – do not teach new content until previous learning is secure. If by stopping to secure the learning in a unit, you are behind the suggested progression, focus on teaching the units that would provide your children with the essential practice they need

Year 1 progression	
Autumn term	
Unit 1: Lower-case letters	• c, a, d, g, o, q (Week 1) • e, s, f, l, i, t (Week 2) • j, u, y, m, n, r (Week 3) • b, p, h, v, w, x (Week 4) • z, k (Week 5) • **Assess and review (Week 6)**
Unit 2: Applying capital letters	• A, B, C, D (Week 7) • E, F, J, H (Week 8) • I, J, K, L (Week 9) • M, N, O, P (Week 10) • Q, R, S, T (Week 11) • U, V, W, X, Y, Z (Week 12) • **Assess and review (Week 13)**
Spring term	
Unit 3: Forming digits	• Numbers 0–5 (Week 1) • Numbers 6–9 (Week 2)
Unit 4: Digraphs and trigraphs	• ll, ff, ss, zz, qu, ck, ch, sh (Week 3) • th, ng, nk, ai, ee, igh, oa, oo (Week 4) • ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, er (Week 5) • **Assess and review (Week 6)**
Unit 5: Useful words	Focus words: • and, go, his, be, her, full, he, into (Week 7) • push, pull, she, put, the, me, is, as (Week 8) • we, to, all, are, by, my, I, was (Week 9) • they, said, you, come, do, have, here, like (Week 10) • love, little, has, one, some, there, so, today (Week 11) • **Assess and review (Week 12)**
Summer term	
Unit 6: Words with Phase 5 GPCs	Writing words with the GPCs: • ay, a-e, ea, e (Week 1) • ie, i-e, o, o-e (Week 2) • ue, ew, u-e, aw (Week 3) • ea, ir, ou, oy (Week 4) • i, a, ow, u (Week 5) • ph, wh, ie, g (Week 6) • **Assess and review (Week 7)**
Unit 7: Days of the week	• Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (Week 8) • Friday, Saturday, Sunday (Week 9)
Unit 8: Sentences with punctuation	• Focus punctuation: . ? ! (Week 10)
Unit 9: Sentences with useful words	• Focus words: again, ask, because, could, eye, beautiful, friend, call (Week 11) • Focus words: laugh, our, people, house, school, should, their, water (Week 12) • **Assess and review (Week 13)**

TRANSITION FROM LITTLE WANDLE HANDWRITING (YEAR 1) TO LETTER-JOIN (YEAR 2)

In Year 1, pupils follow the **Little Wandle Handwriting programme**, developing correct letter formation, orientation, size and positioning through a printed handwriting style. The focus is on establishing secure motor patterns, accurate letter formation and good posture, pencil grip and presentation skills. Pupils are expected to form all letters correctly and consistently before progressing to joined handwriting.

In Year 2, pupils transition to the **Letter-Join handwriting scheme**, using St Mary's chosen cursive style with lead-in and lead-out strokes. This transition takes place once children demonstrate secure formation of printed letters and are ready to develop efficient joining movements. Teaching will initially focus on:

- Correct starting and finishing points for letters.
- Formation of letters with lead-in and lead-out strokes.
- Consistent letter size and orientation.
- Appropriate spacing between words.
- Simple joins before progressing to more complex joins.
- Developing fluency, stamina and legibility.

Teachers will model the transition explicitly, making links between previously learned printed letter shapes and their cursive equivalents. Opportunities for practice will be carefully scaffolded, allowing children to build confidence and automaticity at an appropriate pace.

ADAPTATIONS FOR SEND PUPILS AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES WITH LETTER FORMATION

We recognise that some pupils, including those with SEND, developmental coordination difficulties, fine motor challenges or specific learning needs, may require additional support to achieve handwriting expectations.

Adaptations may include:

- Continued use of printed letter formation beyond Year 1 where this remains the most appropriate approach for the pupil.
- A slower transition to cursive handwriting, introducing individual letter families and joins in smaller steps.
- Additional adult support, modelling and guided practice.
- Use of multisensory approaches, including air writing, tracing, tactile resources and gross motor activities.
- Targeted fine motor development programmes and exercises to strengthen hand control and coordination.
- Alternative pencil grips, writing implements or adapted paper where appropriate.
- Increased opportunities for overlearning and repetition.
- Reasonable adjustments to recording expectations when handwriting difficulties significantly impact access to learning.

For some pupils with identified SEND needs, the priority will remain **legibility, accurate letter formation and effective written communication**, rather than full mastery of a cursive script. Decisions regarding adaptations and progression will be made in consultation with class teachers, the SENDCo and parents/carers, ensuring that each child can experience success and develop confidence as a writer.

The school's expectation is that all pupils are supported to make progress from their individual starting points, with handwriting instruction adapted where necessary to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for every child.

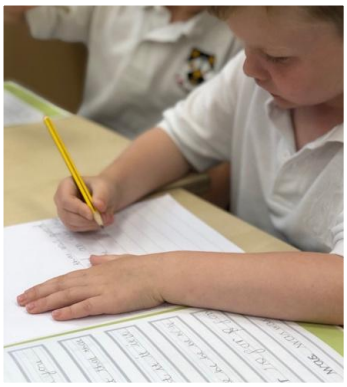
KEY STAGE 1: YEAR 2



Handwriting is taught for 15 minutes daily, focusing on:

- continuing with gross and fine motor skills activities
- practising to strengthen handwriting skills
- learning where and when to use capitals and printed letters, reinforced by practice
- practising handwriting with spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

Module 3 Lesson Planner: Year 2



Module 3 Starting Cursive introduces children to cursive letters and how to join them which is reinforced with regular practice in letter formation and joining.

The sections in this module cover:

- cursive letters and words
- revisiting letter families
- high frequency words
- joining techniques
- sequencing sentences
- dictation exercises
- times table facts
- spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) practice.

With regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing fluency and speed in their writing.

LOWER KEY STAGE 2: YEARS 3 AND 4

Handwriting is taught for 15 minutes daily in Lower Key Stage 2.

Module 4 Lesson Planner: Year 3



Module 4 teaches pupils to use a joined style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping them to refine their handwriting based on the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, modern foreign languages (French and Spanish), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.



Through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum, on completion of this module, the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting should be improving.

Module 5 Lesson Planner: Year 4

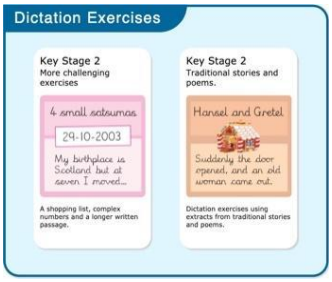


Module 5 focuses on handwriting practice which supports other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, French and Spanish. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and, also provides depth to the curriculum.

Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module's lessons.

On concluding this module, children will have practised applying size-appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum whilst maintaining fluency and legibility.

UPPER KEY STAGE 2: YEARS 5 AND 6



More advanced handwriting techniques are taught during daily 15-minute lessons:

- reinforcing joined handwriting across the curriculum
- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- SATs spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) practice.

Module 6 Lesson Planner: Year 5

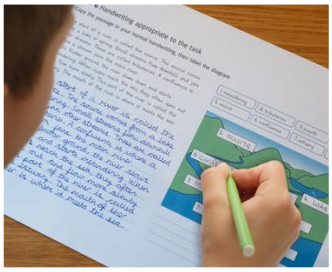


Module 6 continues to build on combining fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum.

In this module, learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the skills and stamina needed to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. With Letter-join's wide range of resources they will be able to work towards producing consistently neat and well-presented handwriting in all curriculum subjects.

On completing this module, children should be producing joined writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.

Module 7 Lesson Planner: Year 6



Module 7 presents learners with a range of tasks where they need to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises help refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based worksheets offer opportunities to practise writing at length.

Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to support SATs SPaG revision. They are designed to support pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of SPaG preparation and plenty of handwriting practice.

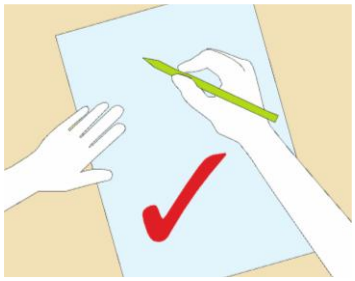
By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects and styles. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, capital letters or an unjoined style.

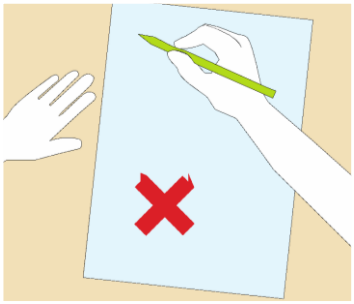
CORRECT POSTURE, PENCIL GRIP AND PAPER POSITION FOR HANDWRITING

Pupils are taught to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.

Sitting position







Right-handed paper position.

Sit with a straight back, not leaning over the page.

Sit right back in the seat.

The table reaches to below the elbow.

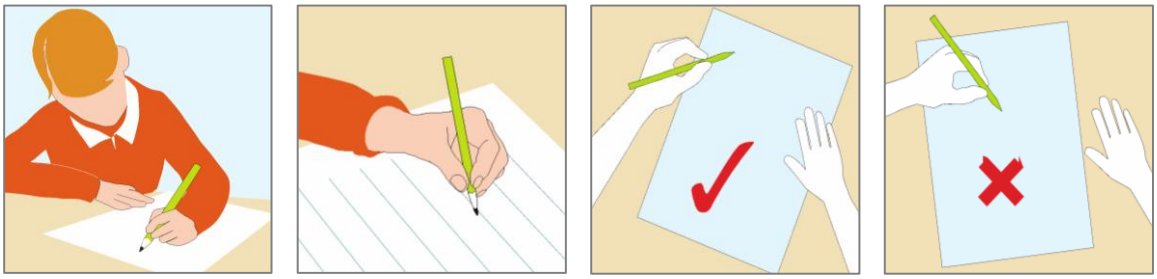
Keep feet flat on the floor.

Pull the chair close to the table.

Left-handed writer

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers will demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Left-handed paper position.

THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

Both right and left-handed children should use the tripod grip which enables the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

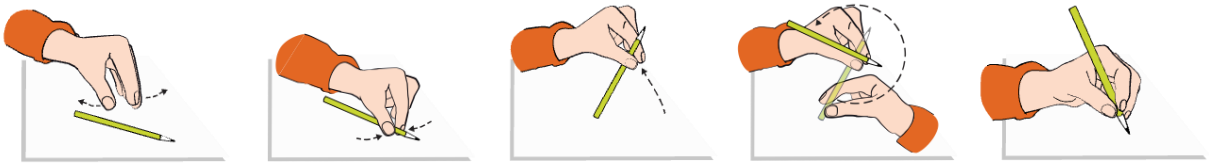
We use the Tripod Grip rhyme:

Right-handed pencil grip



Point away the pencil, Pinch it near the tip, Lift it off the table, Spin it round... and grip.

Left-handed pencil grip



Point away the pencil, Pinch it near the tip, Lift it off the table, Spin it round... and grip.

APPENDIX

St Mary's chosen letter forms

