

Handwriting Policy



Through respect we will work together in Christ to develop
the whole person

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SMSC Statement

At St Matthew's Catholic Primary School we recognise that the personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. We therefore aim to provide an education that provides pupils with opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive, caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the cultures.

Overview

This guidance has been written in line with the statutory requirements for Handwriting across Key Stage 1 and 2 (*NC for English September 2014*). In this policy you will find the requirements for each year group and the key points listed, so that it is clear what needs to be taught in each year group. At St. Matthew's we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our cursive handwriting style. We use Letter-join's on-line handwriting resource and Lesson Planners as the basis of our handwriting policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Staff are expected to use clear cursive handwriting during all lessons and when marking books. This consistent and whole school approach from staff helps to develop children's handwriting and encourages high standards.

Aims

- To have a consistent cursive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Children to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development will be developed through the teaching of English:

Pupils' spiritual development is shown by:

- Writing will be developed across the whole curriculum, including R.E. and P.S.H.E. which give a wealth of opportunities for writing.

- A sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning.
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences and use this as a stimulus for writing.

Pupils' moral development is shown by:

- Pupils will have opportunities to investigate and discuss ideas, offering reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues. This area will also be developed through Philosophy (P4C).

Pupils' social development is shown by their:

- Use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Willingness to participate in a variety of social settings, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively. Pupils are encouraged to read their work aloud in class and to present their work in a variety of ways - presentations and project work.

Pupils' cultural development is shown by their:

- Understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage. Cross-curricular links are made during History, R.E. and P.S.H.E.
- Willingness to participate in, and respond to, for example, artistic, musical, sporting, mathematical, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities. This point links particularly well with Philosophy, as pupils are given this range as a starting point for discussion and enquiry. Pupils are then better equipped to start writing, as they have learnt so much through discussion.
- Interest in exploring, understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

Teaching and learning of 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 using the letter-join programme and cursive handwriting style.

The rules of the Cursive Style help to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke. Additionally, because letters naturally flow into each other, it makes cursive handwriting more consistent and fluent. We believe that this raises standards early in the school which will then later impact throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy, fluency and improved presentation.

Organisation

Handwriting is delivered in short sessions and where possible is integrated across the curriculum. In all classes, handwriting is taught, at least, on a weekly basis and is usually practised by pupils throughout the school day and for homework. All handwriting activities are undertaken as a whole class teaching activity to enable the teacher to model writing patterns or graphemes 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.

Children are expected to apply their learning in all their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work.

Teaching and Learning

As recommended by the British Dyslexia Association, we adopt a continuous cursive style of writing using the letter-join programme. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants model the agreed cursive style when modelling writing both in class, on displays and in feedback in books.

Our agreed cursive style is as below:



Development and progression

i) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

During Reception, 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. These activities include:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making in sand trays, on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

Reception

In EYFS for those children that are ready for handwriting practise they will follow module 1 of the letter-join programme which teaches pre-cursive patterns and cursive, lower case letters. It starts with *Getting Ready for Handwriting* including fine and gross motor skills warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip.

The first module is divided into three sections covering:

- pre-cursive patterns
- easy letters and words
- harder letters and words

At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and form all the cursive, lowercase letters of the alphabet and write words using the correct joining techniques.

In EYFS Children will be introduced to pre-cursive and cursive script at the earliest stages of writing. This will enable an easier transition in Year 1 into the cursive script, depending on their ability.

By the end of Reception children will have been taught to:

- Have the correct pen/pencil grip.
- Write all letters of the alphabet in line with the phonics programme.
- Use pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media.
- Write from left to right.
- Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words.

- Have the correct posture and position

ii) Key Stage 1

During Key Stage 1 children are encouraged to form all letters from the correct starting 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 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.

In Years 1 & 2 the teaching of handwriting progresses from five short activities, to two longer lessons per week. These lessons include:

- continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- strengthening cursive handwriting, learning and practice
- numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice
- KS1 SATs SPaG exercises

Year 1

In Year 1 children will follow Module 2 of the letter-join programme. This module contains lessons for teaching how to write capital letters, printed letters, numbers and symbols, whilst reinforcing cursive handwriting using Letter-join's on-line and printed resources. It is divided into three sections covering:

- capital letters
- printed letters
- numbers and symbols

On finishing this module, children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their use.

Year 1 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (entry and exit flicks).
- Form capital letters.
- Form digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Year 2

In Year 2 children will follow Module 3 of the letter-join programme. This module includes lessons to improve letter formation and orientation of letters through regular practice and to support spelling, grammar and punctuation in readiness for KS1 SATs. The sections in this module cover:

- letter families
- high frequency words
- joining techniques
- sequencing sentences
- dictation exercises
- times table facts
- SPaG practice for KS1 SATs

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

Year 2 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

iii) **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 different purposes.

As fluency and accuracy develops, pupils are awarded with a pen license, which enables them to write with ink across all subjects (Pen license can only be awarded by the writing co-ordinator).

Year 3

Children in Year 3 will follow Module 4 of the letter-join programme. It is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL, onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.

Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.

Year 4

Children in Year 4 will follow Module 5 of the letter-join programme which focuses on using handwriting practice to support 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 and French. 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.

Years 3-4 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

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, e.g. by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5

Children in Year 5 will follow Module 6 of the letter-join programme. This module 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 stamina and skills 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 cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.

Year 6

Children in Year 6 will follow Module 7 of the letter-join programme. This module presents learners with a range of tasks where they have to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based activities will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length.

Module 7 also contains a series of activities to aid KS2 SATs SPaG revision. They are designed to support year 6 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. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters. All of these writing styles are covered in this module.

Years 5-6 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an unjoined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form).

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 (as part of their personal style) whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

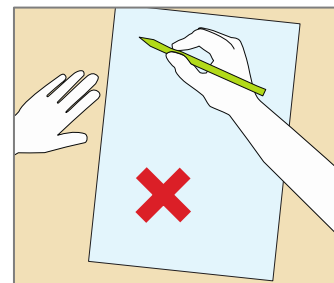
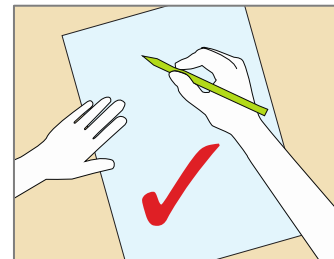
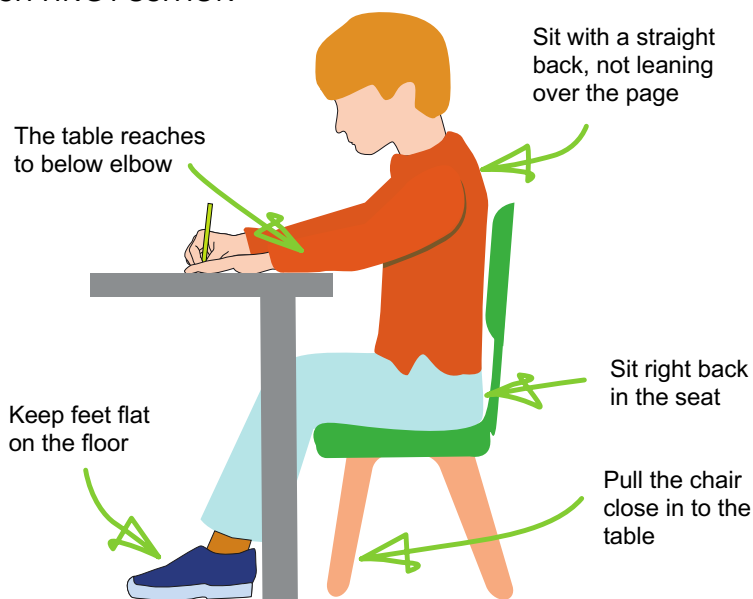
Pen License

A Pen License will be given to pupils when they have displayed neat and consistent Cursive Handwriting across the curriculum. Only then will they be allowed to use a school handwriting pen. The Writing Coordinator will decide when children qualify for their pen license. This is a special award to be celebrated!

Posture

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children.

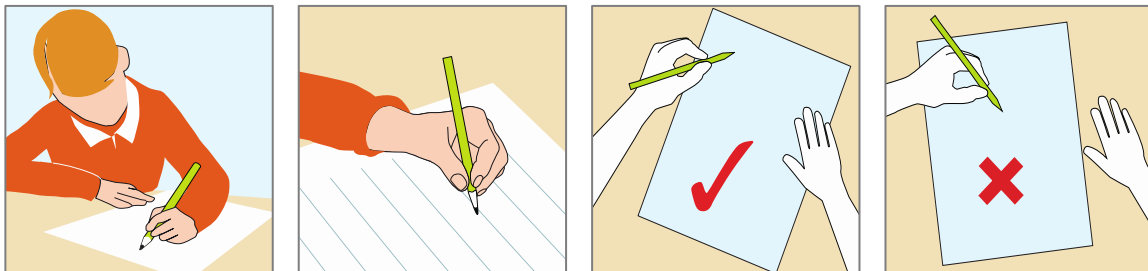
- Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to children's age and height.
- Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right.
- Always make sure that the hand which is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper.

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.

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should 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.



Paper position for left-handed children.

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.

Right-handed pencil grip



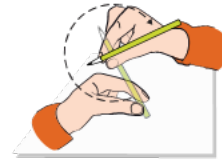
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,

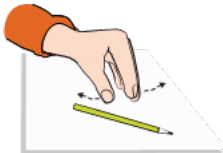


Spin it round...



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.

Equal opportunities and 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 a Pupil Profile. Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper.

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

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation, handwriting informs part of this. Within Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, handwriting is assessed as part of children's writing assessments using the assessment criteria for given year groups. Samples of children's independent writing across a range of subjects will be assessed and moderated at a minimum of three times per academic year.

Expectations for Standards of Presentation

Pupils are expected to:

- look after exercise books and have high expectations of presentation.
- The date (on the right) and title of all work (in the middle of the first line) must appear at the top of the page and must be neatly underlined.
- From Y3 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.

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.
- 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 cursive style and use appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style.

Appendix

Covid 19

At the beginning of the Year there will be a 2 week block to cover basic skills. During this time there will be a focus on revisiting basic skills and writing.

Children will continue with their weekly handwriting lessons where they will address any gaps that occurred during lockdown. They will also continue with their weekly homework to practise handwriting alongside spellings.

In addition to the above we will remain aware of the recovery curriculum that is in place for schools and follow this accordingly to meet the required expectations.