

Handwriting Policy



Approved by Governors: March 2023

To be reviewed: September 2024

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.

The Aims of English as outlined in the National Curriculum English Programmes of Study

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage.
- **write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.**
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas.
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Aims

- To have a consistent print approach from Reception to Year 1 in line with letter join and RWI (Read, Write, Inc) to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To have a consistent cursive approach from Year 2 to Year 6 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.

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 daily and systematically from Reception to Year 6 using the letter-join programme and cursive handwriting style from year 2 onwards. All year groups have regular handwriting lesson in which the teacher models handwriting and the children then practise in their handwriting book.

Organisation

Handwriting is delivered in short sessions and is reinforced across the curriculum. In all classes, handwriting is taught regularly and is practised by pupils during the lesson. All handwriting activities are undertaken as a whole class teaching activity to enable the teacher to model essential transcription skills and knowledge and to instruct pupils on how to develop effective and efficient pen control.

Children are encouraged 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:

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

Development and progression

i) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

In 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 non-cursive print of lower case letters. Staff will use the RWI letter formation rhymes alongside the letterjoin programme to support the correct formation of letters. The Reception letterjoin module 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-writing patterns
- easy letters and words
- harder letters and words

At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and correctly form all the lowercase letters of the alphabet in print.

In EYFS Children will use the non-cursive print style to assist their learning of phonics.

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

- Have the correct pen/pencil grip.
- Write most 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.

Year 1 will continue to practise the print style of lowercase and capital letters and will be introduced to pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters.

During Year 2 children will continue to practise cursive formation of letters and will be 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.

In Years 1 & 2 the teaching of handwriting will 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, introducing cursive handwriting using Letter-join's on-line and printed resources. It is divided into three sections covering:

- printed letters and capital letters
- numbers, punctuation marks and symbols
- Pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters

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
- 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 practise cursive 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:

- cursive easy letters and words
- Cursive harder letters and words
- 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).

Key stage 2 recovery programme

Children who may have gaps in their cursive handwriting or need additional support will follow the Key stage 2 letterjoin handwriting recovery unit.

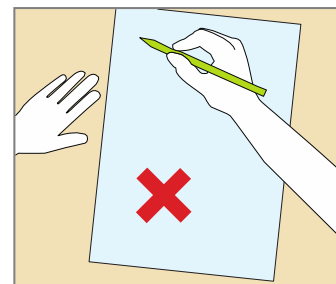
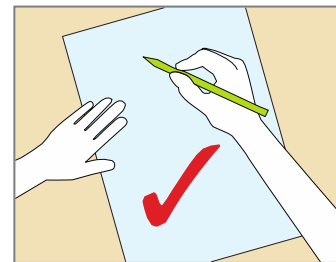
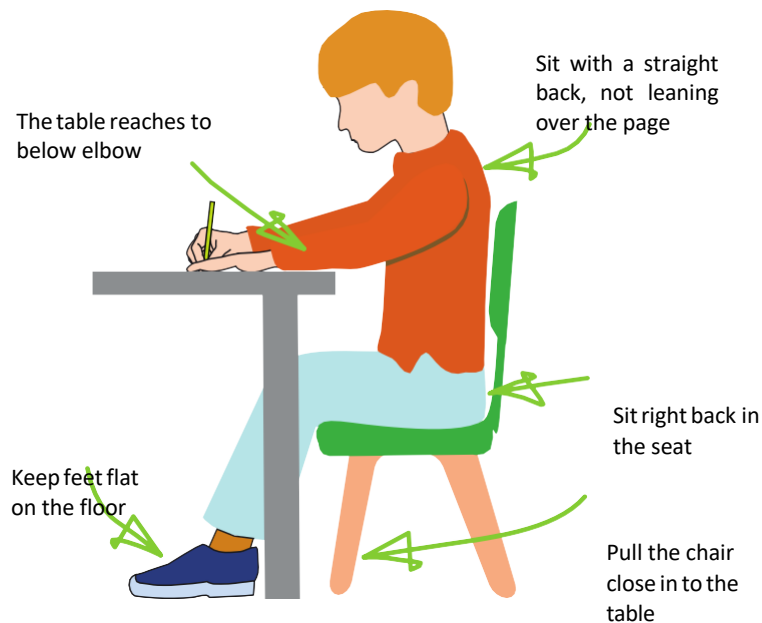
Pen License

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.

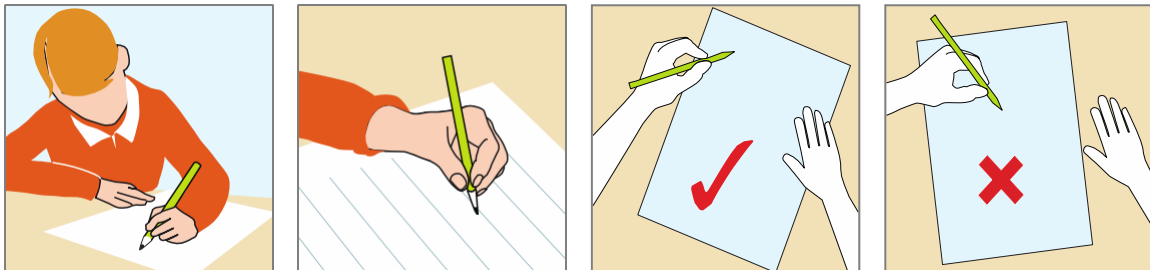
- Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to children's age and height.
- Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right.
- Always make sure that 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.



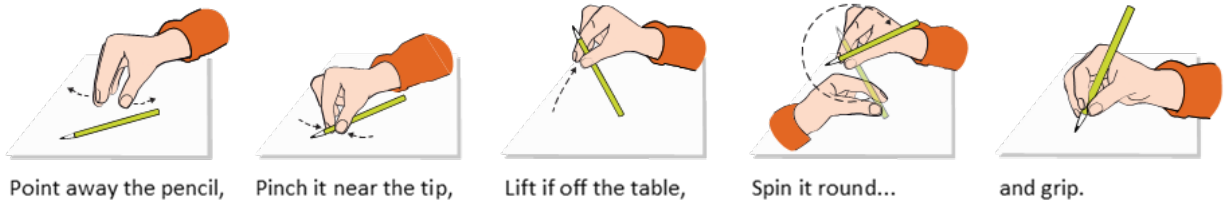
Paper position for left-handed children.

Pencil Grip

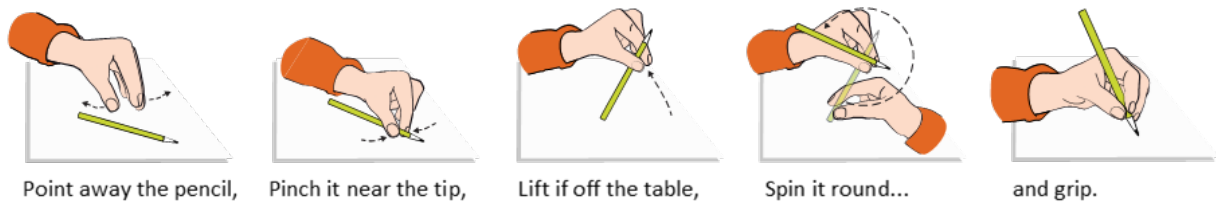
If children are to develop a fluid and rapid writing style then they must learn how to hold a pencil with a grip which is relaxed but allows for efficient pencil control.

- 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



Left-handed pencil grip



Equal opportunities

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 an adult as often as possible. 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 practice 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 regular intervals across the 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, using technology 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.