

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School



Learn. Grow. Achieve. Flourish.

## Handwriting Policy and Procedure

POLICY: Handwriting Policy & Procedures  
APPROVED BY: Headteacher  
APPROVED DATE: 22.06.2021  
REVIEW DATE: Summer 2024  
This policy is reviewed every 3 years.

### Our School Vision

St Mary's school vision is to embrace a Christian like way of living, learning and teaching.

**As a Church of England primary school, we value and are ambitious for all children and are committed to providing a positive, happy, safe, and stimulating environment for them to enjoy and excel in their learning; grow in confidence, resilience and independence; achieve their full potential and flourish as individuals.**

**I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths (Proverbs 4:11)**

At St Mary's, we believe that the ability to write fluently and legibly gives children a means to communicate their thoughts and ideas efficiently and effectively. A child's self-esteem and confidence is increased when they are able to produce well-presented work they can be proud of. We are committed to providing opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect their handwriting, by providing targeted support to any child having trouble.

### **Intent:**

1. To have a consistent approach to teaching handwriting
2. For children to take pride in the presentation of their work and study handwriting with a sense of achievement.
3. To be able to write legibly with increasing fluency and speed by:
  - Having a correct pencil grip
  - Forming all letters correctly

### **Implementation:**

To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and children are explicitly taught the skill of handwriting four times a week in KS1 and twice a week in KS2. Across the school, handwriting is carefully modelled and monitored by the teachers. Children are taught patterns to support letter formation and appropriate letter-joins are also embedded well during handwriting lessons. High expectations are communicated as part the success criteria for the lesson.

## **1. Teaching and Learning**

### **Early Years:**

To prepare children to write, teachers focus on the development of children's gross and fine motor skills such as hole punching, threading, modelling with play dough. All these activities are designed to strengthen the muscles in the arms, hands, and fingers, as well as developing the children's ability to handle, manipulate and control objects with precision. In the next stage children are encouraged to hold a pencil with correct tripod grip.

In early years, the teaching of correct letter formation is linked to the teaching of phonics.

Letter formation is taught daily as part of the RWI phonics lesson. Once the children have learnt all the RWI set1 sounds, additional handwriting practice is taught and reinforced. Individual letters are taught following a particular order (**See Appendix – 1**).

### **Key Stage 1:**

Letter formation practice continues in KS1 as the children learn to write more frequently, across the full range of National Curriculum subjects. In Year 1, correct letter formation is reviewed and using letter families grouped according to similar handwriting movements (**See Appendix – 2**).

From Year 1 onwards children are taught to join their writing when they can form the letters correctly. This can help them recognise specific sounds through graphemes and phonemes and supports spelling patterns (**See Appendix – 3**).

Handwriting is taught regularly and systematically in whole class time, group activities or individually as appropriate.

### **Key Stage 2:**

Children continue to follow the Nelson handwriting scheme. Handwriting as a whole class is taught at least twice a week, but it is also taught as an intervention for specific groups of children where there is the need for extra teaching on a more regular basis. This provision is adjusted to suit the requirements of individual need throughout KS2 to improve upon this skill.

## **2. Planning and Organisation**

At St Mary's, we teach the children to write using the Nelson Handwriting scheme.

### **Seating and posture:**

- Chair and table to be at a comfortable height.
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch.
- The height of the chairs should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor.
- Tables should be free of clutter.
- Rooms should be well lit.
- Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

### **Pencil grip:**

Children should write with a pencil (or a pen when appropriate) with a rounded nib.

- Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.

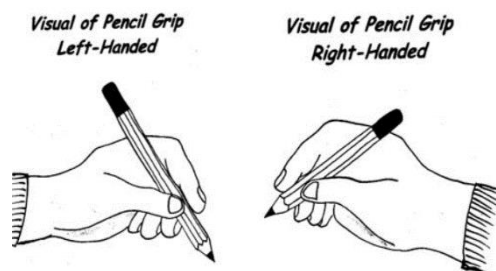
### **For right handers:**

- Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger 3 cm away from the point.
- The paper should be placed to the right slightly tilted to the left.
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.

### **For left handers:**

- Hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger; hold about 3 cm from the tip.
- The hand should be kept below the writing line.
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 8 degrees.
- Use the right hand to steady the paper and placed above the writing line.

**NB** It is very important that a right-handed child is not seated on the left-hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide.



### 3. Assessment

#### **Whole school and class assessment:**

The subject leader for literacy will regularly assess handwriting across the school.

Criteria for whole-school assessment may include:

- Are the children sitting correctly?
- Are letters being shaped correctly?
- Are joins being made correctly?
- Are spaces between letters, words and lines correct?
- Is writing size appropriate?
- Is the handwriting generally legible and pleasant?
- Are the writing standards demonstrated by most children in line with statutory curricula?

#### **Individual assessment:**

Teachers assess children's handwriting progression during lessons as they write as well as once they have completed their writing.

Criteria for assessment may include:

- Does the child adopt the correct posture?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movements when forming/joining?
- Does the child write fluently?
- Is the writing legible?
- Is the writing appropriate?
- Is the child's handwriting developing in-line with statutory curricula?

#### **Pupil assessment:**

Children are frequently reminded to assess their own writing using a checklist (**See Appendix – 4**) provided to them. The checklist may also be used as a basis for pairs of pupils to discuss each other's writing.

### 4. Equal opportunities

#### **SEND:**

Pupils who have a more specific or special need and who need more support with handwriting will have an individual or group programme drawn up for them in consultation with the SENDCo; targets may be identified on an IEP.

#### **EAL:**

Children with EAL are motivated to make the same outstanding progress in handwriting as their peers. To support their understanding of letter formation handwriting is consistently modelled by the class teacher.

**High Achievers:**

Children with advanced skills in handwriting will be supported and given opportunities for extension work.

**Left Handers:**

Find the opportunities given to left handers in planning and organisation section.

**Impact:**

By adopting a systematic approach to teaching handwriting, children will develop their fluency in handwriting by the end of KS2. The school will have a consistent handwriting programme for all staff and pupils to follow. Children's curriculum work and literary displays will contribute towards an evidence portfolio showing both the consistency of the department's teaching but also overall children's progress.

**Appendix – 1**

S a t p

l n m d

g o c k

c k e u r h

h b f i l l s s

j v w x

y z q

**Appendix – 2****Set 1**

c a o d g q s f e

**Set 2**

l l t u j y

**Set 3**

r n m b p h k

**Set 4**

v w x z

**Appendix – 3**

**The Four Joins** (These groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters)

- to letters without ascenders
- to letters with ascenders
- horizontal joins
- horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

**The joining groups**

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

**Group 1**

a c d e h l k l m n s t u (13 letters with exit flicks plus s)

**Group 2**

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y (19 letters which start at the top of the x height)

**Group 3**

b f h k l t (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender)

**Group 4**

f o r v w (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender)

**The break letters**







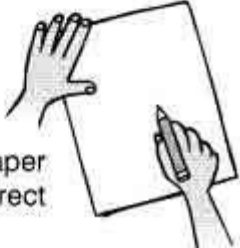







Joins are never made after the letters in this group.

b g j p q x y z (8 letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.)

### The joined style

*The quick brown fox jumps over  
the lazy dog.*

### Appendix – 4

<p><b>Getting ready to write</b> </p> <p>  Are you sitting comfortably with both feet on the floor?</p> <p>  Are you holding your pencil correctly?</p> <p>  Is your paper at the correct angle?</p>	<p><b>Handwriting CHECKLIST</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Are you forming your letters correctly?</li><li> Are any letters too tall or too short?</li><li> Are the descenders of any letters too long or too curly?</li><li> Is there a space between your letters?</li><li> Is there a space between your words?</li><li> Are you making the four joins correctly?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diagonal join to letters without ascenders <i>ai, ar, un</i></li><li>• Horizontal join to letters without ascenders <i>ou, vi, wi</i></li><li>• Diagonal join to letters with ascenders <i>ab, ul, it</i></li><li>• Horizontal join to letters with ascenders <i>ol, wh, ot</i></li></ul></li></ul>
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