

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School



Handwriting Policy

2023-2024

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY HANDWRITING POLICY

1. RATIONALE

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a wide 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 the child progresses through school, the requirement to write legibly and fluently increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases. Children need to be encouraged to adopt the correct pencil grip and writing posture from the start of their school life. They also need regular and constant opportunities to learn, practice and apply specific handwriting skills.

This will ensure children know:

- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
- Having correct pencil grip.
- Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle.
- Knowing the correct formation of all letters.
- Knowing the correct size and orientation of letters.

2. HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND NON-NEGOTIABLES

High expectations **MUST** be applied to handwriting and presentation in the same way that our expectations are high in other areas of the curriculum:

- It is acceptable that there are times (in notes, rough planning or draft) that a child needs to write quickly and therefore, may not spend as much time focusing on handwriting and cursive script.
- It is **NOT** acceptable though, for children to sustain bad habits, posture, pencil grip or standards of presentation as they move through school. Teaching **MUST** have an impact on standards.
- It is **NOT** acceptable for children to vary the standard of their handwriting on a day to day basis- they must strive to show their best.

Also, it is not acceptable to assume children know how to do all of the above. They must see, be taught and have access to modelling which exemplifies, explains and outlines what a skill is, how to do it and how to improve. They therefore, must have access to quality teaching.

3. WHOLE SCHOOL CONSISTENCY

Whole school consistency is vital to ensuring success and progress.

The letter formation that children encounter first at Our Lady of the Rosary in Year Reception is pre-cursive. As children progress through the school, they will be shown how this can progress into cursive script, where letters are all joined. Pre-cursive and cursive letters start at the base of the letter. The letter join programme will form the basis for handwriting lessons – all staff have access to the program in which modelled examples of letters and patterns can be shown to the class. In addition to this, each class has a handwriting booklet, which forms the basis of practice within lessons.

Teachers are expected to exemplify the cursive style in their marking of books, in classroom displays and when writing within lessons (On interactive whiteboard/flipchart paper). Children should experience daily practice of handwriting in a

variety of places – from English lessons to discrete practice in Handwriting books. Staff should consider where this practice should occur within their timetable and plan accordingly.

Children should experience/have access to:

- Daily practice of handwriting.
- Same language (in line with Letter Join) to be used in each year group
- Letter Join interactive whiteboard resources, workbooks and worksheets to be used to support main teaching tool.
- Pencils to be of a good quality and sharp. High expectations regarding pencils. Children should not be completing work with blunt pencils.
- Where handwriting is displayed, it should be of a high quality. Letter join font is to be used for displays.
- Letter formation is to follow the progression policy outlined in this section.

4. TEACHING TIME

Handwriting practice should, in varying forms, take place DAILY where possible (games, English lesson starters, handwriting sessions etc.). More formal taught handwriting sessions need to be built in to the EYFS framework and timetable. They should also, be discretely built in to and taught through the KS1 and KS2 timetable.

EYFS

For our youngest pupils we aim for two to three weekly sessions totaling 30 to 45 minutes that will include the following:

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.

KS1

Tuition will continue with two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes covering:

- Gross and fine motor skills exercises.
- Cursive handwriting reinforcement, learning and practice.
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters: where and when to use, learning and practice.

KS2:

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes teaching:

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement.
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters.
- Dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and handwriting at speed.

5. TEACHING STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS:

EYFS

- Concentrate on letter formation including verbalisation of how to form letters (see appendix)
- A number of examples of initial mark making and opportunities to explore mark making.
- Use of Letter Join's whiteboard board resources to develop muscular strength, coordination and recognition of letter formation.
- Use of thicker triangular pencils for all children initially, until motor skills sufficiently developed to use a normal school pencil.

- By the end of Year R children should be able to: Use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters [with a whoosh], **most** of which are correctly formed and apply their writing in exercise books.
- Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- Embed approach of “This is how we read it... round the apple and down the stem!” for recognizing letters in RML and “This is how we write it... whoosh, round the apple and down the stem!” to show an extra flick to begin pre-cursive joining.

KEY STAGE 1

- Write legibly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins.
- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.

YEAR 1

- Continuation of YR strategies. Ensure consistency is maintained with “This is how we read it... round the apple and down the stem!” for recognizing letters in RML and “This is how we write it... whoosh, round the apple and down the stem!” to show an extra flick to begin pre-cursive joining.
- Handwriting books introduced at the appropriate time.
- Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- All children to follow the whole school approach.

YEAR 2

- As for Y1
- Introduce joining and can practice sounds/letters for split diagraphs and two letters one sound joins.
- Pens can be used when all letters are correctly formed, work is consistently neat and letters joined in all curriculum areas
- Less able/SEN may still need to use specialist lined paper.
- Interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and to follow the whole school approach.

KEY STAGE 2

Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

Quality: Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.

Speed: Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take ‘quick notes’ at a faster pace.

Stamina: Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.

YEAR 3

- Continue all the above.
- Change to narrower line guides.
- High expectations regarding letter formation and presentation in books – handwriting is not an independent activity and should be applied.
- High expectations in class mean progress should be evident and poor handwriting practice never just ‘accepted’.
- Interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs.
- Children should be accessing taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation interactively as well as in handwriting practice books.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

YEARS 4 AND 5

- Continue as above
- High expectations regarding presentation and letter formation.
- Children to be developing the speed and fluency of handwriting skills.
- More able to be practicing handwriting through applied grammar, spelling or creative writing.
- Interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs.
- Children should be accessing taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation interactively as well as in handwriting practice books.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

YEAR 6

- Continue as above
- High expectations regarding presentation and letter formation.
- Children to be developing the speed and fluency of handwriting skills.
- More able to be practising handwriting through applied grammar, spelling or creative writing.
- Handwriting should be applied throughout the curriculum and be a chance to explore different grammar, spelling, punctuation or creative writing techniques.
- Interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs.
- Children should be accessing taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation interactively as well as in handwriting practice books.

www.letterjoin.co.uk

This website will allow you to print work sheets for specific patterns, letters or words for the children and even create your own work sheets. See the English lead for the user name and password.

6. PAPER/BOOKS

The school has specially designed handwriting books for children to practice discrete skills in conjunction with year group practice books. Children should then move on to using formal exercise books when they are ready and competent writers. Children who still need guidance should continue to use the handwriting tramline books.

7. PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & REPORTING

Assessment is formative on daily basis.

Handwriting is predominantly assessed during writing and is an important facet of overall writing effectiveness. Teachers however, should be assessing children's needs/standards of presentation in all lessons – not just writing.

Targets/reporting of progress in handwriting should be included in parental reports if necessary.

Pupils should be encouraged to self-assess and peer assess handwriting during English and handwriting lessons.

8. SEN AND INCLUSION

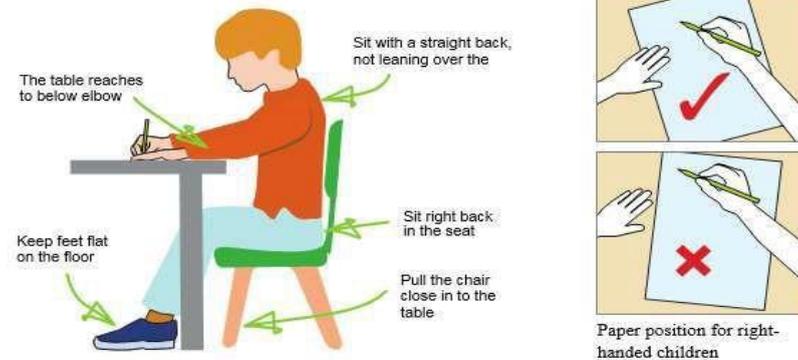
Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems such as fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENDCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources, use of specialist pens/pencils/pencil grips, or participation in specialist interventions. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

9. POSTURE AND GRIP

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

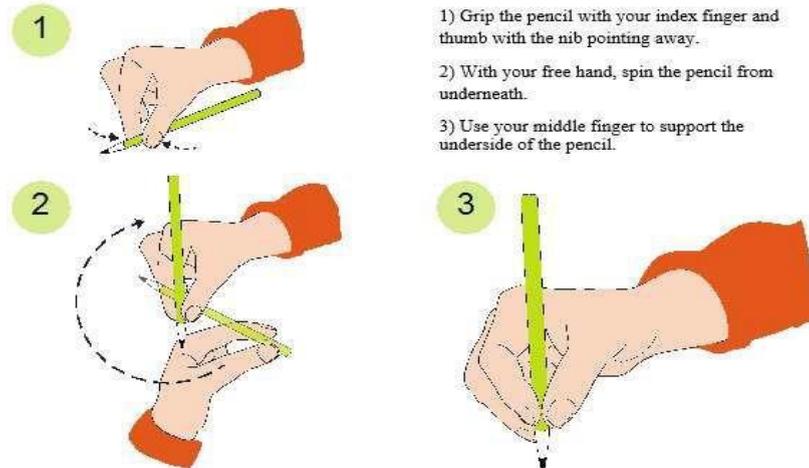
Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

SITTING POSITION



THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

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



Right handers:

Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point. The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left

Left hand must be used to steady the paper

Left handers:

Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger. Hold about 3cm from the tip as closer grips can interrupt pupils' line of vision;

The hand should be kept below the writing line.

The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30° Right hand must be used to steady the paper.

NB: It is very important that a right-handed child is NOT sat on the left hand side of a left handed child. If a child struggles to use the traditional grip, please refer to SENDCO. A range of specially designed pens and pencils are available which can be used in classes. Specialist left handed pens and pencils are also available.

Handwriting Progression



We use the Letter-join scheme as the basis of our whole school approach to handwriting, progressing from Early Years to Year 5.

Early Years

For our youngest pupils we teach handwriting through phonics. Additional handwriting sessions also take place.

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

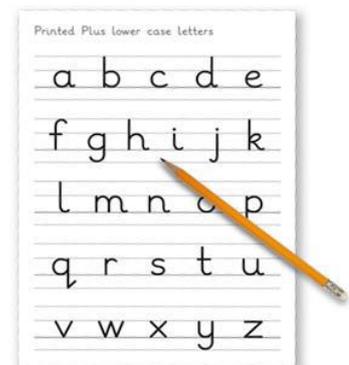


Lesson Planner Early Years – Printed letters

Supporting resources using a printed font include:

- all lower case letters and words
- all of the Phonics activities
- all games and activities
- all KS1 worksheets

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



Lesson Planner Module 1 for EYFS 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.



Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2

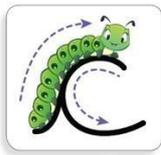
- continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- strengthening cursive handwriting, learning and practice
- numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice
- KS1 SATs SPaG exercises

Lesson Planner Module 2 for Year 1 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

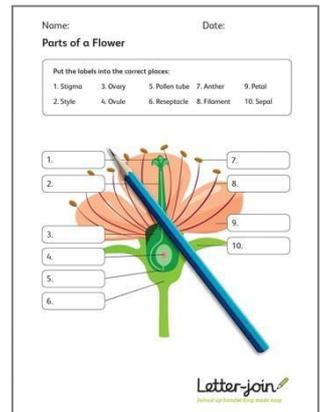
On finishing this module, children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their use.

Lesson Planner Module 3 for Year 2 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.



Lower Key Stage 2: Years 3 and 4

Handwriting lessons will continue twice a week in Lower Key Stage 2.

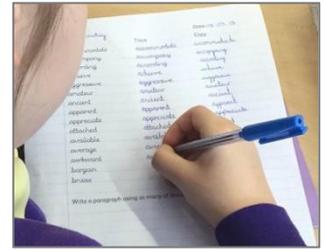
Lesson Planner Module 4 for Year 3 is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French and Spanish), 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.

Lesson Planner Module 5 for Year 4 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, 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.



EXAMPLE
Word of the Week: precarious

Write this week's word six times:

precarious precarious precarious
precarious precarious precarious

Use a dictionary to find the definition of this week's word:

If something is precarious, it is not safe and likely to fall off or fall over.

Write some synonyms of this week's word:

insecure risky hazardous
treacherous unsafe dangerous

Write some antonyms of this week's word:

safe fixed strong
secure protected stable

Write a sentence using this week's word:

The cat was in a precarious position in the tree.
Beware: this cliff edge is precarious.
Take care on that precarious old ladder.
The stranded climber was in a precarious situation.

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Upper Key Stage 2: Years 5 and 6 (if needed)

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum

- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- KS2 SATs SPaG practice

Lesson Planner Module 6 for Year 5 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.



Incorporating handwriting lessons into the timetable

Handwriting sessions are incorporated into the weekly timetable from Y2-5.

The Lesson Planners are designed so that teachers can use them as a toolkit to support and reinforce the teaching of handwriting and they allow plenty of scope to respond to individual children's needs.

