

Read St John's Church of England Primary School



Handwriting Policy

Sowing the seeds of tomorrow, growing in the light of the Lord.

Matthew 13:1-23

Date of Policy: September 2025
Review Date: September 2028

Christian Vision

We aim to unlock the potential for everyone to flourish whilst being rooted and grounded in God's love. We aim high, so together as one family, we can fly.

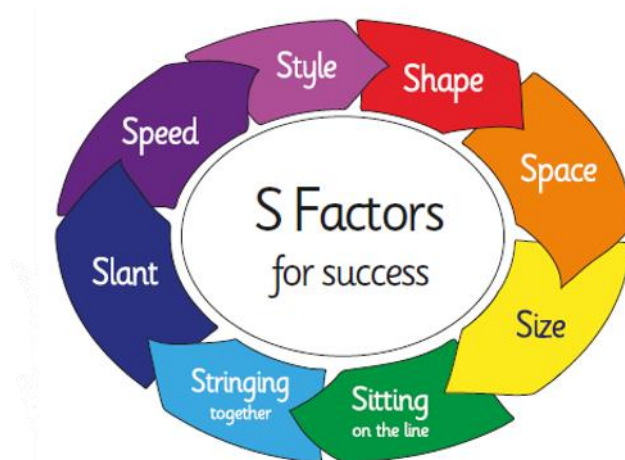
This vision is deeply rooted in the biblical teaching from Matthew 13:1-23, the Parable of the Sower. This parable beautifully illustrates our belief that every child deserves the right opportunities, care, and support to grow and flourish. Just as the sower plants seeds in good soil to nurture growth, we provide an excellent foundation and all the necessary ingredients for every child to reach their full potential.

Introduction and Philosophy

At Read St John's CE Primary School, we use the Schofield & Sims WriteWell programme to deliver a consistent, whole-school approach to handwriting.

WriteWell is a systematic, evidence-informed handwriting scheme designed to support handwriting mastery from Reception to Year 6. Supporting the Department for Education's 2025 Writing Framework, it reflects national expectations and best practice in teaching transcription, the essential foundation for fluent, effective writing.

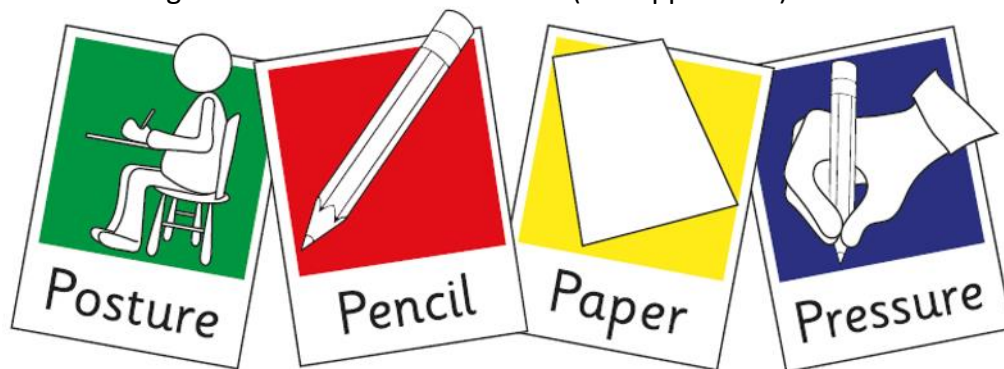
WriteWell is built upon the National Handwriting Association's **eight 'S Factors'**.



Our ultimate aim is for every child to develop a legible, fluent, and efficient written script. By building automaticity in letter formation, we reduce the cognitive load on pupils, allowing them to focus on their working memory and on their creative composition and spelling.

The Physical Prerequisites: WriteWell 'P Checks'

Every handwriting session and formal writing activity must begin with the teacher explicitly modeling and reinforcing the WriteWell **Four P Checks** (see Appendix 1):



- **Posture:** Feet flat on the floor, backs straight, and chairs pulled close to the desk. The non-writing hand must firmly anchor and steady the page.
- **Pencil Grip:** A relaxed, functional tripod grip (pencil held between the thumb and index finger, resting on the middle finger). Left-handed writers should grip slightly higher up to maintain visibility.
- **Paper Position:** Right-handed pupils tilt their paper slightly to the left. Left-handed pupils tilt their paper slightly to the right to prevent wrist-hooking and smudging.
- **Pressure:** The writing tool must glide smoothly. Pupils are taught to avoid pressing too hard, which causes hand fatigue.

Developmental Stages and Curriculum Progression

The school structures handwriting development across the **four cumulative stages** outlined by the WriteWell scheme:

Stage 1: Letter Formation (Early Years & Year 1)

- **Focus:** Developing shape, baseline control, and correct starting points.
- **Implementation:** Lower-case letters are introduced in their distinct WriteWell letter families (see Appendix 2). Pupils learn print letter forms with distinct exit flicks, laying the foundation for future joining. Capital letters and digits 0–9 are explicitly taught alongside lower-case forms.

Stage 2: Space and Size (Year 1 & Year 2)

- **Focus:** Establishing relative sizing, clear spacing, and correct line placement.
- **Implementation:** Pupils practice keeping ascenders (b, d, h, k, l) and descenders (g, j, p, q, y) proportional. Lessons focus heavily on uniform spacing between words and ensuring all letters sit firmly on the baseline.

Stage 3: Joining and Slant (Year 2, Year 3 & Year 4)

- **Focus:** Transitioning to a continuous cursive style and maintaining a consistent slant.

- **Implementation:** Once letter formation is completely secure, diagonal and horizontal joins are systematically introduced. Pupils are taught to maintain a uniform, comfortable slant across all letters to improve flow.

Stage 4: Speed and Style (Year 5 & Year 6)

- **Focus:** Building writing stamina, fluid speed, and personal refinement.
- **Implementation:** Practice shifts toward maintaining legibility during timed tasks and independent note-taking. Pupils refine their personal style while ensuring it remains highly legible.

Method of Instruction: WriteWell Letter Families

To build muscle memory efficiently, lower-case letters are taught and practiced in specific groupings based on their initial movement patterns (see Appendix 2):

- The Ladder Family (l, i, t, j, u, y)
- The Rubber Ball Family (r, n, m, p, h, b, k)
- The Cog Family (c, o, a, d, g, q)
- The Cog Cousins (s, e, f)
- The Zip Wire Family (z, v, w, x)

Lesson Structure and Frequency

Dedicated, explicit teacher-led sessions lasting 10 minutes, delivered each afternoon, with targeted interventions for pupils requiring additional support.

Teachers must use the Model-Practise-Review framework. Teachers actively model the strokes using the handwriting repeater website <https://edu-tools.github.io/> using background that matches our handwriting books. Teachers should verbalise the formation rhymes for EYFS/KS1 and movement patterns in KS2, while pupils replicate in their handwriting books.

Inclusion, Accessibility, and Support

Left-Handed Writers: Left-handed pupils must be seated on the left side of a desk pair to avoid elbow clashes. They are prompted to grip the pencil 2–3 cm from the tip to ensure they can see their own writing line.

Targeted Intervention: Pupils struggling with fine motor skills, spatial orientation, or muscle fatigue will be supported using intervention strategies, including specialised pencil grips, writing slopes, and focused motor-skills warm-ups.

Monitoring, Assessment, and Home Links

- **Cross-Curricular Application:** The presentation standards achieved during handwriting sessions are expected in *all* exercise books.
- **Book Looks:** The English Lead and Senior Leadership Team will conduct termly book looks to monitor progression against the WriteWell stages.
- **Home Engagement:** The school will provide parents with the WriteWell letter family guide and 'P Checks' checklist to ensure consistent vocabulary and habits are reinforced during home learning.

Appendix 1

Use the **P checks** to make sure your body is in a comfortable position for writing.



Before you start, check your **posture**, **pencil grip** and **paper position**. As you write, check that you are applying the right amount of **pressure** through your pencil.

Posture



Sit back in your chair, face forwards and place both feet flat on the floor.

Pencil grip



right-hand pencil grip

Hold your pencil between your thumb and index finger while it rests on your middle finger. Don't hold the pencil too tightly!



left-hand pencil grip

Paper position



right-handers

- Place your paper slightly to your right.
- Tilt the top left-hand corner downwards.
- Use your non-writing hand to hold it still.

- Place your paper slightly to your left.
- Tilt the top right-hand corner downwards.
- Use your non-writing hand to hold it still.



left-handers

Pressure

Make sure you don't press the pencil too hard or too lightly when writing.

Appendix 2

The ladder family

l i t j u y



The rubber ball family

r n m p h b k



The cog family

c o a d g q



The cog cousins

s e f



The zip wire family

z v w x



Appendix 3

Diagonal joins

- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to short straight letters and letters with descenders (starting at the short letter height) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**
- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**
- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**

A cursive join between the letters 'a' and 'n' on a four-line grid. A red arrow shows a diagonal stroke from the top of the 'a' to the middle of the 'n'.

A cursive join between the letters 'c' and 'h' on a four-line grid. A red arrow shows a diagonal stroke from the top of the 'c' to the top of the 'h'.

A cursive join between the letters 'i' and 'c' on a four-line grid. A red arrow shows a diagonal stroke from the top of the 'i' to the middle of the 'c'.

Horizontal joins

- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to short straight letters (starting at the short letter line) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**
- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**
- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**

A cursive join between the letters 'o' and 'n' on a four-line grid. A red arrow shows a horizontal stroke from the middle of the 'o' to the middle of the 'n'.

A cursive join between the letters 'o' and 'k' on a four-line grid. A red arrow shows a horizontal stroke from the middle of the 'o' to the middle of the 'k'.

A cursive join between the letters 'o' and 'a' on a four-line grid. A red arrow shows a horizontal stroke from the middle of the 'o' to the middle of the 'a'.

* Some letters (e.g. **e, s, r, f**) require a variation on these joins and are introduced separately.