

St. Matthew's C of E Primary School Policies



Our Policy: Handwriting

Approval Date:
Review Date:

Handwriting Policy

The quality and fluency of a child's handwriting is often the basis on which performance judgements are made. We have high expectations that our children take pride and care in their written work which handwriting is a key part of. We aim for all our children to successfully develop their fine motor skills initially in EYFS and through to KS1 which will subsequently allow them to develop a fluent, joined handwriting style. The mastery of these skills will allow our children to quickly and clearly communicate their ideas in the written form.

Improving Handwriting at St Matthew's C.E. Primary

To achieve the above goal, it is important that handwriting is planned for and learning objectives should be appropriately matched to the children's abilities.

What does this look like at St. Matthew's?

EYFS

- Children will use a range of tools to develop drawing lines and circles using gross motor skills e.g. swirling ribbons, batting balls, painting.
- Children will use a range of materials to develop fine motor skills e.g. wax crayons, markers, pencils, sponges, chunky brushes, cotton wool balls, shaving foam, finger paints, etc.
- Children will practice manipulative skills e.g. playing with constructions, threading and playing instruments.
- Children will use variety of tools and paper, indoors and outdoors for purposeful writing. e.g. role play, labelling, making cards.
- Children have access to a variety of materials/activities for handwriting, e.g. writing in sand or paint with a finger, making letters out of play dough, tracing letters on a partner's back or in the air.
- Children will be introduced to letters in line with their Read Write Inc (RWI) daily phonics lessons (5 x 30-minute sessions). Each letter has a handwriting phrase to help the children remember the formation.

KS1

- Across Year 1 and 2 (for those on the RWI scheme, children learn how to form letters effectively whilst learning their letter sounds according to the RWI scheme (4 x 1 hour sessions). Each letter has a handwriting phrase to help the children remember the formation.
- In Year 1, handwriting is further taught in approximately 2x 20 minute sessions throughout the week following the Nelson scheme, doing letter formation during the autumn term, beginning to teach cursive from approximately January (for most children).
- In Year 2, handwriting is further taught in a longer 30-minute session weekly (or two shorter sessions) using the 'join-it' font following the Nelson scheme. Handwriting is also targeted during EMT time for those who require it.
- Children use leading strokes when writing to encourage the correct cursive writing formation (from Year 2 or when appropriate in Year 1 – cohort dependent). Then, when children are forming their letters correctly, they can begin to write cursive easily and fluently.

KS2

- In Year 3 and 4, handwriting is taught regularly throughout the week using the 'join-it' font following the Nelson scheme. At the teacher's discretion, teaching is either taught for 15 minutes 3 x a week or a longer 30 to 40-minute session with practice during Early Morning Task time dependent on the cohort's needs.
- In Year 5 and 6, handwriting lessons are taught at the teacher's discretion (dependent on the cohort's needs) and often involve small intervention group sessions for those children in need.
- Handwriting lessons follow the Nelson scheme (same as KS1) which links handwriting to common spelling patterns.

Whole School

- Across the school, teachers discuss handwriting and presentation in all subjects and have high expectations of our pupils.
- All staff model a fluent, joined handwriting style, on the board, on displays and in marking children's books, where age appropriate and following the programme.
- All staff are explicit about different types of handwriting, e.g. note-taking or published work and the presentation expected for all types of writing.
- Handwriting lessons are completed in the back of the children's English books to avoid disruption to the sequence of English lessons.

STRUCTURE OF HANDWRITING SESSIONS:

Within handwriting lesson, teachers must model letter formation and joins accurately and precisely. Handwriting lessons are taught according to the Nelson scheme of work (join progression outlined below). Children are given opportunities to practise individually, in pairs or in small groups working towards independently following the model of handwriting demonstrated by the teacher.

The order of the joins to be taught according to the following groups:

- Group 1 (thirteen letters with exit flicks plus s) a, c, d, e, h, l, k, l, m, n, s, t, u,
- Group 2 (nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height) a, c, d, e, g, l, j, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, u, v, w, x, y
- Group 3 (six letters which start at the top of the ascender) b, f, h, k, l, t
- Group 4 (five letters which finish at the top of the x-height) f, o, r, v, w
- The break letters (eight letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z) b, g, j, p, q, x, y, z

The 4 basic joins:

1. The first join from group 1 – group 2 e.g. in, am
2. The second join from group 1 – group 3 e.g. ab, ch
3. The third join from group 4 – group 2 e.g. oa, wo
4. The fourth join from group 4 – group 3 e.g. wh, ob

Gaining a picture of the needs of your class:

Whilst teaching handwriting, and further meeting the handwriting needs of the class across the curriculum, teachers need to identify and understand the following to ensure they can successfully meet the needs of their learners.

- Who is left-handed?
- Who writes in a first language which writes from right to left?
- Who has difficulties with appropriate pencil grip?
- Who has difficulties with accurate letter formation?
- Which letters are the children having difficulty forming?

PROMOTING GOOD WRITING BEHAVIOURS:

Seating and Posture:

- The chair should be a comfortable height and the children should be able to put their feet on the floor.
- Children should be encouraged to sit up.
- To aid the flow of writing children should be encouraged to angle paper slightly and to use their non-writing hand to keep the paper steady.
- Left-handed children should be encouraged to sit to the left of their partners so they are not limited in space.

Pencil Grip:

Children should:

- Write with a pencil which is reasonably sharp.
- Be encouraged to use a tripod grip with their fingers about 3cm away from the point. Elastic bands could be used to show children where to place the fingers.
- For children who struggle with pencil grip or control then a tripod writing grip could be used.

Left handers:	Right handers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the knuckle of the middle finger, holding the pencil about 3cm from the nib.• The hand should be kept below the writing line.• The paper should be tilted slightly to the right.• Use the right hand to steady the paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger about 3 cm from the nib.• The paper should be tilted slightly to the right.• Use the left hand to steady the paper.

USE OF A PEN

All children in EYFS and KS1 use a pencil to write. From Year 3 onwards, if the children are joining their letters correctly and neatly, they will be awarded a 'pen licence' and will be able to use a blue pen for all schoolwork. In Years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be using a pen. Mistakes must be corrected by a neat line being drawn through the word (using a ruler). Pens are not used in Mathematics.

RESOURCES

At St. Matthew's Primary we use the join-it cursive script as our main resource (using the format and structure of the Nelson scheme) and each year group has:

- Dry wipe boards and pens.
- Teacher whiteboards and flip chart paper for teacher modelling.
- ICT – use Join it font for worksheets and IWB materials.
- The Join it Script can be given to parents at Parent's evenings and during Parent meetings.
- Handwriting practice will take place at the back of English books.

TEACHER HANDWRITING

- This needs to be neat, legible and joined from Y2 onwards.
- Use of a green pen is required when marking children's work.
- Children are required to respond neatly to teacher marking in a purple pen when editing their work when they are using a pen. If the children are still using a pencil, they will correct their work in purple coloured pencils.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Children who need additional support with their handwriting are firstly identified by their teachers. In addition to receiving appropriate differentiation and support whilst receiving in-class teaching, these children will be provided further opportunities to develop these skills tailored to their needs. For example, additional small group interventions throughout the week. If any further concerns are raised related to their handwriting (for example; struggles with letter formation and reversed letters), these will be discussed on an individual basis with the SENCo who will assess and support accordingly.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

We aim to ensure all children can access and participate in their lessons. Children with SEN have individual education plans (IEPs) and personalised provision maps written by their

class teachers. These target their specific, individualised needs to enable them to succeed in the classroom. This can include a range of strategies including differentiated work, specific daily/weekly programmes and/or extra support, in class, by teacher or class support.

Some children with identified SEN may have particular difficulties with handwriting, e.g.

- Dyspraxia – may result in painstaking and poor handwriting.
- ADHD – may result in rushed but inaccurate handwriting.

Concerns about a child’s fine motor skills or handwriting should be discussed with the SEN Co-ordinator so further needs-specific interventions can be put in place when needed. See *Special Educational Needs policy for more information*.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of the school’s curriculum plan for teaching and learning. We believe assessment plays a key role in ensuring children can achieve their targets. This occurs through immediate in-class feedback which provides children with ownership and understanding of their strengths and areas to improve. Additionally, termly testing enables teachers to adapt plans and target interventions effectively. See *the Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy for further information*.

For Handwriting, children are assessed formatively during English and handwriting lessons and summatively twice half-termly through two assessed pieces of writing (one in English books and one in green assessment folders).

During weekly formative assessments within Handwriting lessons, the following are considered:	During summative half-termly assessments, the following are considered:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the posture correct? • Does the child hold the pencil correctly? • Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters? • Are any letters reversed or incorrectly formed? • Does the child write fluently and rhythmically? • Is the writing easily legible? • Is the pupil’s handwriting development in line with the National Curriculum statutory guidelines? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing generally legible? • Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned? • Are the joins made correctly? • Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate? • Is the size of the writing appropriate? • Is the writing properly aligned? • Is the child achieving age-related expectations in line with the National Curriculum?

ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADERS

It is the role of the English Subject Leaders to:

- Offer support and guidance to all staff in the planning and delivery of English.
- Be aware of new initiatives and disseminate relevant information.
- Monitor planning and delivery of the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression.
- Be responsible for the purchase and organisation of resources.
- Monitor progress of children through work, pupil consultation and assessment trackers.
- Ensure all children are making good progress in the lower progress groups.
- Moderate writing to ensure consistency.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the English Subject Leaders in consultation with all staff and amendments presented to the Governors’ Curriculum Committee.

Date of Policy:	September 2023
Date agreed by Governors:	
Next Review Date:	