

Handwriting Policy



This Policy was reviewed January 2021

Signed Chair of Governors: Julia Anderson

Signed Head Teacher: Michele Battersby

Next Review Date: January 2023

Statement of intent

At St Silas C E Primary School we are committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment that is friendly, nurturing, inspiring and supportive for all learners. Through our values of Love, Thankfulness, Service and Belonging, we live our vision:

‘Loving God and each other we work together to be the best we can be.’

Introduction

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”
(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child's handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, rather than upon the act. We adhere to The British Dyslexia Association's recommendation that children learn the continuous cursive style. The key advantages are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations
- Raises standard and expectations

Teaching and Learning

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using 'letter speak'; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.
- Letter formations (see appendix 1 stages 1a to 2), are taught as a specific skill, in Read Write inc phonics sessions daily, with additional, individual or group practise where necessary.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.
- The cursive font should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style.
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

Handwriting Progression

Reception	<p>Children are to take part in activities that develop fine and gross motor skills.</p> <p>The children are introduced to the Read Write inc letter groups and practise correct formation (see appendix 2)</p>
Year 1	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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 groups (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways, and to practise these (see appendix 1). <p>N.B. The cursive script has an exit line that naturally encourages the children to join their handwriting. The children are to begin to join when they are ready.</p>

<p>Year 2</p>	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another ● 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 <p>N.B. If they have not already done so, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.</p>
<p>Year 3 and Year 4</p>	<p>Children should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch <p>N.B. When the children are producing consistently formed, sized and joined handwriting, they will be granted a 'pen license' and encouraged to write in pen where appropriate</p>
<p>Year 5 and Year 6</p>	<p>Children should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters ● choosing the right implement that is best suited for a task

Throughout EYFS and LKS1 the children will be assessed half termly on letter formation. As the child can form a given letter correctly, that letter will be checked off. This provides a running record of the children's achievement and areas to target.

Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins

- Always model good handwriting
- Demonstrate formations
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or a stick

We teach the children that the letters are in different groups that are written in different places on the page, for this we use the terminology that there are Sun, Boat and Water letters.

- 'Sun letters': **b d h k l** (**f** and **t** are just a little bit smaller)
- 'Boat letters': **a c e i m n o r s u v w x z**
- 'Water letters': **g j p q y**.



Handwriting position

Children are taught that when the teacher uses the handwriting signal they automatically go into the perfect handwriting position:

- feet flat on the floor
- bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist from the table
- shoulders down and relaxed
- back leaning forward slightly
- left/right hand holding the page
- left/right hand ready in a tripod grip

The daily phonics session in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

Joining letters is a separate skill, quite apart from learning how to form letters well. It is better taught once children can print quickly and easily.

Avoid

- Don't allow children to write sitting on the floor. It is uncomfortable, encourages bad posture and a poor handwriting position.
- Don't use whiteboards and pens. Children can't learn a tripod grip with a fat chunky pen.
- Don't use entry strokes.
- Do not ask children to copy from the board or a handwriting book. They need to have a strong 'mind picture' of the letter formation before they start to write.

Provision for left handed children

Left handed children always sit on the left side of right handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5cm

from the point of their pencil. Pens appropriate for left handed writers will be provided, to avoid smudging.

Resources and writing materials

Children are given experience of a variety of writing tools. Pens (**handwriting pens not biro**s) should be used by those who have achieved a consistent, cursive style. All children should write in blue ink.

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

The SENCO will provide resources for those who have difficulty with fine motor skills – pencil grips, fine motor control programmes and referrals where necessary.

Presentation

Pupils will learn that different levels of presentation are appropriate for different pieces of work and different circumstances. However, **pupils are expected to:**

- Look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them
- Increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented
- Not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or not fit for purpose
- Use rulers to draw straight lines
- Set out, number and annotate work appropriately
- At appropriate times, pupils may be encouraged to experiment with alternative means of presenting their work for specific reasons
- Cross through mistakes or editing alterations with a single line. Erasers should only be used very occasionally and with the express permission of an adult. (see appendix 3 – Presentation Protocols)

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 and systems for their return and maintenance are robust (self- service classroom) Ensure that children look after resources and materials so that they learn to respect equipment and good value for money is assured.
- **Model handwriting policy at all times**

Policy Success Criteria

We know St Silas C E Primary School's Handwriting and Presentation Policy is effective if:

- A scrutiny of work confirms the appropriate development in handwriting skills
- Specific difficulties are addressed in the marking of handwriting tasks
- A scrutiny of work confirms that the presentation protocol is adhered to

Monitoring and Review



This policy is monitored by the English Lead and Head teacher within the processes of school self-evaluation. The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner should National Policy change.

Appendix 1) Read Write inc joining

Explain to children that there are two basic joins:

- the arm join (diagonal)
- the washing line join (horizontal).

The arm join has three variations:

- a. arm to boat 
- b. arm to sun 
- c. arm to sister.

The washing line join has three variations:

- d. washing line to boat
- e. washing line to sun
- f. washing line to sister.

Appendix 2) Read Write inc Phonics Letter Groups - Please find full documents in the English folder on the google server

Handwriting Stage 1a:

Letter formation

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 1* and use the checklists below to teach handwriting for the following letters:

- 'Around' letters: **c a o d g q**
- 'Down' letters: **l t b p k h i j m n r u y**
- 'Curly' letters: **e f s**
- 'Zigzag' letters: **v w z x**.

Handwriting Stage 1b: Relative size of letters

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 1* to practise writing the words listed in this document.

- 'Sun letters': **b d h k l** (f and t are just a little bit smaller)
- 'Boat letters': **a c e i m n o r s u v w x z**
- 'Water letters': **g j p q y**.



Handwriting Stage 2

Follow the guidance on pp.25–28 of *Phonics Handbook 2* and use the checklists below to teach a mature style of handwriting for the following letters: **a d g o c q u y b p**.

St Silas C E Primary School Presentation Protocols					
	FS	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3/4	Yr 5/6
Writing implements	A selection of 'beginners' thick and fine writing implements. Chunky triangular pencils are introduced	Thin triangular pencils with grips then fine pencils with grips for most pupils	Fine pencils	Introduce handwriting pens (blue) as appropriate for Literacy and written work. Pencil for Maths work	All pupils should be using handwriting pens for written work. Pencils for maths.
	Felt tips should not be used where they will come through onto the reverse of the paper in books				
Self correction	Simple, straight line through to show where they have self-corrected.			Simple, straight line through to show where they have self-corrected. Eraser may be used at the discretion of the teacher for final draft work.	
Ruler use		All straight lines to be drawn with a ruler. Younger pupils will need to be taught how to do this			
New work	New work to commence on a new page	New work will usually commence on a new page, unless advised against by the teacher		New work to be commenced after ruling off previous work, if there is usable space available	
Date	All work to be dated by adult	All work to be dated by child or teacher at top, left hand side.		All written work to be dated by child, at top, left hand side using full date, and underlined. Maths to use numbered date eg. 04/01/21	
Paper	To use unlined paper for the majority of the time.	Teachers should select lined paper, appropriate to the size of writing, so that pupils can position writing correctly on the line. Large squared exercise books		Narrow lines and small squared exercise books. Wide lines and large squared exercise books for some pupils at teacher discretion.	
	Colour of paper can be adjusted to accommodate DLTN				