

Handwriting Policy



Through respect we will work together in Christ to develop
the whole person

Written: September 2019
Date of Review: September 2021
Leader: Carmel Rush

Introduction

This guidance has been written in line with the statutory requirements for Handwriting across Key Stage 1 and 2 (*NC for English September 2014*). In this policy you will find the requirements for each year group and the key points listed, so that it is clear what needs to be taught in each year group. Handwriting in St. Matthew's is a teacher led activity involving modelling of writing. Staff are expected to use clear cursive handwriting during all lessons and when marking books. This consistent and whole school approach from staff helps to develop children's handwriting and encourages high standards.

Aims

- To have a consistent cursive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Children to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.

Development of learning and teaching handwriting

We strive for consistency between key stages and a continuity of approach to letter formation and therefore handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically from Reception to Year 6 using the cursive handwriting style. The rules of the Cursive Style help to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke. Additionally, because letters naturally flow into each other, it is impossible to write separate letters without joining. We believe that this raises standards in the Early Years which will then later impact throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy, fluency and improved presentation.

Organisation

Handwriting is delivered in short sessions and where possible is integrated across the curriculum. In all classes, handwriting is taught, at least, on a weekly basis and is usually practised by pupils throughout the school day and for homework. All handwriting activities are undertaken as a whole class teaching activity to enable the teacher to model writing patterns or phonemes and to instruct pupils on how to develop effective and efficient pen control. Additionally, whole class instruction provides the class teacher with the

opportunity to develop in pupils the habit of concentration which is crucial to good handwriting.

Children are expected to apply their learning in all their exercise books and to show care for the presentation of their work.

Teaching and Learning

As recommended by the British Dyslexia Association, we adopt a continuous cursive style of writing. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants model the agreed cursive style when modelling writing both in class, on displays and in feedback in books.

Our agreed cursive style is as below:

a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u
v w x y z

Development and progression

i) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

During Reception, pupils are involved in a variety of activities to develop essential pre-writing skills in line with the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, mark-making with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media.

For those children that are ready for handwriting practice, individual letter formation is taught, modelled and practised using the entry and exit flicks. Children will be introduced to pre-cursive and cursive script at the earliest stages of writing. This will enable an easier transition in Year 1 into the cursive script, depending on their ability. Displays in Reception should include some models of cursive script.

By the end of Reception children will have been taught to:

- Have the correct pen/pencil grip.
- Write all letters of the alphabet in line with the phonics programme.
- Use pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media.
- Write from left to right.
- Be consistent with the size and shape of letters and the spacing of letters and words.
- Have the correct posture and position

ii) Key Stage 1

During Key Stage 1 children are encouraged to form all letters from the correct starting point and begin to exhibit greater control over size and orientation. Consolidation of both lower case and capital letter formation is a primary focus, as is awareness of ascender and descender letters. Children are also reminded to space their handwriting accurately in order that it can be easily read.

During Year 1 and 2 children are introduced to joined writing techniques. This is started once children seem secure in the coordinated movements associated with each letter and who have a good control over letter orientation, formation and proportion.

Handwriting may be linked to the daily phonics session, or used in conjunction with spelling and independent writing.

Year 1 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (entry and exit flicks).
- Form capital letters.
- Form digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Year 2 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- 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.

iii) Key Stage 2

During this stage pupils continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear and fluent style and by the end of Key Stage 2, be able to adapt their handwriting for different purposes. As fluency and accuracy develops, pupils are awarded with a pen license, which enables them to write with ink across all subjects (Pen license can only be awarded by the writing co-ordinator).

Years 3-4 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Years 5-6 (statutory requirements)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task (e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version). They should also be taught to use an unjoined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form).

Pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding (as part of their personal style) whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

A Pen License will be given to pupils when they have displayed neat and consistent Cursive Handwriting across the curriculum. Only then will they be allowed to use a school handwriting pen. The Writing Coordinator will decide when children qualify for their pen license. This is a special award to be celebrated!

Posture

- Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to children's age and height.
- Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right.
- Always make sure that the hand which is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper.

Provision for left handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. Left-handed children should sit on the left side of right-handed children, so their elbows don't bump. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5 cm from the point of their pencil.

Pencil Grip

If children are to develop a fluid and rapid writing style then they must learn how to hold a pencil with a grip which is relaxed but allows for efficient pencil control.

- Right-hander - a tripod grip is generally accepted as the most efficient way of holding a pencil. It should be lightly held between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support.
- Left-handers - The tripod grip should be the most favoured method of pencil holding but children should be aware that when making joining

strokes the letters are pushed, not pulled. Encourage left handed children to hold their pencil far enough away from the point to allow them to read what they are writing.

* Care should be taken that children do not grip the pencil too tightly as this produces tenseness in the arm and shoulder and also increases pressure on the paper.

Equal opportunities and differentiation

It is appreciated that some children, for a variety of reasons, have problems with legible, correctly formed and orientated handwriting. Children needing additional support are given short bursts of handwriting practice, one-to-one with a Teaching Assistant, or Class Teacher, as often as possible. Sometimes handwriting may form part of a Pupil Profile. Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper.

Exceptionally able pupils may progress at different rates at the discretion of the class teacher. For those children who have mastered a fluent, neat cursive style continual practise may not be necessary and alternative provision will be made for these pupils.

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation, handwriting informs part of this. Within Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, handwriting is assessed as part of children's writing assessments using the assessment criteria for given year groups. Samples of children's independent writing across a range of subjects will be assessed and moderated at a minimum of three times per academic year.

Expectations for Standards of Presentation

Pupils are expected to:

- look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them.
- The date (on the right) and title of all work (in the middle of the first line) must appear at the top of the page and must be neatly underlined.
- From Y3 onwards pupils must use rulers to draw straight lines.
- Children should increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented.
- They should not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or fit for the purpose.
- Pupils should set out, number and annotate work appropriately.

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.

- Set a positive example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when marking children's books. Teachers strive to model the cursive style and use appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style.