

St Ann's R.C. Primary School Handwriting Policy



Love, Respect, Service

To be reviewed January 2025

Handwriting Policy

January 2024

Aims

It is our aim to encourage the progression and development of each child's handwriting throughout the school into a fluent and legible style that can be adapted for a range of purposes and will support their spelling and composition.

Handwriting at St Ann's R.C. Primary School

Supporting our children in developing effective communication skills is a key priority for us at St Ann's. Throughout their time in education, and beyond, neat handwriting is crucial to ensure meaning and understanding is conveyed effectively. Whilst computers have undoubtedly filtered into every aspect of our lives, handwriting is still the main tool used by children to record their ideas.

Learning to write neatly takes time, practice and perseverance but once mastered, it means children can focus on content, and organisation of ideas. When children find the process of writing neatly arduous and time consuming, motivation to write can be greatly reduced, leading to a lack of practice that may further compound difficulties with writing.

Handwriting in the earliest years, is linked to basic reading and spelling achievement. When children learn how to form the letter *m*, they can also be learning its sound. Attention to the linkages among handwriting, reading, and spelling skills can help to reinforce early achievement across these areas.

Handwriting objectives are taken from National Curriculum English Programme of Study and further broken down in the Penpals Scope and Sequence document. Handwriting is taught in explicit, regular sessions focussing on letter formation, consistent size and shape of letters, as well as accurate joining.

At St Ann's we follow the Penpals scheme for handwriting. This provides us with a consistent approach enabling us to make progress across the school. In the 'Penpals Scope and Sequence' document below, you will be able to see the sequence in which handwriting is taught at our school. Learning is differentiated based on the needs of the child. Handwriting is applied in all writing and modelling, as well as in displays, where appropriate, and is a consistent marking focus.

See National Curriculum Objectives

See 'Penpals Scope and Sequence'

Penpals is based on five developmental stages: physical preparation for handwriting; securing correct letter formation; beginning to join along, securing the joins and practicing speed, fluency and developing a personal style. Penpals is focused on whole class teaching using digital resources to enable modelling and interactive learning. The foundation content is inline with the EYFS framework and the Year 1-6 content supports frequent, discrete and direct teaching of handwriting for 5-11 year olds, as required by the national curriculum 2014.

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Parental Input

At St Ann's we encourage our parents to get as involved as possible in helping their child to develop their handwriting. A wealth of information is available on the school website where parents can find out more information about how handwriting is taught and activities they can do at home to support their children.

The correct formation of letters, numbers and joins that are taught at St Ann's can be found in the "Penpals Information for Parents" document.

See Penpals Information for Parents.

Parents are welcomed into school to discuss their child's handwriting. Further support will be given when necessary.

Readiness to Write

Children's readiness for handwriting builds gradually from a very young age. In order to write neatly, a child must develop their gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

Gross Motor skills are those which require whole body movement and which involve large (core stabilising) muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing and walking, running and jumping, and sitting upright at the table.

Fine motor skills involve small muscles working with the brain and nervous system to control movements in areas such as the hands, fingers, lips, tongue and eyes. Developing fine motor skills helps children to do things such as eating, writing, manipulating objects and getting dressed.

Fine motor skills and gross motor skills are developed in a variety of ways in our foundation stage (see EYFS policy) and beyond, where appropriate. Some of the many ways in which we develop the fine motor skills of our children are outlined in the document, 'Developing fine motor skills' which has been made available to parents.

See, 'Fine Motor Skills' Document

Developing a good pencil grip

The root of neat handwriting lies in having a good pencil grip and a good sitting position. If a pencil is not held correctly, or a child is not positioned well at a table, it makes the process of producing neat handwriting much more difficult. At St Ann's we encourage children to sit well, using the correct pencil grip. Where appropriate, visual cues may be used to support them.

See 'Developmental levels of pencil hold'.

See, 'Are you ready for writing?'

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Handwriting Provision

Handwriting lessons are taught across the school, in addition to formal presentation lessons. Formal presentation lessons allow the children to focus their attention solely on producing neat handwriting and presenting work in interesting and creative ways. We also try to provide children with informal opportunities to present work, encouraging them to write neatly.

See, 'Handwriting Provision Map'

Planning and Delivery

Penpals Handwriting style is taught and modelled in marking and teaching from the Early Years Foundation Stage throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All teachers give specific attention to pencil and pen control, grip and posture in helping pupils to develop a neat, legible and joined style.

Teachers identify all left-handed pupils in their class. Left-handers should always sit on the right of a right-handed child to avoid collision.

In Reception and Year 1, children are encouraged to write using a wide variety of media, from chalks and charcoal to sand and water! See EYFS policy for further information.

Children begin to write with a handwriting pen from Year 5 upwards.

Assessment and Extra Support

Handwriting is assessed in informal written assessments which take place each half term. Individual children will be given time to practise certain letters or letter joins when issues are identified. Teachers will focus on handwriting, when necessary, in general day to day marking. Interventions will be provided for those children who require it.

Disabilities & Equalities Statement

All children are given full access to the National Curriculum. Staff will endeavour to ensure that all children reach their potential, irrespective of race, gender, age, home-background or ability. St Ann's R.C. Primary School is committed to promoting equality. When planning and teaching handwriting, staff will make reasonable adjustments to promote equality of opportunity.