



St. Michael and St. John's R.C Primary School Handwriting Policy

Mission Statement

Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love and respect one another to be the best we can be.

Intent

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - Having a correct pencil grip
 - Forming all letters correctly
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters
3. To promote confidence and self esteem.
4. To encourage children to take pride in their work.
5. To provide equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting.
6. To help children recognise that handwriting is a form of communication and as such should be considered important in order for it to be effective.
7. To display presented work around the school as a model of excellence for others to aspire to.

Teaching time

There should be weekly teaching of handwriting (ideally a minimum of 2 x 15mins handwriting lessons each week as well as time to practise).

Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for extra support, in accordance with their individual Support Plan.

Model used

At St. Michael and St. John's, a cursive, joined up handwriting style is taught. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are teaching a cursive style, where all letters will begin on the line. This style is being phased in starting in 2019-20. Years 3-6 will continue to use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

Paper

Paper choice depends on the stage of writing that the child is at. Generally, children will start with lines in Reception, unless children struggle with writing then teachers differentiate. Children continue to focus on sitting writing on the line, with tall letters and descenders being clear. Infant children tend to use wide lines. As writing improve, wide lines become narrow lines, usually in the Juniors.

Teaching Sequence

Children will be taught to:

1. Develop their fine motor skills at first in preparation for holding a pencil.
2. Hold a pencil correctly, copying and tracing patterns, writing over and under teacher's writing.
3. Practise cursive letters, starting on the line in EYFS and KS1, leading to joining handwriting when children are ready.
4. In KS2, children will join letters as per Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

Children will only be moved onto the next step when they are ready.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates



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- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters
- Paint letters
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in plasticine
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

Getting ready to write

Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

Pencil grip

Children should write with a pencil with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp. When children have achieved a good standard of writing in cursive style they will be rewarded with a 'pen licence'. Learners should use a handwriting pen for all lessons except Maths where a pencil should always be used. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted very slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

Handwriting Progression

These steps have been put together based on the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, the Early Learning Goals and KLIPs documents.

Step 1

By the end of Reception year, children will have been introduced to:

- A comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- Producing a controlled line which supports letter formation
- Writing letters using the correct sequence of movements
- Writing letters in a cursive style, starting letters on the line
- Pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media



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- Some simple joins in conjunction with Letters and Sounds

Step 2

By the end of Year 1, children will have been introduced to:

- An effective pencil grip.
- Sitting correctly at a table.
- Forming lower case letters correctly – starting and finishing in the right place, going the right way round and correctly oriented.
- Forming digits 0-9 correctly.
- Practising forming letters in handwriting families: 'long ladders' (i, j, l, t, u), 'one armed robots' (b, h, m, n, p, r), 'curly caterpillars' (c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s) and 'zig-zag' letters (k, v, w, x, y, z)
- Having clear ascenders (tall letters) and descenders ('tails').
- Forming capital letters correctly.

Step 3

By the end of Year 2, children will have been introduced to:

- Practising handwriting patterns from Year 1.
- Forming lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Orientating capital letters correctly.
- Using capital letters appropriately, for example not using capitals within words.
- Writing capital letters and digits of the correct size relative to one another and to lower case letters.
- Starting using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understanding which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Using spacing between words which reflects the size of the letters.

Step 4

Using Nelson Handwriting Scheme Book 3, by the end of Year 3, children will have been introduced to:

- Forming and using the four basic handwriting joins.
- Writing legibly.

Step 5

Using Nelson Handwriting Scheme Book 4, by the end of Year 4, children will have been introduced to:

- Using a joined style throughout their independent writing.
- Writing with consistency in size and proportion of letters, for example by ensuring that downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.
- Using a range of presentational skills, for example:
 - print script for captions, sub-headings and labels;
 - capital letters for posters, title plates, headings;
 - a range of computer-generated fonts and point sizes.

Step 6

Using Nelson Handwriting Scheme Book 5, by the end of Year 5, children will have been introduced to:

- Writing fluently using a joined style as appropriate for independent writing.
- Choosing when it is appropriate to print (lower or upper case) rather than to join writing, for example printing for labelling a scientific diagram or data, filling in a form and writing an email address.

Step 7

Using Nelson Handwriting Scheme Book 6, by the end of Year 6, children will have been introduced to:

- Writing, using a joined style, with increasing speed.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task, for example pencil for quick notes, handwriting pen for letters, marker pens for posters.



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Assessment

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers need to consider:

- 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 revered or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?

Teachers need to assess children individually using O-track to judge whether the child is achieving age-related expectations for handwriting.

Moderation

Subject leaders and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- 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?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the age appropriate expectations in the National Curriculum?

Special Needs Children

If children are not achieving age-related expectations for handwriting, intervention should be put in place as appropriate (see Special Needs Policy). Some children have specific difficulties with handwriting and should be encouraged to type their work, but they must also be encouraged during handwriting sessions to improve their letter formation to make writing legible.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Subject Leader:

Signed:

Date: September 2019