

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Handwriting Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

AIMS:

As a school, we aim to teach the pupils the following:

- A recognition and appreciation of patterns and lines
- Learn the conventional ways of forming letter shapes, both lower case and upper-case letters
- An understanding of the importance of clear presentation to communicate clearly and with meaning
- To take pride in their written presentation and write with enjoyment
- To be able to write quickly across the curriculum
- For pupils to develop a fluent, comfortable, and legible joined-up handwriting style

TEACHING OF HANDWRITING:

Teachers should be using the bubble handwriting scaffold throughout the school.

Handwriting should be taught three times a week and clearly timetabled, with opportunities to consolidate throughout the week. Handwriting should be taught discreetly through all other subject areas, with pupils being exposed constantly to modelled examples of correct formation and presentation of acceptable handwriting. Spelling and handwriting interventions for targeted children will be identified on each teacher's provision map, resulting in some children receiving additional sessions per week.

FOUNDATION STAGE (Nursery and Year R):

Pupils in these years are developing and strengthening their gross motor control (controlled movements of the whole body) and fine motor control (smaller moves, usually of the hands and fingers). They use various equipment to help develop these skills, including big chalks, shaving foam, finger painting and oversized pencils. Pupils will also recognise patterns and begin to talk about shapes and movements. They will also be taught how to write their first name with a capital letter and the correct letter formation. To learn the suitable letter formation, pupils will use letter speak (see Appendix A), based on reading Write Inc, taught daily. In addition, pupils can develop and improve their letter formation using whiteboards, which provides writing practice without the restriction of lines, as well as on lined paper.

- Children are to be introduced to the pre-cursive and cursive script at the earliest stages of writing.
- Class teachers in FS1 and FS2 will model using the pre-cursive script. Children in FS2 should be writing in the pre-cursive script to enable an easier transition in Year 1 into the cursive script, depending on their ability. However, the expectation is that pupils will start to transfer towards a cursive script by the end of Reception, depending on their skill and knowledge.
- Children will be introduced to the Bubble Handwriting scaffold, having been enlarged to suit their needs and motor control.

YEAR 1:

Pupils will continue to work on correct letter formation, using their previous knowledge from Foundation Stage teaching. The letter that speaks from reading Write Inc. will still be used. Most pupils will write their letters correctly, with the correct formation and orientation, leave appropriately sized gaps between words, be able to write with increased speed and stamina, and have an efficient and comfortable pencil grip. Towards the end of the year, most pupils

should move away from printed form to joined-up writing using the Bubble Handwriting scaffold.

YEAR 2:

At this stage, most pupils will be able to write legibly, using upper- and lower-case letters appropriately and with the correct spacing between words. Their ascenders and descenders will be correctly formed a majority of the time. The speed at which they can write should increase, and their stamina with longer lengths of writing. Towards the end of the year, most pupils should form joined-up writing using the Bubble Handwriting scaffold.

YEAR 3 and 4:

In year 3, most pupils will continue to develop their joined handwriting, increase the speed at which they write, and be able to write for a sustained period. Most of the writing they produce will sit on the line.

In year 4, they use joined handwriting most of the time in their work; letters are placed correctly on the line, including ascender and descenders. At this stage, the letter formation should come naturally.

We should aim to have all children using pens by the end of year 4, having had their pen licence.

Year 5 and 6:

In years 5 and 6, pupils have consistent letter size, formation and spacing; their writing is joined up in all subjects, except maths. All of the letters are placed correctly on the line, and in year 5, they are beginning to write with competency at a steady dictation speed, which they will continue to work on and increase in year 6.

Except for maths, no child should still be writing in pencil in upper KS2.

Left-handed pupils:

Left-handed pupils must have provisions made for them, and teachers must be aware of their specific needs when teaching handwriting and make the appropriate adjustments to their teaching. Therefore, requirements should include the following:

- Paper should be positioned to the right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit each individual.
- Correct pen/pencil grip should be taught, and monitored-holding either too close to the paper can block the pupils' line of vision.
- Pupils should be sat to the left of a right-handed pupil so they are not going to interfere with one another during writing (i.e.-knocking, elbows)
- Pupils should be encouraged to bring their hands down and round, so a hooked, claw-like style doesn't develop.
- Teachers need to be aware that letters with a cross-stroke, T, t and f, will be formed differently. The cross is formed right to the left instead of left to right.

HANDWRITING IN OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS:

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that pupils' handwriting and presentation across all subjects are neat. However, teachers must also teach pupils about different types of handwriting, for example personal note taking, or best display presentation.

LETTER FORMATION USING JOINT-IT

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
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

LETTER SPEAK (BASED ON RUTH MISKIN'S READ WRITE INC)

a bounce: a-a-a, apple; write: round the apple and down the leaf
b bounce: b-b-b, boot; write: down the leg, up and around the toes
c bounce: c-c-c, caterpillar; write: curl around the caterpillar
d bounce: d-d-d, dinosaur; write: round his bottom, up to his tall neck, down his feet
e bounce: e-e-e, egg; write: lift off the top and scoop out the egg
f (unvoiced) stretch: fff, flower; write: down the stem, draw the leaves
g bounce: g-g-g, girl; write: round her face, down her hair and give her a curl
h (unvoiced) bounce: h-h-h, horse; write: down the head to her hooves, over her back
i bounce i-i-i, insect; write: down the body, dot for the head
j j-j-j, jack-in-a-box; write: down its' body, curl and dot
k k-k-k, kangaroo; write: down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg
l stretch: lll, leg; write: down the long leg
m stretch: mmm, mountain; write: Maisie, mountain, mountain
n stretch: nnn, net; write: down Nobby, over his net
o bounce: o-o-o, orange; write: all around the orange
p (unvoiced): bounce: p-p-p, pirate; write: down the plait and over the pirate's face
q bounce: qu-qu-qu, queen; write: round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair
r stretch: rrr, robot; write: down his back then curl over his arm
s stretch: sss, snake; write: slither down the snake
t bounce: t-t-t, tower; write: down the tower, across the tower
u bounce: u-u-u, umbrella; write: down and under, up to the top then draw the puddle
v bounce: v-v-v, vase; write: down a wing, up a wing
w bounce: w-w-w, worm; write: down up, down up
x bounce: x-x-x ('ks') kangaroo; write: down the arm and leg, repeat the other side
y bounce: y-y-y, yak; write: down a horn up a horn and under his head
z stretch: zzz, zip; write: zig-zag, zig-zag
sh stretch: shhh
th (voiced AND unvoiced)- stretch, thhh
ch bounce: ch-ch-ch
nh stretch: nnnng
nk bounce: nk nk nk

Assessment and Impact

Pupils should continue to practice handwriting and be encouraged to increase its speed 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, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, such as labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or algebra and capital letters, for example, filling in a form. (*English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 National curriculum in England*)

Pen licence

Pupils who have developed a fluent, comfortable, and legible joined-up handwriting style should receive a pen licence- once they have earned this, they will use a handwriting pen in all subjects, except for maths.

Displays and CT/TA handwriting should include models of cursive script. This should consist of all writing when marking children's work in their books.