

# St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School

## Handwriting Policy



*“Learning together hand in hand with our friend  
Jesus.”*

## Aims:

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 correct pencil grip
  - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
  - Forming all letters correctly
  - Knowing the size and orientation of letters

## Teaching time:

There should be a **minimum** of 3 x 15 handwriting lessons each week in Y1-Y3 and 2 x 15 handwriting as well as time to practice. The lesson structure should be:

- 3 minutes: Brief warm-up exercises led by teacher (*see Appendix 1*)
- 4 minutes: Teacher models letter formation of letters in isolation, joins or words
- 8 minutes: Teacher circulates and intervenes to secure understanding and progress

Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for daily intervention.

In addition, teachers should act as a model when writing on the boards or marking work, using a fluent joined style where appropriate.

## Model used:

St Mary and St Michael's use the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme with the following letter formation

### Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

### Capitals

See Nelsons handwriting Teacher's Handbook Page 9

## Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

## **The four joins**

1. To letters without ascenders
2. To letters with ascenders
3. Horizontal joins
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

*(See Appendix 4)*

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

**The break letters (letters that aren't joined from) are:**

b g j p q x y z

**NB** children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units BEFORE learning to join.

## **Paper**

Early writers will write on unlined paper so that they are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as children are beginning to control the size of their writing, they will be given lined paper and exercise books, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line.

## Reception

All children should write in A4 blank books. When they are ready they should move on to wide lined exercise books.

## Year 1

Children should start the year by writing in wide lined exercise books. Handwriting books should be introduced at the appropriate time.

### Year 2

Children will continue writing in wide lined books. Some children may move to narrow lined books during the year.

All children should be allowed to use unlined paper from time to time so that they can practise to apply skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

### **Teaching sequence:**

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (fine felt tip pen)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words- write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence

*For order of teaching letters and joins see Appendix 4*

### **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 yellow fine felt tip pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist 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

### **Promoting good writing behaviours:**

### 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 in pencil (or pen when introduced) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

### For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3 cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted 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!

*Please refer to Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p19 for further information*

### **Correct letter formation:**

Children are taught to form letters correctly, paying attention to:

- the starting point for each letter,
- the direction of pencil movement,
- the shape and orientation of the letter,
- the relative heights of the body of each letter

- the descender and ascender

*The RWI letter rhymes used in the EYFS to accompany correct letter formation are included in Appendix 2.*

## **Continuity and Progression**

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 (*see Appendix 2 for letter rhymes*)
- pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media

### Year 1

- All lessons to start with the day written at the top by the children e.g. Monday

#### **Autumn 1:**

- Teach lower and upper case letters followed by a pattern. (See Appendix 4 for order of teaching letters)

(See Appendix 6 for examples of handwriting lesson.)

#### **Autumn 2:**

- Review lower and upper case letters.
- Introduce writing words.

(See Appendix 6 for examples of handwriting lesson.)

#### **Spring 1:**

- Review lower/upper case letters and words.
- Introduce sentences.

(See Appendix 6 for examples of handwriting lesson.)

#### **Spring 2:**

- Start joining up letters.
- Follow the unit plans in Nelsons Developing Skills Red Book.

### Year 2

- All lessons to start with the day written at the top by the children e.g. Monday
- Follow the unit plans in Nelsons Developing Skills Yellow Book.

### Year 3

- All lessons to start with the date and day written at the top by the children e.g  
Monday 23rd February
- Follow the unit plans in Nelsons Developing Skills Handbook 1.

#### Year 4

- All lessons to start with the date and day written at the top by the children e.g  
Monday 23rd February
- Follow the unit plans in Nelsons Developing Skills Handbook 2.

#### Year 5

- All lessons to start with the date and day written at the top by the children e.g  
Monday 23rd February
- Follow the unit plans in Nelsons Developing Skills Handbook 3.

#### Year 6

- All lessons to start with the date and day written at the top by the children e.g  
Monday 23rd February
- Follow the unit plans in Nelsons Developing Skills Handbook 4.

**Children should not be expected to begin a new piece of work unless the previous work has been marked.**

### **Assessment**

Curriculum leaders and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly. 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 level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

### **Individual assessment**

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons- the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- 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 reversed or inverted?

- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

### **Links to spelling**

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, string or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Remember to use **Look-Say-Cover-Write-Check**

The child:

**Looks** at the word carefully

**Says** the word

**Covers** the word so that it can't be seen

**Writes** the whole word from memory

**Checks** the word from memory

If not, repeat.

### **Resources**

Nelson Thornes Handwriting Teacher's Book

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

This policy will be evaluated annually.

### **Appendix 1**



Here's a warm up that's great for posture and a positive attitude. Use it before cursive handwriting lessons and during the refreshing and can be done even in a crowded class. If it's manageable, let your students jump in place first.



Push palms



Pull hands



Hug yourself tightly



Reach high, one hand, then other  
Reach - make circles in the air

BLOCKS



Pull up on chair



\* Stack your blocks



Assume an outrageous posture



Stack your blocks again!

## Appendix 2: Handwriting: Letter rhymes

### Read Write Inc.

Here is a list of the letter sounds and rhymes to help the children with writing letters at school.

a	Round the apple down the leaf (apple)
b	Down the laces to the heel, round the toe (boot)
c	Curl around the caterpillar (caterpillar)
d	Round his bottom up his tall neck and down to his feet (dinosaur)
e	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg (egg)
f	Down the stem, and draw the leaves (flower)
g	Round her face down her hair and give her a curl (girl)
h	Down the head to the hooves and over his back (horse)
i	Down his body, and dot for his head (insect)
j	Down his body curl and dot (jack-in-the-box)
k	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg (kangaroo)
l	Down the long leg (leg)
m	Down Maisie, over the mountain over the mountain (Maisie and the mountain)
n	Down Nobby, over his net (football net)
o	All around the orange (orange)
p	Down his plait and around his head (pirate)
q	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair (queen)
r	Down his back, then curl over his arm (robot)
s	Slither down the snake (snake)
t	Down the tower across the tower (castle tower)
u	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle (umbrella)
v	Down a wing, up a wing (vulture)
w	Down up down up (worm)
x	Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side (exercise)
y	Down a horn up a horn and under his head (yak)
z	Zig-zag-zig-zag (zip)

**Number formation practice: Practise writing smaller and smaller.**



### Appendix 3

Look at these capital letters.

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

Look at these groups of letters.  
Each group is formed in a different way.

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

## Appendix 4

### Order of teaching letters

c a d g q o (Formation 1)

r n m h b p (Formation 2)

i t j k x (Formation 3)

u y l v w (Formation 4)

z e s f (Formation 5)

### Capitals without lifting pencil

L V W Z C O U S I J N M G

### Two movements required

T Y K X D P B R Q

### Three movements required

E F H A

### Four basic joins

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders  
e.g. ai, ar, un
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders  
e.g. ab, ul, it
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders  
e.g. ou, vi, wi
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders  
e.g. ol, wh, ot

The first join      Set 1 → Set 2      in    am

The second join    1 → 3      ab    ch

The third join      4 → 2      oa    wo

The fourth join    4 → 3      wh    ob

The break letters                      bigger

### The joined style

The quick brown fox  
jumps over the lazy  
dog.

### Appendix 5: Examples of basic handwriting joins

## Basic handwriting joins

There is no join after capital letters, or the following lower case letters: b, g, j, p, q, s, z

Horizontal join (from a letter which finishes at the top to a letter which starts at the top)

on on on on on

Diagonal join from a letter which finishes at the line to a letter which starts at the top

in in in in in

Diagonal join from a letter which finishes at the line to a letter with an ascender

it it it it it it

Diagonal join from a letter which finishes at the top to a letter with an ascender

ot ot ot ot ot ot

It also helps to teach separately horizontal and diagonal joins to "c" family letters, which require a reversal in the direction of movement:

og og og og og

ad ad ad ad ad

Appendix 6:

Layout of handwriting lessons in Year 1:

Autumn 1

Monday

A A A

a a a

Aa Aa Aa

aaa aaa aaa

Autumn 2

Monday

W W W

w w w

Ww Ww

Willy worm won.

ww ww ww

igloo igloo

ink ink

Ian is ill.

ill ill ill