

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Loughborough



WE GROW WITH JESUS TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE.

Policy reviewed and agreed by staff February 2026

Also linked in the English policy with Spelling.

HANDWRITING POLICY

Aims

It is our aim to encourage the progression and development of each child's handwriting throughout the schools into a fluent, legible and individual style that can be adapted for a range of purposes and will support their spelling and composition. At St Mary's school we believe in the importance of clear and neat presentation to communicate effectively. the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed is recognised. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school. International and national studies completed over a number of years have shown that fluency in handwriting enables children to spell more automatically, based on handwriting and spelling patterns that have been taught and therefore concentrate on the composition of a text.

Increasing fluency and speed is taught by supporting all children to;

- Develop the correct pencil grip
- Know all letters start from the top, except d and e which start from the middle
- Be able to form all letters correctly
- Know the size and orientation of letters
- Work towards developing a fluent, joined handwriting style by the end of Year 1.

Aims From the National Curriculum

To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which

leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.

- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Organisation and Implementation

Handwriting objectives are taken from National Curriculum English Programme of Study and form part of the class teachers' and children's continuous work. Handwriting is taught in explicit, regular sessions focussing on letter formation, consistent size and shape of letters, as well as accurate joining when the child is ready. Learning is differentiated based on the needs of the child. Handwriting is applied in all writing and modelling.

EYFS and Year One teach phonics using the Little Wandle programme. Little Wandle has a clear progression of writing cursively and forming letters taught from year one. In EYFS letter patterns (Unit 1) are taught over four weeks and the lowercase letters in letter families (Units 2 to 5) over the rest of the first term. After practising with patterns, EYFS teach three letters a week in four lessons to support the development of accurate letter formation. There are videos on Little Wandle, that teachers in EYFS and Y1 can watch to model the forming of the letters in their phonics lessons- this is a daily part of the phonics lessons.

In EYFS and Y1 from Little Wandle Handwriting lessons should last approximately 15 minutes and be scheduled at least four times per week. Each lesson should start with practice of the previous day's pattern/ letter using the 'Pattern check-up' or 'Letter check-up' box. Consistent daily practice is essential for progress, and it is strongly recommended to use a small, lined exercise book for additional practice, but this is also done in small group work with an adult guiding the children in their English books. It is crucial that an adult is present during this extra practice to provide guidance and support and to address any misconceptions promptly. The teaching sequence for introducing a new pattern/letter should be: 1. Introduce the letter and formation phrase. 2. Form the letter in the air. 3. Form the letter on the palm of the hand. 4. Trace the mnemonic with a finger. 5. Write the letter. For steps 2 to 5, the teacher provides strong modelling and then the children join in.

Effective modelling

When modelling letter formation, face the same direction as the children, looking over your shoulder to check that children are engaged. This ensures that children can clearly observe the correct direction and movement of the letter. As part of the teacher's/ teaching assistant's modelling, they will demonstrate how to check and improve.

Year 2

Handwriting joins following the model from Twinkl are modelled and taught by the class teacher. Pupils will begin to apply this in writing in lessons. Posture and pencil grip is modelled, taught and monitored in all writing sessions.

KS2

In the junior classes, each pupil has a handwriting book. Handwriting exercises linked to spelling patterns taught are modelled in the register time as a morning activity or linked to a spelling exercise at the beginning of the English lessons. Pupils are expected to join letters, except for upper case and are taught how to form ascenders and descenders. They are also taught there are different types of writing for different text types.

Assessment: Use of TAFs and STACMAT writing statements

When a child has completed an end of unit writing task, teachers mark this against the statements. One of which is about handwriting.

Planning and Delivery Handwriting is taught and modelled in marking and teaching from Reception and throughout Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2). All teachers give specific attention to pencil and pen control, grip and posture in helping pupils to develop a legible style. Teachers identify all left-handed pupils in their class. Left-handers should always sit on the right of right-handed child to avoid collision.

Adaptation

For handwriting there is a range of adaptations staff at St Mary's will use for pupils, particularly for pupils with Send needs, where pencil grip and letter formation may be challenging. Pencil grips, coloured books, different spaced lines etc can be used.

For some pupils with some SEND needs, joining letters may cause distress and make writing more illegible, so each child's writing is looked at individually and the school senco will be referred to, to find the most appropriate adaptation for writing, so the child can make progress.

Reception progression

Autumn term	Preparation and practice (suggested time 4 weeks)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teach the 'Ready to write' checklistEngage in motor development activitiesPractise with patterns	
	Unit 1: Practising patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Horizontal lines, Vertical lines, Wavy lines, Circles (Week 1)Up curves, Down curves, Mixed-height curves, Letter C (Week 2)Spirals, Crosses, Turrets, Diagonals (Week 3)Zig-zags, Sideways V, Letter X, Triangles (Week 4)
	Teach lower-case letter formation (suggested time 9 weeks)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teach the lower-case letters in familiesUse Assessment for Learning to reteach and review	
	Unit 2: Curly letter family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c, a, d (Week 5)g, o, q (Week 6)e, s, f (Week 7)
	Unit 3: Long letter family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">l, i, t (Week 8)j, u, y (Week 9)
Unit 4: Bouncy letter family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">m, n, r (Week 10)b, p, h (Week 11)	
Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">v, w, x (Week 12)z, k (Week 13)	

End or start of term	Assess and review week	Review lower-case letters as needed (Week 14)
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Spring term	Teach capital letter formation (suggested time 11 weeks)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach capital letters • Review lower-case letters alongside capitals • Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review 	
	Unit 6: Capital letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cc, Aa, Dd (Week 15) • Gg, Oo, Qq (Week 16) • Ee, Ss, Ff (Week 17) • Ll, Ii, Tt (Week 18) • Jj, Uu, Yy (Week 19) <p>Assess and review week (Week 20 - before or after half-term)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mm, Nn, Rr (Week 21) • Bb, Pp, Hh (Week 22) • Vv, Ww, Xx (Week 23) • Zz, Kk (Week 24)









End or start of term	Assess and review week	Review capital letters as needed (Week 25)
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Summer term	Practise in digraphs, trigraphs and words (suggested time 9+ weeks)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and review lower-case and capital letters as needed • Practise letter formation in digraphs and trigraphs • Practise letter formation in words • Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review 	
	Unit 7: Digraphs and trigraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ff, ll, ss (Week 26) • zz, ck, qu (Week 27) • ch, sh, th (Week 28) • ng, nk, ai (Week 29) • ee, igh, oa (Week 30) <p>Assess and review week (Week 31 - before or after half-term)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oo, ar, or (Week 32) • ur, ow, oi (Week 33) • ear, air, er plus Assess and review (Week 34)

End of term	Assess and review week	Week 35 (onwards): Assess and review all letters as needed
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Unit 2: Curly letter family

Letter formation phrases

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase	Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Curl around the cat.		Around the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end.
	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.		Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.
	Around the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.		Down the snake from head to tail.
	Around the goat's face and curl under its chin.		Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.
	All around the octopus.		

Unit outcomes and assessment criteria

Key outcomes
In this unit, the children will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form the letters from the curly letter family accurately, with a controlled curve Use the up and down movement for the letters 'a', 'd', 'g' and 'q' Form a straight descender for the letters 'g' and 'q' Lift the pencil off and cross the letter 'f' Make a loop for the letter 'e' Form ascenders and descenders with accuracy.
Key assessment criteria
For every letter, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows the four Ps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sits with the correct posture Uses the correct pencil grip Holds their paper in the correct position Applies appropriate pressure Starts and finishes letters in the correct place and follows the correct orientation Recites the formation phrase to help them remember the letter formation.







Letter	Letter-specific assessment criteria
c	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled, anticlockwise round curve Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish Positions the letter correctly on the line
a	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled, anticlockwise round curve Uses controlled up and down movements, retracing the same line Creates a small flick at the end of the letter Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish Positions the letter correctly on the line
d	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled, anticlockwise round curve Uses controlled up and down movements, retracing the same line Creates a small flick at the end of the letter Forms a straight ascender at an appropriate height Keeps the pencil on the paper from start to finish Positions the letter correctly on the line
g	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled anticlockwise curve Uses controlled up and down movements, retracing the same line Forms a straight descender which extends below the line with a leftward curve Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish Positions the round part of the letter correctly on the line

o	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled, anticlockwise curve all the way around Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish Positions the letter correctly on the line
q	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled, anticlockwise round curve Uses controlled up and down movements, retracing the same line Forms a straight descender which extends below the line with an upward flick at the end of the letter Positions the round part of the letter correctly on the line Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish
e	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms a controlled, anticlockwise round curve Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish Positions the letter correctly on the line
s	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms controlled curves Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish Positions the letter correctly on the line
f	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifts the pencil off the paper to form the horizontal crossbar across the middle of the letter Positions the letter correctly on the line

Letter	Letter-specific assessment criteria
l	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a controlled straight line • Begins at the top and uses a straight downward movement • Creates a small flick at the end of the letter • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
i	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a controlled straight line • Begins at the top and uses a straight downward movement • Creates a small flick at the end of the letter • Forms the letter in the correct order: lifts the pencil to add a small dot positioned just above the letter • Positions the letter correctly on the line
t	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins at the top and uses a straight downward movement with an anticlockwise curve • Creates a controlled straight line • Forms a straight ascender at an appropriate height • Forms the letter in the correct order: lifts the pencil off the paper to form the horizontal crossbar across the middle of the letter • Positions the letter correctly on the line
j	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins at the top and uses a straight downward movement with a controlled clockwise curve at the end • Positions the letter correctly on the line • Forms the letter in the correct order: lifts the pencil to add a small dot positioned just above the letter
u	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a small flick at the end of the letter • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
y	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a descender which extends below the line with a controlled leftward curve • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly with the round part of the letter sitting on the line

Unit 4: Bouncy letter family

Letter formation phrases

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase	Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.		Down the bear's back, up and around its tummy.
	Down, up and over the net.		Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.		Down, up and over the helicopter.

Unit outcomes and assessment criteria

Key outcomes

In this unit the children will:

- Form the letters from the bouncy letter family accurately with a down, up and over movement.
- Form ascenders and descenders with accuracy.

Key assessment criteria






For every letter, check that a child:

- Follows the four Ps:
 - Sits with the correct posture
 - Uses the correct pencil grip
 - Holds their paper in the correct position
 - Applies appropriate pressure
- Starts and finishes letters in the correct place and follows the correct orientation
- Recites the formation phrase to help them remember the letter formation.

Letter	Letter-specific assessment criteria
m	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a 'down, up and over' movement • Creates a small flick at the end of the letter • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
n	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a 'down, up and over' movement • Creates a small flick at the end of the letter • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
r	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a 'down, up and over' movement • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
b	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a 'down, up and over' movement • Creates a straight ascender at an appropriate height • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
p	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a 'down, up and over' movement • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Extends the descender below the line • Positions the letter correctly on the line
h	In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a 'down, up and over' movement • Creates a straight ascender at an appropriate height • Creates a small flick at the end of the letter • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line






Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family

Letter formation phrases

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase	Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.		Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.
	Down and up and down and up the waves.		Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.
	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again, across the box to the bottom.		

Unit outcomes and assessment criteria

<p>Key outcomes</p> <p>In this unit, the children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form the letters from the zig-zag letter family accurately, with diagonal movements • Use the down and up movement for the letters 'v' and 'w' • Lift the pencil off and complete the letters 'x' and 'k' • Form ascenders with accuracy.
<p>Key assessment criteria</p> <p>For every letter, check that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows the four Ps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sits with the correct posture • Uses the correct pencil grip • Holds their paper in the correct position • Applies appropriate pressure • Starts and finishes letters in the correct place and follows the correct orientation • Recites the formation phrase to help them remember the letter formation.

Letter	Letter-specific assessment criteria
	<p>In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes controlled diagonal movements • Controls the down and back up movement • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
	<p>In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes controlled diagonal movements • Controls the down and back up movement • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
	<p>In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes controlled diagonal movements • Lifts the pencil off the paper to form the second diagonal line • Positions the letter correctly on the line
	<p>In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes controlled diagonal movements • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Positions the letter correctly on the line
	<p>In addition to the key assessment criteria above, check that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes controlled diagonal movements • Forms a straight ascender at an appropriate height • Keeps the pencil on the paper from the start to finish • Creates the strokes in the correct order • Positions the letter correctly on the line

Next review: Feb 28