



Hand Writing Policy

This policy was last reviewed: Autumn 2023

This policy will be reviewed again: Autumn 2026

This policy will be reviewed by: English leader

Statutory policy?: No



Handwriting Policy

Rationale

To write legibly, fluently and with sufficient speed by the time children leave St Richard's.

Aims/ Principles

- To deliver high quality handwriting teaching to ensure that all children write legibly and in a joined, cursive style.
- To ensure our pupils is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative thinking.
- To ensure that teaching of handwriting is progressive across the school.
- To ensure that the teaching of handwriting is lively, interactive and imaginative.
- To encourage children to practise cursive handwriting from the moment they are ready and to apply it in their written work.
- To be aware of the needs of different writers and differentiate as required (left handers, dyslexic pupils etc)

Objectives

- To ensure that pupils are taught the agreed letter formation across the school.
- To ensure the majority of pupils in the school are able to write in a cursive style by Year 4.
- To ensure pupils are aware of the correct pencil grip and writing posture.
- To ensure any visible handwriting by the class teacher around the classroom and on displays is in the agreed cursive style.
- To ensure the presentation of most pupils' work is neat, organised and consistent.

Teaching and Learning

At St Richard's we have a school-wide handwriting approach supported by the Letter-Join scheme. Pupils will be taught letter formation and joins in class. Please see the attached lowercase alphabet to help support your children with their handwriting at home.

There is an expectation that handwriting is taught directly and discretely in every year group. Pupils should be taught how to form individual letters before they are expected to join. Pupils that find it extremely tricky to produce legible cursive writing should not be forced to if their un-joined writing is legible. It will be the responsibility of the English leader to support staff with resources that will aid and improve handwriting.

Organisation and Expectations

Using 'shape families' to teach letter formation

For simplicity, the letters of the alphabet can be sorted into four main movement groups. Some letters have different forms – b, k, y, v, and so these fall into two groups.

Some letters e.g. f, s, have some affinity with a group but could be taught separately.

The advantage of aligning letters with a key letter is to help children to remember the starting point and subsequent movement of the letter. This is particularly effective in discriminating b from d.

The four groups are:

- down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l (**long ladder**): letters *i j l t u y*
- down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r (**one-armed robot**): letters *b h k m n p r* (numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction)
- anti-clockwise round, exemplified by the letter c (**curly caterpillar**) letters: *c a d e g o q f s* numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9
- zigzag letters: letters: *N W X Z* numbers: 1, 4, 7.

Teaching Sequence for writing

- Hand and finger strength
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter, dots etc)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words – write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence

The agreed cursive style is written below:

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

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

EYFS

- Develop gross motor control
- Develop fine motor control
- Use large equipment to make marks e.g big chalks, large paint brushes, shaving foam, finger painting etc.
- Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, etc with confidence and enjoyment.
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements

When the children have developed appropriate gross and fine motor control, they will be gradually introduced to letter formation and encouraged to learn: how to write their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation

Year 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- write with spaces between words accurately
- develop speed and stamina

Year 2

Pupils should be taught to:

- practise writing at speed
- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Years 3 & 4

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Years 5 & 6

Pupils should be taught to:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
 - choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
 - choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Planning

Handwriting lesson(s) to be discretely taught and included in the weekly timetable.

Resource ideas

- Cursive font available in Microsoft Word
- Personal whiteboards in writing boxes
- Tracing patterns books
- Handwriting software

Equal Opportunities

The teaching of handwriting will be in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. We aim to provide equal access to phonics for those children with special educational needs and those pupils who are very able and require extension activities.

SEN/Additional Support

Left handed pupils

Teachers should be aware of the specific needs of **left-handed pupils** and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space – avoiding elbows knocking
- left handed pupils should be encouraged to bring their hands down and round so a hooked, claw like style doesn't develop
- extra practise with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- letters which have a cross-stroke such as T, t and f will be formed slightly differently by left handers, where the cross is formed right to left rather than left to right.

Activities and exercises to develop Motor Control

Gross Motor Control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Cycling
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as: *going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements*
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music
- Rolling hoops
- Running with hoops
- Chalking
- Painting on a large scale
- Interactive Whiteboard

Fine Motor Control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes).

Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks

- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
- Drawing in sand and sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving
- Peeling fruit
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on small, large boards and easels and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of lines
- Tracing
- Colouring within guidelines and pictures
- Pattern work
- Using glue spreaders in small pots
- Painting with the tips of fingers
- Threading
- Separating beads into colours.

Hand gym/miming activities to relax fingers and hands before

Writing

- Washing
- Wringing, rubbing, shaking and folding clothes
- Brushing hair
- Stroking a cat
- Playing a musical instrument
- Playing with snow, bubbles, feathers, balloons
- Picking up sweets to put in a dish or your mouth.

Later on:

- Sit in the writing position but with arms dangling limply. While in this position let the hands flutter loosely
- Let the forearms lay limply on the table in the correct writing position. Raise and lower the elbows several times
- Place elbows on the table with the forearms held upright. Let the hands flap loosely backwards and forwards
- Clench and unclench the fists
- Drum lightly with fingers on the table
- Circle the hands, inwards, then outwards
- Hold the pen in the tripod grip lightly. With the forefinger tap the pencil lightly

Monitoring and Review The monitoring of this policy will be the responsibility of the English Leader and the Leadership Team.