



Together in God's love, we learn, inspire and grow



Handwriting Policy

This policy has been adopted by the governing body
of

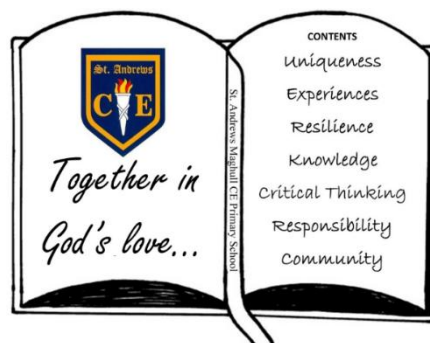
St Andrews' C of E Primary School.

It will be reviewed annually or as required.

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Science Subject Leader: Gemma Bell

Signed: P.Dwan (Curriculum Lead)



Handwriting (The Writing Framework 2025)

The importance of handwriting in developing pupils' writing cannot be overstated. Fluent handwriting is a significant predictor of positive writing outcomes, while a lack of such fluency can constrain pupils by:

- hindering their composition - the cognitive demands of handwriting can divert attention away from other elements of writing, such as planning, composing and revising
- reducing motivation - handwriting difficulties can make writing more effortful and frustrating, which may affect pupils' motivation, especially if they lack support or alternative strategies to express their ideas
- preventing others understanding what they have written - poor handwriting devalues the content, with a detrimental impact: texts in poor handwriting are often assessed as being of lower quality

A key objective, therefore, is for pupils to achieve automaticity in handwriting.

(Writing Framework 2025 - Section 3 - Transcription)

Teaching handwriting at St Andrew's.

Pupils are taught handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from reception, to support their gradual acquisition of skills. We do this using the Read Write Inc approach, including Letter Village from Year 1.

Our school staff expect consistently high standards, making sure pupils practise handwriting regularly and consistently to develop and maintain fluency and legibility. Handwriting is taught daily.

However, asking children to copy from the board or book, trace around dotted letters or practise without supervision, can hinder their ability to build a strong mental model of the movement patterns that underpin letter formation: pupils may not pay attention to how letters and joins are formed and thus continue with the same poor formation. Therefore, using the Letter Village approach, we never ask children to copy letters, joins or words. Copying results in children writing what they think they see - often starting in the wrong place or writing an approximation of the letter or join.

Handwriting is taught effectively to the whole class, with additional support during practice time for those who need it. We teach handwriting progressively using our 'Strong Foundations' tracking system. Teachers then identify children that need further practice and further support e.g. during lessons, during extra handwriting opportunities and in the virtual learning areas in classrooms.

To avoid children practising and reinforcing incorrect letter formation, teaching is consolidated before moving on. Teachers' own handwriting provides a model of high standards, across the curriculum and not just in handwriting lessons, but particularly when pupils are learning to write.

To build strong foundations, handwriting instruction starts in term 1 of reception and is taught by trained teachers and practitioners. For the first few weeks, this may include building the foundations for handwriting, such as practising making the movements needed to form letters in the air.

This is done:

- daily, until pupils can write legibly and easily daily
- taught in small steps, with lots of opportunity for practice
- cumulative: teachers build on what pupils have learned previously
- consolidated before teaching moves on so that pupils do not practise letters incorrectly
- revisited when further practice is needed
- demonstrated by the teacher
- additional to any handwriting that forms part of teaching phonics (RWI) when developmentally appropriate

Nursery

Before formal handwriting instruction begins, children in Nursery develop the essential foundations needed for writing through a range of engaging and purposeful activities. Through programmes such as *Squiggle While You Wiggle*, children build core strength, coordination and movement patterns that support later handwriting development. Purposeful opportunities are provided daily to develop both gross motor skills, such as climbing, balancing and large-scale mark making, and fine motor skills, including threading, cutting, pinching and manipulating small objects. These experiences help children develop the physical control, dexterity and confidence required for successful handwriting as they progress through the school.

Reception

To make sure children get off to the best start, and to give them the best chance of later success in writing, the emphasis in reception is on building the foundations for it: transcription and composition.

At St Andrew's, we keep things simple and do things well.

The early learning goal for Writing includes transcription. This is because mastering transcription prepares St Andrew's children to become writers. Learning to control a pencil to form letters, then words and then sentences means their minds are free to concentrate on the ideas they want to convey through transcription. EYFS practitioners introduce regular explicit handwriting instruction, in addition to phonics, early in reception.

Teachers plan for daily teaching and practice so that correct letter formation becomes automatic, efficient and fluent over time. On joining reception, some of our children may need teaching and practice in using and maneuvering their thumb, wrist and shoulder muscles in the way they need for handwriting. Initially, handwriting lessons include learning the movements needed to form letters, practising these movements at a range of sizes (for example, in the air or, for some children, with fingers on a surface that leaves a trace), learning how to hold and control a pencil and the correct position for writing. They may also need additional support to ensure they are secure in their understanding of key directional words such as, 'up', 'down', 'round' and 'back'.

Teaching then progresses to specific handwriting lessons and practice. This initially includes systematic teaching of and practice in moving the pencil to master the horizontal, diagonal, vertical and circular strokes needed for writing. It then progresses to teaching letter

formation, focusing on where to start each letter, the direction of formation, its shape, position and, later on, its spacing relative to other letters.

Key Stage 1

The national curriculum programmes of study for English: key stages 1 and 2 set out expectations of progress in handwriting.

In 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

Wide-lined paper is essential at this stage. Mid-line guides can also help pupils to position letters. Pupils are only introduced to paper with narrower lines once they can write legibly and easily on wide-lined paper.

In year 2, pupils should be taught to:

- 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, so that later joins do not create extra, confusing shapes

To join letters easily and legibly, pupils first need to form the shape of each letter correctly, starting and finishing each one at the correct point and ensuring that its size is properly related to other letters in the same family.

Joined handwriting should not be taught until pupils can form these unjoined letters (print forms) correctly and consistently. Once they can join letters to write words, they should continue to practise handwriting discretely to develop automaticity

Key Stage 2

In key stage 2, the national curriculum focuses on increasing the legibility, consistency and quality of pupils' handwriting, with the aim of increasing the fluency and speed with which they are able to write down what they want to say.

Once pupils are fluent writers, teachers should make their expectations clear about the nature of the handwriting that is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. In writing tasks other than in English, it is too challenging for pupils to use a newly learnt letter or letter join straightaway. But they might be asked to write the title and the first line in joined writing, and increase, week by week, the number of sentences written in this way.

There is no expectation that schools teach lead-ins for joined handwriting from the start and the national curriculum does not require this, but some schools continue to do this. If they do so, they should also consider teaching unjoined handwriting for specific tasks, such as labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for letters in algebra.

Letter Village at St Andrew's

As it says in the Writing Framework 2025: "Pupils can gain great satisfaction and pleasure in learning how to write if the teaching is explicit, cumulative and engaging. As they see progress and sense growing competence, their motivation to improve increases. Gaining a new skill becomes a source of pride, in the same way as learning to play a musical instrument. It gives them freedom to express their ideas without being hampered by an uncomfortable pencil grip, poor letter formation or inaccurate spelling." Our teaching is grounded in one important principle: We always help children 'visualise to memorise'. We use 'picture hooks' to help them build a mind picture of the letter or join before they write.

We never ask children to copy letters, joins or words. Copying results in children writing what they think they see - often starting in the wrong place or writing an approximation of the letter or join. Our aim is to build children's writing fluency.

Whole School Curriculum intent

Our UNIQUE curriculum is designed to recognise and have a solid **understanding** of children's prior learning, providing **knowledge** and learning **experiences** which build **resilience** and **critical thinking**.

Central to this is excellent skills in **Reading** - the essential key to the whole curriculum. We provide opportunities to engage learning in a fun and **nurturing** way and every child is recognised as a **unique individual**.

We plan and provide a clearly mapped out curriculum which results in good **quality** outcomes. We model and promote **positive attitudes** to learning which reflect the values of our Christian school, **enabling** children to take **responsibility** for their lives. Children leave St Andrew's with a sense of **belonging** to an **outward looking community** where opportunities and aspirations are **unlimited**.

At St Andrew's we ensure that **equality** is embedded in all that we do.

Handwriting Intent

Understanding - Handwriting is planned to ensure prior learning, knowledge, skills and vocabulary are revisited and developed in each lesson. Our teachers track handwriting progress through our 'strong foundations tracker' and use children's prior learning, and support children who need further teaching and consolidation through directed teaching, adaptive teaching and intervention if necessary. This tracker is revisited half termly to track progress in the 'strong foundations' of handwriting.

Nurturing - Our handwriting teaching, means that we help every child at St Andrew's C of E Primary School, to develop a mature and speedy style so that pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements for handwriting from Reception to Year 4. **We never ask children to copy letters, joins or words.** Copying results in children writing what they think they see

- often starting in the wrong place or writing an approximation of the letter or join. Our aim is to build children's writing fluency.

Individual - We teach handwriting to all children in a way that suits all individual needs. Letter Village teaching is 'grounded in one important principle: We always help children 'visualise to memorise'. We use 'picture hooks' to help them build a mind picture of the letter or join **before** they write.' (Ruth Miskin - RWI Handwriting Handbook). Handwriting forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all children. **Letter Village**—the primary handwriting component of the [Ruth Miskin Training](#) Read Write Inc. Phonics programme—supports the individuality of children by **automating mechanics so they can freely express their individual identities, thoughts, and ideas**. By removing the cognitive and physical struggle of writing, the programme ensures that formatting doesn't bottleneck a child's creative mind.

Quality - Letter Village supports quality handwriting teaching and learning through structured, short, multi-sensory daily lessons delivered via engaging animated films. We ensure a consistent approach throughout all key stages.

Unlimited aspirations - **Letter Village** supports the unlimited aspirations of children by rapidly building **handwriting fluency**, freeing their minds from the mechanics of writing so they can express their unrestricted creativity, thoughts, and academic goals.

Equality - We recognise the fact that we have children of differing ability in all our classes. **Letter Village** supports equality for all children by **removing barriers to physical literacy** and building equitable learning environments. Rather than treating handwriting as an innate talent, the program standardizes instruction to ensure every student—regardless of socioeconomic background, culture, or learning difficulties—has an equal opportunity to master fluent writing.

Long term planning and curriculum design:

Read Write Inc. Handwriting - the four stages

Stage 1 begins as soon as most children can read Set 1 sounds. We continue to teach children to form letters correctly.

Stage 2 begins during Year 1. Children learn the relative size of letters and to form letters that will flow easily into a joined style.

Stage 3 follows straight on. Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins - the 'bridge' join, the 'hill' join and the two variations on each. (Year 2 - Year 6)

Stage 4 helps children develop a mature and speedy style. (Year 4 - Year 6)

Each stage ensures pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements for handwriting from Reception to Year 4. We appreciate that the Letter Village Program is designed to end at Year 4, however, the Read Write Inc. Letter Village handwriting program, provides highly structured, targeted benefits for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 (upper Key Stage 2). While early years focus on basic letter shapes, the final years of primary school require children to transition to high-speed, fluent cursive writing to meet the demands of the National Curriculum.

The primary advantages of using the *Letter Village* program in Years 5 and 6 include:

1. Accelerates Speed and Fluency for Extended Writing

2. Reduces Cognitive Load during Critical Exams
3. Supports the Development of a "Personal Cursive Style"
4. Direct Alignment with KS2 "Expected Standard" (EXS) Criteria
5. Efficient, High-Impact Interventions

Handwriting Implementation

We teach children to read and write Set 1 sounds from the start of Reception as part of their *Read Write Inc. Phonics* lessons. Children first learn to form letters while they learn to read Set 1 letter-sounds in Reception.

As soon as they can read Set 1 sounds, we teach a separate daily 10-minute handwriting lesson. These handwriting lessons are at a different time from the *Read Write Inc.* lesson.

Some children haven't held a pencil before.

We do not wait before teaching them correct letter formation. It doesn't take long for children to develop the finger and hand strength to press a soft pencil on to the paper.

Sitting to write.

First, we arrange tables and chairs so all children can clearly see the board.

Children practise sitting comfortably at a table to write.

We teach children that when we say 'perfect handwriting position' they quickly:

- put two feet on the floor
- push their bottom to the back of their chair
- tuck their chair under the table
- hold their pencil in a tripod grip
- place their other hand on their book or paper, so it doesn't move around.

What our children use to write.

Children use a standard HB pencil. For some, a soft 2B pencil might help in the early stage as it requires less pressure on the page.

We teach children how to hold a pencil in a tripod grip. We check their grip at the start of every handwriting lesson - and in all other writing activities. Some children benefit from using a triangular rubber grip on their pencil.

We make sure pencils are sharpened before handwriting lessons!

What our children write on.

For Stage 1, children write in an unlined exercise book. This is so they can focus on correct letter formation.

For Stages 2 children write in books with handwriting tram lines - 21mm outside lines, 6mm inside lines.

For Stages 3 and 4 children write in books with handwriting tram lines - 15mm outside lines.

We do not use whiteboards to teach handwriting.

How do we support children who are left-handed?

When children who are right-handed write, they pull their hand away from their writing. This allows them to see what they have written. Children who are left-handed cover up their writing with their writing hand, so they are less likely to notice if they miss a space between words or make a spelling error. To help, we:

- Give them more space to write by placing them to the left of a child who is right-handed so their arms don't nudge each other.
- Show them how to slant their paper to the right so they can see more of their writing.
- Show them how grip the pencil at a slightly higher point so they can see around their fingers.

Handwriting in the Read Write Inc. Phonics lessons

We teach children to read letters in the order that will generate the most words for reading: **m a s d t i n p g o**, etc.

We connect the letters they read with the shape they write:

Children read a: a-a-a-apple; they write a: round the apple down the leaf.

The picture mnemonics have been primarily designed to help the children read the letters easily. The handwriting phrase supports the letter formation.

This is an important point to remember: we teach letter-sounds at the speed that children can **read** them, **not** the speed they can write them. (We do **not slow down the teaching of Set 1 and 2 sounds** - even if children's letter formation is poor).

Children follow the same handwriting routine every day for each letter they learn to read.

This routine is embedded in every Speed Sounds lesson. For example:

The teacher air-writes a, saying: *Round the apple, down the leaf.*

The children copy.

The teacher writes a on the board, saying: *Round the apple, down the leaf.*

The children say the phrase as they write a on paper, at their tables.

These are the letter-formation phrases to use while you are teaching children to read the Speed Sound cards.

Handwriting Stage 1

We start teaching *separate* handwriting lessons as soon as children can read Set 1 sounds.

This lesson is at a different time to phonic lessons.

We now teach letters in handwriting families. Each family has a common formation.

They continue to write on plain paper.

a d g o c q

u y

b p

h n m r

e s f i

l t k j

v w x z

The sponge cake layers and how we use them.

We use an imaginary sponge cake so children can visualise where to place each letter on the line: the jam in the middle and a layer of sponge on the top and bottom. At Stage 3, children learn that 'all joins are in the jam'.

We can choose if children write in a wide-lined handwriting book or a book with the standard 8mm width lines.

How the children sit.

Children sit at tables for the whole of the lesson.

We arrange tables and chairs so all children can clearly see the whiteboard.

We place children in partners side-by-side; they check each other's letters at key points in the lesson.

Practice time.

We pause the film to:

- remind children how the sponge cake layers correspond to the lines in their books
- address any common difficulties
- give children extra time to practise.

How we make the most of partner check time.

This symbol shows when it's time for partners to check each other's letter, join or word. In each film, children choose their best letter or join and decide their 'two best bits and one to fix'. We pause the film if children need more discussion time.



When do we expect children to use their new handwriting skills in other lessons?

When children write in other lessons, do not expect them to apply the new style straightaway. Once they have practised all the new letters and/or joins, we explain that they are now ready to write the title and first sentence in their new handwriting. This makes it feel like a privilege rather than an order! We increase the number of sentences week by week.

Year 1+ handwriting

Letter Village films are available on the Ruth Miskin Training School Portal, starting from Stage 2. They teach children, step-by-step, how to develop joined handwriting in just ten minutes each day. We teach children to 'visualise to memorise'. We do not ask children to copy. Copying means they haven't memorised and will likely copy what they think they see - often starting in the wrong place and writing an approximation of the letter or join.

Handwriting Stage 2

When do we start Stage 2?

We start using the Letter Village films when the children in our Year 1 class can write with correct basic formation.

Children in Year 2 and above also benefit from following these lessons before they begin learning to join letters.

What do we teach at Handwriting Stage 2?

Children learn the relative size of letters and to form letters that will flow easily into a joined style. They will learn a style that looks like this:

Welcome back to Letter Village. At
Stage 2, children learn a writing
style like this.

At Stage 2, we group letters that have a similar formation: a d g o c q u y b p h n m r e s f i l
t k j v w x z

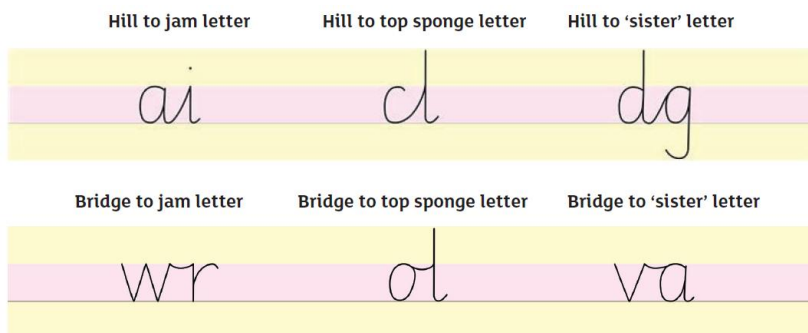
These new handwriting 'picture hooks' focus on each group's shared similarities.

Handwriting Stage 3

Before introducing the Stage 3 films, we check children can form the letters correctly. We use Stage 2 films to give further practice if needed. Children in all year groups benefit from using Stage 3 before moving onto Stage 4.

What do we teach at Handwriting Stage 3? Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins: the 'hill' join and the 'bridge' joins.

Each has three variations:



Children practise each join with specific letter combinations. Then they write words with the joins they have practised.

They learn a style that looks like this.

Welcome back to Letter Village. At
Stage 3, children learn the 'hill'
and 'bridge' joins.

We teach children that all letters are joined with the 'hill' or 'bridge' join with the exception of g, j, q, y and z:

gap jump quit yak zoo

We have separate lessons that show how we modify some letters to allow them to join. For example, r, e and s.



Handwriting Stage 4 (Year 5 and 6 at St Andrew's)

When do we start Stage 4?

Before introducing the Stage 4 films, we check children can:

- Form letters correctly and use Stage 2 films to give further practice if needed. (e.g. intervention, virtual learning)
- Use the 'hill' and 'bridge' joins. We use Stage 3 films to give further practice if needed.

What do we teach at Handwriting Stage 4?

At Stage 4, we help children to develop a mature and speedy style.

Children continue to practise using the two basic joins - the 'hill' join and the 'bridge' join and the two variations of each.

In each ten-minute lesson, children practise joining two letters, a word containing the join and a sentence containing the word. We repeat lessons as necessary. We revisit prior lessons regularly to support misconceptions.

The 60 lessons maximise practice time so children develop the automaticity needed to write with speed.

The Stage 4 writing style is the same as Stage 3. They learn a style that looks like this:

At stage 4 children practise writing the 'hill' and 'bridge' joins, and build speed writing words and sentences.

How the teaching of handwriting meets the needs of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and SEND pupils:

We have designed our curriculum to meet the needs of all our pupils in line with the school key priorities.

Letter Village supports and meets the needs of disadvantaged and SEND pupils by removing the cognitive and physical barriers commonly associated with early writing. Our structured, multi-sensory handwriting programme accelerates progress for children who struggle with traditional copying methods.

Handwriting Impact

Overview of handwriting assessment procedures, including the expectations of teachers using both formative and summative assessment:

Formative assessment: We assess children's work formatively in handwriting through live marking. Teachers provide immediate, specific feedback during practice sessions rather than at the end. These assessments inform the class teacher's planning for future lessons.

Summative assessment: At the end of a term, we track progress using our 'Strong Foundations - Handwriting Tracker.' **This early identification, allows us to spot pupils struggling with fine motor control, core posture, or letter orientation early on, and put small-step interventions in place** Our core principle is: Handwriting should become automatic, fluent, and legible, so pupils can focus on composition rather than transcription.

We track and measure progress against the following expectations:

EYFS (Reception)

Expected by end of EYFS

- Holds pencil with effective tripod grip
- Forms most letters correctly (generally lower-case)
- Writes own name
- Begins to sit letters on the line (where lines are used)
- Uses phonics to write simple words/sentences

Key Features

- ☒ Correct letter formation (starting points)
- ☒ Clear distinction between some letters (e.g. b/d)
- ☒ Large but controlled writing

Year 1

Expected

- Forms all lower-case letters correctly
- Begins to form capital letters correctly
- Leaves spaces between words
- Writing is mostly on the line
- Digits 0-9 formed correctly

Key Features

- ☒ Consistent letter size emerging
- ☒ Orientation mostly correct

Year 2

Expected

- Letters are consistently correctly formed
- Writing is legible across all work
- Appropriate spacing between words
- Capital letters and full stops used correctly
- Introduction to joined handwriting (where ready)

Key Features

- ☒ Size and spacing improving
- ☒ Some joins used correctly
- ☒ Writing speed increasing

Lower KS2 (Years 3-4)

Expected

- Joined handwriting should be the norm
- Writing is legible and consistent in size and spacing
- Ascenders (b, d, h) and descenders (g, j, y) are clear
- Writes with increasing fluency

Key Features

- ☒ Consistent joins (not a mix of styles)
- ☒ Parallel lines of writing maintained
- ☒ Improved presentation across subjects

Upper KS2 (Years 5-6)

Expected

- Writing is fluent, legible, and efficient
- Maintains consistent style, including joins
- Adapts handwriting for purpose (neat vs quick notes)
- Demonstrates personal style (where appropriate)

Key Features

- ☒ Speed supports extended writing
- ☒ High presentation standards across curriculum
- ☒ Clear, confident, automatic handwriting

Monitoring arrangements

We monitor handwriting teaching and learning effectively through our consistent, whole-school policy combined with regular formative checks and adherence to evidence-based frameworks like the Department for Education's Writing Framework.

We have defined a gold standard. Our teaching of handwriting sets clear, visual expectations for letter formation, size, spacing, and joins across every year group.

Use a unified progression: Our teaching of handwriting follows a single, cumulative scheme rather than mixing approaches.

Separate from phonics: Our monitoring of handwriting ensures we monitor timetables to

ensure explicit handwriting sessions are taught distinctly from phonics, allowing proper focus on motor skills and transcription.

Classroom Monitoring and Evaluation

Book looks: The Leadership team, alongside the English Lead, conduct regular reviews of children's books to check that handwriting is practiced frequently and applied consistently in subjects outside English.

Lesson drop-ins: The Leadership team, alongside the English Lead, observe live handwriting lessons to check that teachers effectively model correct posture, pencil grip, and precise letter strokes

Pupil voice: The Leadership team, alongside the English Lead, talk to pupils about their writing goals, asking them to identify their own "gold standard" pieces or letters that still need fixing.