



# Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

## Handwriting Policy

2021-2

### 1. RATIONALE

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a wide range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that

children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through school, the requirement to write legibly and fluently increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases. Children need to be encouraged to adapt the correct pencil grip and writing posture from the start of their school life. They also need regular and constant opportunities to learn, practice and apply specific handwriting skills.

*This will ensure children know:*

- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
- Having correct pencil grip.
- Knowing the all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle.
- Knowing the correct formation of all letters.
- Knowing the correct size and orientation of letters.

## 2. HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND NON-NEGOTIABLES

High expectations **MUST** be applied to handwriting and presentation in the same way that our expectations are high in other areas of the curriculum:

- It is acceptable that there are times (in notes, rough planning or draft) that a child needs to write quickly and therefore, may not spend as much time focusing on handwriting and cursive script.
- It is **NOT** acceptable though, for children to sustain bad habits, posture, pencil grip or standards of presentation as they move through school. Teaching **MUST** have an impact on standards.
- It is **NOT** acceptable for children to vary the standard of their handwriting on a day to day basis- they must strive to show their best.

Also it is not acceptable to assume children know how to do all of the above. They must see, be taught and have access to modelling which exemplifies, explains and outlines what a skill is, how to do it and how to improve. They therefore, must have access to quality teaching.

## 3. WHOLE SCHOOL CONSISTENCY

*Whole school consistency is vital to ensuring success and progress.*

The letter formation that children encounter first at OLSH in Year Reception is pre-cursive. As children progress through the school, they will be shown how this can progress into cursive script, where letters are all joined. Pre-cursive and cursive letters start at the base of the letter. The letter join program will form the basis for handwriting lessons – all staff have access to the program in which modelled examples of letters and patterns can be shown to the class. In addition to this, each class has a handwriting booklet, which forms the basis of practice within lessons.

Teachers are expected to exemplify the cursive style in their marking of books, in classroom displays and when writing within lessons (On interactive whiteboard/flipchart paper). Children should experience daily practice of handwriting in a

variety of places – from English lessons to discrete practice in Handwriting books. Staff should consider where this practice should occur within their timetable and plan accordingly.

Children should experience/have access to:

- Daily practice of handwriting.
- Same language (in line with Letter Join) to be used in each year group
- Letter Join interactive whiteboard resources, workbooks and worksheets to be used to support main teaching tool.
- Pencils to be of a good quality and sharp. High expectations regarding pencils. Children should not be completing work with blunt pencils.
- Where handwriting is displayed, it should be of a high quality. Letter join font is to be used for displays.
- Letter formation is to follow the progression policy outlined in this section.

#### 4. TEACHING TIME

Handwriting practice should, in varying forms, take place DAILY where possible (games, English lesson starters, handwriting sessions etc.). More formal taught handwriting sessions need to be built in to the EYFS framework and timetable. They should also, be discretely built in to and taught through the KS1 and KS2 timetable.

##### *EYFS*

For our youngest pupils we aim for two to three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes that will include the following:

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.

##### *KS1*

Tuition will continue with two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes covering:

- Gross and fine motor skills exercises.
- Cursive handwriting reinforcement, learning and practice.
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters: where and when to use, learning and practice.

##### *KS2:*

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during two or three weekly sessions totalling 30 to 45 minutes teaching:

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement.
- Form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters.
- Dictation exercises to teach the need for quick notes and handwriting at speed.

One morning session per week should be a taught handwriting session to encourage a positive and calm start to the day. Following sessions can be planned in after lunch time break or planned in to another area of the school timetable. English/grammar/reading comp lessons can also start with handwriting games/practice to warm children's thinking up.

#### 5. TEACHING STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS:

##### *EYFS*

- Concentrate on letter formation including verbalisation of how to form letters (see appendix)
- A number of examples of initial mark making and opportunities to explore mark making.
- Use of Letter Join's whiteboard board resources to develop muscular strength, coordination and recognition of letter formation.
- Use of thicker triangular pencils for all children initially, until motor skills sufficiently developed to use a normal school pencil.

- By the end of Year R children should be able to: Use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters [with a whoosh], **most** of which are correctly formed and apply their writing in exercise books.
- **Write Dance** used whole class to support early writing development. FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions to be used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- Embed approach of “This is how we read it... round the apple and down the stem!” for recognizing letters in RML and “This is how we write it... whoosh, round the apple and down the stem!” to show an extra flick to begin pre-cursive joining.

#### KEYSTAGE 1

- Write legibly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins.
- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.

#### YEAR 1

- Continuation of YR strategies. Ensure consistency is maintained with “This is how we read it... round the apple and down the stem!” for recognizing letters in RML and “This is how we write it... whoosh, round the apple and down the stem!” to show an extra flick to begin pre-cursive joining.
- Handwriting books introduced at the appropriate time.
- **Write Dance** used whole class to support early writing development. FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions) used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and to follow the whole school approach.

#### YEAR 2

- As for Y1
- Introduce joining and can practice sounds/letters for split diagraphs and two letters one sound joins.
- Pens can be used when all letters are correctly formed, work is consistently neat and letters joined in all curriculum areas
- Children sent to SMT or English coordinator for celebration of their achievement, before being allowed to use a pen.
- Less able/SEN may still need to use specialist lined paper.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs. Children with poor pencil control/grip must be supported and their needs addressed as early as possible in the school year.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and to follow the whole school approach.

#### KEY STAGE 2

Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

**Quality:** Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.

**Speed:** Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take ‘quick notes’ at a faster pace.

**Stamina:** Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.

### YEAR 3

- Continue all the above.
- Change to narrower line guides.
- High expectations regarding letter formation and presentation in books – handwriting is not an independent activity and should be applied.
- High expectations in class mean progress should be evident and poor handwriting practice never just ‘accepted’.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs.
- Children should be accessing taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation interactively as well as in handwriting practice books.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

### YEARS 4 AND 5

- Continue as above
- High expectations regarding presentation and letter formation.
- Children to be developing the speed and fluency of handwriting skills.
- More able to be practicing handwriting through applied grammar, spelling or creative writing.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs.
- Children should be accessing taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation interactively as well as in handwriting practice books.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

### YEAR 6

- Continue as above
- High expectations regarding presentation and letter formation.
- Children to be developing the speed and fluency of handwriting skills.
- More able to be practicing handwriting through applied grammar, spelling or creative writing.
- Handwriting should be applied throughout the curriculum and be a chance to explore different grammar, spelling, punctuation or creative writing techniques.
- FunFit, Hand-Eye, Write Dance and interventions (based around Letter Join resources) to be used to support children who have additional needs.
- Children should be accessing taught sessions where teachers model and exemplify letter and word formation interactively as well as in handwriting practice books.
- All children to have their own handwriting practice book and exercise book to support their learning.

Go to: [www.letterjoin.co.uk](http://www.letterjoin.co.uk)

Username: huberts

Password: b688ed

*This website will allow you to print work sheets for specific patterns, letters or words for the children and even create your own worksheets.*

## 6. PAPER/BOOKS

The school has specially designed handwriting books for children to practice discrete skills in conjunction with year group practice books. These books are to be used from EYFS to Year 6. Children should then move on to using formal exercise books when they are ready and competent writers. Children who still need guidance should continue to use the handwriting books.

## 7. PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & REPORTING

Handwriting should be evident in medium and short term planning folder. This does not have to be typed up – but can be noted and evidenced against in the long term and medium term English plans.

Assessment is formative on daily basis.

Handwriting is predominantly assessed during writing and is an important facet of overall writing effectiveness. Teachers however, should be assessing children's needs/standards of presentation in all lessons – not just writing.

Targets/reporting of progress in handwriting should be included in parental reports if necessary.

Pupils should be encouraged to self-assess and peer assess handwriting during literacy and handwriting lessons.

## 8. SEN AND INCLUSION

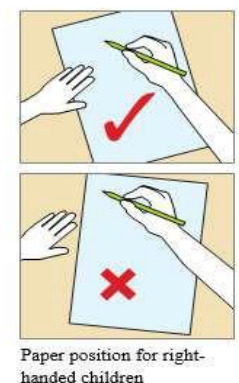
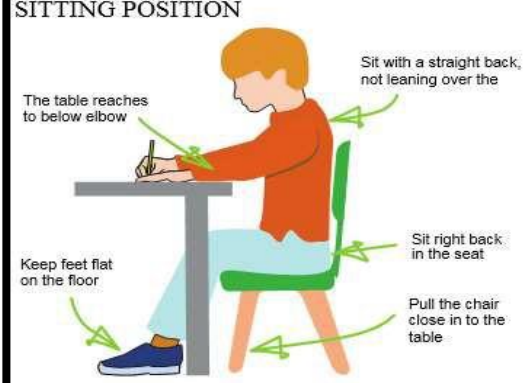
Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems such as fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENDCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources, use of specialist pens/pencils/pencil grips, or participation in specialist interventions such as Fun Fit, Write dance or Hand Eye Co-ordination. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc. Outside agencies can be contacted where appropriate.

## 9. POSTURE AND GRIP

### Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

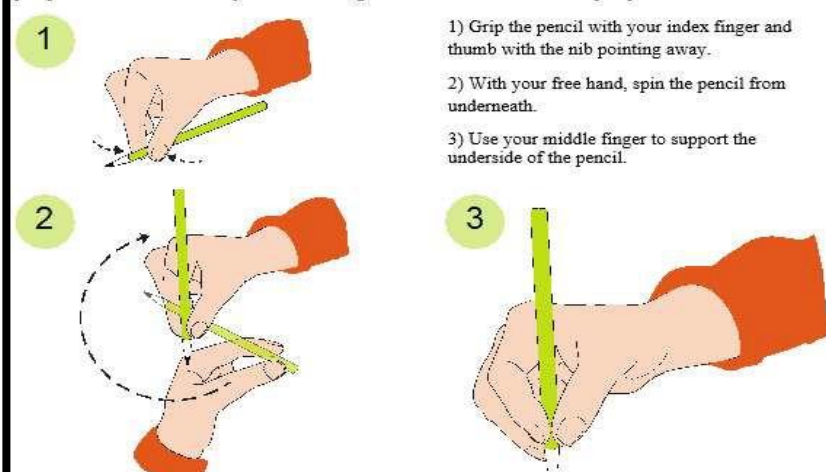
#### SITTING POSITION



#### THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

- 1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
- 2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
- 3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.



*Right handers:*

Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point.

The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left

Left hand must be used to steady the paper

*Left handers:*

Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger.

Hold about 3cm from the tip as closer grips can interrupt pupils' line of vision;

The hand should be kept below the writing line.

The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°

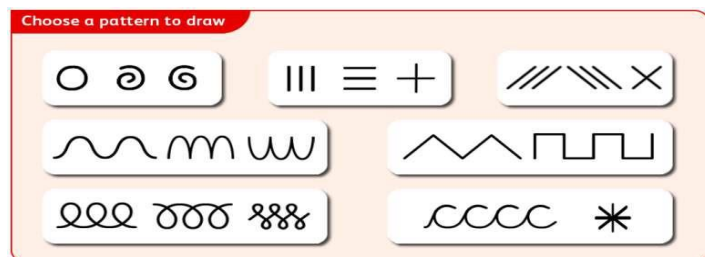
Right hand must be used to steady the paper.

NB: It is very important that a right handed child is NOT sat on the left hand side of a left handed child. *If a child struggles to use the traditional grip, please refer to SENDCO. A range of specially designed pens and pencils are available which can be used in classes. Specialist left handed pens and pencils are also available.*

## 10. PROGRESSION

### Progression through school regarding correct letter formation:

Children will initially start with mark making and will need to practice certain pattern formations, which will naturally support good pen grip development, fine motor skills and pen control. IT will also feed in to the next stage which is letter formation. The key patterns are:



RML's letter formation does not align with the initial un-joined letter formation in Letter Join. Therefore, it is important in EYFS and nursery that we introduce a two pronged "How we read it" and How we write it!" way of looking at and using letters/words.

The first letters children will see will be in line with RML:

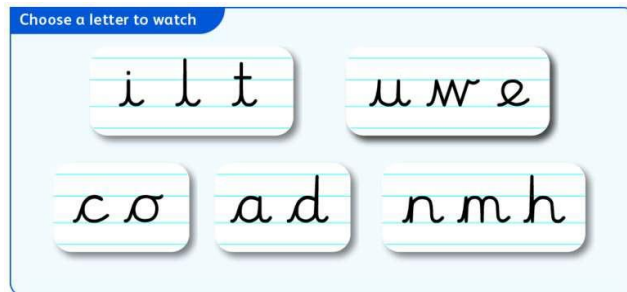
b	r	a	qu	j	z
i	y	d	t	c	s
l	sh	k	ch	f	v
e	u	n	ng	m	th
h	x	g	w	p	o

When we are modelling in class, focusing on/teaching handwriting, exploring letter formation, then we need to use the Letter Join font and Letter Join formation to exemplify pre-cursive and cursive letter formation.

*All letters are available at [LetterJoin.com](http://LetterJoin.com) and on the school's Computers*

*Pre-cursive:*

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



*And cursive:*

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The capital letters are:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P  
Q R T U V W X Y Z

The numerals will be:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



