

**St Mary's Church of England Primary
School
HANDWRITING POLICY
Member of staff responsible:
Mrs S. Walker**



CURRICULUM INTENT

At St Mary's we intend for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. Handwriting begins as soon as the children enter Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) with mark making and gross and fine motor skills being developed over time. Skills are built up in regular, short sessions to encourage the correct letter formation to transfer into long-term memory. Each year group progresses their skills in order for the majority of pupils to have handwriting skills appropriate for their age.

In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practiced in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. At St Mary's we use the systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting through the use of the *Penpals for Handwriting Scheme* to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The *Penpals* scheme is taught in short, regular units on a weekly basis throughout school. Skills build within each year group and progression can be shown through year groups as children build towards and end goal. *Penpals* enables us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS F1 and F2).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS F1/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

In using *Penpals*, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum' and that 'problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say'.

HANDWRITING TOOLS

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS.
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school.
- Fingers when writing on the interactive whiteboard.
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays and artwork.
- Sharp pencils for most writing until a pen licence is awarded.
- A handwriting pen for when they sustain a good level of presentation.

Handwriting is introduced and practised in the *Penpals* Practice Books so that children quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases in English books.

From year 3 to year 5, pen licences are awarded to those children who are consistently writing at an age appropriate level or beyond. Children then use the handwriting pen in all of their lessons to enable children to embed the message that the standard of their handwriting must be of a good standard in all their work. This licence is then taken with them as they begin a new-year group, therefore building on age-related expectations each year. By the time pupils reach year 6, the vast majority of pupils should have received their pen licence. All pupils in year 6 write in handwriting pen in order to prepare them for the next stage in their education (high school) where they will write in pen in all lessons.

CURRICULUM IMPACT

The impact of handwriting will be assessed in line with the school assessment policy and forms part of the assessment for writing (see separate policy). The use of the scheme is monitored by the subject lead to ensure high quality teaching and high impact on progression. Impact is measured on the children's ability to apply age related expectations for handwriting in all lessons.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.