

How we teach: Handwriting



Rationale

- Specific instruction in handwriting is needed in order for children to develop **automatic, legible** handwriting.
- Legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows children to focus on the higher-level aspects of writing content and composition.
- The purpose of handwriting is communication, to be read by others and re-read by self.
- Self-esteem and performance across all subjects is negatively influenced if handwriting is illegible.

Intent

- To develop correct letter formation: consistently sized and proportioned letters that are correctly orientated and positioned based on a script used commonly consistently throughout the school.
- To develop handwriting for different purposes.
- To develop a pride in their work and a positive self-image.

Implementation

- Teachers allow for differentiated learning through explicit teaching of handwriting as well as applied guidance throughout other areas of the curriculum.
- Children are introduced to the **print formation of lower-case and capital letters** in Reception as part of the Rocket Phonics program. These letters have clear start and finishing points and are supported by letter-formation scripts in order to support the correct modelling to children. ([Appendix 1](#))
- From Year 1, pupils are introduced to **cursive handwriting** also via the Rocket Phonics program. This is an all joined style with two main joins – a diagonal line which starts with the pencil point on the writing line, and a smile join ([Appendix 2](#)). Explicit teaching of handwriting is evident throughout the Rocket Phonics program in Year 1 and 2.
- Children will be taught the traditional tripod pencil grip and to think carefully about the letters they write and the join each letter needs in whole words. The teaching focus should be on the mechanics of handwriting rather than only copying.
- Seating posture is also emphasised. Children are instructed that their writing hand should rest lightly on the paper below the words being written so that the words are not obscured.
- Handwriting will be taught regularly and systematically within the Middle Years, building on the styles introduced in Key Stage 1, and as the need arises, in groups and individually in the Upper Years.
- In the Upper Years children will be expected to fluently join their handwriting when writing in their books, with the exception of any task that focuses on note-taking.

- Children will understand the purpose of Handwriting instruction. In the Early Years the focus will be upon the need to communicate, moving towards efficient letter formations for note taking and an ability to produce a 'neat' copy.

Resources

- Children will be taught to position letters correctly using 'handwriting tram-lined' books and then transfer letters to plain-lined paper during direct teaching in Years 1 to 4.
- Pencils will be used for the majority of handwriting, with specialist EASYGRAPH right-handed and left-handed pencils used to support pupils with fine motor control. Handwriting pens will be introduced in KS2 as fluency and style is embedded.

The Role of the Teacher and TAs

- To provide a legible, clear model of the school handwriting style when working with children, marking books and writing on smart boards.
- To model the school script for pupils in their writing.
- To ensure access of available to the Handwriting script and that it is displayed in the classroom.

Working with Parents

- All parents will receive a copy of Handwriting script and formation guide of lower case letters during pre-school visits and meetings. Parents of older children who are new to the school will receive a copy in their welcome pack.
- Parents will be reminded of the script at the Beginning of Year Parent Meetings. A workshop may be offered alongside other Literacy support meetings during the year.

Entitlement for all

















- **Provision for Left-Handed Children** - Some left-handed children may experience handwriting difficulties, and develop fluency later than right-handers because they are pushing the pen across the page rather than pulling it. School guidance notes on assistance for left-handed writers are available to all staff.
- **SEN** Some children have more specific handwriting needs such as **Dysgraphia, Developmental Disorders;** (e.g. Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Autistic spectrum) or **Visual-Motor Co-ordination deficits**. These children should be considered specifically in line with the school SEN policy.
- The use of appropriate resources such as triangular-shaped pencils, grips or writing slopes may be provided for children who exhibit specific difficulties.
- **Computers** will be made available for children experiencing grave fine motor difficulties, after consultation with the SENCO.




Monitoring Progress and Assessment;



















- Frequent assessment and feedback on handwriting will be given in line with the school marking policy.
- Progression is measure against NC Guidance for Assessment Matrix ([Appendix 3](#)).
- At the end of Year 4 all children will be screened for handwriting speed and fluency.
- Work scrutiny by the Literacy Coordinator and Leadership Team will monitor the consistent application of the agreed styles, scripts and resources.

Appendix 1:

Print formation of lower-case and capital letters in Reception
(Rocket Phonics)


	Up and over the hill and curl around to make a snake		Up and over the hill and curl around to make a snake
	I go up and over the hill and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then go straight down and flick.		I start at the top and draw a diagonal line down to the left. I lift my pencil off, go back to the top and draw a diagonal line down to the right. Then I lift my pencil off and draw a straight line from left to right.
	I start at the top and go straight down and flick. I take my pencil off and cross the stick.		I start at the top and draw a straight line from left to right. I find the middle of the line and draw a line straight down.
	I start in the middle, go straight down and flick. Then I take my pencil off and put a little dot above the stick		I start at the top and draw a short straight line from left to right. I take my pencil off, find the middle of the line, and draw a straight line down. I take my pencil off and draw a straight line from left to right.
	I start in the middle and go straight down. Then I go straight back up to form a half bridge then around to make a bowl		I start in the middle and go straight down. Then I go straight back up to form a half bridge then around to make a bowl
	I start in the middle and go straight down. Then I go straight back up to form a full bridge, then flick.		I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line. I lift my pencil off and draw a diagonal line down from left to right. I keep my pencil on the page and draw a line straight up to the top.
	I start in the middle and go straight down. Then I go back up to form a full bridge, then another bridge, then flick		I start at the top and go straight down. I lift my pencil off, go back to the top and draw a zigzag down and back up, then I draw a straight line down.
	I go up and over the hill and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then keep going straight up to make a tall letter. Then I go straight back down and flick.		I start at the top and go straight down. I lift my pencil off, start at the top and form a curve down.


	I go up and over the hill and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then go straight down. I curl to make a tail.		I go up and over the hill then curl right around then finish off with a short straight line across from left to right.
	I go up and over the hill then curl right around to form a circle		I go up and over the hill then curl right around to form a circle.
	I start in the middle and go up and over the hill and curl around		I start at the top and go up and over the hill from and curl around.
	I start at the top and go straight down I go back up (to half-height) to form a bow shape.		I start at the top and go straight down. I lift my pen off, find the middle of the line and go out and up in a diagonal line. Then lift my pencil off, go back to the middle and go out and down in a diagonal line.
	I set off from left to right then sweep round, over the hill from right to left and curl around		I start at the top and go straight down, then go across from left to right in a straight line. Then I lift my pencil off and go across at the top in a straight line from left to right, and again in the middle with a shorter straight line from left to right.
	I start in the middle and go straight down then curl to form a bowl. I go back up then straight back down and flick.		I start at the top and go straight down then curl to form a bowl.
	I start in the middle and go straight down .I go back up to form a half bridge.		I start at the top and go straight down. I lift my pencil off, go back to the top and form a small loop. Then I draw a diagonal line.
	I start at the top and go straight down. I go back up (to half-height) to form a full bridge, then flick.		I start at the top and go straight down. I lift my pencil off, leave a gap and start again at the top to go straight down. Then I lift my pencil off and form a line across the middle from left to right.
	I start at the top and go straight down I go back up (to half-height) to form half a bridge then curve to meet the stick.		I start at the top and go straight down. I lift my pencil off, start back at the top and form a loop to the mid-point and a loop to the bottom.


	I go up and over the hill, then I go straight down and I curl to make a tail. I take my pencil off and draw a short straight line across.		I start at the top and go straight down. Then I lift my pencil off and go across at the top in a straight line from left to right, and again in the middle with a shorter straight line from left to right.
	I start at the top and go straight down and flick.		I start at the top and go straight down, then go across in a straight line from left to right.
	I go straight down. Then I curl to make a tail. Then I take my pencil off and put a little dot above the stick.		I start at the top and draw a line from left to right. I take my pencil off, find the middle of the line, then go straight down and curl around from right to left to form a tail..
	I start in the middle and form a single zigzag.		I start at the top and form a single zigzag.
	I start in the middle and form a double zigzag.		I start in the middle and form a double zigzag.
	I form a diagonal line. I take my pencil off and start on the bottom writing line to form a diagonal which crosses the first line.		I form a diagonal line. I take my pencil off and start on the bottom to form a diagonal which crosses the first line.
	I go straight down and curl to form a bowl Then straight back down I curl to make a tail.		I start at the top and form a diagonal down to the mid-point. I take my pencil off, leave a space and form another diagonal down from the top to the midpoint. Then I go straight down from the mid-point to the bottom.
	I start in the middle and form a short straight line across from left to right. Then I form a diagonal line back down to the line. Then, I form another short straight line across from left to right		I start in the middle and form a short straight line across from left to right. Then I form a diagonal line back down. Then, I form another short straight line across from left to right.
	I go up and over the hill and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then go straight down I kick back at the bottom.		I go up and over the hill from right to left, then curl right around to form a circle. Then I lift my pen off and form a short straight diagonal line through the bottom right of the circle.


Appendix 2:


Cursive handwriting Styles (Rocket Phonics)


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, straight down, flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, straight up, straight down, flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and curl around like a snake, flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, straight down through the line, loop around


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, flick, then cross the t from left to right above the join

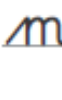
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, up to form a full bridge, flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, up to form a half bridge and curve to complete the b, flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, up to form a bow shape, flick

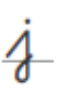
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form a half bridge, smile join


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form a full bridge, flick

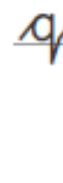
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form a full bridge, then another full bridge, flick

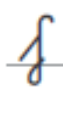
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight down through the line, back up to complete the curve of the p, flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight down to the line, flick, then dot the i


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight down through the line, loop around ready to join the next letter, then dot the j

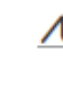
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, smile join


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, straight down through the line, sharp diagonal back up to stop at the writing line, diagonal join to half height, down to form the bowl for the u, down and flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straighten up then hook over, back and straight down through the line, loop around ready to join the next letter


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, flick

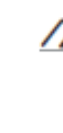
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down to form the bowl for the u, down and flick


 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down to form the bowl, straight down through the line, loop around to join the next letter

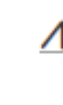
 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down diagonally to form a single zigzag, smile join

 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down diagonally to form a double zigzag, smile join

 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down diagonally to form the first line of x, pencil point off and start back down on the writing line to form another diagonal line up to half height for the second line of x, smile join

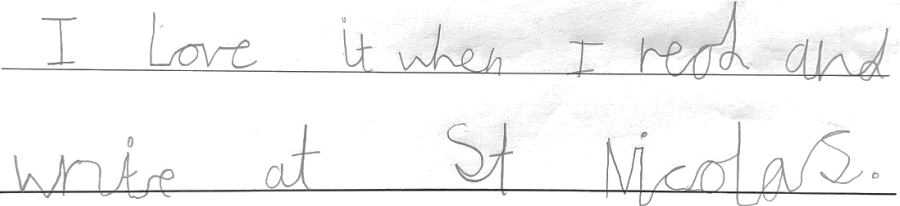

 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight across from left to right, diagonal back down to the line, form a curved line across from left to right with a flick (which provides flair)

 Start on the line and the diagonal line sweeps around to form the e

 Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form a half bridge, smile join to the line which sweeps around to form the e

Appendix 3:

National Curriculum Handwriting Guidance for Assessment Matrix

	Statutory Requirements	Non-Statutory Notes and Guidance	End of Year/Phase Example
Year 1	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</p>	
Year 2	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 un-joined • 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. 	<p>Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.</p>	

Years 3-4	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined • 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). 	<p>Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>	<p>The image shows a sample of handwriting for Years 3-4. The text 'I love it when I read and write at ST Nicolas.' is written in a cursive style on a set of three horizontal lines. The letters are mostly joined, and the writing is clear and legible.</p>
Years 5-6	<p>Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra; and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.</p>	<p>The image shows a sample of handwriting for Years 5-6. The text 'I love it when I read and write at st nicolas.' is written in a cursive style on a set of three horizontal lines. The letters are mostly un-joined, and the writing is more fluid and faster than the sample for Years 3-4.</p>