

# St Anne's Infants' School

## Handwriting Policy



"Reach for the stars"

### Aims

At St Anne's Infants' School, our aim is to build a positive writing culture within which, every child develops confident, fluent, and legible handwriting through consistent, developmentally appropriate teaching. We support children to build secure letter formation, stamina, and pride in presentation so that handwriting becomes an effective tool for communication across the curriculum.

### Rationale

Learning how letters look, strengthens children's understanding of phoneme-grapheme correspondence. When children can form letters accurately, they recognise them more quickly when reading, boosting their decoding and fluency skills. Within the early processes of learning to write, children build strength in their hands, and have more control of a pencil, whilst forming good habits, leading to joined up handwriting later on in their school career. When letter formation is automatic, children's cognitive load is reduced, freeing up the working memory to focus on spelling, composition and creativity.

### Progression of skills

In accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the National Curriculum

Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are supported to develop their gross motor and fine motor skills through a range of play and mark-making activities.</li> <li>As children begin to develop control and coordination, their marks begin to take shape and include patterns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing skills are encouraged through physical play, mark making and by developing children's phonic knowledge to write words.</li> <li>Children are taught to write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed and can be read by others.</li> <li>Fine motor skills are developed further to support correct pencil grip in preparation for fluent writing (using the tri-pod grip in almost all cases).</li> <li>The automaticity of handwriting is developed in order to reduce cognitive load, making it easier for children to focus on composition</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pupils should be taught to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly</li> <li>begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</li> <li>form capital letters</li> <li>form digits 0-9 (<b>See Appendix 1</b>)</li> <li>understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practice these.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pupils should be taught to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another</li> <li>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 (<b>See Appendix 2</b>)</li> <li>write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters</li> <li>use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</li> </ul>

#### ASSESSMENT:

**Terms 1 & 4.** Formation of lowercase letters to be assessed only, (lines not required)

**Year 2:** Capital letters. Formation, orientation and size of lowercase letters relative to one another to be assessed. When children demonstrate competency in the formation of lowercase letters, they will be taught to use diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined: **b, g, j, p, q, s, x, y, z**

## How we teach handwriting at St Anne’s Infants’ School

We know that young children learn most effectively when they can recognise patterns. For this reason, letters are grouped according to those that start in the same place or follow the same movement, these are called Letter Families (see Appendix 1). By modelling the starting places and movement of letters helps our children to develop secure and consistent handwriting habits, leading to:

- strong muscle memory
- smoother, more fluent writing
- fewer reversals and incorrect starting points
- confidence because the learning feels predictable and structured

### The Four Letter Families



Curly Caterpillar Letters	Long Ladder Letters	One-Armed Robot Letters	Zig-Zag Monster Letters
c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s	l, t, i, j, u, y	r, n, m, h, b, k, p	v, w, x, z
These letters all begin with a “curly” anti-clockwise movement. Children learn the basic c shape first, then build the other letters from that same movement.	These letters use a downward “ladder” stroke. Children practise straight, controlled downward lines before adding flicks or dots.	These letters start with a straight down stroke and then “arm out” like a robot. This helps children remember where to start and how to keep letters the same height.	These letters use sharp, angled movements. Children enjoy practising these as fun, energetic patterns before writing them on lines.

### Daily Handwriting lessons include:

- **Warm-ups** to strengthen hands and fingers
- **Teacher modelling** of the letter family movement
- **Practice on whiteboards** for confidence
- **Writing in books** once the movement is secure
- **Applying letters in words and sentences**

Letter families are revisited regularly so children can refine their skills as they progress

### Pencil Grip

Left Handers	Right Handers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger</li> <li>• Hold about 3cm from the tip</li> <li>• The hand should be kept below the writing line</li> <li>• The paper should be tilted slightly to the right</li> <li>• Use the right hand to steady the paper</li> <li>• <b>Posture:</b> Ensure they sit with feet flat, back straight, and their right hand stabilizing the paper.</li> <li>• <b>Classroom Setup:</b> Position left-handed children on the left side of a shared table to prevent bumping elbows with right-handed peers</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point</li> <li>• The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left</li> <li>• Use the left hand to steady the paper</li> </ul> 

## Writing Posture

To support effective handwriting, we promote and model correct writing posture. Staff guide and remind children of the following key principles:

- **Feet Placement:** Children should sit with both feet flat on the floor to provide stability and support.
- **Back Support:** The back should be upright and supported by the chair, avoiding slouching or leaning forward.
- **Table and Chair Alignment:** Furniture should be appropriately sized so that children's elbows rest comfortably on the desk at a 90-degree angle.
- **Arm and Wrist Position:** Forearms should rest lightly on the desk, with wrists relaxed and straight to facilitate fluid movement.
- **Paper Positioning:** Paper should be angled slightly to suit the dominant hand, helping maintain a natural wrist position.
- **Non-Dominant Hand Use:** Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper, supporting coordination and control.
- **Head and Neck Alignment:** The head should remain upright, with eyes looking down naturally—avoiding excessive leaning or craning.

## Inclusion:

Our approach to handwriting is grounded in the belief that every child is capable of developing confidence and fluency in written communication. We recognise that children arrive with diverse strengths, needs, experiences, and motor development, and we ensure that our teaching is responsive, flexible, and inclusive.

- **High expectations for all**  
All children are supported to make progress from their individual starting points. We provide clear modelling, scaffolded practice, and regular opportunities to rehearse skills in meaningful contexts.
- **Adaptive teaching**  
Staff use ongoing assessment to identify barriers to handwriting and adapt teaching accordingly. This may include:
  - alternative pencil grips or writing tools
  - varied paper formats (e.g., larger lines, coloured backgrounds, highlighted lines)
  - additional fine-motor and gross motor development activities
  - chunked tasks or reduced writing volume where appropriate
  - multisensory approaches to letter formation
- **Support for children with SEND**  
For children with identified or emerging SEND, adaptations are planned in partnership with the SENDCO, families, and relevant professionals. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure children can participate fully and develop handwriting skills without unnecessary pressure or comparison.
- **Promoting independence and confidence**  
We prioritise children's autonomy and growth, celebrating the moments when they reach for the stars in their handwriting. We recognise that writing is a complex and demanding skill, and we value the determination children show as they overcome its challenges. Through encouragement and meaningful practice, they develop self-belief, resilience, and genuine enjoyment — foundations that help them flourish as successful, confident writers.
- **Culturally and linguistically responsive practice**  
We recognise that children may use different scripts or writing conventions at home. We value these experiences and support children to transfer skills while learning the handwriting style used in school.
- **Partnership with families**  
Families are offered clear guidance on how handwriting is taught and how they can support their child at home in a positive, pressure-free way.

## Sequence of Learning

### Nursery

In Nursery, handwriting is rooted in rich mark-making experiences, physical development, and early pattern awareness. Children explore a wide range of tools and movements, developing the foundational skills, confidence, and enjoyment that underpin later letter formation.

### Reception

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Term 1	Settling in, gross and fine motor observations to support baseline assessment.		Pre-writing shapes assessment	Gross and fine motor opportunities throughout provision. Drawing Club whole class for fine motor skills development and mark making Clever Hands for identified children <b>Write Dance</b> 3x pwk for gross and fine motor development whole class				
Term 2	Gross and fine motor opportunities throughout provision. Clever Hands for identified children Drawing Club whole class for fine motor skills development and mark making <b>Write Dance</b> 3x pwk for gross and fine motor development whole class							
Term 3	<b>Ladder letter Family</b> (l, I, t – emphasis on tall straight lines, correct starting points)			<b>Ladder letter Family</b> (u, j, y – focus on descenders and spacing)				
Term 4	<b>Curly Caterpillar Family</b> (c, a, o – anti clockwise circular motion practice)			<b>Curly Caterpillar Family</b> (d, g, q – introduce ascenders and descenders))				
Term 5	<b>Curly Caterpillar Family</b> (s, e – reinforce circular strokes)		<b>One-Armed Robot Family</b> (r, n, m)					
Term 6	<b>One-Armed Robot Family</b> (h, b)		<b>Zigzag Monster Family</b> (v, w)		<b>Zigzag Monster Family</b> (x, z)		Assessment for transition/ review and consolidation	



























**Year 1**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
<b>Term 1</b>		Recap the Ladder Family (l, l, u, t, y, and j – integrate the teaching of capital letters)						Assessment
<b>Term 2</b>	Recap the One-Armed Robot Family (n, m, h, k, b, p, r – integrate the teaching of capital letters)						Assessment	
<b>Term 3</b>	The Curly Caterpillar family (c, a, d, e, s, g – integrate the teaching of capital letters)				Assessment			
<b>Term 4</b>	The Curly Caterpillar family (f, g, o integrate the teaching of capital letters)			Assessment		The Zigzag Monster Family (z, v integrate the teaching of capital letters)		
<b>Term 5</b>	The Zigzag Monster Family (w, x integrate the teaching of capital letters)	Assessment		Consolidate and practice (through dictation / red work practice)				
<b>Term 6</b>	Assessment	Consolidate and practice (through dictation / red work practice)						

**Year 2**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
<b>Term 1</b>		Recap the Ladder Family (l, l, u, t, y, and j – integrate the teaching of capital letters)						Assessment
<b>Term 2</b>	Recap the One-Armed Robot Family (n, m, h, k, b, p, r – integrate the teaching of capital letters)						Assessment	
<b>Term 3</b>	The Curly Caterpillar family (c, a, d, e, s, g – integrate the teaching of capital letters)				Assessment			
<b>Term 4</b>	The Curly Caterpillar family (f, g, o integrate the teaching of capital letters)			Assessment		The Zigzag Monster Family (z, v integrate the teaching of capital letters)		
<b>Term 5</b>	The Zigzag Monster Family (w, x integrate the teaching of capital letters)	Assessment		Consolidate and practice (through dictation / red work practice)				
<b>Term 6</b>	Assessment	Consolidate and practice (through dictation / red work practice)						

# Appendix 1

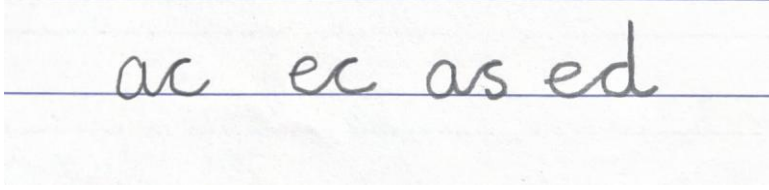
 a A Around the apple and down the leaf	 b B Down the bat and right around the ball.	 c C Curl around the caterpillar	 d D Around his back then head to toe	 e E Under his ear then down his trunk
 f F Curve down the flower and across the leaves	 g G Left around the girl, down her plait and curl	 h H From head to toe and over his back	 i I Down the insect, lift and dot	 j J Down Jane's back, up to her toes. Jump to the ball
 k K From head to toe, arm up, kick out	 l L Down the long, long leg	 m M From the man go down, climb one mountain then the other	 n N From head to toe and over the net	 o O From the top of the head and all the way round the octopus
 p P From head to tail then right around the parrot	 q Q Right around the queen and way down her staff	 r R From head to tail then up and over along his ears	 s S Left around, right around, from head to tail	 t T Down the tower, lift and cross
 u U Under the umbrella, up and down	 v V Down one wing and up the other	 w W Wiggle down, wiggle up, down and up	 x X Hand to toe this way, hand to toe that way	 y Y Down one string and way down the other
 z Z Zig, zag, zig				

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

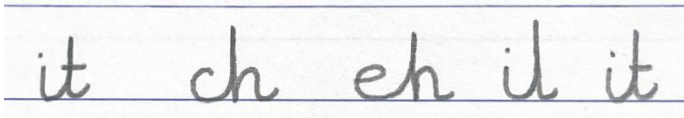
## Appendix 2

Joined handwriting will be taught with the following sequence.

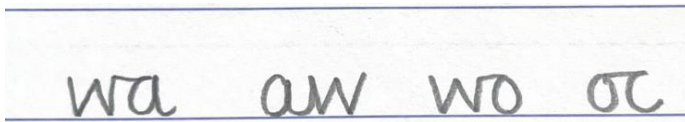
1. From small letter to the top of the next letter – diagonal join



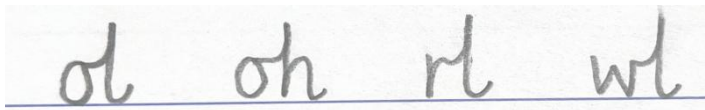
- 2 From small letter to an ascending letter – diagonal



3. From same sized letters – horizontal join



4. Small letter to ascending letter



Capital letters are not joined from or to.

The quick brown fox jumps over the  
lazy frog.