

Handwriting Policy

At St James Primary School we aspire for every single child to succeed. Through our Christian vision we thoroughly believe that all children have the potential to thrive regardless of their starting points, personal context and characteristics. Our children learn through a supportive and purposeful curriculum, linked tightly to national curriculum objectives, that demonstrates that "With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can't overcome. Through Him all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26) Our staff are committed to developing a love of learning, whilst developing the skills and values to support the all-round development of every pupil. St James C of E Primary School is a special place where we dream, believe, learn and achieve.

Intent

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. The development of this fluid style when mastered allows children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves. Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically throughout the school.

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

At St James's our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- To enable children to write in a consistent, well-presented and legible format.
- To have a consistent approach across Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2 when teaching handwriting.
- To ensure that from the Autumn Term of Year 1 to the end of Year 6 children are using a cursive writing style.
- To make sure all children know the difference between lower- and upper-case letters.
- To ensure the skills taught at EYFS and Key Stage 1 continue to develop throughout Key Stage 2.
- To adopt a consistent approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.
- To monitor writing progress effectively to evaluate, promote and maintain high levels of attainment.
- To ensure that children with writing difficulties are identified early and support is given promptly.

- To work in partnership with parents /carers in order to develop each child's full writing potential.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of handwriting are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2013) and in the Educational Programme for Literacy in the EYFs statutory guidance November 2024.).

At St James's we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our handwriting style. We use Letter-join's on-line handwriting resource and Lesson Planners as the basis of our handwriting policy as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Aims:

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.



Implementation:

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Timings

- Y1 & Y1-2- 4-5 times a week, 10- 15-minute sessions
- Y2- 2-3- times a week, 15–20-minute sessions
- KS2- 1-2 times a week, 40–60-minute minutes per week

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. In Early Years the shape of the pencil will vary in terms of its thickness to support with grip and fine motor skills. When fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used. Children in Key Stage Two will be eligible for a pen licence from Year 3 and all children will be given a pen by the start of Year 5.

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place. Letter-join's Lesson Planners all include differentiation activities for extra practice/challenge.

Key Stage Teaching

Early Years

For our youngest pupils in Nursery we deliver daily sessions focusing on developing gross and fine motor skills and in Reception we deliver twice weekly handwriting sessions, which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting



Lesson Planners

Module 1 Print: Early Years teaches handwriting using the printed method. It starts with fine and gross motor skills warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip.

It is divided into three sections covering:

- pre-writing patterns
- easy letters and words
- harder letters and words

At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and form all the printed, lowercase letters of the alphabet.



Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2

Teaching progresses from five short, to two/three longer lessons per week:

- continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- strengthening handwriting, learning and practice
- numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice
- KS1 SATs SPaG exercises

Module 2 Lesson Planners – Year 1

Module 2 Cursive contains lessons for teaching how to write capital letters, printed letters, numbers and symbols, whilst reinforcing cursive handwriting using Letter-join's on-line and printed resources. It is divided into three sections covering:

- warm-ups, letter families and capital letters
- printed letters
- numbers and symbols

On finishing this module, children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their use.

Module 3 Lesson Planners – Year 2

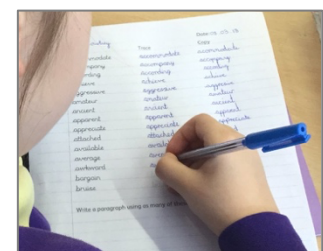
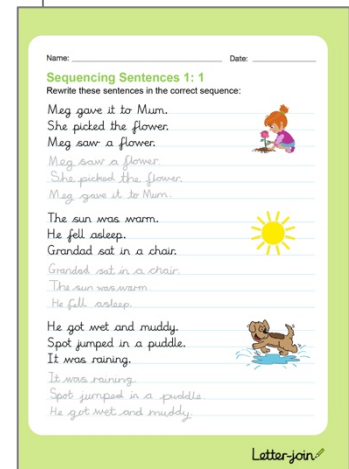
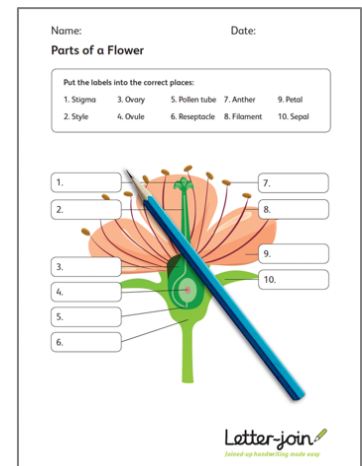
Module 3 Cursive: Year 2 includes lessons to improve letter formation and orientation of letters through regular practice and to support spelling, grammar and punctuation in readiness for KS1 SATs. The sections in this module cover:

- letter families
- high frequency words
- joining techniques
- sequencing sentences
- dictation exercises
- times table facts
- SPaG practice for KS1 SATs

With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing.

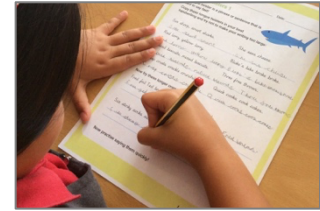
Lower Key Stage 2: Years 3 and 4

Handwriting lessons will continue twice a week in Lower Key Stage 2.



Lesson Planner Module 4 for Year 3 is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French and Spanish), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.

Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.



Lesson Planner Module 5 for Year 4 focuses on using handwriting practice to support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, French and Spanish. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum.

Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module's lessons.

On concluding this module, children will have practised applying size-appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum whilst maintaining fluency and legibility.

EXAMPLE
Word of the Week: precipitous
 Write this week's word six times:
 precipitous precipitous precipitous
 precipitous precipitous precipitous
 Use a dictionary to find the definition of this week's word:
 If something is precipitous, it is not safe and likely to fall off or fall over.
 Write some synonyms of this week's word:
 insecure risky hazardous
 treacherous unsafe dangerous
 Write some antonyms of this week's word:
 safe fixed strong
 secure protected stable
 Write a sentence using this week's word:
 The cat was in a precipitous position in the tree.
 Beware: this cliff edge is precipitous.
 Take care on that precipitous old ladder.
 The stranded climber was in a precipitous situation.
 Letter-join

Upper Key Stage 2: Years 5 and 6

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught during two weekly lessons:

- reinforcing cursive handwriting across the curriculum
- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- KS2 SATs SPaG practice

Lesson Planner Module 6 for Year 5 continues to build on combining fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum.

In this module, learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

Dictation Exercises

Key Stage 2
More challenging exercises

4 small antaumas
24-10-2003
My birthplace is Scotland but all seven I moved.
A shopping list, complex numbers and a longer written passage.

Key Stage 2
Traditional stories and poems.

Hansel and Gretel
Suddenly the door opened, and an old woman came out.
Dictation exercises using extracts from traditional stories and poems.



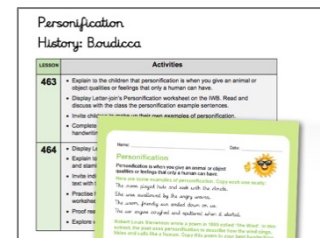
With Letter-join's wide range of resources they will be able to work towards producing consistently neat and well-presented handwriting in all curriculum subjects.

On completing this module, children should be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.

Lesson Planner Module 7 Year 6 presents learners with a range of tasks where they have to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based worksheets will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length.

Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to aid KS2 SATs SPaG revision. They are designed to support year 6 pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of SPaG preparation and plenty of handwriting practice.

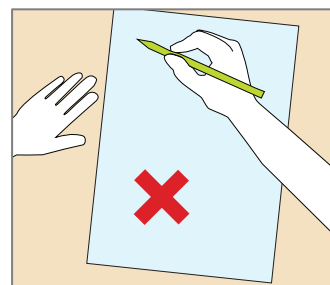
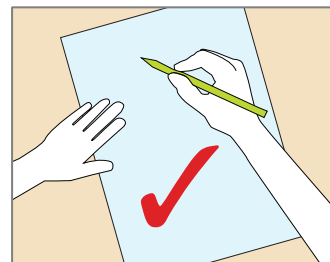
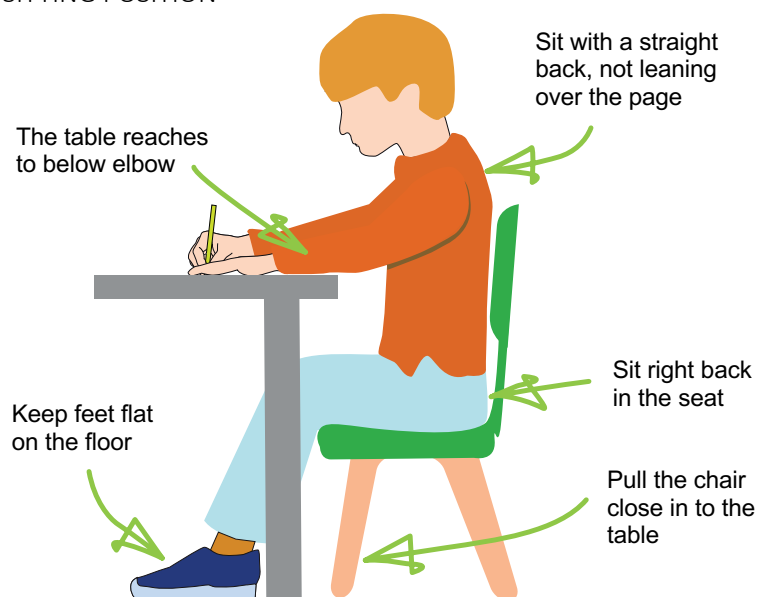
By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters. All of these writing styles are covered in this module.



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

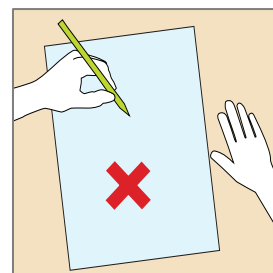
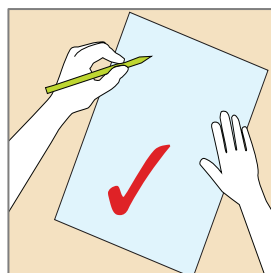
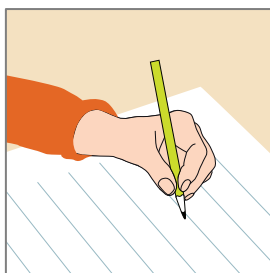
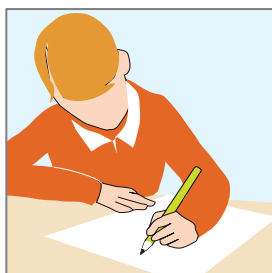


Paper position for right-handed children.

LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children.

Pencil Grip

In Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children will be assessed according to their pencil grip regularly, the results of this will be displayed in class so that adults working with the children are aware of their preferred grip type.

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.

Dynamic Tripod Grasp



Impact

Handwriting is a skill which affects written communication across the curriculum. Our aim is that children are able to write with ease, speed and legibility. By year 6 children will use cursive handwriting using flowing movements and patterns. This handwriting should be demonstrated in all writing across the curriculum. Writing should be fluid in style to allow children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves.

Scripts

- EY- Letter- join Print Plus
- Y1 & Y1-2- Letter-join Air Plus
- Y2-Y6- Letter-join Plus

Where to record handwriting

- KS1 and LKS2 – back of the English books
- UKS2 – sheets from Letter-joins (to be kept)

Handwriting Lesson structure

- Activate – children show correct posture and pencil grip
- Vocabulary – correct vocabulary is used and modelled
- Retrieve – recap previous taught letters or letter joins
- Teach – model correct letter formation and letter joins using the Letter-joins script
- Apply- taught letters/letter joins in small steps

In English lessons

- Activate – 3 times a week
- KS1 begin with single letters and teach letter families.
- KS1 teacher's write the letters underneath the WALT sticker
- KS2 use handwriting slips with tramlines on to write the letters. Children stick handwriting slip underneath the WALT sticker.

Letter Family Teaching Order

1. Ladder Letters (Straight Line Letters):

l, i, t, u, j, y

These letters only require simple, straight-line movements, making them the easiest to learn.

2. Curly Caterpillar Letters (Curved Letters):

c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s, f

These letters are characterized by their curved shapes.

3. One-Armed Robot Letters:

r, b, n, h, m, k, p

These involve a combination of straight and curved strokes.

4. Zigzag Monster Letters:

w, m, x, z

These letters use diagonal and zigzag movements, often considered more challenging.

Terminology

Tall Letters

b d f h k l t

Small Letters

a c e i m n o

r s u v w x z

Fall Letters

g j p q y

Letter-join 

Letter formation on whiteboard using tramlines

