

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

We believe that 'Everyone is different. Everyone is special. Everyone is our neighbour'. As Jesus taught us to love unconditionally, so we strive to nurture respect for all; to provide a rich and stimulating curriculum that considers the individual; and to care for the intellectual, social and spiritual well-being of our whole school community - encouraging positive engagement with the wider world, as affirmed through our school values and parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God ..." and, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Luke 10:27



At St Andrew's we are committed to keeping pupils and staff safe. Our school policies are an essential part of the way we safeguard all members of our diverse school. We support democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. These principles help us to listen to each other and learn from each other to create a safe and rich learning environment for pupils and staff alike.

Approved by:

TLIS

Date: 19/06/25

Reviewed on: June 2025

Next review date: June 2027

St Andrew’s CE Primary, Headington

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

Contents

Handwriting	2
Purpose of this Policy:.....	3
Rationale:	3
Core Principles:	3
Teaching Handwriting	3
Reception.....	3
Year 1	4
Year 2.....	5
Year 3 and Year 4.....	5
Years 5 and 6	5
Presentation in Books	7
Purpose:	7
Rationale:	7
Key Principles:	7
Appendix: Additional Considerations	8

Handwriting

It is important to promote the basic skills of writing— skills that need to become increasingly automatic so that pupils can concentrate on writing composition. This includes the transcription skills of handwriting (or typing, where appropriate) and spelling, as well as sentence construction (forming sentences that effectively convey meaning, with appropriate grammar, syntax, and punctuation).

If these skills are slow or effortful then this will hinder progress in writing composition. High quality practice is essential to develop fluent transcription.

- *Improving Literacy at KS2 – Guidance Report Published by the Education Endowment Foundation (Nov, 2021)*

Purpose of this Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we have a core and consistent approach to how we deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of handwriting teaching at St Andrew's, and for the expectations for presentation of written work in books. All members of staff should be familiar with the policy and apply it consistently.

Rationale:

Fluent handwriting reduces cognitive load and enables children to focus on the content of their writing. By the end of primary school, we want children to be able to express themselves legibly and fluently; to keep up with expectations in secondary school.

Core Principles:

Handwriting is a composite skill: children need well-developed fine-motor skills alongside knowledge of letter formation to write recognisable letters.

Teaching Handwriting

At St Andrew's, we use the Read Write Inc phonics scheme, and associated Get Writing! resources in KS1. Each letter has an accompanying rhyme and visual to help children remember the letter formation. RWI uses "sky, boat, sea" paper to help children learn the relative size and position of letters on a page.



Around the apple
and down the
leaf.



The following details when and how handwriting is taught and practiced in each year group.

Reception

- *Fine Motor Skills* - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- *Gross Motor Skills* - Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.
- *Writing* - Write recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed.

Children are taught the correct letter formation using the RWI rhymes. They are taught the letter formation as the letter sound is taught. Children have sound mats available when writing and are encouraged to use the correct letter formation for sounds they have been taught.

When children are ready, they practice their handwriting in small groups, following the RWI guidance. They progress through Stage 1a (with a focus on letter formation) and Stage 1b (where they are introduced to letter placement through the "sun, boat, sea" line guide).



- Some small letters are called **'boat letters'**: a c e i m n o r s u v w x z.
- Letters that are written below the line are called **'water letters'**: g j p q y.
- Tall letters are called **'sun letters'**: b d h k l t f.

Children are taught number formation weekly, using the [numberblock number formation rhymes](#), which can be found [here](#).

End of year expectation: Children can form most lower-case letters correctly. Sizing may vary and children may not yet be writing on the line.

Year 1

National Curriculum

- *To sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly*
- *To write lowercase letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place*
- *To form capital letters*
- *To understand which letters belong to which handwriting families (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these*
- *To form digits 0-9*

Children should be re-taught the letter formation of each lower-case letter. They should practice the letters in isolation, and in CVC words, using the "sun, boat, sea" line guide (Stage 1b). Children practice daily on handwriting boards, and at other times on paper using the "sun, boat, sea" guides.

Children are taught the letter formation for capital letters during their Get Writing! sessions. Links to the boat, water and sun letters are made to support pupils visualizing the size of the letters. RWI do not have rhymes to help remember the formation of capital letters, but teachers use this [document](#) to show the order of the pen/pencil strokes.

In the summer term, children are introduced to handwriting families – groups of letters which have a similar formation, as shown below. They practice writing these groups of letters in preparation for joining letters in Year 2.

Curly C letters: c, o, a, d, g, q

Ladder letters: l, t, i, j, u, y

Bouncy letters: r, n, m, b, h, p, k

Zig Zag letters: v, w, x, z

Curly Cousins: e, f, s

Children are taught number formation as part of their maths lessons, using the same rhymes as the reception class.

End of year expectation: Children can form each lower-case and some upper-case letter correctly, possibly with some reversals. The letters should sit on the lower line, and the size of each letter should be within the lines but may not be the correct size relative to one another yet.

Year 2

National Curriculum

- *Form lowercase 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 unjoined*
- *Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lowercase letters*
- *Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters*

Children practice their letters in their letter families. They are then introduced to the 3 basic joins (RWI Stage 3). Children will learn that there are two basic joins: “top joiners” and “bottom joiners”. These are first practiced in handwriting sessions in isolated pairs, before being introduced into whole words.

“top joiners”	“bottom joiners”

Children should be taught the letter formation for capital letters. Links to the boat, water and sun letters are made to support pupils visualizing the size of the letters.

Once children have been introduced to the joins, they practice their joined handwriting using the words they are learning to spell.

End of year expectation: Children can form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters. They should use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. (Taken from the end of KS1 writing framework 2019)

Year 3 and Year 4

National Curriculum

- *Use diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined*
- *Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, (e.g. by ensuring that downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch)*

Children in Year 3 and 4 practice their handwriting alongside their spelling lists. Children who still need support in order to meet the KS1 objectives may have a handwriting intervention in order to help them develop their handwriting.

Throughout Year 3 children may earn their “Pen Licence” when they have shown fluency and consistency with their handwriting. At the end of Year 3, all children receive a Pen License.

Years 5 and 6

National Curriculum

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- *Choosing which shape of a letter to use when choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters*
- *Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task*
- *To recognise when to use an unjoined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram, for writing an email address or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form)*

Children in Years 5 and 6 practise their handwriting alongside their spelling lists. Children who still need support in order to write legibly may have a handwriting intervention in order to help them become fluent writers. Children for whom handwriting is proving a significant barrier to communicating in written form may benefit from typing their work in English lessons.

End of year expectation: *maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.* (Taken from the end of KS2 writing framework for 2018/2019 onwards).

Presentation in Books

Purpose:

The purpose of this section of the policy is to set clear, consistent expectations for the presentation of written work across the school. High standards of presentation support children in developing pride and attention to detail in their work.

Rationale:

Presentation is not only about appearance; it contributes directly to the clarity, legibility, and quality of learning. Consistent routines around setting out work also foster good habits and reinforce the importance of accuracy and care. While some flexibility is required to meet individual needs, the school expects all pupils and staff to uphold shared standards.

Key Principles:

- Consistency — All staff apply the same expectations across subjects and year groups
- Pride — Children are taught to take pride in the work they produce, regardless of subject or task
- Clarity — Well-presented work is easier to read, easier to mark, and easier to learn from
- Support — Children who face barriers to neat presentation (e.g., due to physical or learning needs) are supported with reasonable adjustments
- Responsibility — Both pupils and teachers have a role in maintaining high presentation standards

All children are expected to:

- Use blue handwriting pen/HB pencil to write (other grades of pencil when sketching/drawing)
- Write the long date (for English) or short date (for maths) at the top of the page, underlined with a ruler, unless directed otherwise
- Write the title or Learning Objective (L.O.) if instructed, and underline with a ruler
- Glue any L.O. slips or Maths challenges neatly into books, avoiding paper protruding from the book.
- Use a single neat line to cross out errors (no scribbling)
- Follow maths expectations as explained by the class teacher (one digit per square in books; drawing a margin; using a ruler; numbering the questions)
- Avoid doodling or making unnecessary marks in the margins or on covers
- Keep handwriting neat and legible, using joined writing when appropriate
- Start work from the margin and leave appropriate line spacing as guided by the teacher

All teachers will:

- Model high standards of presentation in their own writing when providing examples or feedback
- Explicitly teach and reinforce presentation expectations, reminding pupils where necessary
- Provide an example of good presentation ('What Makes Good Presentation in English/Maths') at the front of Maths and English books (Y2 – 6)
- Praise and celebrate good presentation and progress in handwriting
- Mark books regularly (in line with the Feedback Policy), checking not only for content and accuracy but also for adherence to presentation standards
- Provide targeted support for pupils who struggle with presentation due to specific learning needs or physical challenges

Appendix: Additional Considerations

- **Left-Handed Pupils:** Teacher will ensure they are provided with appropriate seating (so elbows don't clash with right-handed peers) and sloped paper positioning if needed. They will be taught letter formation with consideration for their hand dominance.
- **Pupils with Dyspraxia or Fine Motor Difficulties:** Teachers should be aware of individual needs and make reasonable adjustments, such as allowing the use of pencil grips, larger spacing, or typed work if necessary. Presentation expectations should be adapted sensitively.
- **Font Expectations:** A clear and accessible font should be used, avoiding decorative or hard-to-read styles, both for children's work and for teachers' presentations.
- **Exercise Book Standards:** Teachers should ensure books are well-maintained, labelled correctly, and replaced when damaged.