

Handwriting Policy

At St Michael's we recognise handwriting as a vital skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the whole curriculum. We strive for children to be able to write with ease, speed and legibility; handwriting must become an automatic process which frees children to focus on the content of their writing. The cursive handwriting style teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically through English and handwriting lessons, and embedded across other areas of the curriculum.

Aims

To enable all our children to:

- develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line;
- find a comfortable grip when holding a writing tool;
- form letters properly, identifying where to start and finish each letter;
- form letters of regular shape and size including upper and lower case letters;
- use the correct terminology of ascenders, descenders, lead on and lead off;
- write from left to right and top to bottom of the page;
- put regular spaces between letters and words;
- achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting;
- develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually children are able to write letters with confidence and correct orientation in all writing;
- take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore develop a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

Teaching and Learning of Handwriting

As recommended by the British Dyslexia Association, we use a cursive style of writing. This is introduced once children have formed all 26 letters accurately. All teaching staff use the agreed cursive style when modelling writing both in class, on displays and when giving feedback in books. Although we have many opportunities to practice handwriting skills across the curriculum, we also teach handwriting discretely at regular intervals. The frequency and length of these sessions varies according to the age and competence of children. Linking handwriting with early phonics and spelling work are fully exploited.

At St Michael's five stages have been identified and these form the basic organisational structure of our teaching:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation
2. Beginning to join
3. Securing joins
4. Practising speed and fluency
5. Presentation skills

Our agreed non-cursive script can be seen below:



Our agreed cursive style can be seen below:



Letters are taught in groups, according to how they are formed. Handwriting families are:

1. i l t j
2. c o a d g q
3. n m h r
4. u v w y
5. b p k
6. s e f
7. z x

We use the Letter-join programme to teach handwriting. We use the non-cursive script in Early Years and introduce the cursive script in the Summer of Reception for those who are forming the 26 letters of the alphabet correctly.

Early Years

In the Early Years children engage in prewriting or writing 'readiness' activities. They will have access to a range of writing media and experiences. They need to practice with implements of different size, weight and type in order to develop the necessary skills. Activities can include: threading, construction apparatus, weaving, tracing, stencils,

colouring, painting, scissor skills. Implements used may include: pens, pencils, crayons, felt tips, chalk, interactive whiteboard, sticks, paints and water.

As children make progress with handwriting skills and are engaged in formal handwriting sessions, pencils should be the only implement used for formal writing sessions. At first, children should not be taught to join letters or to start every letter 'on the line' with a 'lead-in', because these practices cause unnecessary difficulty for beginners. Children will be taught to join the letters in digraphs and begin a cursive script in the Summer term. All letter formation will be modelled correctly by an adult and all handwriting activities will be supervised to ensure letters are formed, and eventually, joined correctly. Children will be asked to sit correctly at the table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

In Reception, handwriting will be taught discretely for two twenty-minute sessions.

Key Stage 1

In Year 1 children will continue to be taught to:

- form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters (capital letters are not joined)
- Form capital letters.
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Children will have daily twenty-minute handwriting sessions per week. In Year 2 this will decrease to three twenty-minute sessions, whilst handwriting continues to be linked to all learning across the curriculum.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of children will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately, and with the correct spacing between words, with the majority of children also joining their writing. Where required, some children will use pencil grips and other specific resources to support their handwriting development.

Key Stage 2

In Years 3 and 4 most children will be joining their handwriting. It is expected that pupils will write in a joined, cursive style throughout their independent handwriting across all areas of the curriculum. Handwriting lessons will continue to be taught directly and children will have two twenty-minute handwriting session each week. The aim of handwriting in Years 3 and 4 is to increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting and also the fluency with which children are able to write down what they want to say. This will also support the development of children's composition and spelling.

At the start of Year 4 most children will be writing in pencil, however, as children show that they can form and join letters correctly and that they can present their work neatly, children will receive their 'Pen Licence' and therefore will be expected to write in pen. Pens will be used in all subjects except maths and art, where pencils will be used. It will be expected

that by the end of year 4, if not sooner, all children will be writing in pen. At St Michael's, we use blue Berol handwriting pens only.

Criteria for awarding a pen licence:

1. Handwriting is of the correct size and on the line.
2. Letters are joined using a cursive script.
3. Correct use of spacing between words.
4. Sentences are punctuated properly with capital letters, full stops and commas.
5. Writing is set out neatly clearly showing pride in their work.

Inclusion

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, and children with special educational needs, will be given additional support. Additional resources may also be used such as a handwriting slant. Provision will be made for left-handed children including: seating arrangements to ensure adequate spacing for all and resources positioned appropriately.

Resources

- Sloping surfaces
- Seating cushion
- Pencil grips
- Wooden letter tracing
- Letter-join

Parental Involvement

This policy is shared with parents upon their child entering Nursery. Expectations of each year group is communicated with parents during 'Meet the Teacher' sessions at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers are encouraged to practice their child's handwriting with them at home and any home learning completed should be in line with this policy.

The policy is reviewed every 3 years.

This policy was adopted by the Governing body on:

Review date: 2023

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)