



Handwriting Policy

Non-statutory

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Approved by: Head Teacher Chair of Governors	Approval date: 30th June 2026	Policy lead: English lead

Let your Light shine (Matthew 5v16)

The 6 Principles of Nurture:

These principles underpin all teaching and learning at St George's, ensuring that our classrooms are safe, inclusive and supportive spaces for every child to grow and thrive.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe and secure base.
3. Nurture is central to wellbeing and learning.
4. Language and communication are vital for connection and understanding.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. Transitions are recognised and supported as significant moments in a child's life.

Rationale

At St George's, we believe that handwriting is an essential life skill and an important component of the writing process. Fluent handwriting enables pupils to communicate effectively, express their ideas confidently and focus their attention on composition rather than the mechanics of writing.

We recognise that handwriting development begins long before children form letters. The foundations for successful handwriting are established through physical development, mark making and the development of gross and fine motor skills. These skills are nurtured in our EYFS onwards and are built upon progressively throughout the school.

Handwriting is taught explicitly, systematically and progressively from Reception onwards. We aim to develop pupils who write with confidence, accuracy and fluency, and who take pride in the presentation of their work.

The school follows a progressive approach to handwriting:

- Preschool - print, mark making and pre-writing skills
- Reception - pre-cursive handwriting
- Year 1 - transition from pre-cursive to cursive
- Year 2 - fluent cursive handwriting

Our approach reflects the expectations of the EYFS Framework, the National Curriculum and the Department for Education Writing Framework.

Intent

We aim to:

- teach handwriting consistently across the school
- develop pupils who take pride in the presentation of their work
- provide opportunities for pupils to develop the gross and fine motor skills required for handwriting
- develop correct posture, pencil grip and letter formation from the earliest stages
- ensure all pupils develop a legible, fluent and efficient handwriting style
- develop automaticity and muscle memory so pupils can focus on the content of their writing
- ensure handwriting is taught progressively and builds on prior learning
- meet or exceed the expectations of the National Curriculum
- provide timely intervention and support for pupils who require additional help.

Implementation

Physical readiness for writing

We recognise that successful handwriting begins with physical development.

From Preschool onwards, pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop:

- core strength and stability
- shoulder and upper arm strength
- bilateral coordination
- crossing the midline
- hand strength and dexterity
- finger isolation and fine motor control.

Handwriting sessions may begin with gross and/or fine motor warm-ups to prepare pupils physically for writing. Activities may include:

- large arm movements
- shoulder rotations
- air writing
- ribbon patterns
- finger gym activities
- dough disco
- hand strengthening activities
- crossing the midline exercises.

Mark making and pre-writing skills

We believe mark making is the foundation of all handwriting.

In Preschool and Reception, pupils are encouraged to experiment with a wide range of mark making opportunities in both indoor and outdoor environments. Children develop control and confidence through drawing, painting, large-scale movements and exploratory mark making.

A strong emphasis is placed on learning pre-writing shapes and patterns (see Appendix A), as these underpin later letter formation. Pupils learn the directional movements and shapes that form the basis of all letters before moving onto formal handwriting.

The school uses the 'Write Dance' programme in Preschool and Reception to support:

- gross motor development
- fine motor development
- rhythm and movement
- body awareness
- mark making
- pre-writing shapes and patterns
- confidence and enjoyment in writing.

Consistency across the school

Handwriting is a whole-school priority. All adults model the agreed handwriting style consistently.

The school recognises that reading and handwriting are related but distinct skills. Printed text remains an important part of the learning environment and is used on displays, signage and many classroom resources. This ensures pupils are exposed to a range of printed fonts and styles commonly encountered in books and the wider world.

Whilst print may be used for display purposes, adults consistently model the agreed handwriting style when teaching handwriting and writing. Teachers model pre-cursive or cursive handwriting appropriate to their year group when:

- demonstrating letter formation
- modelling writing
- writing on whiteboards
- recording in pupil books
- producing handwritten examples and working walls
- providing examples of presentation and handwriting expectations.

This approach ensures pupils experience both the printed text required for reading and the fluent handwriting required for writing.

Consistent language is used when teaching letter formation and handwriting families. (see Appendix B)

Progressive teaching

Handwriting is taught discretely and progressively.

Pupils are taught:

- correct posture
- paper positioning
- pencil grip
- letter formation
- handwriting families
- size and orientation
- spacing between letters and words
- joins and cursive patterns
- fluency, stamina and speed.

Handwriting is introduced through explicit teaching and regular practice. At the beginning of each academic year, pupils take part in an intensive programme of handwriting teaching to establish expectations, reinforce correct habits and secure letter formation. This is followed by regular handwriting sessions and opportunities to apply skills across the curriculum.

Pencil grip

Correct pencil grip is taught explicitly and revisited regularly.

Pupils are taught to:

- sit comfortably and maintain good posture
- position paper appropriately
- hold the pencil using the pinch and flip technique
- maintain an effective tripod grip
- apply appropriate pencil pressure.

Staff monitor pencil grip regularly and provide additional support where required.

Progression

Preschool

- Develop gross and fine motor skills.
- Build core strength.
- Explore mark making in a range of contexts.
- Develop pre-writing shapes and patterns.
- Learn correct pencil grip and posture.
- Begin to form recognisable print letters.

Reception

- Secure pencil grip and posture.
- Continue developing pre-writing shapes and movement patterns.
- Learn letters using handwriting families.
- Form letters accurately using a pre-cursive style.
- Develop consistency of size and orientation.

Year 1

- Consolidate pre-cursive letter formation.
- Introduce joins and cursive movement patterns.
- Develop fluency and confidence.
- Increase stamina for longer pieces of writing.

Year 2

- Develop fluent cursive handwriting.
- Improve consistency of size and spacing.
- Increase writing speed and stamina.
- Present work neatly and with pride.

Intervention and Inclusion

Teachers assess handwriting regularly and identify misconceptions promptly.

Where additional support is required, staff use the school's Handwriting Chain of Progression to identify the stage at which a pupil requires additional teaching and support.

The 'Chain of Progression' (see Appendix C) recognises that handwriting develops sequentially and that pupils may need to revisit earlier stages before progressing further.

The five stages are:

1. Gross motor skills and posture
2. Fine motor skills and pencil grip
3. Pre-writing shapes
4. Fluency patterns
5. Letter formation and joining

Interventions are targeted to the stage at which the pupil requires support. This ensures that pupils develop the physical, cognitive and motor foundations necessary for fluent handwriting.

Teachers work collaboratively to:

- identify misconceptions quickly
- provide targeted interventions
- adapt teaching where appropriate
- monitor progress over time
- ensure pupils develop confidence and success as writers.

Supporting Left-Handed Pupils

The school recognises that left-handed pupils may require specific adaptations to ensure comfort, efficiency and success in handwriting.

Staff provide appropriate support by considering:

- seating arrangements to allow adequate space and freedom of movement
- chair and table position to promote good posture
- paper position and angle to support a natural writing action
- opportunities to observe modelled handwriting from an appropriate position.

When modelling in pupil books, staff may provide examples on either side of the page to ensure all pupils, including left-handed writers, can easily view and access the model.

Left-handed pupils are encouraged to develop an efficient and comfortable handwriting style and are supported to achieve the same high expectations as all pupils.

Impact

The impact of our handwriting curriculum is that:

- pupils develop secure foundations for writing
- pupils form letters accurately and consistently
- pupils develop a fluent and legible handwriting style
- pupils write with increasing speed and stamina
- pupils develop automaticity in handwriting, reducing cognitive load and enabling them to focus on the composition and communication of their ideas.
- pupils take pride in the presentation of their work
- teachers model handwriting consistently across the school
- pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Appendix A

Pre-writing skills

Shape	Shape name	Verbal cue
	Vertical line	Down
	Horizontal line	Across
	Circle	Around
	Cross	1. Down 2. Across
	Diagonal	Corner to corner
	Square	1. One stop (across) 2. Two stop (down) 3. Three stop (across) 4. Four stop (up)
	Diagonal	Corner to corner
	Diagonal cross	1. One diagonal to the corner 2. Another diagonal to the corner
	Triangle	1. Middle to corner 2. Jump 3. Middle to corner and across

Appendix B

Letter formation and handwriting families

Pattern	Letter family	Letters	Mnemonic
Downstroke / bounce	Straight letters	i	Up we go...down the body ...and off we go, dot for the head
		l	Up we go...down the long leg...and off we go
		t	Up we go...down the tower ...and off we go, across the tower
		u	Up we go...down and under, up to the top, down by the puddle...and off we go
		y	Up we go...down a horn, up a horn, curl round under his head ...and off we go
Anticlockwise curve	Two o'clock letters	c	Up we go...curl around the caterpillar ...and off we go
		a	Up we go...around the apple and down the leaf...and off we go
		d	Up we go...around his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet...and off we go
		g	Up we go...around her face, down her hair, give her a curl ...and off we go
		q	Up we go...around her head, up past her earring, down her hair ...and off we go
		s	Up we go...slither down the snake...and off we go
Upstroke then arch	Stick first	n	Up we go...down Nobby, over his net...and off we go
		m	Up we go...Maisie, mountain, mountain...and off we go
		h	Up we go...to his head, down to his hooves, over his back ...and off we go
		p	Up we go...down the plait and around the pirate's face...and off we go
		b	Up we go...down the laces to the heel, round the toe...and off we go

Pattern	Letter family	Letters	Mnemonic
Exit from the top	Top joiners	o	Up we go...all around the orange ...and off we go
		r	Up we go...to his head, down his back, then curl over his arm ...and off we go
		v	Up we go...down a wing, up a wing ...and off we go
		w	Up we go...down, up, down, up ...and off we go
Individual	Odd squad	f	Up we go...to the flower, down the stem, curl around to the leaves ...and off we go
		j	Up we go...down his body, curl around by the box, off we go and dot for his head
		k	Up we go...down the body, up his tail, around and down his leg ...and off we go
		e	Up we go...lift off the top and scoop out the egg ...and off we go
		x	Up we go...down his arm and leg, off we go and repeat for the other side
		z	Up we go...zig, zag, zig...and off we go

Appendix C – Handwriting Chain of Progression

The school recognises that handwriting is a developmental process. Each stage builds on the one before it and pupils may need to revisit earlier stages to secure later skills.

Stage	Focus	Examples
1	Gross motor skills and posture	Core strength, shoulder stability, crossing the midline, large arm movements, sitting posture
2	Fine motor skills and pencil grip	Finger strength, pincer grip, pinch and flip, hand dexterity, pencil control
3	Pre-writing shapes	Vertical and horizontal lines, circles, zig-zags, waves, crosses, loops and curves
4	Fluency patterns	Repeated movement patterns, handwriting families, anti-clockwise movements, joins and directional flows
5	Letter formation and joining	Accurate pre-cursive letters, cursive joins, spacing, consistency, speed and stamina

If a pupil experiences difficulty with handwriting, staff identify the stage at which the difficulty occurs and provide intervention at that level before moving pupils on to the next stage.

Children learn the movements and patterns that underpin later handwriting, including vertical and horizontal lines, circles, zig-zags, waves, loops and curves. These movement patterns form the basis of later letter formation and joining