



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Handwriting Policy

Our Curriculum Christian Vision

By embedding our Christian Vision We believe that through the teaching of God's word at St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School, we prepare our children for all challenges that lie before them, enabling all our school family to, 'live and live splendidly' John 10:10 'By reaching our potential together in Christ.' Through exploring creating, and thinking critically we intend to build on prior learning and enable them to link the past, the present and the future in a range of local and global contexts. This is to deepen their understanding and enhance their skills in all curriculum areas. By providing a rich soil, enabling our children to flourish socially, morally, and spiritually in a safe environment. We do this by being prayerful and accepting of God's word, following our Christian values where love is central to all we do Galatians 5:22-23 It is our vision to inspire our children by creating a love of learning throughout our unique curriculum by implementing relevant and meaningful experiences to make learning engaging and exciting.

We worship by celebrating our uniqueness in the acceptance and respect all our differences whilst remembering our faith's diversities and spirituality. John 13:34. Therefore providing teaching and learning opportunities that will be pertinent to our children in order to facilitate their social mobility and equip them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens, who contribute positively to society.

Intent

At St Mary Magdalen's CE Primary School, our intent is to ensure that all pupils develop legible, fluent and automatic handwriting, enabling them to record ideas efficiently and confidently across the curriculum.

We follow the principles of Ruth Miskin's systematic approach to handwriting, which emphasises:

- Teaching correct letter formation from the outset
- Developing secure motor patterns before introducing joins
- Using consistent formation language across all classes
- Ensuring handwriting supports spelling, writing stamina and composition

We want all pupils to:

- Write with increasing speed and fluency
- Use joined handwriting automatically by Key Stage 2
- Take pride in the presentation of their work
- Apply handwriting skills consistently across all subjects



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Our handwriting provision supports the National Curriculum (2014) and contributes to pupils' wider literacy development by reducing cognitive load and allowing pupils to focus on content rather than letter formation.

Implementation

Teaching Approach

Handwriting is taught explicitly and systematically from the Early Years through to Year 6.

- Letter formation is taught alongside phonics
- Adults model handwriting using the agreed school script
- Consistent vocabulary and formation phrases are used by all staff
- Errors are corrected promptly to prevent misconceptions becoming embedded

Where letters are taught in more than one movement (e.g. *d*), this reflects motor-skill development rather than poor practice, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

Stage 1 - begins as soon as most children can read Set 1 sounds. We continue to teach children to form letters correctly.

Stage 2 - begins in Year 1. Children learn the relative size of letters and to form letters that will flow easily into a joined style.

Stage 3 - follows straight on. Children learn how to join letters using two basic joins – the 'bridge' join, the 'hill' join and the two variations on each.

Stage 4 - helps children develop a mature and speedy style.



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Stage 1

Taught alongside phonic sounds using the same letter patter.

Speed Sound Card	Letter	Picture name	Phrase
		mountain	Maisie, mountain, mountain
		apple	Round the apple, down the leaf
		snake	Slither down the snake
		dinosaur	Round the dinosaur's bottom, up its tall neck, down to the feet
		tower	Down the tower, across the tower
		insect	Down the body, dot the head
		net	Down Nobby, over his net
		pirate	Down the plait and over the pirate's face
		girl	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl

Speed Sound Card	Letter	Picture name	Phrase
		orange	All around the orange
		caterpillar	Curl round the caterpillar
		kangaroo	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg
		umbrella	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle
		boot	Down the laces to the heel, round the toe
		flower	Down the stem and draw the leaves
		egg	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg
		leg	Down the long leg
		horse	Down the head to the hooves and over its back

Speed Sound Card	Letter	Picture name	Phrase
		robot	Down its back, then curl over its arm
		jack-in-a-box	Down its body, curl and dot
		vulture	Down a wing, up a wing
		yak	Down a horn, up a horn and under its head
		worm	Down, up, down, up
		zip	Zig-zag-zig



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Stage 2

Handwriting is now taught in letter families. Each family has a common formation. Alongside this we teach capital letters for each letter (see appendix 1).

- a d g o c q
- u y
- b p
- h n m r
- e s f i
- l t k j
- v w x z

Letter	Name	Checklist
a	Annie	✓ start at the bow on the top of her head ✓ over the top of her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ round her chin ✓ up to her ear ✓ up to her bow ✓ straight hair down ✓ add a curl (not too curvy)
d	Dina	✓ start at her bow on the top of her head ✓ over the top of her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ round her chin ✓ up to her ear ✓ up to her bow ✓ spiky hair – up to the top sponge and down ✓ add a curl (not too curvy)
Review: a d		
g	Gaia	✓ start at her bow ✓ over her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ round her chin ✓ up to her ear ✓ up to her bow ✓ down her long hair to the bottom sponge ✓ add a round curl
Review: a d g		
o	Olive	✓ start at her bow ✓ over her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ round her chin ✓ up to her ear ✓ and up to her bow
Review: d g o		
c	Cara	✓ start at her bow ✓ over her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ round her chin and stop

q	Queenie	✓ start at her crown ✓ over her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ round her chin ✓ up to her ear ✓ up to her crown ✓ down her long hair ✓ sharp flick
Review: o c q		
Letter	Name	Checklist
u	Uncle Umberto	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ down to the bottom ✓ round his chin ✓ up to his ear ✓ up to the top of his head ✓ back down ✓ add a curl on the line (not too curvy)
Review words: dug, dog, add		
y	Uncle Yan	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ down his face – to the bottom of the jam ✓ round his chin ✓ join the chin by his ear ✓ up to the top of his head ✓ down his very straight long hair – to the bottom sponge ✓ add a nice round curl
Review words: day, daddy, cod		
Letter	Name	Checklist
b	Bunnie B	✓ start at the top of the sponge ✓ down his straight ears ✓ over his head ✓ curve down his face ✓ make a round chin ✓ join his chin to his ears
Review words: bad, bug, body		
p	Puppy P	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ go down her straight long ears – to the bottom of the sponge ✓ back up again ✓ over the top of her head ✓ curve down her face ✓ make a round chin ✓ join her chin to her ears
Review words: yap, puppy, good		



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Letter	Name	Checklist
h	H hen	✓ start at the top of the sponge ✓ straight down her long feather ✓ back up to the top of her beak ✓ slope up her forehead ✓ curve round her head ✓ straight down ✓ add a curl for the tail feather
Review words: hug, hop, happy		
n	N hen	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ straight down her feather ✓ back up to the top of her beak ✓ slope up her forehead ✓ curve round her head ✓ straight down ✓ add a curl for the tail feather
Review words: and, bun, hand		
m	M hen	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ straight down their feather ✓ back up to the top of the beak ✓ slope up the forehead ✓ curve round her head ✓ straight down ✓ back up to the top of the beak ✓ slope up the forehead ✓ curve round her head ✓ straight down ✓ add a curl for the tail feather
Review words: map, mug, man		
r	R hen	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ straight down her feather ✓ back up to the top of her beak ✓ slope up her forehead ✓ curve round her head and stop
Review words: egg, queen, deep		
Letter	Name	Checklist
e	egg	✓ start in the middle of the jam ✓ scoop and loop up to the top of the egg at the top of the jam ✓ round the egg back to the middle of the jam
Review words: egg, queen, deep		

s	snake	✓ start at the snake's tongue at the top of the jam ✓ slither round the back of the egg ✓ slither round the front of the egg ✓ and round the bottom of the jam
Review words: sunny, soggy, dress		
f	flower	✓ start at the flower in the middle of the top sponge ✓ curve gently round ✓ straight down the stem to the middle of the bottom sponge ✓ curve gently over the root ✓ go the leaves left to right – across the top of the jam
Review words: fluffy, floppy, huff		
i	insect	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ straight down its body to the bottom of the jam ✓ add a curl for its tail – not too sharp, not too round ✓ dot for the eye in the middle of the top sponge
Review words: flip, spin, igloo		
Letter	Name	Checklist
l	Long-legged Layla	✓ start at the top of the sponge ✓ straight down her legs to the bottom of the jam ✓ add a curl – not too sharp, not too round
Review words: long, well, smelly		
t	Top hat Taylor	✓ start at the top of her hat in the middle of the top sponge ✓ down to the bottom of the jam ✓ add a curl – not too sharp, not too round ✓ go the rim of the hat left to right on top of the jam
Review words: trap, teeth, attic		
k	Kay the Clown	✓ start at the top of the sponge for Kay's tall hat ✓ straight down to the bottom of the jam up to the middle of the jam ✓ around the hoola hoop – keep it in the jam! ✓ make a diagonal line to the bottom of the jam ✓ add a curl – not too sharp, not too round
Review words: knock, kitten, kick		

j	Jumping Jay	✓ start at the top of the jam ✓ straight down Jay's body to the bottom of the sponge ✓ add a round curl for his legs ✓ dot for the eye in the middle of the top sponge
Review words: jump, jacket, jolly		

Letter	Name	Checklist
v	V- Acrobat	✓ start at the hand at the top of the jam ✓ diagonal line down to the feet at the bottom of the jam ✓ diagonal line up to the hands at the top of the jam the same both sides
Review words: love, have, give		
w	W- Acrobat	✓ start at the hand at the top of the jam ✓ diagonal line down to the feet at the bottom of the jam ✓ diagonal line up to the hand at the top of the jam ✓ diagonal line down to the feet again ✓ diagonal line up to the hand at the top of the jam ✓ all lines are the same length
Review words: what, when, which		
x	X- Acrobat	✓ start at the left hand at the top of the jam ✓ diagonal line down to the feet at the bottom of



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Stage 3

Pupils' return to letter village for this stage. They will learn two joins: the 'hill' join and the 'bridge' join. There are three variations of both joins:

Hill to jam letter

Hill to top sponge letter

Hill to 'sister' letter



Bridge to jam letter

Bridge to top sponge letter

Bridge to 'sister' letter



Pupils' practise each join with specific letter combinations. They then write words with the joins they have practised. We teach pupils' that all letters are joined with the 'hill' or 'bridge' join with the exception of g, j, q, y and z:

gap jump quit yak zoo

Consistency and Modelling

To ensure whole-school consistency:

- All adults model handwriting using the agreed style
- Displays reflect correct letter formation and joins
- Scripts are not mixed
- High expectations are maintained in every subject

Inclusion and Adaptive Practice



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Handwriting provision is inclusive. Pupils may access:

- Pencil grips
- Wider-lined paper
- Sloped boards
- Additional fine motor or handwriting interventions

High expectations are maintained while appropriate scaffolds are provided.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Handwriting is assessed termly as part of writing outcomes
- Teachers assess:
 - Letter formation
 - Joining accuracy
 - Consistency of size and spacing
 - Fluency and legibility
- Monitoring includes book scrutiny, moderation and pupil voice

Pen licences are awarded in KS2 when pupils consistently demonstrate:

- Accurate joins
- Neat presentation
- Sustained quality over time

At St Mary Magdalen's CE Primary School pen licences are awarded when pupils demonstrate consistent, high-quality handwriting over time, not as a one-off performance.

Pen Licence Entry Criteria

A pupil must demonstrate **all** of the following consistently:

Letter Formation

- All letters correctly formed
- Clear starting and finishing points
- Ascenders and descenders consistent

Joining

- Joins used correctly and consistently
- No incorrect or forced joins
- Capitals not joined



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Legibility

- Writing is easy to read
- Letter size consistent
- Clear spacing between words

Fluency & Control

- Writing flows smoothly
- No hesitation due to letter formation
- Maintains quality in longer pieces

Presentation

- Dates and titles neat and correctly underlined
- Work shows pride and care
- Presentation consistent across subjects

Pen Licence Expectations

Once awarded, pupils must:

- Use pen in all curriculum books (except Maths)
- Maintain the same standard consistently
- Understand that the pen licence can be reviewed if standards decline
- Year 6 use black pen from the beginning of the academic year.

Reception	Letter formation	• Correct tripod grip (where developmentally appropriate) • Form lower-case letters correctly using taught phrases • Letters mostly correctly oriented • Begin writing on the line
Year 1	Secure formation	• All lower-case letters formed correctly • Capitals introduced and not joined • Consistent size and orientation • Spaces between words emerging
Year 2	Introducing joins	• Lead-in strokes secure • Correct diagonal and horizontal joins taught explicitly • Writing mostly joined by end of Year 2 • Legibility maintained when joining



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ

Year 3	Fluency & consistency	• Joined handwriting expected in all books • Consistent letter size and spacing • Ascenders/descenders clear • Increased writing speed without loss of legibility
Year 4	Automaticity	• Joined handwriting is automatic • Fluent writing across the curriculum • Personal style emerging while remaining legible • Sustained neatness in longer pieces
Year 5	Presentation & stamina	• Writing is fluent, quick and controlled • Consistent joins and spacing • High presentation standards maintained • Writing stamina supports extended composition
Year 6	Readiness for Secondary	• Confident, fluent joined handwriting • Writing is fit for purpose and audience • Style is personal but consistently legible • Sustained quality under timed conditions

Impact

As a result of this approach:

- Pupils write legibly and fluently with increasing speed
- Handwriting becomes automatic, reducing cognitive load
- Pupils can focus on composition, vocabulary and grammar
- Presentation across the curriculum is consistently high
- Pupils show pride and confidence in their written work
- Gaps in handwriting development are identified and addressed early

By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils leave St Mary Magdalens CE Primary School with handwriting that is:

- Fluent
- Joined
- Consistent
- Fit for secondary school expectations

Impact Evidence Includes

- Book scrutiny outcomes
- Writing moderation
- Pupil voice
- Reduced need for handwriting intervention over time
- Improved writing stamina and quality



Reaching our Potential Together in Christ