

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Handwriting Policy

February 2026



Written: February 2026 (Policy based on Letter Join Policy with STM adaptations)

Ratified by Governors:

Due for review: February 2028

Handwriting Policy

We are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care with our handwriting style, subsequently, handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly across the school beginning in reception in addition to writing in phonics lessons. By using Letter-join's handwriting scheme as the basis of our handwriting policy, the Writing Framework guidance all National Curriculum requirements are covered through a structured teaching programme.

Objective

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

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

Aims

- Develop neat, legible and speedy handwriting where letters and words are automatically produced in independent writing.
- Establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- Understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different handwriting styles (joined, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.



Expectations

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

Consistency throughout the school

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the teaching and learning of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in their work. We want to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting, so they feel 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 throughout learning, as emphasised in the 2025 Writing Framework.

Pens and pencils

Pupils will first learn to write with marking making tools (such as, fingers, chunky crayons, chalk, soft pencils, paint brushes) while developing an effective grip before exploring with large scale drawing and writing to build fine motor skills, then moving to smaller, more precise writing tools. During this stage, pupils will explore and practise developing pincer grips through fine motor activities throughout the school day.

As a pupil's fine motor skill progresses, they will move to handwriting pencils and in Key Stage Two move to using a pen

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine and gross motor development, appropriate additional support will be put in place for example, additional opportunities to develop core stability, shoulder strength, hand and finger strength and a choice of writing implements, including alternative methods of recording.



Handwriting at home

Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home using the Letter-join Pupil login.

Teachers may set Home Learning Tasks, but children can also explore Letter-join's handwriting resources, including watching and practising letter and word animations (with parents) and playing online interactive games. Letter-join's online games and activities include:



Early Years and Key Stage 1:

- **Magic Patterns** - supports the development of fine motor skills through tracing patterns, shapes and mazes.
- **Magic Words** - gives children the freedom to practise handwriting by tracing their own choice of letters and words.
- **Write it Right!** - awards stars for practising and improving letter shapes and joins.
- **When I Grow Up** - lets learners select fun characters while learning to write their names.
- **LetterMatch** - helps children learn the sounds and names of letters.
- **LetterLotto** - rewards pupils when they correctly recognise and trace letters.
- **Letter Families** - is a fun activity for learning which letter family each letter of the alphabet belongs to.

Key Stage 2:

- **Write in Time!** - is a fun, timed activity to support the development of fast and fluent handwriting.
- **Remember Write** - helps boost spelling and writing while testing pupils' memory skills.

All Key Stages:

- **Word Bank** - a set of words created by a teacher to support the learning of vocabulary and spelling which pupils practise by tracing.
- **Word Search** - pupils have fun finding words while learning tricky spellings.
- **Spelling lists** - pupils practise high frequency, common exception and statutory words.



Script types/ forms

Stage 1 (typically EYFS and Year 1) Printed letters

Letter-join Print Plus

A printed font with simple exit strokes in keeping with the DfE's phonics guidance.

bright sun

Stage 2 (typically Year 2) Introduction to the cursive script (Letter Join air plus - lead in and lead out lines)

Letter-join Air Plus

A pre-cursive font with lead-in and lead-out lines to teach cursive letter shapes.

bright sun

Stage 3 (typically Key Stage 2) fully cursive script (Letter Join Plus - Lead in and lead out)

Letter-join Plus

A continuous cursive font with lead-in and lead-out lines, the most widely used Letter-join font.

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Key Stage Teaching

Early Years

We teach short, daily handwriting lessons, which may include:

- warm-up activities to get ready for handwriting
- air writing, pattern making and physical activities to develop gross motor skills
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for writing
- mark making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays and tablets, etc. to develop and refine fine motor skills
- the introduction of letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary.

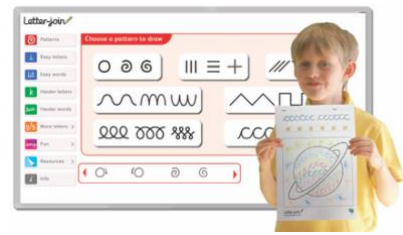


Module 1 Lesson Planner

Module 1 Print teaches handwriting using a printed font style.

This module 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 lowercase letters of the alphabet in a printed style.

Letter-join Print Plus

A printed font with simple exit strokes in keeping with the DfE's phonics guidance.

bright sun

Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2

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

- continuing with gross and fine motor skills activities
- practise to strengthening handwriting learning
- learning where and when to use capitals and printed letters, reinforced by practice
- practising handwriting with spelling, punctuation and grammar (GPS).



Module 2 Lesson Planner: Year 1

Module 2 Print to Cursive teaches how to correctly use and write capital letters, printed letters, numbers, punctuation, maths symbols and other symbols. Children are then introduced to pre-writing patterns and cursive letters in preparation for Module 3 when they are required to start joining their handwriting.

This module is divided into three sections covering:

- warm-up activities, letter families and capital letters
- the uses of printed letters
- numbers and symbols

- the introduction of pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters.

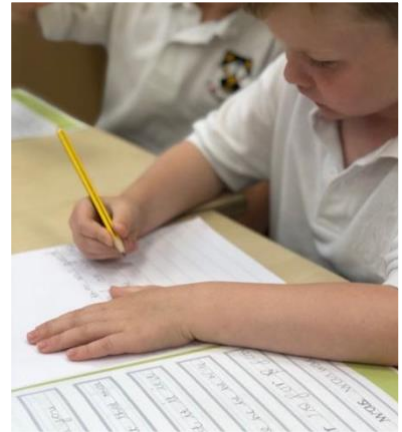
On completion of this module, children should be confident in writing all capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and have some familiarity with the orientation of cursive letters.

Module 3 Lesson Planner: Year 2

Module 3 Starting Cursive introduces children to cursive letters and how to join them which is reinforced with regular practice in letter formation and joining.

The sections in this module cover:

- cursive letters and words
- revisiting letter families
- high frequency words
- joining techniques
- sequencing sentences
- dictation exercises
- times table facts
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar (GPS) practice.



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

Letter-join Air Plus

A pre-cursive font with lead-in and lead-out lines to teach cursive letter shapes.

bright sun

Lower Key Stage 2: Years 3 and 4

Handwriting lessons are daily in Lower Key Stage 2.

Module 4 Lesson Planner: Year 3

Module 4 teaches pupils to use a joined style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping them to refine their handwriting based on the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, modern foreign languages (Spanish), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.

Through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum, on completion of this module, the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting should be improving.



Module 5 Lesson Planner: Year 4

Module 5 focuses on handwriting practice which supports 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, 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.



Letter-join Plus

A continuous cursive font with lead-in and lead-out lines, the most widely used Letter-join font.

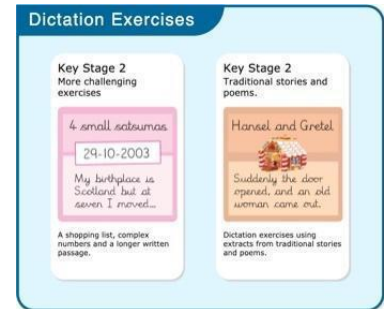
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Upper Key Stage 2: Years 5 and 6

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught daily.

Lessons:

- reinforcing joined handwriting across the curriculum
- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- SATs spelling, punctuation and grammar (GPS) practice.



Module 6 Lesson Planner: Year 5

Module 6 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 skills and stamina needed to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. 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 joined writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.



Module 7 Lesson Planner: Year 6

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

Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to support SATs GPS revision. They are designed to support pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of GPS 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 and styles. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, capital letters or an unjoined style.



Correct posture, pencil grip and paper position for handwriting

Pupils are taught to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.

At the start of every lesson, teachers will model correct posture at their demonstration area and remind pupils of the required posture needed to write comfortably and successfully.

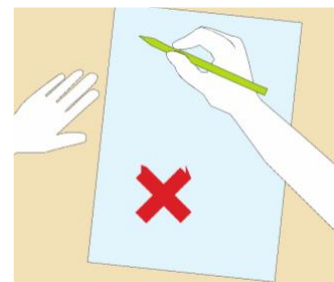
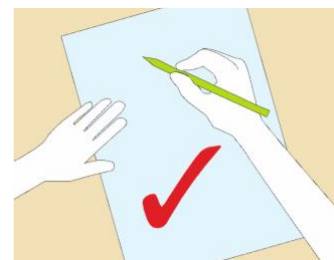
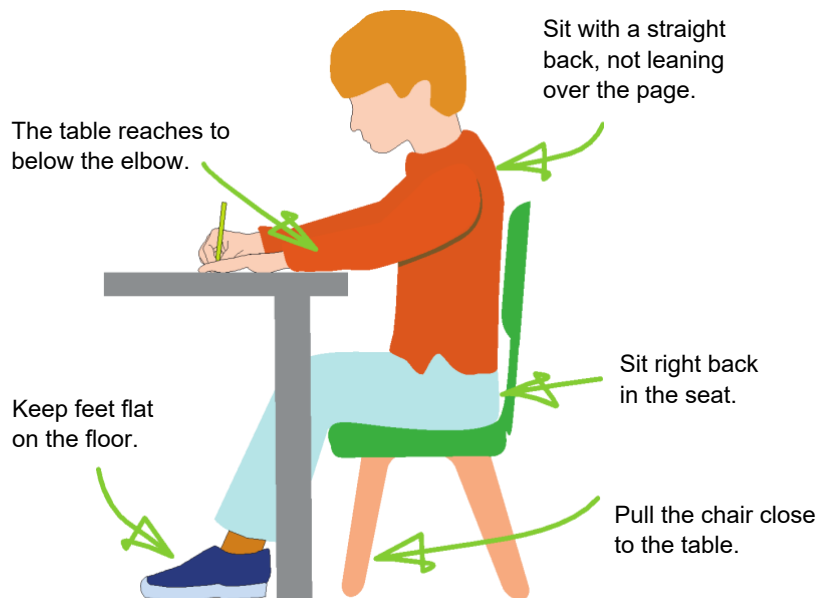
Every classroom has a 'Posture Poster' on display.

Pupil desks will only have the required resources for that lesson on them. Desks will be as clutter free as possible to provide pupils with appropriate space to write.

Supporting adults will consider their positioning to ensure maximum table space is left for children.

Teachers and teaching assistants will know which children are right and left handed and will carefully consider their seating plans accordingly.

Sitting position

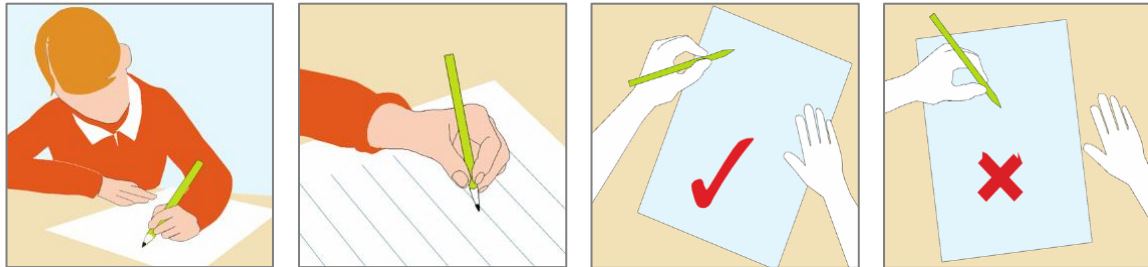


Right-handed paper position.

Left-handed writers

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers will 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.



Left-handed paper position.

The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left-handed children should use the tripod grip which enables the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

We use the Tripod Grip rhyme:

“Nip, Flip and Grip”

Right-handed pencil grip



Nip



Flip



Grip

Left-handed pencil grip



Nip



Flip



Grip

Identification of need

Where children are identified as having challenges during the handwriting process, teachers will offer interventions and strategies to support in the first instance. Further investigation could involve our in-house Occupational Therapist (OT) who will seek further support if needed.