John 13:34 **'Love one another, as I have loved you'**

St Stephen's
CE Primary School

Handwriting at St. Stephen's

Developing Strong Foundations

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At our school, we recognise that handwriting is a critical component of successful writing and underpins pupils' ability to communicate ideas effectively across the curriculum.

Our intent is to ensure that all pupils:

- develop **fluent, legible and efficient handwriting**
- achieve **automaticity in letter formation and transcription**, freeing cognitive capacity for composition
- follow a **consistent, whole-school approach** to handwriting from EYFS to Year 6
- are supported through a **developmentally appropriate progression** from mark-making to fully joined cursive writing

We prioritise:

- secure **letter formation before joining**
- consistent modelling by all adults
- early establishment of correct habits to prevent later barriers to writing fluency

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils will write **confidently, quickly and with a consistent, personal style**.

2. Implementation

Structured progression

Phase	Approach	Font
EYFS	Early mark-making → correct letter formation (Little Wandle)	National Primary
Year 1	Secure print letter formation (Little Wandle)	National Primary
Year 2	Introduction of pre-cursive (lead in + lead out)	Letter-join Pre-cursive
Year 3–6	Fully joined cursive handwriting	Letter-join Cursive

Teaching programmes and expectations

- In **EYFS and Year 1**, handwriting is taught using the **Little Wandle scheme**, and lessons must follow the programme as set out.
- From **Year 2 onwards**, handwriting is taught using **Letter-join**, and lessons must follow the structured planning.

Suggested teaching frequency (as a guide):

- **Year 1**: three lessons per week (15 minutes)
- **Year 2**: three lessons per week (15 minutes)

- **Years 3 and 4**: three lessons per week (15 minutes)
- **Years 5 and 6**: two lessons per week focusing on more advanced handwriting techniques (20 minutes)

Handwriting presentation and line guidance

- In **EYFS**, pupils are **not required to write formally on lines**. However, where lines are provided in books or resources, these will be **12mm** to support correct formation and spatial awareness.
- In **Year 1**, pupils will continue to use **12mm lines** to support accurate letter formation and consistency.
- From **Year 2 onwards**, pupils will use **8mm lined paper** in books and across all areas of learning to support the development of smaller, more controlled and consistent handwriting.

Teaching approach

Handwriting is taught:

- **explicitly and regularly** in short, focused sessions
- through **modelling, guided practice and repetition**

Staff:

- use consistent **language and patter**
- model the **agreed school handwriting style**
- ensure pupils practise both in discrete sessions and **across the curriculum**

Progression by phase

EYFS

- Focus on:
  - gross and fine motor control
  - pencil grip and posture
  - correct letter formation through Little Wandle
- No expectation to join letters

Year 1

- Continued use of **Little Wandle handwriting scheme**
- Emphasis on:
  - accurate letter formation
  - correct starting and finishing points
- Letters remain **unjoined**

Year 2

- Introduction of **pre-cursive handwriting**:
  - lead-in strokes
  - lead-out strokes
- Font: **Letter-join Pre-cursive**

⚠ **Key requirement:**

Children must be able to form all letters correctly before beginning pre-cursive.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

- Development of **fully joined handwriting** using **Letter-join Cursive**
- Focus on:
  - fluency
  - consistency
  - speed and automaticity
- Handwriting is applied across all subjects

Ready to Write: Seating, Posture and Positioning

Tummy to table: Children should sit close enough to the table for their tummy to be near the edge. This reduces the need to lean forward and supports a stable writing position.
Feet supported: Feet should be supported on the floor where possible, providing a stable base for writing.
Relaxed posture: Children should sit upright with shoulders relaxed rather than leaning heavily over the page.
Book slightly angled: The book should be positioned at a comfortable slight angle rather than square to the child. This supports natural movement of the forearm and wrist.
Helping hand: The non-writing hand should steady the book and move the page as the child progresses across the line.
Pencil grip: Children should use a comfortable, controlled grip. A tripod grip is encouraged where appropriate, but individual differences are recognised.
Left- and right-handed writers: Positioning should be adapted to the child. Right-handed writers may angle the book slightly to the left; left-handed writers may angle it slightly to the right. Left-handed pupils should be supported to keep the wrist as relaxed and straight as possible.
These expectations should be reinforced routinely before and during handwriting and extended writing.

3. Non-Negotiables

- All pupils' handwriting is **assessed for correct letter formation**
- **Correct letter formation must be secure before joining begins**
- Once joining is taught and secure, **all writing should be joined across the curriculum**
- Any **overwriting (practice over existing letters)**:
  - must be **supported by an adult**
  - must only be used when the child already demonstrates **secure and accurate letter formation**
- All EYFS and KS1 staff use the agreed **patter for letter formation**

- All staff model the **school handwriting style**
- All new staff are made aware of expectations and non-negotiables
- There is a consistent approach for **new-to-school pupils** with different handwriting styles

4. Inclusion and Adaptation

- **Adaptations will be provided for pupils where needed**, ensuring all pupils can access and succeed in handwriting learning.
- Pupils who require additional support:
    - revisit earlier stages of the handwriting progression
    - receive targeted adult support
- Adaptations may include:
    - scaffolded resources
    - increased modelling and guided practice
    - adapted writing tools or formats
    - alternative methods of recording where appropriate

Application and Fluency
Discrete handwriting sessions provide explicit teaching and deliberate practice. Handwriting is also reinforced within English lessons and across the curriculum so that pupils apply their skills in meaningful writing. The aim is for handwriting to become increasingly automatic, allowing pupils to focus their attention on composition.
Where additional support is required, intervention should be short, focused and matched to the specific barrier identified. This may include posture, book positioning, pencil grip, letter formation, joins, spacing, sizing, writing on the line, fluency, stamina or speed. Pupils may revisit an earlier stage of the progression where appropriate.

5. Impact

Pupil outcomes

- Pupils write with:
    - **accuracy, consistency and legibility**
    - increasing **fluency and speed**
- Handwriting becomes **automatic**, enabling pupils to focus on composition

Quality of work

- Books show:
    - **consistent presentation**
    - handwriting applied across all subjects
- Pupils demonstrate pride in their work

Consistency across school

- A shared approach ensures:
    - clear progression from EYFS to Year 6
    - consistency in teaching and modelling

Wider impact

- Pupils develop:
    - **confidence in writing**
    - the ability to **record ideas efficiently and independently**

Key Principle

Secure letter formation is the foundation of handwriting.
Joining is introduced only when pupils are ready, ensuring long-term success and fluency.