



# Handwriting at St Anne Line Catholic Infant School

## What should our children learn and achieve?

The National Curriculum highlights the significance of handwriting, stating that by the end of Key Stage 1, children should have developed a comfortable and consistent handwriting style. This includes correctly formed letters of appropriate size and an introduction to the horizontal and diagonal strokes needed for joining letters. Handwriting is not only a physical skill but also a key component in developing writing fluency. When children can form letters automatically and efficiently, they are able to focus more on the content of their writing — such as vocabulary, sentence structure, and creativity — rather than on the mechanics of letter formation. As a result, fluent handwriting supports greater confidence, stamina, and overall quality in children's written work.

At St. Anne Line Catholic Infant School, this is why we prioritise handwriting instruction through a structured approach that closely aligns with the Read Write Inc. phonics scheme. Our handwriting program is progressive, ensuring that it meets the National Curriculum requirements while fostering each child's development. By integrating handwriting with phonics, we help students build a strong foundation in literacy that supports their overall communication skills. It is necessary for the children to see that there is a need to carry over their handwriting skills to other areas of the curriculum. To reinforce this need, a positive approach is adopted to presentation and display of handwriting within the school.

## Aims

We aim for our children to:

- Understand the importance of neat presentation in order to communicate their ideas clearly.
- Take pride in the presentation of their work and gain a sense of achievement.
- Use the correct letter formation.



- Develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that they work towards being able to write in a neat cursive style when they leave KS1.

## How do we teach handwriting?

At St Anne Line Catholic Infant School, we make the physical process of writing – handwriting – enjoyable from the start, so children see themselves as ‘writers’. Children practise handwriting in dedicated phonics lessons and at other specific times in direct, discrete teaching sessions as directed by the teacher. We use the Read write Inc programme, we use mnemonics – memory pictures – to help children visualise the letter or join before they write it down. Children need to practise handwriting under the guidance of a teacher so they do not develop habits that will be difficult to undo later. Teachers use a variety of strategies for the teaching of handwriting including:

- Direction
- Demonstration
- Modelling
- Scaffolding
- Explanation

The mnemonics children are introduced to are as follows:

m Maisie, mountain, mountain  
a round the apple, down the leaf  
s slither down the snake  
d round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet  
t down the tower, across the tower  
i down the body, dot for the head  
n down Nobby, over his net  
p down the plait and over the pirate’s face  
g round her face, down her hair and give her a curl  
o all around the orange  
c curl around the caterpillar  
k down the kangaroo’s body, tail and leg  
u down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle



b down the laces to the heel, round the toe  
f down the stem and draw the leaves  
e lift off the top and scoop out the egg  
l down the long leg  
h down the head to the hooves and over his back  
r down his back and then curl over his arm  
j down his body, curl and dot  
v down a wing, up a wing  
y down a horn, up a horn and under his head  
w down, up, down, up  
z zig-zag-zig  
q round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair  
x down the arm and leg and repeat the other side

In the early stages (Stages 1 and 2, in Reception and Year 1) children are taught:

- How to hold a pen/pencil correctly and form letters and numbers of regular size and shape.
- Write from left to write and top to bottom of a page.
- Start and finish upper and lower case letters correctly.
- Put regular spaces between letters and words
- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.

In the later stages children are taught to:

- Write legibly and begin to write in a joined style with increased fluency and speed.



### Stage 1a:

Children practise correct letter formation. Children learn correct letter formation using the same picture mnemonics they have already learnt in the Speed Sounds Set 1 Lessons.

These letters are now taught in handwriting groups:

- 'Around' letters: c a o d g q
- 'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y
- 'Curly' letters: e f s
- 'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x.

### Stage 1b:

Children learn where to place the letters on the writing line. Once children can form the letters correctly, they learn how to place the letters on the line. Picture mnemonics help children to visualise the size and placement.

- Some small letters are called 'boat letters': a c e i m n o r s u v w x z.
- Letters that are written below the line are called 'water letters': g j p q y.
- Tall letters are called 'sun letters': b d h k l t f.

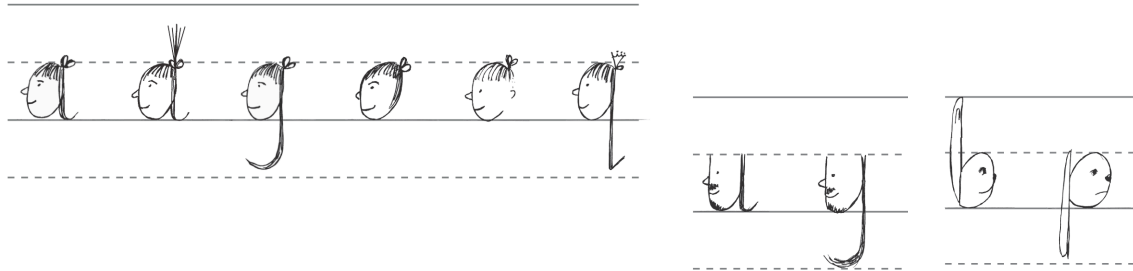
Children should write on wide-lined paper.

### Stage 2:



Children learn a mature style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing.

Children are Introduced to the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets. The six sisters – Annie, Dina, Gabi, Olivia, Carina and Queenie – all look the same. Their mother tells them that they must all have a different haircut so people can tell them apart! The uncles – Uncle Umberto and Uncle Yaseen – look just like the sisters, except they are bald on the top of their heads. The family have a dog and a bunny whose faces are very similar too, but they have long ears.



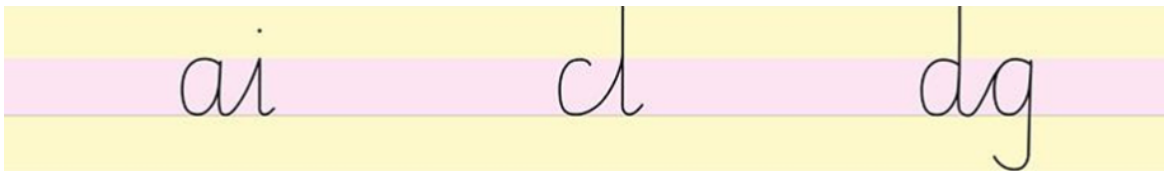
Stage 3:

Children 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



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



We modify some letters to allow them to join. For example, r, e and s.





## The Perfect Handwriting Position:

Teachers teach children that when you use the handwriting signal they automatically go into the 'perfect handwriting position':

- feet flat on the floor
- bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist from the table
- shoulders down and relaxed
- back leaning forward slightly
- left/right hand holding the page

## Handwriting Milestones:

### Nursery

We aim for the children to:

Use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip

Use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks.

Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.

Beginning to show a preference for a dominant hand.

Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; write 'm' for mummy.

Write some letters accurately.



Through specifically planned activities and experiences including dough disco and activities to develop gross and fine motor skills, children in our nursery develop the skills to enable them to become fluent in handwriting as they progress through the school.

## Reception

We aim for the children to:

- use a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- write their first name correctly, beginning with a capital letter
- form lower case letters using the correct sequence of movements, aided by the Read Write Inc. formation speak
- form capital letters in the correct direction
- form digits 0-9

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage the children will be provided with a range of activities to develop their fine and gross motor skills needed for handwriting.

Children in Reception will be taught explicitly correct letter formation. They are taught how to form letters in line with the phonics programme. They are not taught to join at this stage. When teaching children digraphs, emphasis should not be placed on joining letters. Suggested tools and activities for fine motor development: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons, sky writing, finger painting, sand writing, moulding with clay, dough disco, squiggle while you wiggle. We aim for the children to use their core muscle strength, developed through gross motor activities, to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.

## Year 1



We aim for the children to:

sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly (perfect pencil grip)  
begin to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place  
form capital letters correctly  
form digits 0 to 9 correctly  
understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Handwriting requires frequent and direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

## Year 2

We aim for the children to:

sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly using the perfect pencil grip  
form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another  
start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined  
write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters  
use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Pupils revise and practise correct letter formation through direct teaching. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

## Impact



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The impact of handwriting instruction at St. Anne Line Catholic Infant School is evident through various assessment methods and observations. Teachers regularly observe children as they form letters, noting their progress in letter formation and consistency. The presentation of children's work reflects this growth, showcasing increased neatness and care in their writing. Additionally, half-termly assessment allows us to evaluate individual handwriting skills in alignment with the National Curriculum expectations for Key Stage 1. As a result, we can identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes, ensuring that each child develops strong handwriting skills that contribute to their overall literacy development.



## Handwriting Progression

All objectives derived from the National Curriculum or the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are typed in **black**. Additional objectives are typed in **purple**. Objectives which directly contribute towards the Early Learning Goals are in **green** or the statements in the Teacher Assessment Frameworks appear in **bold**. Be aware that the Teacher Assessment Frameworks refer to key stages not Y2 and Y6. Therefore these objectives will be found scattered across year groups. Key Objectives are underlined. These are the most important objectives in each year group. They must be mastered in the year group in which they appear.

<p>Handwriting and presentation</p>	<p>Develop strong gross and fine motor control</p> <p><u>Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip</u></p> <p><u>in almost all cases (ELG)</u></p> <p><u>Use a pencil with control</u></p> <p><u>Write recognisable letters</u> (lower and upper case), <u>most of which are correctly formed (ELG)</u></p> <p>'Around' letters: c a o d g q          'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y          'Curly' letters: e f s          'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x.</p> <p><b>Begin to form numbers correctly (contributes to EXS KS1)</b></p>	<p>Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.</p> <p>Form correctly:</p> <p>'Around' letters: c a o d g q          'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y          'Curly' letters: e f s          'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x.</p> <p>Form the equivalent upper case letters correctly.          Form the digits 1-9 correctly.</p> <p><b><u>Form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (WTS KS1)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another (WTS KS1)</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Write upper case letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to other letters and digits (EXS KS1)</u></b></p> <p><b>Write legibly (WTS KS2)</b></p> <p><b>Use diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters together (GD KS1)</b></p> <p>Know which letters not to join</p> <p><b><u>Ensure spacing between words is appropriately sized (EXS KS1)</u></b></p> <p>Type simple sentences accurately</p> <p>Use two joins (hill and bridge)</p>
<p>RWI Handwriting Stages and structure of the lesson.</p>	<p>Stage 1</p> <p>We start teaching separate handwriting lessons as soon as children can read Set 1 sounds. We now teach letters in handwriting families. Each family has a common formation. a d g o c q</p> <p>u y          b p          h n m r          e s f i          l t k j          v w x z</p> <p>In Reception we connect the letters they read with the shape they write: Children read a: a-a-a-apple; they write a: round the apple down the leaf.</p>	<p>Stage 2/3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing a letter with a story and rap.</li> <li>Show children how to write the letter.</li> <li>Children practise writing the letter.</li> <li>Children check their letters with a partner and repeat steps 2-4.</li> <li>Review new and previous letters by practising writing words.</li> </ol>	<p>Stage 2/3/4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing a letter with a story and rap.</li> <li>Show children how to write the letter.</li> <li>Children practise writing the letter.</li> <li>Children check their letters with a partner and repeat steps 2-4.</li> <li>Review new and previous letters by practising writing words.</li> </ol>



Read Write Inc. Speed Sounds Lesson plans give clear guidance how to teach children to write the letters and Set 1 films also help to teach handwriting.

Once children can read the sounds, we continue to teach children correct letter formation in a separate 10-minute lesson every day. See: Online RWI Reception Handwriting Handbook on Phonics Online on Oxford Owl

Use the following routine for every lesson:

1. Use MTYT to say the handwriting phrase: Round the apple, down the leaf.
2. TOL as you use the checklist below to write the letter on the board. For example: ✓ start at the stalk ✓ go round the apple ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom. Ask the children say the checklist with you as you write the letter a few times.

Children practise writing the letter

1. Check that the children are still sitting in the perfect handwriting position – above.
2. Rub out the picture and any letters from the board – the children must visualise the letter, not copy.
3. Ask the children to write one letter, slowly and carefully. (Do not ask them to draw the handwriting picture.)
4. Model again how you repeat writing the letter, getting a bit quicker each time.
5. Go round the room supporting children who need help. Don't sit with one child.

Review the letter

1. Write the letter on the board and make one error, choosing a common error children have made.
2. Ask the children to TTYP to find your 'two best bits', for example, you remembered to start at the stalk, and you went back up to the stalk.
3. Then ask children to TTYP to find 'one to fix', for example, you made the leaf too curly.
4. Rewrite the letter perfectly.
5. Ask children to practise again.

On the next day, choose a new focus letter or review one or two previously taught letters. Note: Help children learn to visualise the



	<p>letter as a picture and not the written checklist. Do not write the checklist on the board, though you may need a sticky note to help you remember to start with.</p>		
<p>Daily Practice</p>	<p>During RWI lessons.</p> <p>Separate handwriting lesson: As soon as children can read Set 1 sounds, handwriting is taught daily for 10–15 minutes.</p> <p>Focus on one or two new letters each day following the RWI letter order.</p> <p>Use the 'Model, Practise, Apply and Review' model:</p> <p>Model using RWI handwriting phrases and the letter checklist.</p> <p>Practise with children saying the phrases aloud as they write, then apply the taught formation.</p> <p>Review together, identifying "two best bits and one to fix".</p>	<p>Continue daily handwriting sessions using RWI for 10–15 minutes..</p> <p>Consolidate correct letter formation using RWI Mental Checklists.</p> <p>Begin to focus on:</p> <p>Size and relative positioning of letters on wide lines</p> <p>Spacing between words</p>	<p>Maintain daily or near-daily practice for 10–15 minutes, focusing on: Neatness</p> <p>Consistency of size and alignment</p> <p>Fluency in longer writing tasks Ensure all letters are formed correctly, consistently, and fluently. Use handwriting to support writing across the curriculum. Instead, consolidate clear, consistent letter formation and appropriate word spacing.</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>For Stage 1, children write in an unlined exercise book. This is so they can focus on correct letter formation.</p> <p>Introduce wide-lined books once children understand size and position.</p> <p>Provide sharp pencils, using triangular pencils or grips to support the tripod grip.</p> <p>Use Speed Sounds lesson plans.</p> <p>Use RWI handwriting sheets, once children are ready.</p> <p>Set 1 mnemonics.</p>	<p>Use RWI handwriting sheets.</p> <p>Use lined handwriting books, once children are ready.</p> <p>Use the 'sponge cake' method and film</p> <p>Ensure all children use sharp pencils and maintain tripod grip.</p> <p>Use the Handwriting videos on the RWI portal (Letter Village Lessons) using the new mnemonics ('visualise to memorise')</p>	<p>Use lined handwriting books consistently, once children are ready.</p> <p>Ensure all children use sharp pencils and maintain tripod grip.</p> <p>Use the 'sponge cake' method and film.</p> <p>Use the Handwriting videos on the RWI portal (Letter Village Lessons) using the new mnemonics ('visualise to memorise')</p>




<p>Posture and Grip</p>	<p>Teach correct handwriting posture from Day 1, including: Tripod grip</p> <p>Feet flat, bottom back, body a fist from the table</p> <p>Shoulders relaxed, page held steady with non-writing hand</p> <p>Use a consistent verbal cue like “Ready to write” to trigger the position and the non verbal RWI cue.</p>	<p>Reinforce correct posture and grip through regular checks.</p> <p>(See Reception guidance)</p> <p>Use a consistent verbal cue like “Ready to write” and “show me your perfect pencil grip and perfect handwriting position” to trigger the position and the non verbal RWI cue.</p>	<p>Children should now be secure in the tripod grip and posture.</p> <p>Use a consistent verbal cue like “Ready to write” and “show me your perfect pencil grip and perfect handwriting position” to trigger the position and the non verbal RWI cue.</p>
<p>Mental Checklists</p>	<p>Use RWI handwriting phrases to develop clear mental images of letter formation (e.g. “Start at her hair bobble, go round her face...” for ‘g’).</p> <p>Begin to introduce Mental Checklists once letter shapes are familiar.</p>	<p>Encourage automatic recall of RWI handwriting phrases and checklists.</p> <p>Start to build stamina with longer words and simple sentences.</p>	<p>Encourage automatic recall of RWI handwriting phrases and checklists.</p> <p>Encourage children to assess their own and peers’ writing: “Two best bits and one to fix”</p> <p>Support the development of independent editing and improvement</p>
<p>Avoid</p>	<p>Writing on the floor</p> <p>Whiteboards or chunky pens</p> <p>Entry strokes</p> <p>Joins</p> <p>Copying from the board or handwriting books</p>	<p>Premature introduction of joined handwriting</p> <p>Inconsistent or unstructured letter formation</p> <p>Copying letters</p> <p>Entry strokes</p>	<p>Entry strokes</p> <p>Copying – build mental images first, then write from memory.</p>

Handwriting Overview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWzKxOJXrhg>

Training video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyzYN4ZlW5k>



Handwriting Handbook -  837431\_RWI\_HandwritingHandbook.pdf