



St Michael's First School "Through God we Love, Laugh and Learn".



St Michael's First School

Handwriting Policy

2026



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Intent

At St Michael's First School, we recognise that handwriting is an essential skill that supports children's confidence, fluency and independence as writers. We aim to develop a consistent handwriting style through a clear progression of skills from early mark-making and fine motor development in Nursery, through to fluent, joined handwriting by Key Stage 2.

Children are taught to develop:

- Correct pencil grip and posture
- Good letter formation
- Consistent letter size and spacing
- Fluency and speed
- A personal, neat and legible handwriting style

All staff model the agreed handwriting style consistently across the school.

Implementation

Nursery: Pre-Writing Development

Aim

To develop the fine motor control, coordination and early writing behaviours needed for handwriting.

Children will develop:

- Gross motor strength through physical activities
- Fine motor skills through manipulating objects
- Pencil control and mark-making confidence
- Awareness of patterns, shapes and directionality

Activities include:

- Dough disco and finger strengthening activities
- Threading, tweezers and peg activities
- Painting and large-scale mark making
- Drawing patterns and shapes
- Tracing movements in sand, foam and other sensory materials
- Developing a comfortable and effective pencil grip

Children are encouraged to:

- Make marks with meaning
- Draw shapes and patterns



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- Develop left-to-right movement
- Recognise that marks and symbols communicate meaning

Reception: Print Handwriting

See Little Wandle Guide to Teaching Handwriting in Reception

Autumn and Spring Terms

Children are introduced to:

- Correct sitting position
- Correct pencil grip
- Letter formation using the agreed school script
- Writing letters using clear print formation

Focus areas:

- Starting letters in the correct place
- Correct direction of movement
- Accurate formation of capital letters and lowercase letters
- Consistent sizing

Children practise:

- Letter patterns
- CVC words
- Their name
- Simple sentences

Summer Term: Transition Towards Pre-Cursive

Children begin to prepare for joined handwriting by developing pre-cursive movements.

They are introduced to:

- Lead-ins and lead-outs
- Continuous movements
- Preparing letters for joining

Children practise:

- Adding a small entry stroke before letters
- Developing smoother writing movements
- Maintaining correct letter formation

The focus remains on accuracy and fluency rather than speed.



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Year 1: Developing Pre-Cursive Handwriting

Aim

To develop consistency and confidence with pre-cursive handwriting in preparation for joining.

Children will:

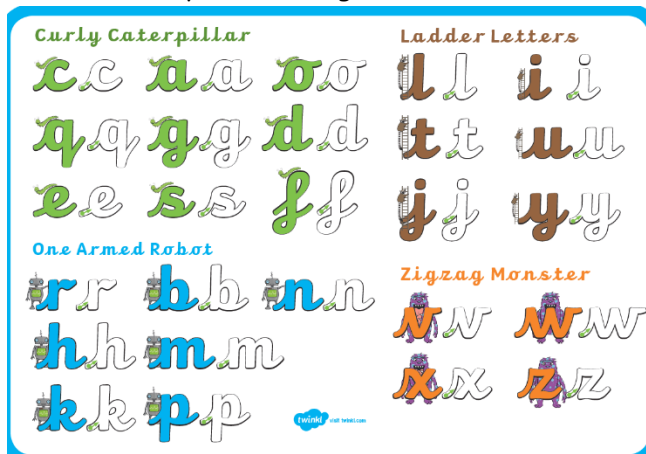
- Continue to use lead-ins and lead-outs
- Develop fluent letter formation
- Practise writing at an appropriate size
- Improve spacing between letters and words

Teaching focuses on:

- Correct formation of all lowercase letters
- Capital letters
- Numbers
- Common joins where appropriate

Children begin to:

- Recognise which letters naturally join
- Write words using a continuous movement
- Develop handwriting stamina



Precursive Letter Groups.

Year 2: Beginning Joined Handwriting

Aim

To develop fluent, joined handwriting.

Children are taught:



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- Horizontal joins (e.g. joining letters with exit strokes)
- Diagonal joins
- Consistent spacing
- Increased writing speed and fluency

Children practise:

- Joining common letter patterns
- Applying joins in independent writing
- Maintaining neat presentation across all subjects

By the end of Year 2, children should be developing a fluent, joined handwriting style.

Year 3: Fluency and Refinement

Aim

To develop a confident, efficient handwriting style.

Children will:

- Write with increased speed and accuracy
- Maintain consistent letter size and spacing
- Apply joined handwriting independently

Teaching focuses on:

- Improving presentation
- Developing personal consistency
- Using handwriting effectively in longer pieces of writing

Children are encouraged to:

- Take pride in presentation
- Adapt handwriting size when needed
- Write fluently without unnecessary pauses

Year 4: Independent and Personal Handwriting Style

Aim

To ensure children use fluent, legible handwriting confidently across the curriculum.

Children will:

- Use joined handwriting consistently
- Develop speed and endurance
- Produce high-quality written work independently



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Focus areas:

- Presentation
- Fluency
- Accuracy
- Appropriate style for different purposes

Children may begin to develop a personal style while maintaining the school's handwriting expectations.

Teaching Expectations Across School

Teachers will refer to *Little Wandle 'Ready to Write.'* checklist across the school to ensure that the highest expectation for writing is set across the school.

Teachers will:

- Model handwriting consistently
- Use the agreed handwriting script
- Provide regular handwriting practice
- Correct letter formation misconceptions
- Celebrate progress and improvement

Handwriting should be practised regularly through:

- Dedicated handwriting sessions - x1 per week.
- Phonics and spelling activities - Daily
- Independent writing opportunities
- Presentation expectations across subjects - refer to *Presentation Policy 2026*

Progression Overview

Year Group	Focus
Nursery	Pre-writing skills, mark making, fine motor development
Reception	Print handwriting and correct letter formation Transition to pre-cursive with lead-ins/lead-outs
Year 1	Developing pre-cursive handwriting
Year 2	Beginning joined handwriting



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Year 3	Fluent joined handwriting
Year 4	Consistent, independent handwriting style

Impact:

All children will develop a comfortable, effective pencil grip and a legible style of handwriting which will increase their writing stamina and ability to write at greater length for a wide audience. Most children will develop a joined handwriting style by the time they reach Key Stage 2. Monitoring of teaching will take place through lesson observations and learning walks, discussions with staff and pupils and scrutiny of children's books. Fine motor, name writing and match fit assessments will be completed, particularly in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Handwriting will be assessed in Key Stage 2 using the Writing Assessment grids for Independent Writing.