ST. JOHN'S
ANGELL TOWN
C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

"Learning to make the world a better place through faith, hope and love!"

Reviewed	***Summer 2025***
Next Review	***Summer 2027***

Purpose and Aims

Purpose: *When communicating ideas in writing, it is important that children use a handwriting style which is neat and legible. The importance of handwriting should not be under-estimated. It is vital that children can write quickly, comfortably and legibly as it is a skill needed in many curriculum areas. Children's self-esteem is also heightened when they are able to take pride in their handwriting.*

Aims:

- *To develop a joined, confident handwriting style that is clear, legible, fluent and consistent throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.*
- *To instil a positive attitude towards handwriting.*
- *To present work in a neat and orderly fashion appropriate to the task.*

Provision

Children, from Year 1 through to Year 6, use the 'Nelson' handwriting scheme. Pupils are expected to be taught distinct handwriting lessons 3 times per week, with the lessons lasting 15 minutes. Reception pupils are taught handwriting through phonics from the outset. Children who display specific difficulties with handwriting will have these addressed through such interventions as slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips, using alternative writing media etc. Further details of the joins can be found in the attached, more detailed, handwriting and presentation policy. Children who show particularly pleasing progress with their joined handwriting are rewarded with 'Pen Licences' from the end of Year 3.

Progression and Assessment

Progression: *Letter joins become more complex, and as children progress through the school, they are encouraged to take creative risks with their own handwriting style, including elements of calligraphy, sign writing, note-taking etc.*

Assessment: *Children's handwriting is formatively assessed regularly. A joined hand is essential for children to be judged as 'at expected' from Year 3 upwards.*

Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement

Children's handwriting is monitored on a daily basis by the class teacher, who is expected to provide intervention groups for children who need it. These children may be struggling with letter formation, joins or legibility. The teacher will make provision for the skills learned in these intervention groups to be applied and developed in day-to-day classwork. Regular taught handwriting lessons will also have a positive impact on children's letter formation, joins and writing speed.

Handwriting and Presentation Policy Summer 2025

Handwriting

When communicating ideas in writing, it is important that children use a handwriting style which is neat and legible. The importance of handwriting should not be under-estimated. It is vital that children can write quickly, comfortably and legibly as it is a skill needed in many curriculum areas. Children's self-esteem is also heightened when they are able to take pride in their handwriting.

Aims

- *To develop a joined, confident handwriting style that is clear, legible, fluent and consistent throughout Year 2 and Key Stage 2.*
- *To instil a positive attitude towards handwriting.*
- *To present work in a neat and orderly fashion appropriate to the task.*

Provision

Handwriting and expected standards of presentation should be taught as a whole class activity. Some additional lessons at the beginning of a term may be necessary. Intensive teaching is recommended at the start of each school year to clarify expectations, with further reinforcement in weekly lessons.

Teaching Time

There should be a ***minimum*** *of 3 x 15 minutes handwriting lesson each week as well as time to practise. The lesson structure should be:*

- *3 minutes: Brief warm-up exercises led by teacher. Children to check the three 'P's (paper, pen grip, posture). See Appendix 1 for warm-up ideas.*
- *4 minutes: Teacher models letter formation of letters in isolation, joins or words.*
- *8 minutes: Silent, independent work. Teacher circulates and intervenes to secure understanding and progress.*

The teacher should act as a model when writing on the board or marking work, using a fluent joined style where appropriate.

The Nelson Handwriting Scheme

At St John's Angell Town Primary School, we use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to help children develop their handwriting. Children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units before learning to join. Letter formation as per the scheme is as follows.

Lower case letters

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

Capital letters

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Letter sets

The Nelson Handwriting Scheme groups letters into five overlapping 'sets', as follows.

Set 1	a c d e h i k l m n s t u	*Twelve letters with exit flicks, plus 's'.*
Set 2	a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y	*Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height.*
Set 3	b f h k l t	*Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.*
Set 4	f o r v w	*Five letters which finish at the top of the xheight.*
Set 5	b g j p q x y z	*Eight letters after which no join is ever made. Joins are not made to or from the letter 'z'. Note that f, g, j and y do NOT have loops.*

Letter joins

Basic join	*Set 1 ❼ Set 2*	*to letters without ascenders*	in ma ki
Second join	*Set 1 ❼ Set 3*	*to letters with ascenders*	ab if
Third join	*Set 4 ❼ Set 2*	*horizontal joins*	oa fo we
Fourth join	*Set 4 ❼ Set 3*	*horizontal joins to letters with ascenders*	ob fl wh

Physical Environment

The Three 'P's: -

paper

- *pen grip*
- *posture*

Attention to posture and seating arrangements is important. To this end, all teachers need to ensure the following are in place:

- *Paper or books should be slanted at 11 o'clock for right-handed children or 1 o'clock for left-handed children.*
- *Chair and table should be at a comfortable height (height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor).*
- *Table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.*
- *Children should be encouraged to sit up straight and not slouch.*
- *Tables should be free of clutter.*
- *Rooms should be well lit.*
- *Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.*

Children who display specific difficulties with handwriting will have these addressed through such interventions as slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips, using alternative writing media etc.

<u>Pen Grip</u>

A comfortable pencil grip is taught in Reception and consistently applied throughout the school. This generally consists of thumb and forefinger gripping the pencil with the middle finger supporting it. Other writing grips may be applied for children who may struggle with this grip. Writing grip triangles may be attached to the pencil if children find this comfortable and an aid to their natural pencil grip. The focus is for a comfortable recognised grip which maintains legible handwriting. Left-handed children are encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5 centimetres from the end of the writing implement to avoid smudging their work.

Presentation

It is very important to ensure consistency towards presentation of work across the school. Staff should focus on the following guidelines to ensure this consistency, taking into account age and ability of children where necessary.

<u>Aims</u>

- *to ensure a consistent high standard of presentation across the school in exercise books, in order to raise children's self-esteem and pride in their work.*

<u>Writing equipment</u>

Children will write in pencil until they demonstrate sufficient ability to write fluently and legibly, at which point they may use a handwriting pen as supplied by the school. It is expected that all children will be using a handwriting pen by the end of Year 3.

Layout of work

Where children are starting work on a new page of their exercise book or on lined paper, they should write the date on the top line (not the gap at the extreme top of the page), miss a line, followed by the learning objective or WALT, and then miss another line before starting their work. These should be underlined and aligned on the left side of the page, against the margin.

- *The date should be written in long form in all subjects apart from mathematics e.g. Monday 1st September 2025, Friday 17th April 2026.*
- *The short form date should be written as 1.9.2025, 17.4.2026*
- *In Key Stage 2, 'L.O.' or 'WALT' should be written and underlined along with the full learning objective if not printed on a label.*
- *Errors should be neatly crossed out with a single line, e.g. ~~recieve~~ receive*

Books

Children should be expected to keep their books well presented. They should not 'doodle' on the front cover, or indeed on pages inside. Children may be asked to re-write work on paper to be stuck over messy work in books which are not kept well-presented

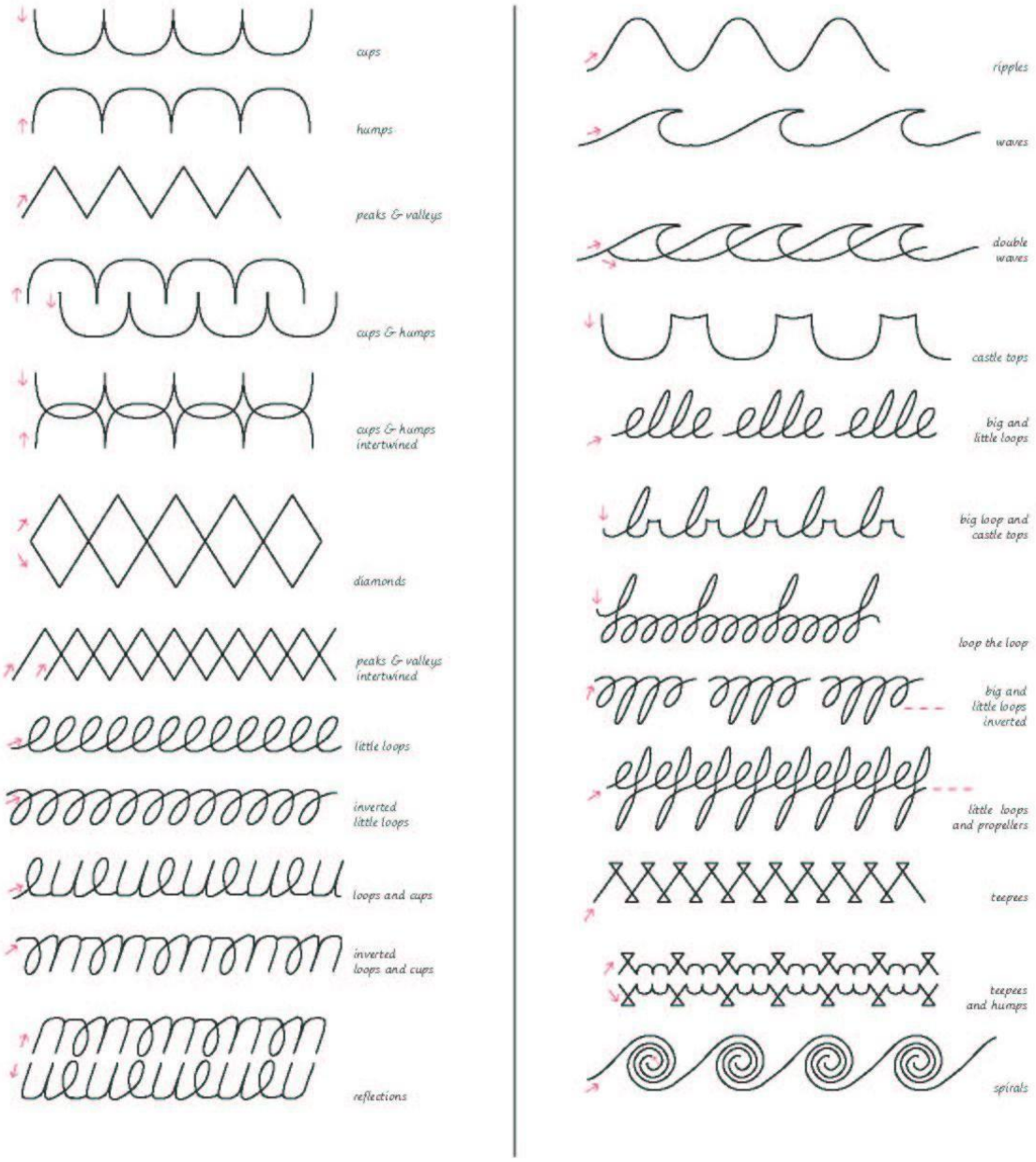
Diagrams and pictures

Pencils should be used in all subjects to draw pictures and diagrams, along with rulers if necessary. Gel pens, fineliners and felt tips are not permitted in exercise books, as these can smudge or bleed through paper. Crayons and coloured pencils should be used instead.

Appendix 1 Handwriting warm-up ideas

I Don't Know! *Shrug shoulders up, down, forwards and backwards, as if you were saying 'I don't know!'*	***Crocodile Jaws*** *Raise your arms in the air with one above the other. Then snap your hands together like a crocodile snapping its jaw. Take turns having the left and right arm above each other for this activity.*	***Air Traffic Controller*** *Start with your elbows bent and your hands in a fist in front of each shoulder. Then straighten your elbows, moving one arm out from the body and the other arm to the side of your body. Alternate arms back and forth.*
Butterfly *Begin with your arms straightened in front of your body. Link your thumbs together to make an "X" and turn your hands facing out. Using the shoulders to move, make small circles with the hands, moving from left to right (remember to do this movement from the shoulders, not the fingers or hand).*	***SHOULDER, HAND AND FINGER WARMUPS FOR HANDWRITING*** 	***Finger Push-Ups*** *Place the tips of your fingers together and straighten the fingers while pushing the finger tips against each other.*
Piano *Drum your fingers on the table or desk as if playing the piano. Make sure each finger touches the desk. You can also work on fast vs. slow movements with this. "How slowly can you play the piano?" "How fast can you play the piano?" "Can you use both hands together to play the piano?" (works on bilateral coordination skills).*	***Baton Twirling*** *Get your pencils out and start to twirl them in the air like a baton, spinning them both horizontally and vertically in the air. This combines some shoulder and finger exercises together.*	***Imaginary Gloves*** *Pull on your "gloves" by applying firm pressure to the fingers and back of each hand. This provides proprioceptive and tactile feedback and prepares the muscles for movement.*

Handwriting exercises



Push palms

Pull hands

Hug yourself tightly

Reach high with one hand, then the other. Make circles in the air.

Pull up on chair.

Stack your blocks

Strike a pose!

Stack your blocks again.

BLOCKS
heads
shoulders
hips
knees
feet

Appendix 2
Glossary of handwriting terms baseline: *the*

line on which most letters rest.

x-height: *also called the midpoint, it is the height of all letters that are not* ***ascenders*** *or* ***descenders****. Letters that do not go above the x-height are: a c e m n o r s u v w x z*

ascender: *a letter that goes above the* ***x-height****. Letters that go above the x-height are: b d f h k l t and all CAPITAL LETTERS.*

ascender line: *the line that ascenders go up to. If there were a line across the top of b d f h k l, that would be the ascender line.*

descender: *a letter that goes below the* ***baseline****. Letters that go below the baseline are: f g j p q y. The part that goes below the baseline is called the* ***tail****.*

descender line: *the line that descenders go down to. If there were a line across the bottom of f g j p q y, that would be the descender line.* ***upstroke:*** *any movement upward with the writing instrument.* ***downstroke:*** *any movement downward with the writing instrument.*

stem: *the vertical line in a letter: B b D d F f g H h I i J j K k L l M m N n P p R r T t u Y* ***crossbar:*** *the horizontal line through these letters: A E F f G H T t* ***counter:*** *the white space inside a closed letter like these: A a B b D d e g O o P p Q q* ***flourish:*** *an ornamental stroke, also called a swash.*

hook*: a tiny flourish, usually on the end of a letter.* ***slant****: to left or right in comparison to vertical angle, also called* ***gradient.***

weight*: the thickness of the lines*

Check your 3 Ps!

Pen grip

- *Are you gripping your pen correctly?*

Paper position

- *Is your paper at 11 o'clock or 1 o'clock?*

Posture

- *Straight back, feet on floor and use your other hand to keep your paper straight.*

Handwriting 'JUMPS' checklists for exercise books

JUMPS!

Is your writing **joined**?

Have you **underlined** your date and LO?

Does your writing start at the **margin** and finish at the end of the line?

Are you using the correct **pen**?

Is the **size** and **spacing** of your letters consistent?

JUMPS!

Is your writing **joined**?

Have you **underlined** your date and LO?

Does your writing start at the **margin** and finish at the end of the line?

Are you using the correct **pen**?

Is the **size** and **spacing** of your letters consistent?