



**St. Joseph's Catholic
Infant & Junior Schools
Birtley**

Handwriting
Strategy

December 2022

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Statement of intent

St Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior School believes that handwriting, similar to reading and spelling, can affect pupils' progress and achievement across the entire curriculum. When taught effectively, handwriting is mastered by the majority of pupils during the primary phase, allowing them to develop a more effective style of handwriting by the time they begin secondary school.

One of the most successful methods for ensuring consistent teaching and learning across the school is by having a clear policy in place. This policy has been developed in consultation with all the teaching staff and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), in order to ensure clear and consistent methods for teaching handwriting across the school.

St Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley use Cambridge University Press: PenPals Handwriting Scheme to teach handwriting from EYFS to Year 6.



I. National curriculum standards

- 1.1. In September 2014, the DfE published the 'English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2' document which included a set of handwriting standards that pupils are expected to reach by the end of each year group.
- 1.2. All members of school staff have regard to the national curriculum standards for handwriting when delivering lessons.
- 1.3. During Reception, pupils are taught to:
 - Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
 - Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
 - Form capital letters.
 - Form digits 0-9.
 - Understand which letters belong to which handwriting families, (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practice these.
- 1.4. During Year 1, pupils are taught to:
 - 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 un-joined.
 - 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.
- 1.5. During Year 2, pupils are taught to:
 - Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
 - Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).
- 1.6. During Years 3 to 6 pupils are taught to:
 - Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
 - Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.
 - Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

2. Practising handwriting

2.1. Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting skills on a daily basis, with separate time allocated in the timetable to allow pupils to practise and develop their movement memory.

- In EYFS, children should have at least 2 discrete handwriting lessons per week. The sessions will take place in 2 adult led groups and children will record their handwriting in the PenPals workbooks.
- In KSI, children should have 2 discrete handwriting lessons a week. For one session per week, the children should record their handwriting in their PenPals workbooks. During the second weekly handwriting session the children should use the PenPals textbook and record this session in their handwriting exercise books.
- In LKS2, children should have 2 discrete handwriting lessons a week. For one session per week, the children should record their handwriting in their PenPals workbooks. During the second weekly handwriting session the children should use the PenPals textbook and record this session in their handwriting exercise books.
- In UKS2, children should have 1 discrete handwriting session per week. For the weekly discrete handwriting session, the teacher should alternate between using PenPals workbooks and the PenPals textbook, where the children will record the session in their handwriting exercise books.

All discrete handwriting sessions follow the PenPals Handwriting Scheme.

2.2. It is vital that pupils develop the correct handwriting techniques. With this in mind, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that any errors are immediately corrected, and pupils can practise their corrections.

2.3. Available on the school website is a PenPals Handwriting guide for parents and carers, which explains the school's methods for teaching handwriting. This document also explains how parents/carers can encourage pupils to practise at home.

3. Teaching and learning

3.1. Teaching staff have weekly staff meetings to ensure that there is continuity in teaching methods across year groups and key stages.

3.2. Pupils are taught to recognise and appreciate patterns and lines.

3.3. Pupils are supported in finding a comfortable and effective grip for holding their writing implement.

3.4. Pupils are encouraged to hold their writing implements correctly, away from the point to ensure the line of vision is not interrupted.

3.5. The importance of neat and clear presentation is clearly communicated to pupils, successful teaching leads to pupils taking pride in the appearance of their work.

- 3.6. Pupils are encouraged to have the correct seating position when learning; the bottom of the back needs to be in contact with the back of their chair.
- 3.7. Pupils in key stage 2 are encouraged to write quickly, whilst maintaining clear and accurate presentation.
- 3.8. Pupils are taught to write on a range of textures such as whiteboards, blackboards, and different types of paper.
- 3.9. Teachers display examples of correct handwriting in the classroom, along with examples of the highest standard of work by pupils.
- 3.10. New members of staff who will be involved in teaching handwriting will receive a copy of this policy.

4. Pupils who are left-handed

- 4.1. Paper is always positioned to the far right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit their individual needs.
- 4.2. Left-handed pupils are always seated to the left of a right-handed pupil in order to avoid competition for space.
- 4.3. Left-handed pupils are given additional supervision and practise time to ensure they are making the same progress as other pupils.

5. Assessment

- 5.1. Teachers regularly consider the progress of pupils. In terms of progress in handwriting, teachers consider the following questions:
 - Is the writing legible?
 - Are the letters in the correct shape?
 - Are the letters correctly proportioned?
 - Is the space between words, lines and letters appropriate?
 - Is the size of the writing correct?
 - Is the writing correctly aligned?
 - How many pupils are achieving the standards set out in the national curriculum?
- 5.2. Teachers regularly monitor the progress of pupils during lessons. When observing pupils, teachers consider the following questions:
 - Is the pupil's posture correct?
 - Is the pupil holding the pencil properly?
 - Is the pupil using the correct movement when forming and joining letters?
 - Are the letters reversed or inverted?
 - Does the pupil have a fluent writing style?
 - Is the writing legible?
 - Is the pupil making the expected progress set out in the national curriculum?

6. Policy review

- 6.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the English Lead.
- 6.2. The scheduled review date for this policy is December 2024.