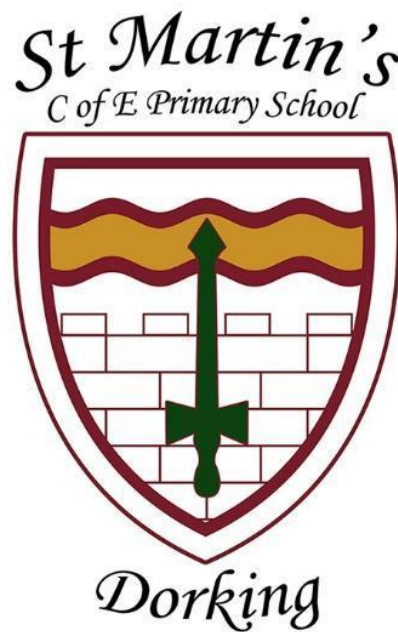


# St Martin's C of E Primary School



## Handwriting Policy

**Agreed – Autumn 2025**  
**To be reviewed – Autumn 2027**

# Handwriting Policy

## Rationale

**“Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. It needs to be systematically taught.”**

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through school the requirement to write legibly and fluently, at speed, increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases.

At secondary school, children are obliged to write almost constantly, taking notes to dictation, writing essays, and copying down the homework required for the next day. For the child who has learned to form letters without apparent deliberation or effort, such tasks are straightforward. In contrast, for the child who is still struggling with the basic elements of the skill, then even copying down homework may present a problem.

The difficulty with writing stems from the complexity of the task which involves a combination of different skills, including the physical co-ordination required for handwriting. There is a need for automaticity, and how the component skills, such as joining up letters and spelling, need to be in place by 11 years. Creativity will suffer if the child has to focus on the mechanics of writing. As a group, reluctant writers lacking practice will trail behind their more able classmates whose skills improve rapidly just because they write more.

## Whole School Approach

**Please note the following important points:**

1. Changing handwriting takes a lot of time and effort and needs to be monitored
  2. Encouragement is essential.
  3. Short, regular, frequent periods of practice are much more effective than long sessions.
  4. Make sure that any teaching at home does not set up conflicts for the child between home and school.
- (National Handwriting Association)

## Objectives

1. To develop within all pupils a legible style of handwriting.
2. The size and shape of letters is consistent.
3. Flow and movement are fluent and smooth.
4. A consistent personal style can be established by Year 6.
5. To raise children's self-motivation and esteem through the establishment of best handwriting practice.
6. To establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills by displaying and rewarding work that meets end of year group expectations.

## Guidelines for Handwriting Policy

### Style

To achieve these objectives, we have decided to adopt a cursive script, towards the end of Year 1. Cursive script enables a child to progress naturally and quickly from learning to form a single letter correctly to using the mastered letters in a cursive script.

Early Years children take part in Write Dance sessions, such as; forming large letters in sand, shaving foam and on paper to practice anticlockwise rotations and straight lines.

These activities will help to develop their fine and gross motor-skills and recognition of patterns, for example, to form letters using their index finger in sand or using paint. Children should begin to learn how to correctly hold a pencil. Then children will progress in how to use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed. They should be given the opportunities to develop their handwriting, using the pre-cursive style, to their full potential at that age.

See the diagram below.



EYFS and KS1 will continue to learn the pre-cursive style that is in link with Read Write Inc (RWI) where the children will be taught saying to help them remember, E.g. *a – 'around the apple down the leaf'*. See Appendix 2 for the RWI letter formation sayings.

In Key Stage One children will have the correct handwriting modelled to them initially within their RWI/phonic sessions and then reinforced within dedicated handwriting sessions. During the Summer term of Year 1, children will begin to learn lead ins, the precursor to the cursive script. In Year 2, the children will be encouraged to write the whole word before dotting the 'i' and crossing the 't'. They will practise joins using either high frequency words, words, which do not conform to the usual phonetic rules, or key vocabulary being used across the theme.

In Key Stage Two children will have the correct handwriting modelled to them through their own spellings. In some cases, the teacher may write the spellings in the handwriting book for them as well. Children will write out a line of each word every day in order to practise specific movements.

The rules of the Cursive Style help:

- to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke;
- with the flow of Cursive Writing as letters naturally flow into each other - it is impossible to write separate letters without joining;
- form spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness;
- develop a child's visual memory;
- develop all children's writing skills regardless of academic ability;
- to develop skills of punctuation and grammar.

## **Tools**

### **Pencil and Pens**

Children should always use a good quality HB handwriting pencil which is always sharp and not too short. Children write in pencil until the class teacher assesses that their writing has met the agreed Pen criteria (see Appendix 5). Once the writing in pen is gained, children will be expected to complete the majority of their work in pen, except for Mathematics and for creating diagrams and drawing. Classroom adults will monitor

## **Grip**

The tripod grip of the writing tool is recommended. Gripping the pencil too tight and therefore pressing too hard can lead to strain injuries of the ligaments of the hand and wrist which may lead to conditions such as 'carpal tunnel syndrome' and 'tennis elbow'.

## **Paper**

The majority of children will be able to use 'ordinary' ruled lines by Year 3, but would have a handwriting practise book for morning sessions. In some cases, teachers may ask children to complete their everyday writing using handwriting paper to encourage more uniform handwriting.

## **Modelling**

- The teacher should use modelling of both right- and left-handed movements and vocalise the size, shape and movement of the pencil.
- The Smartboard gallery contains tramlines for the modelling of correct letter formation and cursive script.
- Children should be encouraged in self and peer assessment.
- Particular children's work can be scanned and examined as a model.
- The teacher should tour the classroom during exercises to 'see' and comment on everyone's work assisting individuals as needed.
- All staff in EYFS and KS1 to use the same terminology from RWI within Phonic lessons and handwriting sessions. E.g. 'a: around the apple, down the leaf, b: down the laces to the hell, round the toe'.

## **Recommendations**

- Handwriting must be regarded as valuable and time must be found to teach it effectively and successfully.
- All teachers and support staff should become familiar with the expected handwriting style.
- All teachers must use the expected handwriting style when marking children's work and modelling any kind of writing to the class.
- Any writing on display boards must use the expected handwriting style if handwritten.
- Display copies of high-quality handwriting on walls, and interactive whiteboards to act as reward, motivation and as a statement of the quality expected.
- Move children from pencil to pen only when they are ready.

## **Handwriting tips for teachers**

- Insist on a correct, balanced seating position;
- Two hands to be used at all times;
- The feet of the chair and the children's feet should be on the floor;
- When children are writing with pencil, make sure it is always sharp;
- Ensure that paper or book is correctly positioned;
- While children are writing, constantly re-enforce teaching points and good practice;
- Letters must touch both lines on the narrow band, but not go above the top line or below the bottom line;
- Teach children that tall letters go half way up the broad band on the line guide and tag letters go half way down the broad band.

## **Assessment**

It is an essential part of this policy to assess handwriting at several points:

1. Whole school assessment
2. Class assessment
3. Individual assessment
4. Self-assessment
5. Peer assessment

## **Whole school assessment and class assessment**

1. Is the writing generally legible and pleasant?
2. Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
3. Are the joins made correctly?
4. Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
5. Is the writing properly aligned?
6. Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils' in line with end of year expectations?

## **Criteria for individual assessment – for use with those who have particular problems**

Does the child...

1. adopt the correct posture?
2. hold the pen/pencil correctly?
3. use the correct movement when forming and joining letters?
4. reverse or invert any letters?
5. write fluently and rhythmically?

Is the writing...

1. easily legible?
2. appropriate?
3. in line with the Year group expectations?

## Appendix 2 Linked to RWI

- a Round the apple down the leaf (apple)
- b Down the laces to the heel, round the toe (Boot)
- c Curl around the caterpillar (caterpillar)
- d Round his bottom up his tall neck and down to his feet (dinosaur)
- e Lift off the top and scoop out the egg (egg)
- f Down the stem, and draw the leaves (flower)
- g Round her face down her hair and give her a curl (girl)
- h Down the head to the hooves and over his back (horse)
- I Down his body, and dot for his head (insect)
- J Down his body curl and dot (jack-in-the box)
- k Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg (kangaroo)
- I Down the long leg (leg)
- m Down Maisie, over the mountain over the mountain (Maisie and mountains)
- n Down Nobby, over his net (football net)
- o All around the orange (orange)
- p Down his plait and around his head (pirate)
- q Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair (queen)
- r Down his back, then curl over his arm (robot)
- s Slither down the snake (snake)
- t Down the tower across the tower (castle tower)
- u Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle (umbrella)
- v Down a wing, up a wing (vulture)
- w Down up down up (worm)
- x Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side (Exercise)
- y Down a horn up a horn and under his head (yak)
- z Zig-zag-zig (zip)

## Appendix 3

Lower case Letters

k

Children in Y1 and Y2 are introduced to the loopy k in handwriting sessions in KS1.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The quick brown fox jumps  
over the lazy dog.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Appendix 4  
TUVWXYZ

We teach 4 basic joins:

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, on, at
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. at
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on, ru
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ob, wh
- Not all letters join.
- The following 17 letters have joins made both to and from a c d e f h i k l m n o r t u v w Joins are made to but not from the following 8 letters: b g j p q s x y Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The quick brown fox jumps  
over the lazy dog. Baa baa  
black sheep, have you any  
wool? Yes sir, yes sir, three  
bags full.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
XYZ

0123456789

## Appendix 5

|                                                                       | I think... | My teacher thinks... |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| My descenders are neat.<br>(Check tails on y, g, j, p and q)          |            |                      |
| My ascenders are neat.<br>(Check the uprights on b, d, h, k, l and t) |            |                      |
| My letters sit on the line.                                           |            |                      |
| My letters are consistent in size.                                    |            |                      |
| Spaces between words are consistent.                                  |            |                      |
| I am beginning to join my handwriting.                                |            |                      |
| My writing starts at the margin.                                      |            |                      |
| All work has a date and LI, underlines with a ruler                   |            |                      |
| I use one neat line to cross out mistakes.                            |            |                      |