



## St. John Vianney R.C. Primary School

### Handwriting Policy

This handwriting policy is for staff, parents, carers, students and visitors. It is intended to provide a clear framework for a shared understanding of teaching handwriting and ensuring continuity across the school. Handwriting is the skill of fluid movement where memory holds the shapes because it has made them so often. This is why children need to be taught through demonstration, explanation and practise. The correct formation of letters needs to be automatic before the children can move to learn a fluent, joined handwriting style.

### Aims of the Penpals handwriting scheme

Formal handwriting skills will be taught regularly and systematically through the use of the Penpals for Handwriting scheme (Cambridge University Press). Five stages are identified and these form the basic organisation of the scheme:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (Foundation Stage – Nursery and Reception)
2. Beginning to join (Year 1 and 2)
3. Securing joins (Year 2 and 3)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Year 3 and 4)
5. Presentation skills (Year 5 and 6)

Opportunities for linking handwriting and early phonics and spelling work are fully exploited through the Penpals scheme.

### Posture

Children are taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.

### Pencil grip

Children should use a tripod grip. Children are taught how to place their pencil on the table in front of them with it pointing towards their bodies and to then pick it up and allow the pencil to fall back into the tripod grip.

### Handwriting teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Foundation Stage children need to develop skills which will later enable them to acquire a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style.

In Nursery and Reception, children will develop:

- Gross motor skills to develop their core, shoulder and wrist strength. This is necessary for children to hold and maintain an effective posture for writing.
- Fine motor activities which will develop dexterity, speed and controlled movement of the wrists, hands and fingers. This will aid the development of a comfortable tripod pencil grip (between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger) that allows for efficient control of the pencil.
- Recognition of pattern and language to talk about shapes and movement e.g. forming shapes and letters in sand/shaving foam.

In Nursery, children use the Squiggle Early Learning Programme, which uses a developmental approach of neurological and physiological movements to music to create marks.

In Reception during Autumn term, children are introduced to Phase 2 graphemes and their correct formation. This takes place within daily *Unlocking Letters and Sounds* Phonics sessions. In addition to this, correct letter formation is taught in letter formation families using the Penpals Scheme each week.

### **Teaching Handwriting in Key Stage 1 and 2**

The highest priority is given to teaching the correct letter formation before any attempt is made at joining. All pupils have at least one 40 minute handwriting lessons per week with further 'short burst' opportunities to revisit and practise skills.

#### **Key Stage 1**

Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities. Teachers and support staff will continue to guide children on correct letter formation using a comfortable tripod pencil grip that allows for efficient control. Through the Penpals scheme children who are ready will begin to learn how to join letters in Year 1 and continue to practice the skill in Year 2.

#### **Key Stage 2**

Children will continue to have regular practice of handwriting, securing the joins and developing speed and fluency. By the end of Year 6 pupils should have a clear, fluid handwriting style. Children will have the opportunity to earn a 'pen licence' from Year 3 onwards and may use a handwriting pen rather than pencil at the discretion of the teacher.

#### **Handwriting Feedback**

Marking should be timely and relevant. Teaching staff should give immediate feedback during handwriting lessons, modelling correct formation and joins in pupil's books before giving opportunity for the pupil to practise.

### Assessment and Progress over time

On-going assessment in handwriting gives the chance to spot errors or inconsistencies that are likely to impede a fast, fluent handwriting style. For pupils in KS1 there is a baseline assessment (in Penpals teacher handbook) which assesses the previous year's work and informs next steps for learning. Teachers in KS1 will use these assessments at the start of the academic year.

From Year 3 onwards formative assessment will inform the teacher and pupil of progress and next steps for developing handwriting technique further. Teachers will make an assessment by considering the following:

- Are all letters formed correctly?
- Are letters consistently sized?
- Are the known joins used?

### Handwriting Intervention

Children who have been identified as requiring additional support in handwriting will receive the intervention programme **Write from the start**, delivered by a trained teaching assistant. Additional sessions of **dough disco** is used in the Early Years to improve fine motor control and gross motor skills and support hand-eye coordination. This activity also strengthens the muscles in the hands and arms, crucial to support early writing development.

This policy will be reviewed in July 2024.

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