

Hanley St Luke's Church of England Academy

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Handwriting Policy	
Date reviewed	January 2025
Next review date	January 2026
Subject lead	Mrs Rebecca Forrester and Mrs Hayley Furey
Headteacher	Mrs Zoe Cooper
Governor/Committee (where applicable)	Mrs Julie Salisbury and Mrs Catherine Miah

Our School Vision

Jesus said *"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."* (John 10:10)

At Hanley St Luke's, we believe that every child is created in the image of God and is precious in His sight. Inspired by Jesus' promise of fullness of life, we seek to enable all to flourish in body, mind, and spirit.

Our School Mission

At Hanley St Luke's we are rooted in God's love and guided by Christian faith, we nurture each child so that they can live life to the fullest. Through the values of **honesty, courtesy, kindness, perseverance, and respect**, we create an inclusive, compassionate, and hope-filled community where all can grow academically, spiritually, morally, and emotionally. We walk together with Christ, helping one another to discover our gifts, develop wisdom, and make a positive difference in God's world.

Handwriting at Hanley St Luke's

At Hanley St Luke's, we place an emphasis on pupils' presentation of work. We have high expectations of our pupils and take particular care in our handwriting style. We believe that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from letter formation through to letter joins while practising speed and fluency. Being taught letter formation in the correct families during the early foundation years of a child's education will ensure a lasting and fluent handwriting habit. It is of utmost priority that the correct letter

formation, letter direction and spacing are all embedded and used with skill before introducing joined up handwriting.

Handwriting should become an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of their writing. In order for this to occur, it is important that all adults model the correct formation at all times, when marking, teaching and for display. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

Aims

- To teach correct letter formation which is to a high standard of presentation
- To ensure children develop neat, legible cursive script
- To adopt a consistent approach to teaching handwriting skills.
- To encourage children to write with speed, fluency and comfort
- To provide pupils with clear guidance on presentation and encourage them to take pride in presentation of their workbooks
- To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals

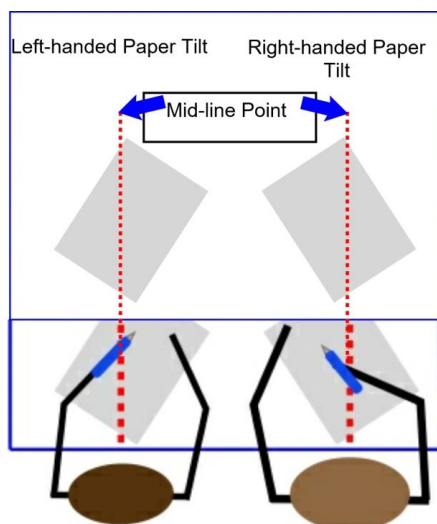
Expectations

Posture

Children should be taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor. Children are positioned to have direct view of the board/teacher.

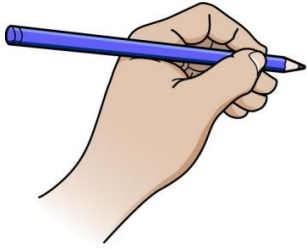
Paper Position

Left-handed children should be encouraged to tilt their paper to the right slightly so that they can see what they are writing and to reduce smudging when they graduate to using pens. Right-handed children are encouraged to tilt their paper to the left. Free hands should be used to steady the paper and should bear some body-weight.

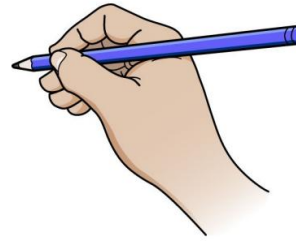


Pencil grip

Children should use a tripod grip. Children should be shown 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. Teachers may refer to 'Pick and flick'.



Left- handed



Right- handed

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established and children use consistently legible joined handwriting with correct letter size, formations and joins, a pen licence will be awarded by the English Lead. This will enable the children to use a blue school Handwriting pen.

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting.

Handwriting equipment

All Handwriting is practised using a sharpened pencil and paper to develop the correct use of pressure. Children will practise handwriting using the Supersonic Phonics Friends worksheets and in their English books. It is important that they use the same sized lines as their other curricular books so that children's skills are transferable and that the same expectation of handwriting is set across all writing.

In Year 1 and 2, children write in books with 10 mm lines. Children in KS2 will write in books with 8mm lines unless they need further support with letter formation. In these cases, 10mm lined books or books with 3 lines are used to match their needs.

Explicit modelling and teaching

Teachers in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 carefully model the correct size and orientation of letters and expectations in all lessons, particularly in phonics lessons when applying phonics to writing. In Nursery and Reception, children begin with pre-writing shapes and start the handwriting program (Supersonic Phonics Friends Handwriting Scheme) once they have been taught basics 2 group 5 in phonics lessons.

Through the Supersonic Phonics Friends (SSPF) scheme, teachers model how to write each letter as it is taught. Letter formation is supported through actions and alliterative pictures linked to each letter. Letters are taught in **letter families** rather than alphabetical order.

Visual prompts are used:

- A **green leaf** shows where to start
- A **red leaf** shows where to finish

Children in KS1 have two discreet handwriting lessons each week following the SSPF handwriting scheme. In Key Stage 2, all English lessons begin with the explicit modelling of a letter, letter join or word for all children to practice in their English books. In addition to this, to support with beginning to join letters, Year 3 have an additional handwriting lesson each week.

When teachers model handwriting, letter formation is explicitly taught including where to start and which way to go, to support automatic processing.

Where needed, children begin by tracing letters over the teacher's modelled example in highlighter pen with a dot as a starting point cue. They will then be asked to copy letters using just a starting point before writing them completely independently without cues.

Teachers may even find it helpful to guide the child's hand as they trace the letter.

The teacher's handwriting is the model for the children. All teachers should aim to produce quality writing at all times whether in the books or on the board.

Reasonable Adjustments

Children can use different tools to support them with their handwriting:

- Pencil grips are most supportive and effective for children aged 4–7 while they are still learning how to hold a pencil. After age 7, we only use a pencil grip if a child feels uncomfortable when writing or if their hand gets tired quickly.
- Some children use a coloured overlay in school or work on tinted paper to help them read their own work more clearly.
- Specific targets may be given for pupils who need more support with their letter formations and these are part of their learning plans. Focused interventions and support in lessons are part of our daily support for these pupils.
- If a child's handwriting does not improve over time, even with classroom strategies and practice, we can then make a referral to an Occupational Therapist for further support.

Continuity and Progression

Beginning in the Early Years, handwriting is taught using the printed method as shown below.



Lettergroups

Letters are taught in groups using directional prompts relating to the movement, giving children the correct patterns at the start. It gives them a clear rule and structure.

Each of these groups has visual features that are common across all the letters. In this way, children learn to recognise the overlapping characteristics of letters.

Handwriting Families		Suggested Duration
Len's Ladder Letters 1	l t i u y j	2 – 4 weeks
Curly Cals Letters	c o a d g q e f s	3 – 6 weeks
Len's Ladder Letters 2	r n m h b p k	2 – 4 weeks
Zippy's Zigzag Letters	v w x z	1 – 2 weeks

Children are taught to know which group each letter belongs to and prompts are used to reinforce patterns and address errors. For example, children learn 'b' is a 'ladder letter that starts at the top and 'd' starts the same as the 'curly letters c and a'.

Progression across the school

EYFS Early Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases. • Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery. • Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing • Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
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The National Curriculum expectations are as follows:

Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these
Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 unjoined • 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

Year Three and Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes 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]
Year Five and Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Across the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children will:

- Have opportunities to watch adults writing and opportunities to write themselves.
- Have opportunities to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making and physical activities.
- Trace and draw shapes and patterns to help them master the diagonals and curves necessary for correct letter formations (Pre-writing shapes).
- Have exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- Attempt writing for various purposes using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions.
- Write their own names and other writing forms such as labels and captions and begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation.
- Use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words.
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters and numbers, most of which are correctly formed.

By the end of Reception year children will have been introduced to:

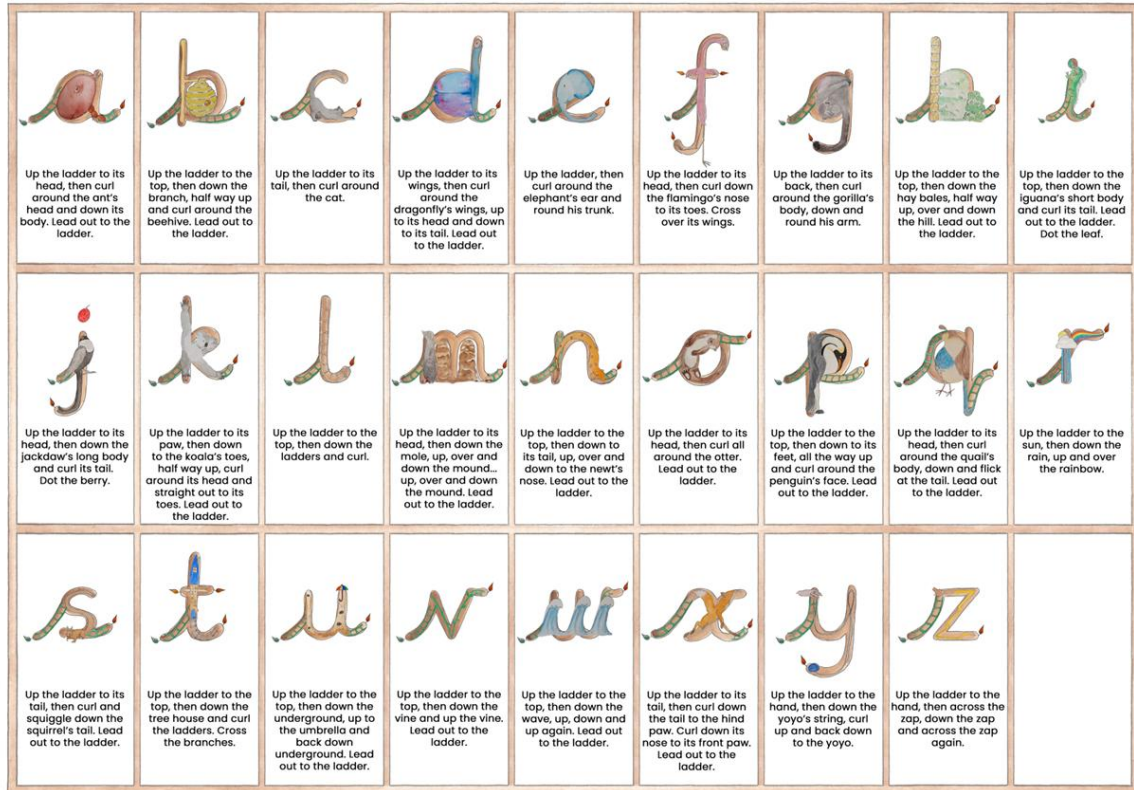
- A correct, comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- Writing printed letters using the correct sequence of movements
- Pattern-making and letter/number formation

Key Stage 1

- Continue to secure a correct, comfortable and efficient pencil grip.
- Carefully explicit modelling teaches how to correctly write capital letters, uses of printed letters, numbers, punctuation, maths symbols and other symbols
- Practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion.

Handwriting certificates will be given to children when they are able to form all letters correctly.

In Year 2, once children have the correct letter formation, letter direction and spacing, then they are introduced to cursive handwriting. To enable letters to be joined, the following formations are to be taught. This will be taught discreetly for those children who are ready and the letter joins as below.



Year 3:

When children are confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, they are taught the above formations to enable them to join letters, following the order below.

Base joins

Set 1 ll li ti il it ill ut at ull
 Set 2 all in un an im um am ine ime
 Set 3 ar aw iv hu ti ki du ay ey
 Set 4 ip up ib ub th ck ch ent ant

Top joins

Set 1 ou ov ow op
 Set 2 re ri rt rk
 Set 3 ob ol ot of if
 Set 4 ve we wh
 Set 5 fe fi fu fl ft

Joins to anti-clockwise letters

Set 1 ac ad ag ca da ha
 Set 2 oa od og oo
 Set 3 fa fo va wa ws
 Set 4 ea ed

Other joins

Set 1 Joins to e
 Joining from t
 Joining from p

Joining from b
Descenders joined to e
qu
ff
ss
sw
us
ix

Year 4:

- Ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and the spacing between letters and words.
- With the regular handwriting opportunities children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing.
- Reinforce cursive handwriting across the curriculum

Year 5 and 6

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught including:

- form-filling/labelling using printed and capital letters
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- KS2 SATs SPaG practice

Feedback

Teachers will be vigilant to ensure that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils and those with Special Educational Needs are met. Children will receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip; writing pressure; sitting position or letter formation are seen.

Assessment

Assessment of letter formation will be ongoing through feedback and teacher observations and any incorrect letter formation will be addressed immediately and worked on in class, with support from home if possible. Scrutiny of handwriting will take place throughout the year by the English and Phonics leads.

The Role of Parents/Carers

The school recognises the importance of keeping parents informed of our policy and procedures regarding the teaching of handwriting. We value the support of parents in encouraging and assisting their children with handwriting development. Therefore, parents/carers will be made aware of our agreed handwriting policy and encouraged to practise this with their children at home. Parents/carers will be informed of the school's approach to handwriting and they will be given guidance on the correct letter formation prior to their children starting at the school and as part of meetings for parents as children move up the school.