St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy

Love, Learn and Live in Christ

Handwriting Policy

2026

Handwriting at St Joseph's

Review Date	Changes Made	Amended By
July 2026	Policy created	J.Zaffino/ N.Boyd

At St Joseph's, handwriting is taught progressively from Nursery to Year 6. Our aim is for all children to develop the physical skills, correct letter formation and fluency needed to become confident and increasingly independent writers.

Nursery

In Nursery, the focus is on developing the **foundations for handwriting**. Children take part in regular fine-motor activities that develop **hand strength, coordination, dexterity and an effective pencil grip**. Children are given frequent opportunities to make marks, draw, trace and begin to develop the movements needed for later letter formation.

Reception and Key Stage 1

Children in **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2** follow the **Monster Phonics Handwriting Scheme**. Teaching follows a progressive approach to developing correct letter formation, size, orientation, spacing and presentation.

Key Stage 2

Children in **Years 3–6** follow **Letter-join**, using the **Letter Break font**. Teaching builds on the secure formation established in EYFS and KS1, with an increasing focus on consistency, fluency, legibility and efficient handwriting. As the scheme introduces cursive handwriting in year 2, our children will follow the year group below them in order to ensure the handwriting is progressive.

Year 3 – Module 3

Year 4 – Module 4

Year 5 – Module 5

Year 6 – Module 6

Baseline Assessment and the Autumn Term

At the beginning of every academic year, teachers from **Reception to Year 6** complete a handwriting baseline assessment. Children are asked to write **every letter of the alphabet**, allowing teachers to identify strengths and any gaps in letter formation.

Teachers use the baseline assessment alongside their **professional judgement** to plan handwriting teaching during the **first half term**. Teaching during this period is responsive to the needs of the class and focuses on addressing identified gaps and securing previously taught skills.

The appropriate handwriting scheme will normally begin from the **second half term**. However, teachers may introduce the scheme earlier where children demonstrate that they are ready to progress.

Responsive Teaching and Intervention

Handwriting teaching at St Joseph's is **progressive but flexible.** Teachers use their professional judgement to ensure that children secure the skills they need before moving on.

Where individual children continue to experience difficulty with particular letters or handwriting skills despite targeted classroom teaching, these areas will become the focus of a **specific handwriting intervention.**

This creates a clear cycle of:

Baseline assessment → Identify gaps → Targeted teaching → Reassess → Begin/continue scheme → Intervention where required

This approach ensures that children do not simply move through a handwriting scheme according to their year group; teaching is adapted so that **gaps are addressed, secure skills are built upon and each child is supported to make appropriate progress towards fluent, legible handwriting.**

Yearly Progression

Year Group	Main Focus	Key Content
Nursery	Developing the physical foundations for writing	Fine-motor activities to develop **hand strength, dexterity and coordination.** Developing an effective pencil grip and control through mark making, tracing, drawing, patterns and large movements. Building confidence and readiness for formal letter formation.
Reception	Developing correct letter formation	Follow the **Monster Phonics Handwriting Scheme.** Begin with handwriting **patterns and movements** before progressing through the five letter families: **Curl-back, Straight-down, Top-start, Up-and-over and Mix-up.** Use formation rhymes and modelling to establish correct starting points and direction. Progress from individual letters into simple words linked to phonics.
Year 1	Securing letter formation and applying it to words and sentences	Follow the **Monster Phonics Handwriting Scheme.** Consolidate accurate lower-case formation through letter and word families. Develop correct **size, orientation and placement on the line.** Apply handwriting to familiar phonically decodable words and sentences. Develop formation of **capital letters and digits 0–9.**
Year 2	Refining formation, size, spacing and presentation	Follow the **Monster Phonics Handwriting Scheme.** Secure consistent lower-case formation, appropriate **letter size, ascenders and descenders**, correctly sized capitals and digits, and **consistent spacing between words.** Develop increasing fluency when writing words and sentences.
Year 3	Developing fluent, legible and consistent handwriting	Begin **Letter-join using the Letter-join Break font.** Develop joined handwriting across independent writing, focusing on **legibility, consistency and quality.** Practise difficult joins, double letters, ascenders, numbers, dictation and near-point copying. Apply handwriting through vocabulary, spelling and wider curriculum activities.
Year 4	Applying fluent and legible handwriting across the curriculum	Continue **Letter-join Break.** Develop **size-appropriate, fluent and consistent handwriting** and apply it across different subjects and tasks. Practise Year 3/4 statutory spelling words, cloze sentences, dictation, vocabulary and handwriting within maths, science, geography and **MFL.** Develop the ability

		to adapt handwriting appropriately, including using printed letters for labels and diagrams.
Year 5	Developing automatic, high-quality handwriting with increased stamina	Continue **Letter-join Break**. Develop the **stamina to write at length** while maintaining consistently neat, well-presented handwriting. Apply handwriting through Year 5/6 spellings, cloze sentences, dictation, advanced vocabulary and extended cross-curricular writing. Increase **speed and automaticity** so attention can increasingly be given to the content rather than the physical process of writing.
Year 6	Mastering fluent, automatic and adaptable handwriting	Continue **Letter-join Break**, building on the upper-KS2 skills established in Module 6. Maintain **speed, fluency, stamina, legibility and consistent presentation** when writing at length and across the curriculum. Children should be able to produce joined handwriting automatically and adapt their handwriting appropriately to the task, including using printed letters where appropriate for diagrams and labels. Module 6's intended end point is automatic joined writing so children can focus on the content rather than the process of handwriting.

<u>What we will see in books</u>

At St Joseph's, we expect handwriting teaching to move from **supported practice to independent application**.

In **EYFS and Key Stage 1**, children will use the Monster Phonics handwriting resources, including **tracing and copying activities**, because these support children in learning and securing correct letter formation. Children will also have opportunities to apply these skills in their own writing.

In **Key Stage 2**, handwriting is taught using **lined handwriting books** rather than relying heavily on scheme worksheets. This helps children transfer the skills taught through Letter-join into their everyday writing and develop consistency across the curriculum. The Letter-join materials themselves are designed to build fluency and application across different curriculum areas.

Trace-and-copy worksheets remain available as an additional support, particularly for children who need further practice with specific letters, joins, size or formation. They are used purposefully as scaffolding rather than being the main evidence of handwriting teaching in KS2.

Across **all year groups**, the expectation is that the handwriting skills being taught are visible in children's everyday work. Children should understand that handwriting is not something used only during a handwriting lesson; the same expectations for **formation, size, spacing, legibility and presentation** apply in English, RE, science, history, geography and all other written work.

By KS2, we therefore expect to see:

- **Handwriting practice in lined books**, showing clear progression and teacher feedback where appropriate.
- Increasingly **fluent, legible and consistent handwriting** in everyday written work.
- Children applying the same handwriting expectations **across every subject**.

- Scheme worksheets or trace-and-copy sheets used selectively for **additional practice, intervention or identified gaps**.
- As children progress through KS2, increasing **speed, stamina and automaticity**, so handwriting supports rather than slows down composition. Letter-join identifies this as an important progression towards producing joined writing automatically and maintaining quality when writing at length.

Teachers should be modelling cursive handwriting in any written feedback or modelling on the board to ensure consistency.