



**St Michael's**  
C.E. Primary School

# Handwriting Policy

Last reviewed: September 2026  
Next review due: September 2027



*"Courage to Flourish in the Love of God"*

## Our Theologically Rooted Christian Vision



# Courage to Flourish in the Love of God

*"I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10)*



*"Be strong and courageous... the Lord your God will be with you  
wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)*

These biblical texts underpin our vision summary, 'Courage to Flourish in the Love of God'. Jesus' words from the New Testament describe his desire for everyone to be a full and flourishing version of their created selves, experiencing life in all its vibrant fullness, individually and in community. Our ambition is for everyone to encounter this fullness through the life and work of the school, whatever their background, beliefs or circumstances. God's words to Joshua from the Old Testament illustrate how life, and learning, can be challenging, bringing setbacks and discouragement. These words inspire us to keep on going in those circumstances, confident that God watches over us and walks beside us.

The joining of these biblical texts is meaningful for the particular circumstances of our school community. It gives coherence to our aspirational vision that will grow courage and resilience as enablers of 'life in all its fullness' for everyone. To support our vision, we have seven overarching Christian values:

### COURAGE



**Phillippians 4:13**

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

### HOPE



**John 1:5**

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

### LOVE



**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

"Love is patient and kind... it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth."

### FORGIVENESS



**1 John 1:9**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us"

### TRUST



**Proverbs 3:5-6**

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

### COMMUNITY



**Hebrews 10:24**

"Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good."

### THANKFULNESS



**1 Thessalonians 5:18**

"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you"

## **Intent**

At St Michael's CE Primary School, we believe that handwriting is a fundamental life skill that enables children to communicate their ideas clearly, confidently and effectively. We aim for all pupils to develop fluent, legible and efficient handwriting that supports success across the curriculum. Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking, allowing children to focus on the content and purpose of their writing.

Through a carefully sequenced progression from Nursery to Year 6, children develop the physical, cognitive and technical skills required to become competent writers. We encourage all pupils to take pride in their presentation and develop a strong sense of ownership of their work.

## **Aims**

We aim:

- To develop fluent, legible and efficient handwriting for all pupils.
- To establish high expectations for presentation across the curriculum.
- To ensure children develop the physical foundations necessary for successful handwriting.
- To teach correct posture, pencil grip and letter formation.
- To develop consistency in handwriting across the school.
- To enable pupils to write with increasing stamina, automaticity and speed.
- To ensure all staff model high standards of handwriting.
- To foster pride, resilience and perseverance in written work.

## **Handwriting Progression**

### **Nursery – Developing Strong Foundations**

Handwriting begins in Nursery through the development of strong physical foundations. Children are not expected to formally form letters but instead develop the gross motor and fine motor skills which underpin future handwriting success.

Provision includes opportunities to:

- Develop core strength, balance and stability.
- Climb, crawl, balance, push and pull.
- Participate in large-scale mark making.
- Strengthen hand and finger muscles through activities such as playdough, threading, pegging and construction.
- Develop hand-eye coordination.
- Explore a variety of mark-making tools and media.

- Develop early pencil control and grip.
- Give meaning to marks and begin purposeful mark making.

Children are encouraged to explore and experiment with different grips whilst adults support the gradual development of an effective pencil hold appropriate to each child's stage of development.

## **Reception and Year 1 – Little Wandle Handwriting**

In Reception and Year 1, children follow the **Little Wandle Handwriting Programme**.

Teaching is systematic and builds upon the physical foundations developed in Nursery.

Children are taught:

- Correct posture.
- Pencil grip.
- Paper positioning.
- Letter families.
- Letter formation.
- Number formation.
- Directionality.
- Appropriate spacing.
- Writing fluency and stamina.

By the end of Reception, most pupils will be able to form lower-case letters correctly, begin and finish letters in the correct place and write with increasing control and consistency. By the end of Year 1, pupils are expected to confidently form all lower-case and capital letters correctly and apply these skills within independent writing.

## **Years 2–6 – Letter-join**

From Year 2 onwards, pupils follow the **Letter-join Handwriting Programme**.

Teaching focuses on:

- Correct joining techniques.
- Consistency of size and spacing.
- Fluency and stamina.
- Presentation skills.
- Speed and automaticity.
- Applying handwriting skills across the curriculum.

Children are expected to develop a fluent joined handwriting style and apply this consistently throughout all subjects.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils should be able to produce fluent, legible and efficient handwriting and adapt their style appropriately for different purposes and audiences.

## **Handwriting Frequency**

### **Nursery**

Daily opportunities for gross motor development, fine motor development and mark making are provided through continuous provision and adult-directed activities.

### **Reception**

Children participate in daily Little Wandle Handwriting sessions alongside opportunities to apply handwriting skills through writing provision and directed teaching.

### **Year 1**

Children participate in daily Little Wandle Handwriting sessions and are expected to apply learned skills across the curriculum.

### **Years 2**

Children take part in 4 Letter-join sessions a week and are expected to apply handwriting expectations consistently within all curriculum subjects.

### **Years 3–6**

Children take part in 3 Letter-join sessions a week and are expected to apply handwriting expectations consistently within all curriculum subjects.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Handwriting is taught explicitly and progressively across the school.

Lessons typically include:

- Warm-up activities.
- Teacher modelling.
- Guided practice.
- Independent application.
- Feedback and improvement.

Handwriting is not viewed as a standalone subject. Pupils are expected to apply their handwriting skills consistently across all curriculum areas and within all written work.

All staff are expected to model the school's agreed handwriting style when writing in books, on displays, on whiteboards and during shared writing sessions. Consistent modelling ensures pupils are exposed to high-quality examples of handwriting throughout the school day.

## **Posture, Pencil Grip and Paper Position**

Children are explicitly taught the correct habits for handwriting.

### **Posture**

Children are encouraged to:

- Sit with both feet flat on the floor.
- Sit with knees and hips at approximately 90 degrees.
- Sit with their back supported by the chair.
- Position themselves squarely to the table.
- Use their non-writing hand to stabilise the paper.

### **Pencil Grip**

The school promotes the development of a dynamic tripod grip as this provides the greatest control and efficiency when writing.

Grip development is supported according to age and stage of development.

### **Paper Position**

Children are taught how to position paper correctly according to whether they are right-handed or left-handed. These expectations are reinforced consistently throughout the school.

### **Supporting Left-Handed Writers**

Left-handed pupils are supported through:

- Appropriate seating arrangements.
- Correct paper positioning.
- Suitable pencil grip guidance.
- Additional modelling where necessary.
- Access to left-handed resources when appropriate.

Staff ensure that left-handed pupils can write comfortably and develop effective handwriting habits.



## Inclusion

At St Michael's, we are committed to ensuring that all children develop the knowledge, skills and physical foundations required to become confident and successful writers. We recognise that children develop handwriting skills at different rates and that some pupils may require additional support to achieve age-related expectations.

Children are assessed regularly against the school's handwriting progression and the developmental guidance outlined within our Strong Foundations approach. In EYFS, assessments consider children's gross motor development, core stability, upper body strength, crossing the midline, bilateral coordination, fine motor skills, pencil control and pencil grip, recognising that these physical skills underpin successful handwriting development. The school also uses guidance from *Let's Get Physical & Ready to Write* to identify strengths, gaps and barriers to writing development and to inform next steps for teaching and intervention.

In EYFS, *Let's Get Physical* is used as a baseline to assess whether children have developed the gross motor and fine motor skills needed to support early mark making and handwriting readiness. This helps staff identify pupils who require additional opportunities to strengthen core stability, shoulder strength, hand strength, coordination, pencil control and other foundational skills before formal handwriting demands increase.

Assessment information is used to identify children who may be falling behind age-related expectations. Where gaps are identified, targeted interventions are deployed to provide additional support and practice. These interventions may include:

- Gross motor skill activities.
- Fine motor development programmes.
- Additional handwriting practice.
- Pencil grip support.
- Small-group teaching.
- Individual intervention.
- Targeted teacher modelling and feedback.

Assessment is used to pinpoint specific barriers and ensure that interventions directly address the areas requiring improvement.

All pupils are formally assessed against the school's handwriting progression expectations **three times per year**. Children identified as working below age-related expectations are monitored and assessed more frequently to evaluate the impact of support and ensure that identified gaps are closing. Intervention programmes are reviewed regularly and adapted where necessary to ensure pupils make strong progress towards age-related expectations and handwriting fluency.

Through high-quality teaching, careful assessment and targeted intervention, we aim to ensure that every child can fully access the handwriting curriculum, develop confidence as a writer and achieve their full potential.

During transition, teachers are provided with information about children who have not yet secured these foundational physical skills. This ensures receiving teachers are aware of individual starting points and can plan targeted provision, intervention and classroom support from the beginning of the year

### **Presentation Expectations**

High expectations of presentation apply across the curriculum. All children are expected to present their work neatly and to the highest standard in **every book and every subject**. Handwriting is not taught in isolation; pupils are expected to apply learnt skills consistently across the curriculum whenever they write.

Pupils are expected to:

- Form letters correctly.
- Maintain appropriate letter size, orientation and spacing.
- Use joined handwriting where appropriate.
- Present all work neatly and with pride.
- Apply handwriting expectations consistently across all subjects.

Teachers support pupils in meeting these expectations through high-quality modelling, explicit teaching and consistent feedback. All adults are expected to model the school's agreed handwriting style in books, on displays, during shared writing and on whiteboards.

To promote consistency and fluency, pupils use handwriting guidelines and appropriate writing lines in all relevant subjects. This ensures that children continually practise and apply correct letter formation, size, spacing and presentation whenever they write. Through regular application across the curriculum, pupils develop increasing fluency, stamina and confidence as writers.

### **Assessment and Intervention**

Handwriting is assessed through ongoing teacher assessment and formal monitoring.

All pupils are formally assessed against the school's handwriting progression expectations **three times per year**.

Assessments consider:

- Letter formation.
- Letter orientation.
- Size and spacing.
- Pencil grip.
- Posture.
- Joining.
- Fluency.
- Presentation.



- Age-related expectations.

Assessment information is used to identify pupils who are working at, above or below expected standards.

Children identified as working below age-related expectations receive additional support and practice to address identified gaps. These pupils are assessed more frequently to monitor progress and ensure interventions are having the intended impact.

Within EYFS, assessment is additionally informed through observation of gross motor development, fine motor development, mark making, pencil control and pencil grip to ensure strong foundations are secured before formal handwriting expectations are introduced.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The English Lead and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy through:

- Lesson visits.
- Learning walks.
- Book looks.
- Pupil voice.
- Staff discussions.
- Assessment outcomes.

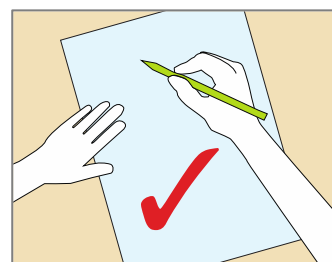
The effectiveness of the handwriting curriculum will be reviewed annually to ensure high standards, consistency and continued improvement across the school.

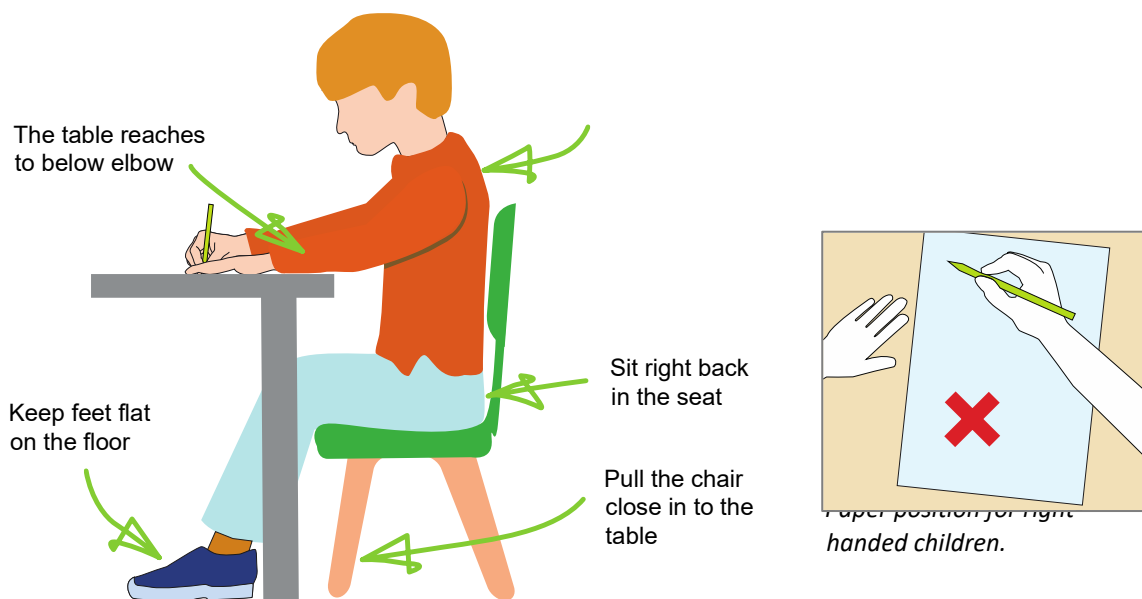
### **Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting**

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

#### **SITTING POSITION**

Sit with a straight back, not leaning over the page

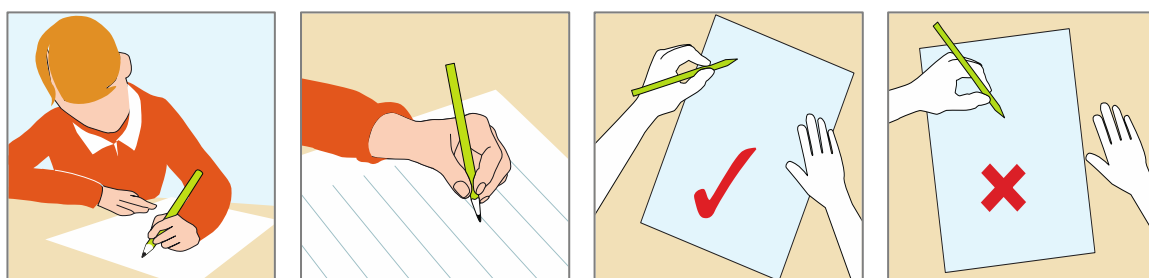




## LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

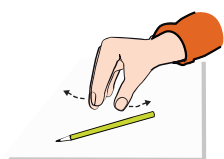


*Paper position for left-handed children.*

## The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib. We use the Tripod Grip Rhyme:

## Right-handed pencil grip



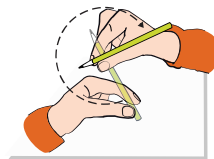
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,

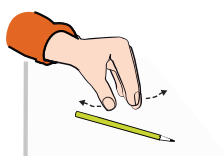


Spin it round...

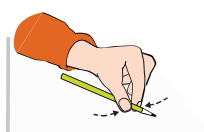


and grip.

## Left-handed pencil grip



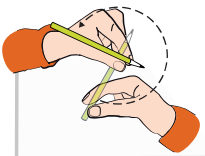
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,



Spin it round...



and grip.

## Foundation Letter/Shape formation

Children in EYFS are taught how to correctly form and orientate letters. Through the development of gross and fine motor skills, the development of mark making skills and the direct teaching of letter formation, by the end of Reception, most children will be able to form letters correctly. Some children may find achieving this expectation challenging. Those children will be supported with targeted and appropriate intervention. To support the teaching of correct formation of lower-case letters, letters are grouped into 'families' according to how they are formed:

- Curly letter family
- Long letter family
- Bouncy letter family
- Zig-zag letter family

Letter formation phrases are listed below in their families:

### Unit 2: Curly letter family

| Letter mnemonic                                                                   | Formation phrase                                             | Letter mnemonic                                                                   | Formation phrase                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Curl around the cat.                                         |  | Around the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end. |
|  | Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.           |  | Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.             |
|  | Around the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet. |  | Down the snake from head to tail.                              |
|  | Around the goat's face and curl under its chin.              |  | Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.            |
|  | All around the octopus.                                      |                                                                                   |                                                                |

### Unit 3: Long letter family

| Letter mnemonic                                                                   | Formation phrase                    | Letter mnemonic                                                                     | Formation phrase                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Down the lollipop stick.            |  | Down the jellyfish and dot its head.                 |
|  | Down the iguana and dot the leaf.   |  | Down and around the umbrella and back to the ground. |
|  | Down the tiger and across its neck. |  | Down, around the yo-yo and curl around the string.   |

### Unit 4: Bouncy letter family

| Letter mnemonic                                                                   | Formation phrase                                   | Letter mnemonic                                                                     | Formation phrase                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|  | Down, up and over the mouse's ears.                |  | Down the bear's back, up and around its tummy.   |
|  | Down, up and over the net.                         |  | Down the penguin's back, up and around its head. |
|  | From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow. |  | Down, up and over the helicopter.                |

### Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family

| Letter mnemonic                                                                     | Formation phrase                                                                              | Letter mnemonic                                                                   | Formation phrase                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.                                     |  | Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along. |
|    | Down and up and down and up the waves.                                                        |  | Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.   |
|  | From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again, across the box to the bottom. |                                                                                   |                                                                      |

## Handwriting Font

### Letter-Join Print Plus

This will be taught from Year 2 to Year 6 for handwriting lessons.

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z

### Letter Join Print Plus

Letter-Join Print Plus will be taught in Reception and Year 1 for handwriting lessons.

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z