

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Aims

- To have a consistent cursive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays/resources.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in continuous cursive handwriting.
- Children to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.

At St Thomas More, we use the continuous cursive style of handwriting with the aim that eventually all letters are joined accurately in writing. There are many important reasons for using this style.

Its most important feature is that each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper – and consequently, each word is formed in one, flowing movement. Each letter is formed starting on the line.

The key advantages to this system are:

- ✓ By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a physical memory of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape;
- ✓ Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (b/d or p/q);
- ✓ There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case;
- ✓ The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.

Posture and Seating Position

- Chair and table of appropriate height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface
- Sit up straight
- Feet flat on the floor
- Chair pushed in but not so far that the tummy touches the edge of the table
- Paper tilted (see additional sheet for diagram)
- Hand not holding the pencil rests on the work keeping it stable

Our agreed continuous cursive style can be found here <http://st-thomas-more.oxon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Writing.pdf>

Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery):

In order to perform the mechanics of writing confidently, children must develop good hand control. To this end, we promote the development of both gross and fine motor control through a variety of multi-sensory ongoing opportunities. Through play and cross-curricular opportunities, we allow the children to pick up the writing implement themselves and decide which hand they prefer.

Implements such as chunky triangular pencils, large chalks and chunky pens etc. are used by pupils to rehearse skills on paper, chalk boards, whiteboards, pavement etc. Once they are confidently using flowing movements, the children are introduced to smaller, more controlled activities such as left to right, top to bottom and anti-clockwise movements.

Reception

Children continue to develop their gross and fine motor skills through learning opportunities during the day. Formal handwriting begins with children being taught to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters in a **printed style**. Children are taught to form lower case letters first.

See <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/print-letters-refining.html> for order of teaching printed letters.

A child's first major achievement is to write their name, so whilst concentrating on lower-case letters, they are taught how to form the capital letter of their name. As they master the lower-case letters, children are introduced to the remainder of the capital letters.

The expectation is that by the end of Reception, pupils will start to transfer towards a continuous cursive script depending on their skill and ability, in order for a smoother transition into Year 1.

Why focus on lower case letters first?

- One reason being that about 95% of what children write, and are exposed to, is in a lower-case form and only 5% in capital.
- Lower-case letters are far less complicated, requiring fewer pencil lifts to complete them.
- As both lower-case and capital letters require a child to form curved lines, a skill which most children have to practise, writing lower-case letters is no more difficult than writing capitals.
- In a young child's writing all the letters are initially the same size, whether they are capitals or lower-case letters; it is part of the normal developmental path of handwriting. So the view that teaching capitals letters is easier because they are bigger is not true.
- Young children who have learnt mostly capital letters first find it difficult to stop, as it is so ingrained into the memory, often using them half way through words and sentences. Even when they are older this inappropriate use of capitals creeps back into their work especially if they are tired or concentrating hard on composing their work.

Order of teaching handwriting letters and joins.

Single Letters (Continuous Cursive Beginners) Reception and Year One

The straight letters: l, i, t, u, y

- **The 2o'clock letters:** c, a, d, g, q, s
- **The tunnel letters:** n, m, h, b, p
- **The top joiners:** o, r, v, w
- **The square letters:** x, z
- **The odd letters:** f, k, j, e

As soon as a letter group has been taught as single letters they can be practised in words (not joined).

Continuous Cursive Joins Year 2 (going into Year 3)

Introduction of the four handwriting joins

- First join: un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung
- Second join: ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti ink unk
- Third join: od pg re ve oon oom
- Fourth join: wl vl of ff fl flo
- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters

Supporting activities

- Match and copy captions
- Trace and copy patterns
- Copy words
- Copy sentences
- Write out menu
- Copy poem
- Alphabetical ordering

Continuous Cursive Joins Year 3 (going into Year 4)

Revision

- Practise capital letters

Further practise of the four handwriting joins

- in ine
- ut ute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es
- ri ru ry (practising joining from the letter r)
- oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)
- ee ea ed (practising joining from the letter e)
- ow ov ox (practising joining from the letter o)
- ky hy ly (practising joining to the letter y)
- ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)
- od oo og (practising joining from the letter o)
- er ir ur (practising joining to the letter r)
- ai al ay
- oy ou oi
- re oe fe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)
- fu wu vu (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)
- ot ol ok (practising joining to ascenders)
- ai al ow ol (practising all the joins)

Supporting activities

- copy words
- copy sentences
- copy poems
- match questions to answers
- copy jokes
- make and copy compound words

Year 4

- ning ping ting
- oc od oo
- ake ome are
- fla flo fle
- who wha whe

- ie in il
 - inly ky ny
 - ap ar an
 - ick uck ack
 - he
 - we
 - re
 - fte fir fin
 - wra wri kni (silent letters)
 - ii ll tt rr nn mm cc oo dd ss ff ee
 - ew ev ex (spacing)
 - th ht fl (proportions)
 - ac ag af
- Capital letters
 - Decorated capital letters
 - Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ “ , ‘

Supporting activities

- Copy words, sentences, poems
- Trace and copy
- Copy tongue twisters

Years 5 and 6

- Practise consistency and size of letters
- Practising using a diagonal joining line
- Practising leaving an equal space between letters
- Practising joining to the letter y
- Practising using a horizontal joining line
- Practising the size and height of letters
- Practising joining from the letter i
- Practising joining to and from the letter v
- Practising consistency in forming and joining letters
- Practise speedwriting
- Practising crossing double tt

- Practising joining to and from the letter e
- Practising joining to and from the letter w
- Practising printing
- Practising drafting and editing
- Practising joining to the letter t

Ensuring letters are consistent in height and size

- Practising with punctuation
- Practising break letters
- Practising joining from the letter m
- Ensuring the ascender on the letter t is the correct height
- Practising spacing within words
- Developing fluency
- Practising printing
- Practising forming and joining the letter f
- Practising presentation
- Practising printing
- Practising speed writing
- Revision
- Looking at different handwriting styles

Next review of policy November 2021