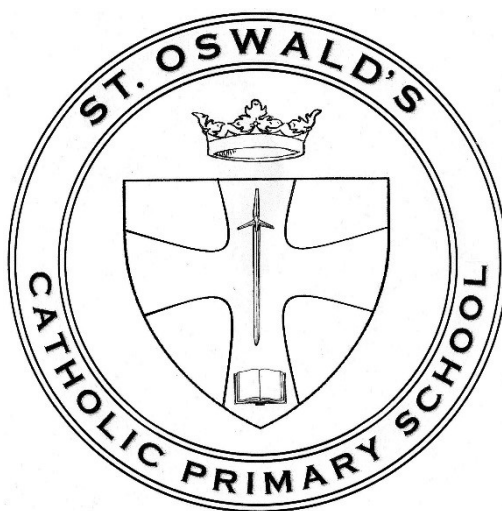


St Oswald's Catholic Primary School



Handwriting Policy 2026-2029

Approved by:	Approval date	Renewal date
Full Governors	10 th September 2026	Autumn 2029

This Handwriting Policy is set within the context of the whole school aims and mission statement:



Together with Jesus,
We will Learn and Grow in Faith

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School **Handwriting and Presentation Policy**

Rationale

Our policy aligns with the National Curriculum's goal for pupils to develop **fluent, legible, and speedy** handwriting. Mastering this skill is vital because:

- **Academic Success:** Most assessments remain handwritten; legibility is essential for fair marking.
- **Cognitive Flow:** Automaticity reduces "cognitive load," allowing children to focus on creative composition rather than letter formation.
- **Brain Development:** Handwriting engages motor and cognitive skills more deeply than typing.
- **Practical Utility:** It remains a core life skill for note-taking and clear communication.

Teaching & Learning

Handwriting is taught systematically alongside phonics and spelling. We ensure progress through:

- **Direct Modelling:** Teachers regularly demonstrate correct letter formation and joins.
- **Supervised Practice:** Children practice through careful repetition, with staff monitoring to correct errors in real-time.
- **High Expectations:** We promote a consistent school-wide standard to foster a sense of pride, respect, and self-esteem in all written work.

Our Approach: Read Write Inc. (RWI)

We follow the **Read Write Inc. Handwriting scheme**, teaching formation alongside phonics. We use a "visualise to memorise" approach rather than simple copying to ensure children internalise letter shapes.

The Four Stages

- **Stage 1 (Reception):** Focuses on correct letter formation in "handwriting families."

- **Stage 2 (Year 1):** Focuses on relative letter size and prepares children for joining.
- **Stage 3 (Year 1/2):** Introduces "bridge" and "hill" joins.
- **Stage 4 (Year 2–4):** Develops a mature, speedy, and personal style moving from pencil to pen.

Each stage ensures pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements for handwriting from Reception to Year 4.

The "Sponge Cake" Method

To help children position letters, we use the imagery of a sponge cake:

- **Top/Bottom Sponge:** The outer limits for ascenders and descenders.
- **Middle Jam:** Where the body of the letter sits and where all joins occur.

"Perfect Handwriting Position"

Children are taught to quickly adopt this 7-point posture:

1. Feet flat on the floor.
2. Bottom to the back of the chair.
3. Chair tucked in.
4. Shoulders relaxed.
5. Back leaning forward slightly.
6. Tripod grip on the pencil.
7. Non-writing hand steadying the paper.

Materials and Progression

- **Writing Tools:** Standard HB pencils are used by most. Soft 2B pencils or triangular grips are used for those needing extra support.
- **Pen Licence:** From Year 4, pupils may earn a Pen Licence to use a blue handwriting pen once they are secure at stage 4 (pencils remain mandatory for Maths).

What should children write on?

For Stage 1, children write in wide lined exercise book. This is so they can focus on correct letter formation.

For Stages 2 and 3, children write in 15mm-lined books or books with handwriting tram lines – 15mm outside lines, 4mm inside lines.

For stage 4 and beyond, Handwriting book with guidelines provided to indicate correct size, proportion and placing of the letters.

Handwriting after RWI

Children who have completed RWI, continue the continuous cursive handwriting style. Handwriting will be taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. It will be modelled by the teacher then monitored throughout the session. Children will be encouraged to self-assess, looking for consistency. Where possible, handwriting teaching will be linked to phonics and spelling patterns. This will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings.

Teachers will model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard, display work and when marking books.

Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to:

Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:

- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

Teaching Procedures

- **Frequency: Reception & KS1 (Stages 1–3):** 10 minutes daily. **Lower KS2 (Stage 4):** 10 minutes, 3 times a week. KS2 pupils with fine motor difficulties will receive targeted handwriting intervention using the Read Write Inc. scheme.
- **Modelling:** Teachers must demonstrate formation/joins on the board and model high standards of handwriting in all marking and displays.
- **Observation:** Teachers must move around the room to correct grip and formation in real-time.
- **Vocabulary:** Children should learn terms such as *ascender*, *descender*, *clockwise*, *vertical*, and *parallel*.
- Display writing throughout the school includes cursive writing and computer-generated continuous cursive writing.

Inclusion and SEN Support

Left-Handed Pupils: Should sit to the left of right-handed peers. Paper should be slanted to the right to prevent smudging and allow the child to see the pencil tip.

Specific Needs: Pupils with coordination difficulties may use sloping desks, cushioned grips, or 2B pencils as required or possibly a referral to Occupational Therapy.

Consistency: All staff must intervene immediately if they observe a poor grip or posture during any writing activity.

Implementation

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. This policy links closely with the marking policy and presentation guidelines that are given in other subject policies.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review of the Handwriting policy.

The literacy coordinator in consultation with SMT will monitor this policy.