



Handwriting Curriculum Document

Intent

Our intention is to deliver a high-quality, systematic, and progressive handwriting curriculum that equips every pupil with the essential skills to develop fluent, legible, and confident handwriting. We recognise that handwriting is a fundamental skill that influences the quality of work across the entire curriculum. Our aim is for handwriting to become an automatic and fluent process that supports, rather than hinders, creativity and higher-level thinking, enabling pupils to focus on the content and composition of their work rather than the mechanics of writing.

Through coherent and continuous learning, underpinned by systematic teaching and supported by the Letter-Join scheme, pupils are guided to develop fluency, stamina, and control so that they can write accurately and at length, producing a neat, legible, and speedy joined style by the end of Key Stage 2. Regular and purposeful practice ensures that pupils develop automaticity in their handwriting, producing letters and words effortlessly and maintaining accuracy, consistency, and legibility through attention to correct posture and pencil grip. As they progress, pupils learn to adapt their handwriting for different purposes, confidently choosing between cursive, print, or capital letters depending on the task, whether note-taking, completing forms, or presenting final written drafts. Handwriting is reinforced across all curriculum areas, supporting learning in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and modern foreign languages, thereby strengthening wider literacy skills.

Inclusive practice ensures that all pupils, including those with additional needs, are supported to achieve their full potential through adaptive strategies and resources where appropriate. Ultimately, our intention is for every pupil to take pride in the presentation of their work, to write with confidence and independence, and to communicate effectively through a fluent, legible, and expressive handwriting style.

How is handwriting is taught at St. Vincent's

Principles of our Handwriting Teaching

1. **Focus on foundational skills first**
 - Correct posture, pencil grip (tripod hold), and paper orientation, pressure
 - Gross motor control: air writing, large pattern movements
 - Fine motor control: mark-making, tracing, tablet/whiteboard practice - pattern practise
2. **Prioritise letter formation and legibility**
 - Children must learn accurate letter shapes, size, and orientation before fluency or joining.
 - Automaticity is the goal: handwriting should become effortless, freeing cognitive resources for composition.
3. **Lead-in strokes / entry strokes**
 - Letter-join / cursive schemes: Introduce entry strokes later, once individual letters are secure, to support joined handwriting.
4. **Progressive teaching**
 - Begin with lowercase letters in Reception, move to capital letters and digits in Year 1.
 - Introduce simple joins after letters are secure, building towards fully joined cursive handwriting.
 - Later years focus on fluency, speed, and adaptability for different purposes and subjects.

Teaching sequence			
Foundational skills: Hand and finger strength Correct posture, pencil grip (tripod hold), pressure and paper orientation. Pattern practise	Letter families: Curly letter family: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s, f Long letter family: l, i, t, u, j, y Bouncy letter family: m, n, r, b, p, h Zigzag letter family: v, w, x, z, k Capital Letters A-Z Capital letters do not join to lower case letters	Lead-ins taught for lowercase letters	Letter joins: First join: Diagonal join. Diagonal join from and to letters without ascenders or descenders. Diagonal join to letters with ascenders and descenders. Diagonal join from letters with ascenders. Diagonal join from letters with descenders. (e.g. ai, it, le, qu) Second join: Horizontal join. (e.g. oo, ra, vi, wn) Third join: Ascenders/descenders to ascenders/descenders. Diagonal join from letters with ascenders/descenders to letters with ascenders/descenders. Fourth join: Horizontal join from letters with ascenders/descenders to letters with ascenders/descenders. (e.g. lb, pl, ob, rt)

Implementation

Handwriting instruction should be regular, explicit, and progressive: Short sessions in early years, longer/fewer sessions as children develop stamina. Review earlier skills periodically (formation, joins, spacing) to maintain standards. Provide differentiated support for children with fine motor delays, left-handedness, or other needs. Apply handwriting teaching across all subjects to reinforce fluency and presentation.

Letter formation

In Reception and KS1, we focus on teaching the correct formation of each lowercase letter. We use the following Little Wandle phrases to ensure that children are starting all of their letters in the correct place and that they are correctly formed.

 Around the astronaut's helmet, and down into space.	 Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.	 Curl around the cat.	 Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet	 Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk	 Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.	 Round the goat's face, up to his ear; down and curl under his chin.	 Down, up and over the helicopter	 Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot [on the leaf] at the top.
 All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.	 Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner.	 All the way down the lollipop.	 Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.	 Down the stick, up and over the net.	 All around the octopus.	 Down the penguin's back, up and round its head.	 Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end	 From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow
 Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail	 From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	 Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick	 Down to the bottom of the volcano, and back up to the top	 From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.	 Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	 Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.	 Zip across, zag down and across the zebra	

We use the following phrases that in Reception and KS1 to help us to ensure that children are forming their capital letters correctly.

Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.

Handwriting Overview

EYFS	<p>Posture, Pencil grip, Paper orientation, Pattern Practise, Gross and fine motor control</p> <p>Correct lowercase letter formation (legibility over speed), Capital letters, digits (0-9)</p> <p>By the end of Reception: Pupils should form all lowercase and uppercase letters correctly and numbers 0-9</p>	<p>1–1 1/2 years Cylindrical Grasp</p> <p>2–3 years Digital Grasp</p> <p>3 1/2–4 years Modified Tripod Grasp</p> <p>4 1/2–7 years Tripod Grasp</p>
Year 1	<p>Reinforce correct posture, grip, paper orientation and formation</p> <p>All capital letters, reinforce digits (0-9), letter families and lead-in strokes</p> <p>Practise writing whole words and short phrases with consistent size and spacing.</p> <p>By the end of Year 1: Pupils should form all lowercase letters correctly (using lead-ins) and form uppercase letters correctly</p>	Lead-ins:
Year 2	<p>Improve letter size, spacing, and line alignment</p> <p>Diagonal and horizontal joins, including those to and from ascenders/descenders.</p> <p>Build fluency through longer words and sentences across subjects.</p> <p>By the end of Year 2: Pupils should develop a consistent joined style, writing with increasing speed and legibility.</p>	<p>b h k m n p r</p> <p>a d c o f e s g q</p> <p>accident</p> <p>accidentally</p> <p>actual</p>
Year 3	<p>Refine joined handwriting as the default style across the curriculum. Focus on consistent letter size, spacing, and presentation. Strengthen fluency through meaningful writing tasks and dictation.</p> <p>By the end of Year 3: Pupils should write fluently and legibly at length, with handwriting no longer interrupting composition.</p>	
Year 4	<p>Consolidate fluency, consistency, and speed; handwriting should feel automatic.</p> <p>Encourage adaptation of handwriting for different tasks (notes, drafts, final copies).</p> <p>Maintain neat presentation across all subjects.</p> <p>By the end of Year 4: Pupils should have a confident, fluent joined script, sustaining quality over longer pieces.</p>	
Year 5	<p>Emphasise speed, stamina, and adaptability rather than formation. Ensure handwriting remains legible and neat in extended writing across all subjects. Promote automaticity so handwriting supports thinking and composition.</p> <p>By the end of Year 5: Pupils should write quickly and neatly, using handwriting as a tool for clear written communication.</p>	<p>Hey diddle, didle, the median's the middle, You add, then divide for the mean. The mode is the one you see the most And the range is the difference between.</p>
Year 6	<p>Prioritise presentation, fluency, and purposeful handwriting. Pupils should choose the most appropriate style (cursive, print, capitals) for the task and write legibly at speed. Expect independent, high-standard presentation across all subjects.</p> <p>By the end of Year 6: Pupils should produce fluent, adaptable, and legible handwriting, suitable for all purposes and sustained writing tasks.</p>	

Year	Autumn	Spring	Summer
EYFS	Preparation and practice (suggested time 4 weeks) Unit 1: Practising patterns Unit 2: Curly letter family Unit 3: Long letter family Unit 4: Bouncy letter family Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family	Unit 6: Capital letters	Unit 7: Digraphs and trigraphs (printing) ff, ll, ss zz, ck, qu ch, sh, th ng, nk, ai ee, igh, oa oo, ar, or ur, ow, oi ear, air, er
Year 1	Printing: Consolidation of letter formation of lowercase letters in a smaller size Consolidation of letter formation of upper case letters with appropriate sizing	Pre-cursive, lead-ins: Curly letter family: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s, f Long letter family: l, i, t, u, j, y	Pre-cursive, lead-ins: Bouncy letter family: m, n, r, b, p, h Zigzag letter family: v, w, x, z, k
Year 2	Cursive: First join - diagonal join to letters without ascenders or descenders: ai, am, an, ao, ar, au, ca, ci, co, cu, sa, se, si, sm, sn, so, ss, st, su, sw, ia, im, in, io, ir, iu	Cursive: First join - diagonal join to letters without ascenders, and then with ascenders and descenders: ma, mi, mm, mo, mu na, nc, ne, ni, nn, no, nu, ua, ui, um, un, uo, ag, aj, ab, ah, ak, al, at, ch, ck, cl, ct	Cursive: First join - diagonal join to letters with ascenders and descenders: sb, sh, sk, sl, st, sp, el, eb, eh, ek, el, et, ih, ik, ill, it, ig, ip, mp, np, nd, ug, up, ub, uh, uk, ul, ut
Year 3	Cursive: First join - diagonal join from letters with ascenders: da, di, do, du, dy First join - diagonal join from letters with ascenders: ha, he, hi, ho, hu, ka, ke, ki, ko, ku First join - diagonal join from letters with ascenders: la, le, li, lm, lo, lp, lu, bu, ba, be, bi, bo, br, bs	Cursive: First join - diagonal join to the letter 'c': ac, ec, ic, lc, uc First join - diagonal join to the letter 's': as, cs, ds, es, hs, is, ks, ls, ms, ns, ts, us First join - diagonal join to the letter 'e': ae, ce, de, ee, he, ie, ke, le, me, ne, ue,	Cursive: First join - diagonal join from letters with descenders: qu, pu, pa, pe, pi, pl, po, pr, ps Second join - horizontal join: oa, oc, od, oe, og, oi, oj, om, on, oo, or, os, ou, ov, ow, ox, oy, oz
Year 4	Second join - horizontal join: ra, rg, ri, rm, rn, ro, rp, rr, rs, ru, va, vi, vo, vs, vu, wa, wi, wn, wo, ws, wu, wy	Third join - diagonal join from a letter with an ascender/descender to a letter with an ascender/descender: Ib, kl, ll, ph, pl, pt, bl, th, tt	Fourth join - join to letters with hooks, lines and loops: ga, ge, gi, gl, go, gr, gs, gu, wh, ya, ye, yi, yo, yu Practise writing words with capital letters.

	<p>Second join - horizontal join to the letter 'e': oe, re, ve, we</p>	<p>Third join - horizontal join from to a letter with an ascender: ob, oh, ok, ol, ot, rt</p> <p>Fourth join - join to letters with hooks, lines and loops:</p> <p>ja, je, ji, jo, ju, fa, fe, fi, fo, fr, ft, fu</p>	<p>Practise combining all 4 joins when writing sentences.</p> <p>.</p> <p>Final consolidation of all joins.</p>
UKS2	<p>Pupils will focus on maintaining a consistent and fluent style.</p> <p>Pupils will practice maintaining legibility when writing at speed.</p> <p>Pupils will continue to improve handwriting through writing more sustained passages of writing, both copied and from their imagination.</p>		