

XII Apostles RCPS Handwriting Policy



**Mrs Marsden & Curriculum Team 1
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Through learning and loving we will follow Jesus.

XII Apostles Handwriting Policy

- To place Christ at the centre of everything we do
- To recognise that each child is unique and to ensure that each child is educated to fulfil their human potential
- To develop an understanding of Community; being able to recognise, respect and celebrate the diversity of all within it.

The second aim of our mission statement is that all children are unique and are, 'educated to fulfil their human potential.' At XII Apostles, we believe that, even in a technological world, developing children's handwriting and having the ability to write neatly, accurately, legibly, fluently and being able to adapt style to purpose are still an important part of children's literacy. Having a flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity.

Aims

We aim to:

- give pupils the tools that are necessary for writing cursively, fluently and legibly so that the act of handwriting is not a barrier to creativity
- enable all pupils to develop their own style of handwriting;
- enable children to adapt their handwriting style to suit the given task;
- encourage pride and high levels of presentation in their own work

Teaching and Learning

Why is teaching handwriting important?

Handwriting:

- activates parts of the brain involved in thinking and working memory, allowing the writer to manage and store information.
- When taught correctly, handwriting actively encourages good postural control and mid-line crossing,
- writing by hand is good for stimulating the brain

At XII Apostles, we believe handwriting is a necessary and important skill that is developed throughout the whole curriculum. It is discretely focused on at least daily in FS and KS1 and 3 times weekly in KS2 by either the class teacher or teaching assistant. Included in these sessions is time for the children to apply and practise their learning. Further practise opportunities across the curriculum are utilised. As progress is made, the emphasis then shifts to

developing the children's own style and fluency, again through practise and application.

Handwriting is taught following the Supersonic Phonic Friends (SSPF) Curly Cal and his friends Handwriting Scheme and the Pen Pals scheme of work (Cambridge), and the children work through 5 developmental stages:

1. Readiness for handwriting; gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation (EYFS and Key Stage 1)
2. Beginning to join (Key Stage 1- GD year 2 and lower Key Stage 2)
3. Securing the joins (Lower Key Stage 2)
4. Practising speed and fluency (Upper Key Stage 2)
5. Presentation skills (Upper Key Stage 2)

Phase 1 expected EYFS/Key Stage 1

The children in the EYFS begin to develop and build on their gross and fine motor skills through a wide variety of activities throughout the curriculum. They practise their mark making that then eventually leads to learning the formation of both lower and upper case letters, in line with the scheme. The inclusion of a 'flick' at the end of most letters is also learned, in preparation for joining.

Sessions are short, active and regular (at least daily)

N.B. The Foundation 1 book in the Pen Pals scheme is ideally suited to children working within basics 1 and 2 of SSPF. However, the activities within this should continue to be used with the children as they begin to learn how to form letters following the SSPF scheme.

Phase 2 – Key Stage 1 (GD only) and lower Key Stage 2

Children begin to join their letters introduced as 2 basic joins:

Diagonal join - (e.g. *at*): this is the most common join. It starts from the final flick on the baseline

Horizontal join (e.g. *op*) : this join is formed from letters that finish at the top of the letter rather than at the baseline.

Again, regular practise is given in short, focused sessions (at least 3 times per week)

Phase 3 – Lower Key Stage 2

Children continue to practise and secure their joins through regular practise and application across the curriculum

Phase 4 – Upper Key Stage 2

Children begin to develop their speed and fluency and focus more on their size and layout of their letters.

Phase 5 – Upper Key Stage 2

Children develop their presentation, speed and fluency and own style. They decide on where and when different handwriting is needed.

Each year group follows their given LTP, in line with either the SSPF or PenPals scheme (see whole school LTP, Appendix 1.) However, teachers adapt their teaching in line with the ability and phase of development of their cohort so a 'stage not age' philosophy is used. Additional sessions/practise are planned for identified children in order for learning to be reinforced and extra practice/application time given.

In addition, opportunities for children to develop, practise, re-enforce and apply their substantive and disciplinary knowledge and strategies are used throughout the curriculum. For example, shared and guided writing as well as phonics sessions, afford many opportunities for talking about and modelling letter formation and joins.

Learning to associate the kinaesthetic handwriting movement with the visual letter pattern and the aural phonemes will help children with learning to spell and a spelling/vocabulary link is identified at the start of each unit.

Handwriting sessions are 'active' sessions and incorporate all aspects involved in developing handwriting, for example, posture, pencil grip warm ups, positioning of paper etc.

Children practise letter formations and joins in different ways, e.g air writing, tracing etc. to re-enforce learning before actually practising on paper. Handwriting tram lines are initially used to help children regulate the size and orientation of their letters. However, teachers ensure that children also regularly practise writing on lined paper in order to apply their learning to a real context. The width of the lines used, become narrower as the children become more secure and work through the 5 phases.

A common, shared vocabulary is used throughout the school and with the children to help reinforce substantive and disciplinary knowledge. This is clearly outlined as part of the scheme.

Rhymes from the SSPF Curly Cal scheme are used initially in EYFS and KS1 as an aid for correct letter formation. Once children are able to form letters correctly in accordance with the SSPF letter formation guides, they will begin to join letters in Y3 (Y2 if the child is working at GD and ready to progress), following the PenPals scheme.

In line with the Pen Pals Scheme, the use of pen for handwriting begins to be introduced in y4. However, this is at the teacher's discretion and individual children's abilities in handwriting and other aspects of writing e.g. spellings, sentence construction etc. The use of pen will also be determined by the actual purpose of the writing itself e.g. pen to be used for a formal letter or a piece of work for a display. It is important for the children to make these decisions and be aware of appropriate times and situations for the use of pen.

Inclusion - supporting pupils with SEND

Handwriting is adapted to meet the needs of individual children taking into account their primary need, making reasonable adjustments and through adaptive teaching.

Pencil hold & resources

- The most important thing is comfort and a hold that will be efficient under speed
- The traditional pencil hold allows children to sustain handwriting for long periods, but there are many alternative pencil holds (particularly for left-handers)
- Some children may benefit from triangular pencils or ordinary pencils with plastic pencil grips.

Left handed children

- Left-handed children should not sit to the right of right-handed children as their papers will meet in the middle.

Sloped Surfaces

- Children who experience some motor control difficulties often benefit from writing on a slight slope
- Ring-binders are the easiest and cheapest way to provide a slope

Handwriting is a complex skill that involves many cognitive processes. It requires good letter perception with visual and motor perceptual skills and for children to have reached the necessary developmental milestones.

For those children not yet reaching these important developmental milestones or having other cognitive or processing needs, further intervention is utilised. This includes strategies and activities for developing:

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Improving core body strength and strengthening hand muscles
- Letter formation and correcting reversal

- Fluency and speed
- Appropriate pressure

Resources and further guidance are stored on Teams.

Assessment and Recording

Children's progression in handwriting is assessed daily through formative assessments and observations. Summative assessments at the end of each year are also available as part of the scheme and the upper primary books provide a starting-point assessment. Furthermore, the LTP for Key Stage 2, builds in revision time for work in prior years, so this is also used as an assessment opportunity.

Marking

Set work for handwriting practice. Handwriting may be chosen as a focus for a piece of work in other curriculum areas and so would be commented on in line with the Marking Policy.

Parents and Carers

Parental sheets that outline the expectations for each year group are included as part of both the SSPF and PenPals scheme and will be sent out to parents as the children are taught how to form letters weekly for Reception children and at the beginning of each academic year for Years 1 to 6. Children's progress in handwriting is reported to parents as part of parent's evening and end of year reports.

Reviewed: biannually
Next review date: Sept 2026