



Handwriting Policy

Overall Aims

A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. As such, we actively teach handwriting as part of the English and Literacy curriculum through daily phonics lessons and discrete weekly lessons, quick reinforcing sessions and application every day. Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of progression from readiness for handwriting, through to letter joins, practising speed and fluency and higher presentation skills.

To develop a clear, legible style of writing, children are taught to:

- hold a pencil comfortably; promoting a legible style that encourages writing from left to right, from top to bottom of the page and starting and finishing letters correctly
- develop a consistent size and shape of letters and a regularity of spacing between letters and words
- join letters correctly
- Develop greater control and fluency as they become increasingly confident.

Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We will never simply ask children to copy models from a sheet or practice book.

Teaching and Learning

Considerations when teaching handwriting:

- a) Pencil grip and tension;
- b) Writing pressure;
- c) Clarity of the stroke;
- d) Orientation of the paper for left/right handed children;
- e) Body posture;
- f) Orientation of seating for left handed children (i.e. not bumping elbows with right handed children).

Children need to be made aware of:

- a) Where the letter starts;
- b) Where the individual letter stands with regard to the baseline;
- c) Ascenders and descenders - lined paper will assist;
- d) Spacing and finger space between words;
- e) Consistent writing size;
- f) Capital letters and their appropriate use

PROVISION

Handwriting and expected standards of presentation should be taught as a **whole class activity**. Some additional lessons at the beginning of a term may be necessary. Intensive teaching is recommended at the start of each school year to clarify expectations, with further reinforcement in weekly lessons.

Teaching Time

- **Nursery** - Children will begin with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from simply making marks to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to finer motor skills using a variety of tactile methods. They need opportunities to make marks in their own way and to gradually refine these into recognisable patterns and eventually individual letters and numbers.
- **Primary 1** - Handwriting will be taught daily as part of our Literacy Lesson. Children are taught how to form the letters of the alphabet accurately, quickly and effortlessly. Basic formation is taught using handwriting phrases so children have mnemonic support to visualise the shape of each letter. It is expected that by the end of this year, the majority will be writing unaided, using capitals where appropriate and presenting their written work legibly.
- **Primary 2** - Children continue to practise forming letters use the letter formation stories used in literacy lessons.
- **Primary 3** - An introduction to joined writing can be started when a child has developed a consistent, clear print style, where letters are generally correctly formed. The children will now begin to work towards their pen licence

There should be a **minimum** of 1 x 30 minutes handwriting lessons each week in Primary 2 and 3.

In P4-P7 there should be a **minimum** of 1 x 15 minutes handwriting lessons each week as the children aim to receive their Pen licence by the end of Primary 4.

The lesson structure should include:

- brief warm up exercises led by the teacher
<http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-warm-up-exercises.html>
- teacher modelling of letter formation of letters in isolation, joins or words
- whilst pupils writing , the teacher circulates and intervenes to secure understanding and progress

In addition, teachers should act as a model when writing on the board or marking work, using a fluent joined style where appropriate.

A model of the agreed handwriting style should be displayed in all classrooms. In addition, posters around the school environment should also model expectations for handwriting and presentation.

The writing process

Handwriting patterns

Pupils should be given opportunities to use materials to develop hand-eye coordination. Writing patterns that reinforce basic handwriting movements will help to develop fluency, control and confidence.

Focus

Each handwriting lesson should have a clear focus. This should be discussed, and demonstrations given to emphasise key teaching points.

Practice

Pupils should have opportunities for 'purposeful, guided practice'. Motivated and directed handwriting is essential.

Fluency and rhythm

Fluent handwriting is writing which the pencil literally flows from letter to letter in a smooth and almost continuous process. Children should be encouraged to write at a reasonable speed in order to develop this skill.

Speed

The essential qualities of good writing and fluency, neatness and speed. Fluency is best achieved at speed, but writing done too quickly often suffers from loss of form, regularity and legibility. The Nelson Handwriting style and joining methods have been designed to stand up to the demands for speedy, efficient handwriting. If children are struggling with the speed of their written work then lessons or additional support should be given to them using resources from the Speed Up writing book.

Individuality

Children should not be expected to make exact reproductions of the letters forms presented as models in Nelson Handwriting. In due course it is likely that many children will develop individual variations on this style. These variations will give their writing character, and, provided that the writing is legible, are to be encouraged.

Presentation

Children need to learn to consider the visual impact of their writing as well as its accuracy. Aspects of presentation (including spacing, margin, borders, illustrations and calligraphic effects) should also be focused on.

(b) The Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme

At St Mary's Episcopal Primary School, we use the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme to help children develop their handwriting, based on the clear, upright style of Nelson.

Letter formation as per the scheme is as follows:

Lower case letters

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

Capitals

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W

Numbers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The joining sets

Set 1

a c d e f h i k l m n s t u

Twelve letters with exit flicks plus s

Set 2

a c d e g i j m n o p r s u v w x y

Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height

set 3

b f h k l t

Six letters which start at the top of the ascender

Set 4

f o r v w

Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height

The break letters

b g j p q x y z

Eight letters after which no join is made

Joins are not made to or from the letter z

Children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units before learning to join.

The joins

	Set		Set		
The first join	1	⇒	2	in	am
The second join	1	⇒	3	ab	ch
The third join	4	⇒	2	oa	wo
The first join	4	⇒	3	wh	ob
The break letters				bigger	

The joined style

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Physical Environment

Attention to posture and seating arrangements is important. To this end, all teachers need to ensure the following are in place:

- chair and table should be at a comfortable height ;
- table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor;
- children encouraged to sit up straight and not slouch;
- height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor;
- tables should be free of clutter;
- rooms should be well lit, and
- left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

Children who display specific difficulties with handwriting will have these addressed through such interventions as slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips, using alternative writing media etc.

ASSESSMENT

All teachers have high expectations of children in regards to handwriting and presentation of work in books, and will encourage children to take pride in their work.

Children's writing and presentation in books will be monitored by class teachers on a daily basis. Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons - the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Does the child adopt the correct posture?
- Does the child hold the pencil/pen correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and/or joining letters?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Does the child reverse or invert any letters?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the writing speed appropriate?
- Is the size of writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?

We believe the Nelson style promotes the development of clear, legible writing.

Good handwriting practice is encouraged in all written work, but particularly in Literacy.

Nelson Handwriting is a proprietary product of Nelson Thornes Limited providing a clear, practical framework for the teaching of handwriting. See www.nelsonthornes.com for more details.



Handwriting phrases for helping your child to form letters

This works best if your child practises for a short time every day.

1. Show the picture side and air-write as you say the phrase
2. Ask your child to practise in the air with you
3. Using a sharp pencil and sat at a table, encourage your child to have a go
4. Praise your child for their efforts

- m** Maisie, mountain, mountain
a round the apple, down the leaf
s slither down the snake
d round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet
t down the tower, across the tower
i down the body, dot for the head
n down Nobby, over his net
p down the plait and over the pirate's face
g round her face, down her hair and give her a curl
o all around the orange
c curl around the caterpillar
k down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg
u down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle
b down the laces to the heel, round the toe
f down the stem and draw the leaves
e lift off the top and scoop out the egg
l down the long leg
h down the head to the hooves and over his back
r down his back and then curl over his arm
j down his body, curl and dot
v down a wing, up a wing
y down a horn, up a horn and under his head
w down, up, down, up
z zig-zag-zig
q round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair
x down the arm and leg and repeat the other side



Handwriting Style



Lower case letters

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Capitals

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Numbers

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The joined style

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