

William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery



Handwriting Policy

Date of policy creation:	January 2022
Date of policy review:	January 2025
Governing body signature:	

Why Teach Handwriting?

Introduction

- As a **motor skill** - handwriting practice helps develop co-ordination.
- Well formed letters and linking letters helps develop **aesthetic awareness**.
- Well presented handwriting improves children's **attitude towards their work** through personal pride and satisfaction in the finished product.
- The legibility of pupils' work affects the **fluency and quality** of written work in general.

"The ability to write easily quickly and legibly affects the quality of a child's written output, for difficulty with handwriting can hamper his flow of thoughts and limits his fluency"

(The Bullock Report) This school policy clarifies our approach of handwriting, and is supported by guidelines.

Vision and Values

We see excellence in teaching and enjoyment in learning as the foundation for success in life. Learning is strongest when the learner commits energy, focuses on **a real goal, does not give up and works hard** to overcome obstacles. The skill of producing well-formed legible handwriting remains fundamental to pupils' educational achievement.

We believe that:

- A flexible, fluent handwriting style empowers pupils to write with confidence and creativity. This is an entitlement that needs skilful teaching.
- Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth.
- Readiness for handwriting; gross and fine motor skills leading to pattern-making and letter formation
- Beginning to join
- Securing the joins
- Practising speed and fluency
- Presentation skills
- Handwriting must be actively taught; this can be done in association with phonics and spelling. Learning to associate the kinaesthetic handwriting movement with visual letter pattern and aural phonemes will help with learning to spell.

Teaching and learning

The teaching of handwriting skills begins as soon as possible. The structured teaching of the correct letter formations begins in Foundation stage along with gross and fine motor skills.

If pupils are to produce a clear, legible style, they need to be introduced to the movements and principles of cursive (i.e. joined-up) writing from the beginning of their time in school.

By the end of Key Stage 2 it must be emphasised that no child is too old or proficient at handwriting to stop practising. Hopefully the development of a personal style will carry on into adulthood.

EYFS Ages and Stages

Reception

Writing - Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Physical Fine motor - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

Programmes of Study for English

Pupils should be able to:

Year 1

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

• **Year 2**

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Year 3 and Year 4

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Year 5 and Year 6

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.
- Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use a print style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

Nelson Handwriting Scheme

- The school uses the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to support the delivery of teaching of handwriting. This is in the context of whole class teaching leading to independent writing which is developed through:
- Vocabulary for talking about letter formation and joining
- Strong links between letter strings and handwriting practice
- Efficient pencil/pen hold and good posture
- An emphasis on developing legibility, speed and fluency
- Consideration of different styles of writing for different purposes
- Awareness of presentational issues.

Pupils are taught:

- the correct orientation of patterns and letters
- the correct letter heights
- which letters to join and not to join.
- different types of letter joins

Teachers share the Learning Objective at the beginning of the lesson and model correctly the joins being focused upon. Pupils are given reminders through the use of the Focused Activity at the beginning of the lesson, which then moves onto independent application in the Extra Activity. Pupils who are able to complete these activities to the required standard are then moved onto the Extension Activity, while those who need more practice continue to work on the Extension Activity. Handwriting practice exercises will be completed in pupils' writing journals. We feel that this supports the pupil and acts as a reference point and a reminder about presentation and letter formations.

Having developed a good pencil grip style pupils use HB pencils. As a pupil's handwriting skills develop, they will move from pencil to pen. Black ink is used as it gives a clean, sharp appearance and supports pupils with visual impairment. Pupils should be encouraged to begin to use pens when the teacher feels that they have developed a good handwriting style from Year 3 onwards. Children are able awarded their 'Pen License' in our Celebration Assembly where they are recognised for their achievement.

The most suitable pens to begin with are "Handwriters" and "Notewriters". Pupils at the upper end of Key Stage 2 can move onto using a black ink cartridge pen, when the teacher feels it is appropriate.

Extra Support

- Pencil grips can be used to help develop an appropriate grip
- Occupational Therapists recommend Stablio pens or pencils for some pupils who need a tool more tailored to the shape of their hands.
- A raised board with a non-slip surface can also support pupils
- Some pupils are given additional support from a Teaching Assistant. This is to provide extra reinforcement to secure formation and joins.

The role of the English subject leader:

- To support staff in raising standards in the quality of pupils' handwriting through reviewing the policy on a regular basis auditing and moderating pupils' work, ensuring that staff are aware of and adhere to the agreements within the policy.
- Monitoring use of resources.
- Evaluating and purchasing resources.
- Leading staff meetings related to handwriting.

The role of the teacher and teaching assistant

- To appreciate the importance of handwriting.
- To learn and use the agreed style of handwriting to a degree of competency so that will support its use in the classroom and they act as an exemplar when writing comments in pupils' books.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to practice their handwriting skills. The teacher will teach a whole class handwriting lesson each week.
- Differentiate tasks according to levels of competency.
- Communicate clear expectations on the quality of presentation in all pupils' books across the curriculum.
- To develop in the classroom an appreciation of different handwriting forms and style (calligraphy) and to provide the most suitable resources and equipment for children to use.

Ways of working

Teachers plan for handwriting on a weekly basis. The teacher introduces the focus of the lesson through the learning objective and the use of Success Criteria. These Success Criteria are taken from the National Curriculum, and are covered by following the Nelson Text books for the appropriate Year group (From Year 1) taught in the sequence of the Pupil Book. (See Appendix A).

Children in Reception class practice letter formation within their Read Write Inc Lessons, only.

This Scheme has been selected to give full coverage of the National Curriculum, as well as take into account the guidance from the Ofsted Framework of 2019.

Assessment

Teachers use the National Standard grids for assessing handwriting. The standards are produced in the form of writing mats for the pupils to use in order to assess where they are and to identify the next steps for them to improve their handwriting.