



Whitley Abbey Primary School

Handwriting Policy

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1. Curriculum Statement

Intent

At Whitley Abbey Primary School, the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed is recognised. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school.

In the EYFS, children are taught to use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds, as well as some common words with irregular spellings.

Planned opportunities are provided for the children to develop writing simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Children develop the use of effective pencil grip throughout their time in Reception.

In KS1, children's handwriting practice focuses on ensuring that children form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. It develops their use of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and promotes an understanding of which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. Children also develop accuracy in writing capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters and use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. Children are taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Throughout KS2, emphasis is placed on children's development of writing legibly, fluently and with increasing speed. Emphasis is placed on children being taught to choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters, as well as choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Implementation

To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and children are explicitly taught the skill of handwriting at a minimum of once a week. In reception and KS1, the teacher will use the Nelson workbooks to ensure accurate coverage of the different joins and use of ascenders and descenders. This will be recorded in a handwriting book. To ensure cohesion with our phonics scheme (Read Write Inc.), children in EYFS and KS1 will follow the formation of the 'k' and 'f' according to RWI rather than the Nelson scheme. This will help to reinforce children's reading knowledge.

In KS2, the outcome is recorded directly into children's literacy books and handwriting practise can take place within the English lesson. Teachers are expected to explicitly teach the skill of handwriting at a minimum of once a week for a minimum of 30 minutes. Across the school, handwriting is carefully modelled by the teacher and outcomes are recorded by the children in their English books. The use of patterns to support letter formation and appropriate letter-joins is also embedded enabling children to also further develop their fine motor skills. High expectations are also communicated as part the success criteria for the lesson. A high standard of presentation is also encouraged and expected in children's written work across the wider curriculum.

Impact

This systematic approach ensures development in the skill of handwriting throughout each year group. Children take pride in their written work and achieve proficiency in their own use of the Nelson script. Outcomes in children's wider curriculum work, as well as in their English books and school displays, evidence the progress that children make in this area, as well as the consistency of the approach across the school.

2. Teaching and Learning

For children to achieve a high standard of handwriting, they need to be explicitly taught the skills needed. At Whitley Abbey Primary School, we use and teach the Nelson style, letter formations and joins in handwriting to ensure consistency across the school. We have high expectations in handwriting lessons and make sure that children are expected to apply the same standards in other writing as well. Handwriting practice takes place at least once a week and has a clear focus, with key teaching points demonstrated to the class. Each session provides allocated time for children to practise the specific handwriting skill. Extension activities will allow for further practice, development and challenge.

Teachers will make sure that children are concentrating on 'the 3 'P's' during handwriting sessions. These are -

- Paper: the paper children write on should be angled slightly away from the writing hand.
- Posture: sitting up straight, both feet on the floor, adequate desk space.
- Pencil grip: tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil (held lightly between thumb and forefinger, about 3cm from the point with the middle finger providing additional support).

3. Assessment

Teacher assessment:

Teachers will assess children's handwriting progression during lessons as they write as well as once they have completed their writing. Criteria for assessment may include:

- Does the child adapt the correct posture?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movements when forming/joining?
- Does the child write fluently?
- Is the writing legible?
- Is the writing appropriate?
- Is the child's handwriting developing in-line with statutory curricula?

Pupil assessment:

Throughout the writing process, children are encouraged to assess their handwriting. The 'Getting Ready to Write' visual prompt and 'Handwriting checklist' can be found in the classroom for children to reference.

The expectation for a high standard of handwriting is also communicated prior to writing tasks. When explicitly indicated in the children's success criteria, this is an aspect of the outcome which is reviewed and assessed by each child on completion of the task. Neat presentation is always recognised and praised by the class teacher and children are encouraged to review their handwriting as part of the writing process.

Whole-school assessment:

The subject leaders for literacy will regularly assess handwriting across the school. Criteria for whole-school assessment may include:

- Is the handwriting generally legible and pleasant?
- Are letters being shaped correctly?
- Are joins being made correctly?
- Are spaces between letters, words and lines correct?
- Is writing size appropriate?
- Are the writing standards demonstrated by the majority of children in line with statutory curricula?

4. Planning and Resources

At Whitley Abbey Primary School, we will teach the children to write using the Nelson Handwriting scheme. The most up-to-date edition of the scheme guides children through carefully structured stages from pre-writing patterns all the way to the development of individual style.

- Teachers are to use the Nelson books to deliver high-quality handwriting lessons.
- Year 6 children move to using a pen as necessary for KS2 SATs.
- Other KS2 children will write in HB pencil until it is deemed that their handwriting is sufficiently accurate. At this point they will transition to pen.
- EYFS and KS1 children will write in HB pencil in all exercise books.
- All children will write in HB pencil in Maths books.

5. EYFS

It is important for children to understand the importance of clear and neat handwriting from an early age. Correct letter formation is taught in both Nursery and Reception and children are given opportunities to independently practise their handwriting. Children are also given plenty of opportunities to develop the fine motor skills they need for accurate handwriting through continuous provision in the EYFS setting.

In Reception, formal handwriting lessons are introduced and children each have a handwriting book in which to practise their pencil control and letter formation.

During these handwriting lessons the children will learn to write legibly in a pre-cursive style with increasing fluency and speed by:

- Having a correct pencil grip, posture and paper position (3 'P's)
- Knowing the correct way each letter and numeral is formed (lower case letters)
- Forming all letters correctly (including size and orientation)

6. KS1

In KS1 handwriting is to be taught discretely using the Nelson Handwriting scheme. In KS1 the children will continue to use handwriting practice books. Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities. Handwriting should be discussed within and linked to phonics sessions and teachers and support staff should continue to guide children on how to write letters correctly.

In Year 1 the children will continue to develop their pre-cursive handwriting with increasing fluency and speed by:

- Having a correct pencil grip, posture and paper position (3 'P's)
- Knowing the correct way each letter and numeral is formed (lower case letters and capital letters)
- Forming all letters correctly (including size and orientation)

In Year 2 children progress to write legibly in a cursive style with increasing fluency and speed by;

- Having a correct pencil grip, posture and paper position (3 'P's)
- Knowing the correct way each letter and numeral is formed (lower case letters and capital letters)
- Forming all letters correctly (including size and orientation)
- Using the 4 joins
- Knowing which letters are the break letters
- Writing in a joined style

7. KS2

In KS2 handwriting continues to be taught discretely using the Nelson Handwriting scheme. In KS2 the children will record their handwriting practise directly into their literacy books. During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent style and by the end of Year 6 be able to adapt their handwriting for the for different purposes, such as: a neat, legible hand for finished, presented work, a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc.

In KS2 the children progress to write legibly in a cursive style with increasing fluency and speed by;

- Having a correct pencil grip, posture and paper position (3 'P's)
- Knowing the correct way each letter and numeral is formed (lower case letters and capital letters)
- Forming all letters correctly (including size and orientation)
- Using the 4 joins
- Knowing which letters are the break letters
- Writing in a joined style
- Practising skills of printing, *slanting* and speedwriting
- Progressing to an individual joined style
- Considering handwriting styles for different purposes

8. Equal Opportunities

All children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential in handwriting, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, and ability, or of any physical or sensory disability.

9. Inclusion

Provision for children with English as an additional language.

Children with EAL are encouraged to make the same outstanding progress in handwriting as their peers. To support their understanding of letter formation handwriting should be consistently modelled by the class teacher.

Provision for children with Special Educational Needs

Some children experience difficulties making progress in their handwriting development. They may need additional support with their fine motor development, pencil grip or letter formation. The class teacher should liaise with the Literacy subject leader and SENDCo to put into place the most appropriate form of support. This could include:

- Pencil grip or jumbo triangular pencil
- Fine motor skills intervention
- Additional handwriting group
- Additional handwriting homework
- A different exercise book

High Achievers

Children with advanced skills in handwriting will be supported and given opportunities for extension work.

Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned to the left for right-handed pupils and to the right for left-handed Pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision
- Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically
- The paper should be slanted to the right at about a 30-45-degree angle. This allows the child to "push-rather-than-pull" their pencil across the page and to see where they are writing. This also helps them avoid smudging their work as they smoothly move their arm across the page.

Teachers know it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

10. Role of the Subject Leaders

The role of the subject leaders is to coordinate the teaching of handwriting across all phases of the school. This is in order to secure a consistent approach across the school and to ensure progression in handwriting is outstanding.

Some key duties that the literacy subject leader should undertake over the course of the year include:

- Monitoring of handwriting in handwriting books and literacy books
- Monitoring of the application of handwriting across other exercise books, such as topic books
- Helping identify and facilitate the professional development needs of staff
- Liaising with the school SENDCo to best support children with handwriting difficulties
- Keeping abreast of new initiatives in the teaching of handwriting

11. Parents

We recognise how important the home-school link is for children to make outstanding progress in all areas of learning – including handwriting. Parents will be informed of their child's standards of presentation during Parents Evenings and will be encouraged to support with any additional handwriting practice where necessary.

Appendix

A: Ready Reference Guide

READY REFERENCE GUIDE

The letter forms

The lower-case alphabet for Starter Level:

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

The lower-case alphabet for Books 1 to 6:

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

A letter slant of 8° from the vertical to the right is introduced in Pupil Book 3:

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

The lower-case print alphabet:

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

The capital letters and numerals:

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
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

These are the same throughout the scheme.

The letter groups

Letter families

In year one, *Nelson Handwriting* groups the letters into sets based on handwriting families. These are letters that are formed in similar ways.

Set 1

c a o d g q s f e

Set 2

i l t u j y

Set 3

r n m h k b p

Set 4

v w x z

Joining groups

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

Group 1

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

Thirteen letters with exit flicks plus s.

Group 2

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

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

Group 3

b f h k l t

Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.

Group 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.

The joins

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

The joined style

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Letter size

Book	x-height of letter (mm)
Starter Workbook A	10
Starter Workbooks B & C	8
Book 1A and 1B	6
Book 2	5
Book 3	4
Book 4	4
Book 5	3
Book 6	3

B: The 3 P's

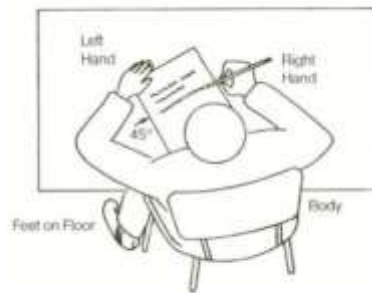
Posture

- Feet flat on the floor and hip width apart. Use a step if required.
- Hips flexed at 90°
- Bottom and back supported
- Chair tucked in under the table
- Elbows supported on the table
- If the chair has a deep seat, put a cushion behind the child's back to give more support
- Work out a simple physical reminder such as a tap on the shoulder when posture is poor
- Try an angled writing surface if suitable
- A smooth work surface will provide less resistance to movement

Paper Position

This is important to allow a view of the writing and to help prevent the development of a hooked grasp. Left handers may need to position the paper at a different angle to right handers.

Paper Position for Right-Handers



Paper Position for Left-Handers



Pencil Grip

The way the child holds a pencil/pen is important. The grip needs to be comfortable, not too tiring and allow movement of the pencil/pen in a controlled way to write neat letters. The best grip for many of us is:

- Pencil balanced against hand
- The wrist is slightly extended (bent upwards)
- The tip of the thumb and index finger are on the pencil/pen with the index finger slightly flexed (bent)
- The side of the middle finger has the pencil resting on it at the level of the fingernail
- Children should try and achieve a tripod pencil grasp

