

Newfield Park Primary School



Handwriting Policy

February 2016



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Rationale:

"Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. It needs to be systematically taught."

(National Handwriting Association)

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates; for that reason, it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting taught and modeled throughout our school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. We want all children to feel proud of their work; including how it is presented.

Aims and Objectives:

At our school we aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential by catering for those different learning styles. We will support children with the acquisition of a legible, fluent, efficient handwriting style.

Through our teaching children will:

- Develop a legible style of handwriting.
- Develop a consistency in the size and shape of letters.
- Develop fluent and smooth flow and join of letters.
- Raise their self-motivation and esteem through the establishment of best handwriting practice.
- Establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills.
- Follow the Nelson Cursive font (when using ICT) or Nelson Pre-Cursive font.



Implementation:

In order to meet our aims and objectives, all members of our school community will use the "Nelson" handwriting Scheme.

- Nelson Handwriting provides a clear, practical framework for implementing and developing a whole-school handwriting policy. Pupils are actively encouraged to explore different styles of handwriting and develop their own style whilst learning to form letters and joins accurately. The scheme is introduced to children in Year 2 and continues and develops with children throughout the stages into Year 6.
- At the back of this policy is an exemplar alphabet for staff, children and parents to refer to.

- Full explanations (for staff) of what children are expected to do within each year group are part of the new writing curriculum sheets and can also be found in a separate document within the English folder entitled "Handwriting changes"

Printed Font

- Children will also experience different styles of printed font. The University of Edinburgh highlights that children need to be exposed to a wide range of styles and sizes to aid their reading skills. This includes handwritten examples on displays. When possible, the Nelson handwriting font will be used on displays within classrooms

Handwriting lessons

- The frequency and length of handwriting lessons will vary according to the age and competence of the pupils. With Early Level pupils, it is appropriate to have short, daily lessons. Children in KS1 and KS2 will do handwriting practice based either on common joins or key vocabulary at the start of every lesson. This will be done at the start of lessons for 5-10 minutes and will be documented in Maths and Learning Journeys (English books for Year 6). Good handwriting skills and neat presentation will be continually reinforced in all work across the curriculum.

Tools

- Initially children should use a good quality HB handwriting pencil, to practice their joins. Teachers and children should ensure it is always sharp and fits comfortably in their hand. Proper handwriting pens may be introduced as the handwriting improves as a motivation to earn the privilege to write in pen. Where possible, display work should be in pen, and a neatly, joined, consistently sized style should be used.

Grip

- Children should be taught and continually encouraged to hold their pencil using the tripod grip. Pencils should be held lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support. Children should be sitting comfortably with both feet on the floor.

Left Handed Children

- Children who are left handed should also be encouraged to hold their pencil with this grip. When joining letters some left handed children may find it more appropriate to leave 'f' and 't' unjoined. During handwriting sessions, it is recommended that right handed children will not be seated on the left hand side of a left handed child. This ensures that their elbows do not collide.
- A child who experiences significant difficulties with fine motor skills will be placed on a 'Let's Move' programme in school. Should these difficulties persist, a referral may be made to the Occupational Therapy Service.

Monitoring and Assessing

- All handwriting skills are assessed by the teacher or teaching assistant on an ongoing basis. Children will also have the opportunity to self and peer assess their work. They may use formative assessment

strategies to highlight their best piece of work as well as areas that they feel they need to improve on, for example, using traffic lights or circling best letter/ join.

- “Nelson” handwriting scheme also provides checklists designed for children and teachers to assess progress. Children experiencing difficulties with handwriting will be supported by the class teacher and may receive extra focused lessons.

Evaluation and Review

- In consultation with staff, governors, and pupils’ the English Working Party is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the impact this policy has upon the school and responding to the findings, always striving to improve the quality of learning and teaching at Newfield.
- The English Working Party will review this policy annually and will look at the evidence of progress in books and assessed pieces of work, and the impact the “Nelson” Materials has.

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if required.

Draft 1: September 2015

Draft 2: February 2016

Date for Review: July 201



Nelson Pre-Cursive font

Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu

Vv Ww Xx Yy

Zz

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Handwriting Progression

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Progression

- On entry to Reception, children's pencil grips are assessed and they are given the appropriate support to enable them to master the 'tripod grip' through a variety of mark making activities.
- Children in Reception are also involved in the 'Write Dance' movement programme. This ensures they can perform key gross motor movements, which aid general fine motor skills and letter formation.
- Letter formation (graphemes) are introduced in Reception alongside the sound focus (phoneme) in phonics. Due to the programme of delivery, letters will be introduced in the following order: s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, e, u, r, h, b, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, z, qu.
- Letters are formed as illustrated below. The dot and arrow show the start point for the letter and the direction of the initial stroke.
- Whilst children are encouraged to use the appropriate language of ascenders and descenders, with younger children these words may be reinforced with terms such as tall letters/sticks (ascenders) or tails (descenders).

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

- As soon as children develop some control over their letter formation and have developed a small repertoire of letters, handwriting can be taught in 'word families'. This is when individual letters, which are formed in similar ways, are taught alongside one another (see below).

c o a d g q

i l t f j

r n m h b k

v w

u y

e s x z (stand alone letters)

- As children develop their phonic knowledge and begin to word build, individual letters will begin to join to others depending on the phase of phonics being delivered. For example if children are learning the 'ch' phoneme, this join will be reinforced as part of their daily phonics lesson. This stage is begun in Reception and will continue into Year 2, increasing in complexity and reflecting the phase of phonics the child is working at.
- After this stage, in Year 3, comes the reinforcement of specific joins which are at the core of a consistent cursive script and are detailed below.
- 1st join - a diagonal stroke from the bottom of one letter to the top of a regular lower case letter: *in, im, cu, ew, dr, ey*.
- 2nd join - a diagonal stroke from the bottom of one letter to the top of an ascender (tall letter): *il, at, ub, ch, ck*.
- 3rd join - a horizontal stroke which links two lower case letters, across the top: *og, oa, oi, om, rc, rd, rn, wa, vo*.
- 4th join - a horizontal stroke from the top of a lower case letter, to an ascender (tall letter): *ob, rt, wh*.
- Letters *b, g, j, p, q, y, x* and *z* are known as 'break letters' and are not joined to any letters which follow them:

*table, magic, banjo, topic, squeal, eyes,
boxes, fuzzy.*

- Further examples of letter formation with non-break letters are detailed below.

*ccc church, accent
ooo school, office
aaa nail, aardvark
ddd diamond, puddle
iii indigo, Hawaii*

lll slope, lollipop
fff follow, scuffle
ttt today, skittle
rrr radio, erratic
nnn nonsense, sunny
mmm money, mummy
hhh hospital, think
kkk kite, spooky
vvv violet, above
www window, what
uuu umbrella, continue
eee echo, sleepy
sss sausage, Mississippi

- Children in Years 3 and 4 will continue to practise their handwriting, improving fluency, legibility and consistency .
- They will also be encouraged to space their writing appropriately so that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and ascenders and descenders on different lines do not touch.
- In Years 5 and 6 children will continue to have opportunities to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed and will be encouraged to develop a more 'personal style' .
- They will also be encouraged to match their style of writing and writing implement to the audience or purpose of a given task.