



Parklands Primary School

Handwriting Policy

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”
(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Nelson Handwriting provides a clear, practical framework for implementing and developing a progressive, whole school handwriting policy.

At Parklands Primary School we believe that children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work across the curriculum. We aim for handwriting to become a skill that requires little effort and that this in turn reduces cognitive load, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of written work, rather than upon the act. We will further support any child who experiences difficulty with producing handwriting in line with this policy and will adapt the teaching of handwriting where necessary.

Aims of the Handwriting Policy

We aim for:

- pupils to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed.
- pupils to develop their handwriting skills progressively and to be able to write legibly at each point in their development.
- pupils to develop an effective and comfortable pencil grip.
- pupils to know that all letters start from the top (*except d and e which start in the middle*).
- pupils to form letters correctly; knowing the size and orientation of letters.
- pupils to produce legible handwriting in a style that can be joined by the end of KS1
- pupils to know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively across the curriculum.
- a consistent approach to handwriting and presentation throughout the school, including consistent modelling of writing in children’s books, on the whiteboard, on hand written displays and resources.

Teaching Handwriting

At Parklands Primary School we follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme by Oxford Owl which introduces letters in line with the DfE ‘Letters and Sounds’ document and makes curriculum links to phonics and spelling. Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practiced using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalized. The Nelson

Scheme includes pattern practice and motor skills work, combined with three levels of differentiated activities for all abilities.

Letter formation as per the Nelson Scheme is as follows:

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

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

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

1. to letters without ascenders e.g. in, am, on
2. to letters with ascenders e.g. ab, ch, il
3. horizontal joins e.g. o a, wo, og, wi
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. wh, ob, al

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Teaching Time

In the Foundation Stage there should be daily mark making activities.

In KS1 and LKS2 there should be a minimum of 2 x 15 minute lessons a week.

In UKS2 there should be 1 x15 minute lesson a week.

Some pupils who find handwriting difficult may need further intervention.

The use of books and paper

As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease. Children should start writing in plain books, then as their handwriting improves into exercise and handwriting books.

Reception: Children should use plain books with pencil lines drawn or printed on, (*approx 2cm apart*).

Year 1: Children start the year using wide lined English exercise books and medium squared Maths books. Handwriting books should be introduced at the appropriate time depending on the child's ability.

Year 2: The majority of children should be ready to start the year on narrow lined English books and small squared Maths books. Children should use unlined paper from time to time so that they can apply skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

KS2: Children should write in narrow lined English books and small squared Maths books. Children should continue to use unlined paper from time to time.

Teaching Sequence

The teaching sequence should begin in Nursery and develop with children through their writing journey.

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation (*Physical literacy*)
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (*highlighter*)
- Under teacher's writing (*directly under words – write in large letters, leave large spaces between words*)
- Independence

For the order of teaching letters and joins see Nelson Teacher's Books/Oxford Owl on-line.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

Staff are expected to:

- Model good handwriting all the times
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pens
- Write with chalk on the chalkboard

- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you
- And many, many more.....

Getting Ready to Write – Seating and Posture

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

- The chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Children should be 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
- Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

Pencil Grip: Children should write with a pencil, (or a pen when appropriate), with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.

For right-handers: Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger 3cm away from the point. The paper should be placed to the right slightly tilted to the left. Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left-handers: Hold the pencil lightly between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger; hold about 3cm from the tip. The hand should be kept below the writing line. The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20/30 degrees. Use the right hand to steady the paper. NB, it is very important that a right-handed child is not seated on the left-hand side of a left-handed child as their elbows will collide.

Pupils who struggle to form letters in the correct direction and orientation should receive additional modelling of the letter formation and be given further opportunities to practise the movement in the correct direction ‘in the air’ with their finger, in resources such as sand trays and on a large scale using chalks etc. They should then trace over patterns and letters shapes in order to gain confidence and ‘muscle memory’ in order to attempt the written form independently in a handwriting book. Lined paper should be chosen in relation to the current ability of the pupil to form letters of the appropriate size and in accordance with the pupil’s speed of writing. A pupil may make more effective progress using larger lines and can therefore be given different Handwriting books and Topic Work books to support this.

Teaching staff can select the most appropriate focus resource sheets for a pupil and may decide to take further time to consolidate upon pupil’s letter formation. Additional resources are also available through the English Lead and Inclusion Team.

Pupils may be given additional resources and handwriting packs to practise at home in replacement of other written Home Learning, where appropriate. These packs should be discussed and made in consultation with parents and the English Lead and Inclusion team.

Inclusion, SEND and Equality

Children who display specific difficulties with handwriting will have these addressed through a range of resources and interventions such as, slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips, using alternative writing media etc. Individual cases may be referred to the SENCo where necessary. All children should be supported to achieve their best. Teaching staff should discuss significant needs with the Inclusion Team and should act upon any advice given by outside agencies for pupils with an EHCP.

Handwriting Progression

EYFS Provision and Progression

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, writing skills are encouraged through physical play and mark making. The development of fine motor skills is planned for within literacy sessions and is evident throughout continuous and enhanced provision creating opportunities for all pupils to produce an effective pencil grip and prepare for early writing. As Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) are taught in Phonics sessions during the Autumn term, the children learn the formation phrases in line with sessions from Read Write Inc using the Grapheme and Mnemonic, Picture cards and Formation phrases which match the expected formation set out in the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

The children then choose and write the correct grapheme for each of the sounds they have learnt in order to form initial sounds in words and then progress to from simple CV, VC, CVC, CVCC, CCVC and CCVCC words. All of the GPCs taught are practised during daily Phonics sessions using whiteboards and are then applied in a writing context at least once a week using lined writing books, forming words and sentences containing the taught GPCs during weekly literacy focus sessions. Children are taught the letters in their name when they are developmentally ready and are encouraged to write their name independently. Close attention is paid to using the tripod pencil grip, correct posture and the positioning of the paper to help children develop good handwriting habits for the future. Support is available within the classroom environment in the form of Grapheme Mats (which include the formation of Capital Letters) and Phonics displays.

In the EYFS Children also have access to a range of writing opportunities and mark making tools including (but not limited to): chubby crayons, big chalk, paint brushes, play dough and thick triangular pencils.

By the end of the EYFS, we aim for all pupils to be able to write legibly using print. All pupils are expected to be able to:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

KS1 Provision and Progression

In Year One the children take part in discrete, weekly handwriting sessions as part of their Read Write Inc Phonics lessons.

These sessions are structured in the following way:

- Each teaching session begins with reminders about physical preparation, getting ready to write, seating and posture, and encouragement to sit up straight
- Teachers then model the weekly handwriting focus linked to the phonemes being taught.
- There may be opportunities for tracing (*over teachers writing, worksheets from the scheme or laminated cards etc*) and following and creating patterns where appropriate.
- Pupils then have time for independent practise in a calm environment. Pupils apply their skills and practise the weekly formation focus.

Pupils use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines and written examples and models written by teaching staff.

In the Autumn term, children learn, consolidate and re-cap:

- How to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- They re-cap lower case letters in the correct direction
- Re-cap starting and finishing in the right place.

Pupils also consolidate their handwriting practice to form capital letters and digits 0-9.

In the Spring term, pupils are taught which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (*i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways*). Nelson Handwriting Scheme groups letters into 'sets':

- 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

In the second half of Spring term, pupils begin forming diagonal joins and horizontal joins using these sets. 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 (*13 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 (*19 letters which start at the top of the x height*).

- Group 3: b f h k l t (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender).
- Group 4: f o r v w (5 letters which finish at the top of the x-height).



Nelson Handwriting Scheme (Oxford University Press)

In the Summer term, the four joins and the following are reviewed:

- Break letters are the 8 letters after which no join is made.
- Joins are not made to or from the letter z: b g j p q x y z.
- Capital letters and numerals are never joined.

By the end of Year One, all pupils are expected to:

- 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.

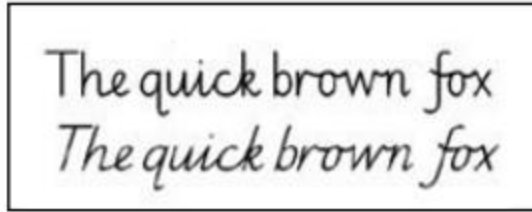
In Year Two the children take part in weekly Handwriting sessions following the same outline as Year One with more advanced content (*as outlined below*).

Pupils use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines and written examples and models written by teaching staff. As pupils gain confidence in using joined handwriting during Year Two, there is an additional focus given to handwritten presentation.

At the end of each half term, teachers teach handwriting skills in an extended context and children apply their skills within their usual writing book. Pupils copy passages of text using joined handwriting of the appropriate size and consistency and spacing between words which reflects the size of the letters and are given an opportunity to present their writing to their best ability.

By the end of the KS1, all pupils are expected to be able to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- 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.



Nelson Handwriting Scheme (Oxford University Press)

KS2 Provision and Progression

In Year 3 children will continue to develop their use of cursive handwriting building upon the skills they have developed in Key stage 1.

In Years 4,5 and 6 children will be expected to use cursive handwriting in all areas of the curriculum.

Those children whose writing is neat and legible may be encouraged to use handwriting pens. If any child is not on track to reach these expectations, they will receive additional support through small group intervention groups.

By the end of the KS2, all pupils are expected to be able to:

- write legibly
- maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed

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. Subject Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly.

When assessing the quality and effectiveness of children's handwriting teachers should consider:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the National Curriculum criteria and assessment without levels?

Children are observed closely as they write during weekly handwriting sessions – the teacher circulates, monitors and intervenes. Support or further scaffolding is then given when pupils are unable to fully access the handwriting taught within a session independently.

Handwriting outcomes are assessed mainly through the use of verbal feedback which happens 'live' within the session. We emphasise re-modelling of the written form by teaching staff where misconceptions or incorrect formation is evident. It is important that incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation are identified and corrected at the point it occurs.

The Role of Teachers and School Staff

All members of staff, (*including teaching assistants, supply teachers, and students*), are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children's writing at home from an early stage. The EYFS and KS1 staff play an important role in communicating this, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names.

The role and responsibility of the subject leader

- To support and guide the classroom practice of teachers and support staff;
- To ensure coverage, continuity and progression in planning;
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of English teaching and learning;
- To update documentation where necessary;
- To produce action plans for the School Development Plan, prepare bids and manage the English budget effectively;
- To liaise and consult with outside agencies where appropriate;
- To prepare and lead INSET;
- To attend relevant INSET training;
- To review regularly the contribution made by English to a meaningful curriculum.

Review

This policy is reviewed by staff and governors at least every three years. Parents are most welcome to request copies of this document and comments are invited from anyone involved in the life of the school.

Appendix

The aims of the 2014 National Curriculum	How <i>Nelson Handwriting</i> delivers these aims:
Year 1	
<p>Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these 	<p><i>Nelson Handwriting</i> supports children from the earliest stages of learning to write. Guidance is given in the Teacher's Book about how to create the conditions for good writing: atmosphere, seating and posture, and pencil and pen grip. Each Pupil Book has a flap on the front cover which reminds children how to prepare for writing. New videos show how children should sit, how they should hold their pencil and how they should position their paper on the desk.</p> <p>All of the lower-case and capital letters are covered in the Workbooks and online Teaching Software, with clear and consistent instructions about how to start and finish letters. The digits 0-9 are covered too.</p> <p><i>Nelson Handwriting</i> groups the letters into sets based on how they are formed, and children practise these in a cumulative manner.</p>
<p>Notes and guidance (non-statutory) 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.</p>	<p><i>Nelson Handwriting</i> is designed to be used little and often. The Teacher's Book gives guidance on direct teaching, and the online Teaching Software gives animated demonstrations of each letter and join.</p> <p>The Teacher's Book also gives useful guidance about left-handed pupils and their specific needs in terms of grip, posture and paper alignment. A left-hander's version of the Pupil Book cover flap is available.</p>
Year 2	
<p>Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>In Year 2, <i>Nelson Handwriting</i> revises the previously-learned joins with an emphasis on relative height. Children re-cap their learning of lower-case and capital letters and practise forming them with consistency.</p> <p>Children are also given the opportunity to continue to practise using print letters, and are reminded that some letters are best left unjoined when next to other letters.</p>
<p>Notes and guidance (non-statutory) 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.</p>	<p>Frequent practice and repetition is at the heart of <i>Nelson Handwriting</i>. The course provides ample opportunity for children to refine their writing skills as their motor control improves.</p>

Appendix

The aims of the 2014 National Curriculum	How <i>Nelson Handwriting</i> delivers these aims:
Year 3-4	
<p>Handwriting</p> <p><i>Pupils should be taught to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch] 	<p>Throughout Years 3 and 4, children continue to practise and develop their handwriting skills. The idea of writing with a slant is introduced for the first time. Nelson Handwriting provides practice in joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes as well as the 'break letters' that are best left unjoined. There is an emphasis on spacing letters consistently and on keeping ascenders and descenders in proportion.</p>
<p>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>Each of the Nelson Handwriting units is based on a context that links into areas across the curriculum, and/or picks up on a key spelling pattern, reinforcing the shape of the letters with the spelling pattern of the word.</p> <p>Guidance is given in the Teacher's Book about how teachers can best ensure that good handwriting is not just reserved for handwriting lessons, and about emphasising the importance of fluency, neatness and speed in writing across the curriculum.</p>
Year 5-6	
<p>Handwriting and presentation</p> <p><i>Pupils should be taught to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>At Years 5-6, Nelson Handwriting continues to provide structured practice for the skills that have been developed so far.</p> <p>Children continue to practise the joins and the break letters, looking at consistency of sizing and spacing.</p> <p>Nelson Handwriting empowers children to develop their own style of handwriting from a secure base, choosing their writing implement and style as appropriate to the occasion.</p>
<p>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</p> <p><i>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 an unjoined 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.</i></p>	<p>Nelson Handwriting continues to develop writing fluency. Speedwriting challenges help children practise automaticity and speed.</p> <p>Children are taught about the difference in expectation between informal jottings and final presented versions and given opportunities to practise these. A range of contexts, from writing addresses to labelling maps and diagrams, help them learn the contexts in which joined or unjoined writing is most appropriate.</p>