

Hevingham Primary School
Hevingham Under 5's
Handwriting Policy

This policy reflects the school's English Policy. Handwriting should be, and is an integral part of children learning to read and write. At Hevingham Primary School we understand the importance of teaching children how to write legibly and to eventually develop their own writing style.

Our Aims

1. To ensure that young children develop physical strength and grip to be able to control mark making tools
2. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
3. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - having a correct pencil grip
 - knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
 - forming all letters correctly
 - knowing the size and orientation of letters

Early years

Children begin to communicate from a young age using mark making. This can be with a variety of tools and materials. It is crucial that our EYFS environments support children's ability to choose to mark make in their continuous provision and for adults and children to celebrate their attempts. EYFS environments also need to support the development of both gross and fine motor skills. This should be shown in the weekly Enhanced Provision planning with specific objectives. Activities to support this should be available in both the indoors and outside provision.

Children should be supported to develop an age and stage appropriate pencil grip that is comfortable and effective. Below is a guide to the different developmental stages of a pencil grip;

1-2 years old: Fisted grip or Palmar Supinate Grip. Children often hold their writing tool like a dagger, scribbling using their whole arm.

2-3 years old: Digital Pronate grip. All fingers are holding the writing tool but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page. Children begin to stabilise their shoulders, so that movement now comes mostly from the elbow. At this age, children should start being able to copy a horizontal, vertical and circular line.

3-4 years old: 'Splayed' or 4 finger grip. 4 fingers are held on the writing tool, beginning to form the arc between the thumb and index finger (web space). Movement will occur mostly from the wrist and the hand and fingers move as one whole unit. At this age, children should be able to complete simple dot-to-dots, imitate zig-zag and crossed lines, trace dotted lines and draw simple humans (eg. Head, stick body and one other body part such as arm or leg).

4 + years old: Static Tripod grip. This is a 3 finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit. At this age, children should be able to copy a diagonal line, a square, a diagonal cross, a circle and a triangle. Pictures of humans become more detailed, including both arms and legs and even facial features. Sometimes this can also have a fourth finger involved, and be termed a Quadrupod grip.

Any children assessed to be needing support with the development of their motor skills should receive targeted support.

Teaching time

Children in Reception should receive 1 - 2 small group focused teaching sessions a week. Children identified as needing further support may have daily or 3 x weekly intervention.

In KS1 and KS2, there should be a **minimum** of 2 x 15 handwriting lessons each week that teach the skills. KS1 also use daily phonics sessions to support their letter formation. In KS2, most lessons begin with a dictated sentence which provides an opportunity to practise and assess handwriting without the cognitive load of creating their own sentence. Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for daily intervention.

Hevingham Primary School uses the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme with the following letter formation-

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

1. to letters without ascenders
2. to letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The break letters (letters that aren't joined from) are:

b g j p q x y z

NB children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units BEFORE learning to join.

Paper

As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease. When children are ready to write in books, books with lines are used. The spacing of the lines decreases as and when ready. The majority of children in KS1 should be using narrow lined books. For some children, they will need to continue on wide lined books until ready. All children should be allowed to use unlined paper *from time to time* so that they can practise applying skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

Teaching Sequence

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- 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 the Nelson Thornes Teachers Handbook.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- 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 pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in malleable materials
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

Getting ready to write

Seating and posture

- 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
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The 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 or Pen grip

- Children should write with a pencil in Early Years and early KS1
- Pens should be introduced in KS1 and all children in KS2 should be writing in pen
- Pencils should be reasonably sharp and of a reasonable length
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil
- If children are struggling with pencil grip, special grip supports may be used.

For right handers

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

For left handers

- Hold lightly between 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°
- 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!

Please refer to Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p10 for further information

Assessment

During each handwriting lesson, teachers need to assess and work with children according to the needs. During this session, children will be coached on individual issues. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the national expectations?

Within classrooms and around the school, all children are given frequent opportunities to have work on display that demonstrates their handwriting skills.

Part of assessment of work will be the element of handwriting. The following should be considered:

- 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 national expectations?

Links to spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Remember to use **Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check** The child:

Looks at the word carefully

Says the word

Covers the word so that it can't be seen

Writes the whole word from memory

Checks the word is written correctly

If not, repeat.

All children's work should be presented neatly with joined handwriting in KS2 and some of the diagonal and horizontal joins in Year 2. When appropriate, use 'DUM TUMS' (Date, Underline, Miss a line, Title, Underline, Miss a line, Start). All worksheets should be stuck in straight and tidy, no edges should stick out. All books should be clearly marked with the child's name and subject either typed or in the teacher's handwriting.

Presentation

Pupils will learn that different levels of presentation are appropriate for different pieces of work and different circumstances. However, pupils are expected to:

- Look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them
- Increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented
- Use writing or drawing media that is approved and fit for purpose
- Use rulers to draw straight lines
- Set out, number and annotate work appropriately
- At appropriate times, pupils may be encouraged to experiment with alternative means of presenting their work for specific reasons.
- Cross through mistakes or editing alterations with a single line. Erasers should only be used very occasionally and with the express permission of an adult.

Teachers are expected to:

- Ensure that classrooms are well equipped with the essential tools that will assist pupils to create work with a high presentational standard
- Organise the classroom in such a way that materials and resources are easily accessible and systems for their return and maintenance are robust
- Ensure that children look after resources and materials so that they learn to respect equipment and good value for money is assured.

Resources

Nelson Thornes Handwriting Teacher's Book

Nelson Thornes Handwriting: Developing Skills Books

Nelson Thornes Handwriting CD Roms

Role of Subject Leader

The English Subject Leader is responsible for the development and monitoring of the Handwriting Policy to ensure a coherent handwriting approach across the school. They can help teachers with their planning and are responsible for developing the school's policy. The SL will assist teachers by leading staff meetings, planning and leading INSET activities, providing consultancy and advice, and by supporting them in the classroom. The SL also ensures that all staff access the relevant CPD.

The Head teacher / Subject Leader will scrutinise planning, English work, summative displays and observe handwriting lessons. They will also gather the views of children in termly discussions.