

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes

# Handwriting Policy

Co-ordinators: Sheila Siebert

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**"Be responsible, be fair, stay positive and care"**

## **Principles and Purposes**

The development of handwriting is the responsibility of class teachers and overseen by the English Co-ordinator with regular cross curricular monitoring by the SLT.

This policy aims to give an overview of policy and practice in handwriting at John Ruskin School.

At John Ruskin we believe that neat, well formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards by allowing the pupils to take pride in and have a sense of ownership of their work. We have a 'whole school approach' to the teaching of handwriting, so that teaching is consistent and all teachers are giving the same advice to parents and supply teachers.

## **Model Used**

As a school, we use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to teach handwriting. A breakdown of the letter formations and joins can be found on page 9 and 10 of the Nelson Handwriting Teachers guide and in Appendix 1.

## **Expectation:**

### **The Order of Teaching**

#### **NURSERY**

Teachers need to assess accurately where the child is, and plan carefully for the small steps of progress which will support them in eventually achieving the end of Reception Early Learning goal - **Use a variety of writing equipment and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, some of which are correctly formed.**

Children will be given regular opportunities, through all kinds of play and cross-curricular links, to take part in activities that encourage children to develop controlled and co-ordinated movements – both in terms of gross and fine motor control.

Children should be allowed to pick up the writing implement themselves and decide which hand they prefer. Only then should they be given help with the pencil hold (see sections on pencil grip). As children begin to discover their preferred hand for holding a pencil and once they are confidently using flowing movements, they can be introduced to smaller, more controlled activities.

#### **RECEPTION**

Emphasis in the foundation stage is on generating the correct movement rather than solely on neatness. Children will be shown how to hold a pen or pencil correctly. They should be given regular opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements.

Children will make use of 'handwriting whiteboards' to learn and practise correct letter formation as a class. The Blue Level Nelson Thorne CD-ROM resource can be used to support this. These skills will then be supported and developed in guided sessions through 'finger gym' activities, with emphasis on developing the finger strength and fine motor coordination needed to generate later correct letter formation.

When the teacher assesses that the children are ready, they will be introduced to the four joins in small groups.

Where possible, single letters should be taught in the following progression of 'families':

- c a d g q o
- e s f
- i l t
- u y j k
- r n m
- h b p
- v w x z

Letters have been grouped in this way as similar movements are needed to form the letters in each group. e.g. All letters that require retracing verticals are taught together, letters using anti-clockwise circular motions, etc.

Where possible, new sounds, with two or more graphemes, could be demonstrated using a joined script but with emphasis primarily on the correct letter formation.

Learning goal - **Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, many of which are correctly formed.**

## **YEAR 1**

All children will use wide ruled English exercise books and the Red Level Developing Skills workbook. Review of reception work will be undertaken in the autumn term. Handwriting in Year 1 will prioritise correct seating, pencil grip and letter formation as this forms the basis for developing a more fluid, cursive script as handwriting develops.

By the end of Year 1 children will have been introduced to the four handwriting joins:

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

The Red Level Nelson Thorne CD-ROM resource can be used to support this. Where possible, new sounds should be demonstrated using a joined script.

Learning goal - **Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.**

## **YEAR 2**

When each child is ready, they should move to mid ruled English exercise books. The Yellow Level Developing Skills workbook is used to continue to practise the four handwriting joins. The Yellow Level Nelson Thorne CD-ROM resource can be used to support this.

By the end of KS1 most children should

- write using appropriate spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

- form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- Be using the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join some letters.

New spelling patterns should be demonstrated and taught using a joined script.

### **YEAR 3**

Almost all children should be using the mid ruled English exercise books, where the handwriting practice should be evidenced. The children will use the Book 1 Developing Skills workbook to continue to practise the four handwriting joins. They will also be introduced to the break letters, practising capital letters and writing with a slope. The Book 1 and 2 Level Nelson Thorne CD-ROM resource can be used to support this.

By the end of year 3 all children should

- write using appropriate spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.
- form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- be using the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join their letters.

### **YEAR 4**

The children will use the Book 2 Developing Skills workbook to continue to practise the skills learnt so far and to develop their consistency in size and proportion of letters. The Book 1 and 2 Level Nelson Thorne CD-ROM resource can be used to support this. Their handwriting will be evidenced in their English books.

### **YEAR 5**

The children will use the Book 3 Developing Skills workbook to continue to practise the skills learnt so far and to develop their consistency in size and proportion of letters and their fluency. Their handwriting will be evidenced in their English books and across the curriculum.

### **YEAR 6**

The children will use the Book 4 Developing Skills workbook to continue to practise the skills learnt so far and to develop their presentation skills. Their handwriting will be evidenced in their English books and across the curriculum.

### **Resources**

Each class should have access to the following

- Pens and pencils, both ordinary and triangular
- Children's Developing Skills books from Y1 to Y6
- Teachers book
- Resources and Assessment book
- The Nelson Handwriting font within Microsoft Word
- Nelson Thorne CD-ROM resource.

## **Patter**

Teachers should use the agreed 'patter' for helping children to recall the required movements for each letter. See Appendix 2

## **Timetabling**

### KEY STAGE 1

Handwriting should be taught three times a week, generally on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, for 15 minutes.

### KEY STAGE 2

Handwriting should be taught twice a week, generally on a Monday and Wednesday, for 15 minutes.

It is understood that handwriting pervades all aspects of the written curriculum and, as such, can be modelled with high expectations for correct formation and use in the presentation of all work.

## **Handwriting lessons**

Each handwriting lesson should contain the following elements:

- Warm up – see Appendix 3 for examples of warm up activities
- A reminder of correct seating and posture – See Appendix 4
- A reminder of correct pen or pencil grip and paper position – See appendix 5
- A focus that will be discussed and demonstrated by the teacher
- An opportunity to practice the focus
- A plenary that revisits the focus

## THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- Teachers should plan handwriting lessons that are in line with the school policy and should build on what has gone before.
- Teachers must demonstrate the focus of the lesson.
- Teachers should observe the children carefully to prevent significant faults becoming ingrained habits that will be difficult to break. Common faults are:
  - Faulty pen/pencil grip
  - Incorrect letter formation
  - Reversals and inversions
  - Poor posture and paper positioning
- Teachers should maintain high expectations for handwriting and presentation across all subject areas.

## THE ROLE OF THE TEACHING ASSISTANT

- The role of the teaching assistant should mirror that of the class teacher. Teaching assistants should observe the children carefully to prevent significant faults becoming ingrained habits that will be difficult to break. Common faults are:
  - Faulty pen/pencil grip
  - Incorrect letter formation
  - Reversals and inversions
  - Poor posture and paper positioning

### **Pencil grip**

- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil for right handed children.

#### *Right handed children*

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

#### *Left handed children*

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the nib
- 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

*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 and Appendix 5 for further information

### **Differentiation**

The Resources and Assessment book contains a 'Focus Resource' for each unit that can be used to support less able children. There is also an 'Extension Resource' which can be used

to cater for the child who is ready for more challenging work. The CD-ROM resource also has a 'Support' and 'Extension' activity that can support differentiation.

### **Equalities**

All children are provided with equal access to the Handwriting curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or home background. Work is differentiated to meet children's individual needs and specialist equipment or extra adult support provided for children with disabilities.

### **Assessment**

The SLT will monitor handwriting as an ongoing part of book monitoring across the school. The English coordinator will carry out a regular survey of children's writing by monitoring samples from random children at the beginning and end of each academic year.

The Resources and Assessment book contains a range of assessment sheets which should be used regularly.

- Self assessment sheets – these should be used at the end of each half term. Children should copy the assessment into their exercise books rather than using the line guides provided. The self assessment section at the bottom can then be stuck into handwriting books.
- General assessment sheets – these can be used at the end of each term to track the progress that the children are making. Again, children should copy the assessment into their exercise books rather than using the line guides provided.

**Writing implements, linked to assessment:** when children have achieved legible joined handwriting in pencil, they will progress to a fibre tip "school handwriting pen", which will then be used for all written work in school.