

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes

Handwriting Policy

Co-ordinator: Sheila Siebert

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Current review: 2024



“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 Senior Leadership Team (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 across years is consistent and all teachers are giving the same advice to class teams, parents and supply teachers.

Model Used

As a school, we use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme which 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 as well as pencil and pen grip for both right and left handed learners. Focus in Reception is linked to motor control and patterns which can be used to support their learnt phonic progression. From Year 1, Nelson Handwriting groups the letters into sets based on how they are formed and children practise these in a cumulative manner. Access to the online Teaching Software (<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-school/nelson-handwriting>) includes videos and teaching support resources for Reception and to supplement the guidance in the Teacher Books that are found in year groups 1-6.

Nelson Handwriting is designed to be used little and often for direct teaching and we maintain expectations for generalisation of learnt skills across the curriculum.

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 be introduced to handwriting patterns and formations as part of the ELS teaching sequence when learning a new letter sound pattern. ~~The Teaching software resource can be used for additional support and consolidation.~~ These skills will be supported and developed in sessions through 'finger gym' activities, with emphasis on developing the finger strength and fine motor coordination needed to generate letter patterns and, later, 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 together with the online Teaching Software. 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. Use of the ELS progression in phonics will be linked to Nelson Handwriting script and children will have opportunities to practise in ELS Workbooks. All of the lower-case and capital letters, together with the digits 0-9 are covered in the Red level workbook and online Teaching Software.

Where possible, single letters should be reviewed and 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.

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 Nelson workbook and online videos and resources 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 online Teaching resource can be used to support this.

By the end of KS1 most children should

- write lower case letters 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.

KS2

Use of the Nelson online resources can be used to supplement the teaching and consolidation of handwriting as children progressively learn to join legibly, fluently and at a reasonable pace. Use of the cursive script will support the development of automaticity in spelling and fluency in expressing themselves in their written work. In lower KS2, children continue to use pencil when presenting their work in English and Topic but will use pen for Handwriting in Year 4, in readiness for Year 5. Upper KS2 children use pen in all subjects except Maths and subjects requiring drawing or sketching.

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 slant.

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. Their handwriting will be evidenced in their English books with expectations for generalisation to other subject areas. Handwriting pens are introduced for handwriting practise for those who are able.

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. Emphasis on increasing handwriting pace and presentation across a variety of genres will be expected as they begin to develop their own handwriting style. 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 Handwriting online resources (Oxford Owl)

Patter

Teachers should use the agreed 'patter' for helping children to recall the required movements for each letter, seating and posture reminders and the tripod pencil grip. See online videos.

Timetabling

KEY STAGE 1

Handwriting should be taught three times a week, generally on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, for 15 minutes and can be incorporated into ELS sessions where applicable.

KEY STAGE 2

Handwriting lessons should be taught twice a week, generally on a Monday and Wednesday, for 15 minutes and may be used to support spelling patterns where appropriate. Handwriting pens are introduced in year 4.

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 patterns, videos and (Appendix 3) for examples of warm up activities
- A reminder of correct seating and posture – See online resource video
- A reminder of correct pen or pencil grip and paper position – See online resource video
- 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 online Teaching software 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

- English Marking sheets have a designated section to identify handwriting, which can be used to support children needing handwriting intervention or common skills.
- Termly referencing using Southwark Star assessments
- The SLT and subject co-ordinators will monitor handwriting/presentation as an ongoing part of English and cross curricular book monitoring across the school. The English coordinator will carry out a regular survey of children's writing by monitoring samples from random children through book monitoring, display and 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 could 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 English books.
- General assessment sheets – these can be used at the end of each term to track the progress that the children are making against the National Curriculum expectations for handwriting (see below). Again, children should copy the assessment into their exercise books rather than using the line guides provided.

Writing implements, linked to assessment: From year 5, 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.



England

The following table provides guidance on the expectations of the 2014 National Curriculum in England, with regards to handwriting.

Year 1	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly• 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)• leave spaces between words.
Year 2	<p>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.
Years 3 and 4	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</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 (e.g. ensure downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).
Years 5 and 6	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices◦ deciding whether or not to join specific letters◦ choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.