



Whitstone Community
Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Whitstone C.P. School

Handwriting Policy

This Policy outlines the teaching and learning of Handwriting at Whitstone C.P. School. The fundamental purpose of handwriting is to enable all pupils to equip themselves with a basic life-skill. In order to prepare children for the adult world and contribute to their personal development, they must learn to write clearly and legibly.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's English and presentation policies.

Aims

At Whitstone C.P. School we aim to ensure that children:

- Correctly hold a pen or pencil.
- Write from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom of the page.
- Start and finish letters correctly.
- Put regular spaces between words.
- Correctly form both lower and upper case letters and numbers.
- Write legibly and fluently in a cursive script.
- Learn to use different handwriting styles for different purposes.
- Develop their own personal style, after learning the basics of handwriting.

Teaching & Learning

We will base our handwriting scheme on the Nelson handwriting style.

- i. Nelson handwriting has a definitive course for developing a fluent and legible handwriting style.
- ii. It provides a clearly structured programme with full technical aspects of writing.
- iii. There is provision for both group and individual assessment, with emphasis on self-assessment throughout the programme.

The Nelson text books are sequenced for progression and contain three levels of differentiation designed for a whole range of abilities. Structured units introduce clear teaching points followed by plenty of opportunities for practice. The units ensure:

- Children develop a fluent and legible style
- provision for the early years, and includes exit flicks from the beginning
- key handwriting skills are introduced and developed in meaningful contexts
- that work set is suitable for whole-class, group and individual work
- aids assessment
- encourages pupils to monitor their own progress.

Age Specific Guidelines

Early Years Foundation Stage

- Pencil control is the initial focus where children are taught to grip a pencil correctly to follow lines and shapes that progress toward letter shapes.
- Handwriting will then focus on the accurate formation of lower case letters using a variety of approaches. Examples might include:
 - skywriting with and without music.
 - using a variety of mark-making tools and surfaces such as writing in sand/water on white boards.
 - using sticks etc. to make marks with paint, feathers and so on.

Year 1 onwards.

- The handwriting script to use is the Precursive Upright and replicates that used by Nelson handwriting for handwriting practice. Letters have been put together to follow a progression from individual letters, through printed blends of sounds, to joining of individual sounds to blends of sounds which practice the appropriate joins. These will be used by Class 1 and 2. Older children in Class 3 are encouraged to develop their own handwriting flair and to improve their speed and consistency of size and style. They will practise different patterns to improve joins, fluency and style. They will also develop different styles of writing for different purposes, for example posters, lists etc.

Practising Handwriting

Handwriting is practised regularly in whole class or group situations either as a focused session or as part of everyday writing. The frequency and duration of the sessions is decided by class teachers and the needs of the children. Every child has their own Nelson's handwriting workbook initially at The Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1. When they are competent they progress to a lined book which helps to support the teaching of handwriting, and allows them to see the technical aspects of their writing (letter formation, basic joins, printing, speed writing and slope).

Left Handed Children

At least 10 per cent of the population is left-handed – a slightly higher proportion of males are left-handed than females. There is no need for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing, if a few simple strategies are employed:

- Model letter formation, sky writing, etc. specifically for left-handed children, with your left hand.
- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.

- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- Experiment with seat height – some left-handed children may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.
- To avoid smudging their work Left-handed children should be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5 cm away from the end of their writing implement. The pencil should sit in the 'V' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb. The wrist should be straight.
- Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. They should, therefore, be given more attention in the classroom to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter a fast, fluent and legible hand.

Children with dyslexia

Evidence suggests that children with dyslexia benefit from writing in a continuous cursive handwriting style. Therefore, children with dyslexia at Whitstone C.P. School will be asked to join their letters. The benefits of asking children with dyslexia to join letters include:

- Improvement in a child's spelling. When writing cursive, the word becomes a unit, rather than a series of separate strokes, and correct spelling is more likely to be retained.
- Fewer letters are likely to be reversed, as all lower case cursive letters can begin on the line.

(Information taken from The International Dyslexia Association <https://dyslexiaida.org/why-bother-with-cursive/>)

Further information can be found under the 'websites' section of this policy.

Displays & School publications

The Nelson font should be used, where possible, in teacher directed displays and publications (eg. letters). Teachers and children should also have the opportunity to write display objectives, captions and explanations.

Key Points

- The guidelines below should be carefully followed and children's progress monitored.
- Teachers should be aware that left handed children often have greater difficulty in handwriting than with a right hand preference, see notes below for more details

- There will be times when children with special needs struggle and a targeted intervention programme will then need to be delivered. When this occurs, members of staff will work with the school's SENCO and use IEPs (Individual Education Plans) to support progress.
- If handwriting is used as homework (something that can be very effective in some cases) it should be on an individual basis after talking to the parent of the children involved, and ensuring that they understand the script used in school and our approach to teaching.
- Remember that handwriting can be a very enjoyable activity for children – appeal to their creativity, get them to challenge themselves, send good examples to the Head teacher.
- Another incentive for good handwriting/ presentation is our house point reward scheme.
- Handwriting will be taught weekly as a discrete subject (although opportunities obviously present themselves for combining handwriting with spelling patterns, letter strings and blends in Read Write Inc). Timings will vary depending on the age of the child.
- Children will be taught correct formation before they are expected to practise it.
- Joined handwriting should not take place until a pupil has mastered correct letter formation.
- All handwriting practice undertaken in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 will be in pencil (though children should have experience of using a variety of writing tools as part of the general curriculum).
- All handwriting practice undertaken in Key Stage 2 will be in pen.
- Children from Year 2 onwards will be expected to join their letters in each piece of work.

Useful Websites

Nelson Handwriting Scheme:

www.nelsonthornes.com/nelson_primary/new_html/nelhand_home.htm – Nelson's website, providing some samples of resources in the books and additional information about the scheme.

Information on the teaching of cursive handwriting to children with dyslexia:

The International Dyslexia Association

www.dyslexiaida.org

Policy to be reviewed: October 2019