

Hempshill Hall Primary School



Handwriting Policy 2025

Introduction

The National Curriculum states that writing depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. By the end of Year 6 children should be able to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. It is not a natural activity that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity. A movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting. It is in our hands that the kinaesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter. Children should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content.

Intent, Implementation, Impact

Intent

For children to:

- Be able to form all letters and numbers correctly by starting and finishing in the correct place, keeping them all the same size and sitting them on the line
- To write fluently and legibly joining all appropriate letters by the end of Year 6.

Implementation

- Teacher modelling in all areas of the curriculum
- Regular teaching and practice throughout the week
- Linked to phonics and spelling – Little Wandle – in Foundation and KS1
- Use of Nelson Handwriting Scheme and resources
- Handwriting is taught and practiced at least 3 times a week

Impact

- Children use the correct pencil grip and posture when writing
- Spaces between words are clear in foundation
- Children can form all letters correctly and start joining by year 2
- Children will be writing with speed and fluency, joining all letters correctly by the end of Year 5
- Work displayed around school is of a high standard of presentation

National Curriculum aims

The National Curriculum English Programmes of study provide guidance on teaching handwriting:

Year 1 pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9 (always starting from the top)
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

Year 2 pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some diagonal and horizontal joins (see Appendix 1: Nelson Objectives by Book)
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters

- Using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters
- Understand which letters should not be joined (break letters)

Year3-4 pupils should be taught to:

- Use diagonal and horizontal joins to join all letters that can be
- Understand the letters that should not be joined (Break Letters)
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders do not touch.

Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for the task (e.g. quick notes, letters)

Our key principles at Hempshill Hall are:

- Handwriting should be taught explicitly, in short frequent sessions. **It should be modelled by the teacher then supervised.** Children should be encouraged to self/peer assess to aim and look for consistency.
- Where possible, it should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns. For example, showing and modelling the joining of di/tri-graphs in phonics. This will help with handwriting, visually discriminating graphemes and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings.
- When ready, pupils should be practising on the lines they are going to be using in their English books.
- High expectations of handwriting are needed. Children may need to repeat work that is not satisfactory.
- Teachers need to model good handwriting at all times e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and when marking books.

Our Curriculum

At Hempshill Hall, we follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme from Year 2 to Year 6, see Appendix 1 and 2 for details of letter formation and joining. Year 1 follow Little Wandle for phonics, therefore, they introduce letter formation as they introduce the letters and sounds from the scheme.

Teaching Methods

Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children must practise by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming the letters correctly.

Foundation Stage

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Foundation Stage should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognisable letters
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder.

In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then be reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils.

Key Stage 1 and 2

Handwriting should be taught explicitly, in short frequent sessions. Teachers model the letter or join to be learnt and then monitor the children during their practice. Areas where children struggle are taught one-to-one during the sessions. Handwriting is also monitored and assessed in all curriculum areas, with high expectations across the school.

When children in years 2 – 6 have achieved all of the handwriting criteria, they move on to using a special pen in writing tasks. All children in year 6 use pen in their English lessons.

Special educational needs & disabilities (SEND)

- Children struggling with fine motor skills in Key Stage 1 will take part in activities to strengthen their muscles and develop their skills. These activities will include Dough Disco or Funky Finger workshops.
- Left handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their writing arms from bumping each other. The angle of the paper depends on the handedness of the pupil. Left-handers should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents them from smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. A left-hander may also benefit from holding the pencil higher up.
- Some children who are having difficulties with handwriting may benefit from a sloping surface and special equipment e.g. triangular pencil grip for a short period of time.
- Children that are struggling with their handwriting in key stage 2 may take part in additional interventions sessions where personal targets are set.
- Write From The Start is used in Key Stage 1 and 2 for those children with poor fine motor skills.

Monitoring

Handwriting will be monitored by the subject leaders during book scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Nelson Objectives by Book

Year 1	Following Little Wandle Letters and Sounds phases
Year 2 (Book 1a)	Introducing and practising letter family set 1: c o a d g f s q e Introducing and practising letter family set 2: i l t j u y Introducing and practising letter family set 3: b h k m n p r Introducing and practising letter family set 4: v w x z Capital letters: E F H I T L Capital letters: A K M N V W X Y Z Capital Letters: B D C G O Q S P R U J Practising numbers Introducing break letters Practising size and consistency
Year 2 (Book 1b)	Diagonal join to set 1 letters Diagonal join to set 1 and 2 letters Diagonal join to set 3 letters Diagonal join to the top of set 1 letters Diagonal join to the top of set 2 letters Diagonal join to the top of set 3 letters Diagonal join to the top of set 4 letters Form and join from the letter w Practising the horizontal join Horizontal join to set 3 letters Practising fourth join to set 1 letters (o to f) Practising fourth join to set 2 letters (w to l)
Year 3 (Book 2)	Joining to the top: ai, ay, ey Joining to the top from letter e Joining from the letter i Horizontal join oa, ow, oe Size and height of letters oo, ue, ew Joining from the letter o Capital letters Joining to the letter a Joining to the letter r Horizontal join ou, ou out Small letters – same size and height Joining to ascenders Joining to and from the letter c Writing the letter g Diagonal join le, el, al ,il Joining the letter s: sh as es Joining the letter y: ky, hy, ly Joining the letter g
Year 4 (Book 3)	Forming descenders accurately Forming ascenders accurately Diagonal join to a small letter: ci, cir, cer, cen Diagonal join to a tall letter: mb, imb, umb, amb Joining to and from the letter l Joining to the letter y Forming the letter s correctly Practise spacing between letters Capital Letters Letter t correct height Double letters

	Joining to the letter e Joining to the letter k Second join: ch, che, cho, cha, chi Joining from letter e Horizontal joins: ous, mous, ious Joining from the letter a Punctuation ? ! – “ “ , ‘ Diagonal joins to letter y Joining from and to letter r Joining from letter w Numbers Silent letters Joining from letter f
Year 5 (Book 4)	Joining from the letter e Joining to and from the letter s Consistent size and height Double letters Spacing Diagonal join: un unn inn imm Horizontal join: rep, rem, rea, reo Joining to the letter y Speedwriting Joining to and from a letter w Joining from the letter m Joining from the letter i Diagonal joins to ascenders Joining to and from letter f Punctuation Joining to and from v Break letters
Year 6 (Book 5)	Joining to and from letter r Consistent size and height Developing fluency Correct height of letter t Forming and joining the letter s Break letters Practising printing Forming ascenders correctly Practising presentation Correct formation of letter k Speed and fluency Punctuation Consistent letter size Speedwriting Forming small letters correctly Looking at different handwriting styles

Appendix 2: Letter Formation



Pattern	Value of Pattern
	r n m h p b k
	c o a d g q e
	i u y l t
	v w x
	i u y l t a d
	r n p m h
	c o o o o a o g o d
	i l u m h

Appendix 3: Letters left not joined (break letters)

It should be noted that breaks between adjacent letters which are left not joined are part of cursive handwriting and this is indicated in the requirements for Year 2-6. The rule for children is that when a letter is made which finishes with the pen facing the 'wrong way' then the pen is lifted and writing begun again. Letters not joined (e.g. 'y' followed by 'a') are placed as close to each other as possible. Also capital letters are not joined.

It is sensible to leave the following letters not joined:

b g j q p y s z