

## **Handwriting Policy**

**2021-22**

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## **1. Curriculum Statement**

### **Intent**

At William Patten School, the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed is recognised. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school. The programme of study at William Patten seeks to ensure that by the end of KS1, children are able to write cursively.

In the EYFS, children are taught to use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds, as well as being able to write some common words with irregular spellings. Planned opportunities are provided for children to develop their writing of simple sentences, which can be read by themselves and others. Children develop the use of effective pencil grip throughout their time in reception.

In KS1, handwriting practice focuses on ensuring that children form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. It develops use of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and promotes understanding of which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. Children also develop accuracy in writing capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and in writing lower-case letters, using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. Children are taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Throughout KS2, emphasis is placed on children's development of writing legibly, fluently and with increasing speed. Children are taught to choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and are able to decide whether or not to join specific letters. They are also able to choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

### **Implementation**

To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and children are explicitly taught the skill of handwriting three times each week. In reception and KS1, the children use the Nelson Workbooks to record and practise their handwriting. In KS2, the outcome is recorded directly into children's literacy books and handwriting practise takes place within the literacy lesson.

Across the school, handwriting is carefully modelled by the teacher and outcomes are recorded by the children in their literacy books. The use of patterns to support letter formation and appropriate letter-joins is also embedded enabling children to also further develop their fine motor skills. In both key stages, teachers use the RWI spelling lists and draw attention to spelling patterns as they demonstrate writing the word in handwriting practise at the start of English lessons. High expectations are also communicated as part of the success criteria for the lesson. Children's successes and improvements are recognised through the 'Handwriting Hall of Fame' which displays work in a prominent part of the school building. Each week, a headteacher's award is also given to a child in each class whose efforts and progress in handwriting have been recognised.

A high standard of presentation is also encouraged and expected in children's written work across the wider curriculum.

### **Impact**

This systematic approach ensures development in the skill of handwriting throughout each year group. Children take pride in their written work and achieve proficiency in their own use of the Nelson script. Outcomes in children's wider curriculum work, as well as in their literacy books and school displays, evidence the progress that children make in this area, as well as the consistency of the approach across the school.

## 2. Teaching and Learning

In order for children to achieve a high standard of handwriting, they need to be explicitly taught the skills that are needed. At William Patten we use and teach the Nelson style, letter formations and joins in handwriting to ensure consistency across the school. We have high expectations in handwriting lessons and make sure that children are expected to apply the same standards in other writing as well.

Handwriting practice takes place in 3x each week and has a clear focus, with key teaching points demonstrated to the class. Each session provides allocated time for children to practise the specific handwriting skill. Extension activities will allow for further practice, development and challenge.

Teachers will make sure that children are concentrating on 'the 3 'P's' during handwriting sessions. These are -

- Paper: the paper children write on should be angled slightly away from the writing hand.
- Posture: sitting up straight, both feet on the floor, adequate desk space.
- Pencil grip: tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil (held lightly between thumb and forefinger, about 3cm from the point with the middle finger providing additional support).

## 3. Assessment

### *Teacher assessment:*

Teachers will assess children's handwriting progression during lessons as they write as well as once they have completed their writing. Criteria for assessment may include:

- Does the child adapt the correct posture?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movements when forming/joining?
- Does the child write fluently?
- Is the writing legible?
- Is the writing appropriate?
- Is the child's handwriting developing in-line with statutory curricula?

### *Pupil assessment:*

Throughout the writing process, children are encouraged to assess their handwriting. The 'Getting Ready to Write' visual prompt and 'Handwriting checklist' can be found in all their books for children to refer to in order to reflect and assess.

The expectation for a high standard of handwriting is also communicated prior to writing tasks. When explicitly indicated in the children's success criteria, this is an aspect of the outcome which is reviewed and assessed by each child on completion of the task. Neat presentation is always recognised and praised by the class teacher and children are encouraged to review their handwriting as part of the writing process.

### *Whole-school assessment:*

The subject leader for literacy will regularly assess handwriting across the school and this will also be considered during routine monitoring of topic books. Criteria for whole-school assessment may include:

- Is the handwriting generally legible and in line with age expectation?
- Are letters being shaped correctly?
- Are joins being made correctly?

- Are spaces between letters, words and lines correct?
- Is writing size appropriate?
- Are the writing standards demonstrated by the majority of children in line with statutory curricula?
- Is there progression in the quality of handwriting from one year to the next?

#### 4. **Planning and Resources**

At William Patten, we will teach the children to write using the Nelson Handwriting scheme. The most up-to-date edition of the scheme guides children through carefully structured stages from pre-writing patterns all the way to the development of individual style.

- Teachers can use the Nelson Teacher's books, Resources and Assessment books and online teaching tool to deliver high-quality handwriting lessons.
- Nelson font is also available on all school PCs so that all communication can be presented to children using the Nelson digital font.
- Year 6 children move to using a handwriting pen over the course of the first term. Initially this is in Topic work only. In the second term, Year 6 children will transition into using handwriting pen in Literacy books as well as Topic. By the third term, Year 6 children will be using handwriting pen in all curriculum subject writing (except maths, where they continue to use pencil). The rate of transition from pencil to pen will be determined by the class teacher, on an individual-basis and in consultation with each pupil.
- EYFS-Year 5 children will write in HB pencil in all exercise books.

#### 5. **Organisation**

From Reception through to Year 6, there are 3 x weekly handwriting sessions. In KS2, these take place within literacy lessons. Regular additional opportunities to practise are also provided, for example, presenting work for display.

#### 6. **EYFS**

It is important for children to understand the importance of clear and neat handwriting from an early age. Correct letter formation is taught in both Nursery and Reception and children are given opportunities to independently practise their handwriting. Children are also given plenty of opportunities to develop the fine motor skills they need for accurate handwriting through continuous provision in the EYFS setting.

In Reception, formal handwriting lessons are introduced and children each have a Nelson handwriting book in which to practise their pencil control and letter formation.

During these handwriting lessons the children will learn to write legibly in a pre-cursive style with increasing fluency and speed by:

- Having a correct pencil grip, posture and paper position (3 'P's)
- Knowing the correct way each letter and numeral is formed (lower case letters)
- Forming all letters correctly (including size and orientation)

#### 7. **KS1 and KS2**

In KS1 and KS2 handwriting continues to be taught discretely using the Nelson Handwriting scheme. In KS1 the children will continue to use handwriting practice books and KS2, the children will record their handwriting practise directly into their literacy books.

In Year 1 the children will continue to develop their pre-cursive handwriting with increasing fluency and speed by:

- Having a correct pencil grip, posture and paper position (3 'P's)

- Knowing the correct way each letter and numeral is formed (lower case letters and capital letters)
- Forming all letters correctly (including size and orientation)

In Year 2 and KS2 the children progress to write legibly in a cursive style with increasing fluency and speed by;

- Using the 4 joins
- Knowing which letters are the break letters
- Writing in a joined style
- Practising skills of printing, *slanting* and speedwriting
- Progressing to an individual joined style
- Considering handwriting styles for different purposes

## 8. **Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential in handwriting, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, and ability, or of any physical or sensory disability.

## 9. **Inclusion**

*Children with English as an additional language.*

Children with EAL are encouraged to make the same outstanding progress in handwriting as their peers. To support their understanding of letter formation handwriting should be consistently modelled by the class teacher.

*Children with Special Educational Needs*

Some children experience difficulties making good progress in their handwriting development. They may need additional support with their fine motor development, pencil grip or letter formation. The class teacher should liaise with the Literacy subject leader and SENDCo to put into place the most appropriate form of support. This could include:

- Pencil grip or jumbo triangular pencil
- Fine motor skills intervention
- Additional handwriting group
- Additional handwriting homework

*High Achievers*

Children with advanced skills in handwriting will be supported and given opportunities for extension work.

## 10. **Role of the Subject Leader**

The role of the subject leader is to coordinate the teaching of handwriting across all phases of the school. This is in order to secure a consistent approach across the school and to ensure progression in handwriting is outstanding.

Key duties that the literacy subject leader should undertake over the course of the year include:

- Monitoring of handwriting in Nelson Workbooks and literacy books
- Monitoring of the application of handwriting across other exercise books, such as topic books and Reading Journals
- Helping identify and facilitate the professional development needs of staff
- Liaising with the school SENDCo to best support children with handwriting difficulties
- Organising, maintaining and cataloguing handwriting resources
- Keeping abreast of new initiatives in the teaching of handwriting

## 11. Parents

We recognise how important the home-school link is for children to make outstanding progress in all areas of learning – including handwriting. Parents will be informed of their child's standards of presentation during Parents Evenings and will be encouraged to support with any additional handwriting practice where necessary.

In Reception children are given letter formation homework as and when they learn a new Set 1 sound. From then on, handwriting homework will only be given if a child needs additional support to make good progress in their handwriting and presentation.

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