

Handwriting Policy

September 2024-25

Contents

- 1. Curriculum Statement**
- 2. Teaching and Learning**
- 3. Assessment**
- 4. Planning and Resources**
- 5. Organisation**
- 6. EYFS**
- 7. KS1 and KS2**
- 8. Equal Opportunities**
- 9. Inclusion**
- 10. Role of the Subject Leader**
- 11. Parents**

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 have learnt the skills necessary to write cursively, and that they join fluently, efficiently and neatly by the end of KS2.

In the EYFS, children are taught to form recognisable letters, alongside using their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. 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 in the correct direction and of the correct size relative to one another and to their capital letters. Children learn to use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. In Year 2, once children's letter formation is secure with regard to orientation, they are taught to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and to understand which letters are best left unjoined.

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, developing their own style. They are also able to decide whether or not to join specific letters for efficiency and to choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Implementation

The school uses the Nelson Handwriting Scheme as a basis for our letter formation and joining in EYFS and KS1. Children are explicitly taught the skill of handwriting (in addition to our daily writing lessons) a minimum of three times each week. From Reception to Y2, Nelson Workbooks are used for the majority of handwriting practise, although there are also opportunities to practise applying these handwriting skills to weekly spelling words (supporting the children to become increasingly secure with grapheme-phoneme correspondences). In Year 3, cursive writing is consolidated using teaching based on letter shape families as well as the types of join. Across KS2, outcomes are recorded in booklets created for the integrated practise of spelling and handwriting. In every classroom, handwriting is carefully modelled by the teacher, so that attention can be drawn to patterns that support letter formation and appropriate letter-joins.

High expectations for handwriting are communicated across the curriculum. Headteacher's awards are routinely given to children whose efforts and progress in handwriting have been recognised.

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 a Nelson-based script. Teaching handwriting and spelling explicitly, outside of composition tasks enables our children acquire the fluent transcription skills which are the

foundation for their progress in writing. Teaching spelling and handwriting together makes visible many patterns in the language, enabling pupils to make connections. 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 of letter formations and joins in handwriting to ensure consistency across the school. We have high expectations in handwriting sessions and make sure that children know these expectations apply in English lessons and other writing as well.

Explicit handwriting practice takes place at least three times each week, with key teaching points demonstrated to the class. Each session provides allocated time for children to practise the specific handwriting skill. Across the school, handwriting learning is increasingly linked to spelling practise. Where necessary, children are guided to complete individualised additional practise, often in response to teacher marking, in written work across the curriculum. The timetable for handwriting and spelling is included in section 5: Organisation.

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).

For younger children, this may be referred to as the 'Writing 123': one hand resting on the paper, two feet flat on the floor, three fingers holding the pencil correctly.

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, and during written work in the wider curriculum, children are encouraged to assess their handwriting. A visual prompt to present work neatly and with a high standard of handwriting can be found on lesson slides for children to refer to in order to reflect and assess.

The expectation for a high standard of handwriting is always clearly communicated prior to writing tasks. 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 English 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, implementation of the Nelson Handwriting style is supported through the EYFS and KS1 workbooks, as well as online resources that can be used in KS2 as needed, ensuring a consistency in approach from pre-writing patterns all the way to the development of individual style. In conjunction with our discrete spelling teaching, online resources from other providers are also used for handwriting exercises based around spelling foci for each year group. Where this is the case, teachers ensure their modelling continues to match the Nelson style, and that attention is drawn to break letters and joining patterns where differences may occur.

- Teachers can use the Nelson Teacher's books, Resources and Assessment books and online teaching tool as part of their handwriting lessons, or to provide additional targeted support.
- The Nelson font is also available on all school PCs so that, where appropriate, typed communication can be presented to children using the Nelson digital font.
- Year 6 children move to using a pen, typically over the course of the first term. This allows them more opportunities to select a tool appropriate to their task. 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 write in HB pencil in all exercise books.

5. Organisation – KS1 and KS2

KS1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	<p><u>Session 1 - Spelling</u> Focus rule/word grouping taught.</p> <p>Patterns are explored and word definitions clarified. Children practise reading and recognising the words with a short activity e.g. word search, highlight the key words in a sentence</p>	<p><u>Session 2 –</u> Combined handwriting and spelling practice.</p> <p>Children complete activities in their Nelson handwriting books, using taught graphemes to spell words and sentences.</p>	<p><u>Session 3 - Spelling</u> Focus rule revisited.</p> <p>Children practise writing their weekly spelling words using taught letter formation (or joins in Y2, when and if appropriate).</p> <p>Dictation used as part of this session.</p>	<p><u>Session 4 –</u> Combined handwriting and spelling practice.</p> <p>Children complete activities in their Nelson handwriting books, using taught graphemes to spell words and sentences.</p>	<p><u>Session 5</u> Spelling assessment.</p> <p>New focus rule may be introduced.</p>

Year 1 / 2 children who attend phonics will also complete spelling work using taught sounds 3x a week in these sessions.

Year 2 HLR children should complete brief additional spelling practice using the weekly list or statutory spellings at least 3x a week at 9.05 (similar to KS2).

Additional spelling practise through dictation also takes place in Year 1 and 2.

*In the run-up to the Phonics Screening Check, the KS1 afternoon sessions focusing on taught GPCs are replaced with additional targeted phonics practise for small groups.

KS2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	<p><u>Session 1</u></p> <p>Focus rule/word grouping is taught.</p> <p>Patterns are explored and word definitions clarified.</p> <p>Children practise reading and recognising the words with an activity (e.g. a game, wordsearch, or finding the words within sentences/a passage of text).</p> <p>This session may also be completed on the Friday of the preceding week.</p>	<p><u>Session 2</u></p> <p>Combined handwriting and spelling practice.</p> <p>Teachers model joins relevant to the word list, then model writing each of the spelling focus words.</p> <p>Children practise writing each of the words using handwriting paper.</p>	<p><u>Session 3 – if required</u></p> <p>Combined handwriting and spelling practice.</p> <p>Depending on the needs of the cohort, this session can be used to repeat single-word writing (session 2) or to break up sentence dictation (session 4) into 5 sentences per session.</p>	<p><u>Session 4</u> Combined handwriting and spelling practice.</p> <p>Teachers model writing a sentence that includes a spelling word on handwriting guide paper, drawing attention to taught joins and morphology.</p> <p>Children then apply their spelling and handwriting learning to write a dictated sentence for each of their 10 spelling words.</p>	<p><u>Session 5</u> Spelling assessment.</p> <p>New focus rule may also be introduced on this day.</p>

The above sessions are explicitly taught and include detailed teacher modelling. In addition to these, children across KS2 also benefit from opportunities for independent practise and consolidation, such as use of the 'look, cover, write and check' method. Practises such as these take place during soft starts and in other short bursts depending on class timetables. In Year 3, additional modelled teaching of joins also occurs on a weekly basis.

6. **EYFS**

It is important for children to understanding 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 as timetabled (Section 5: organisation) as well as in English and RWI sessions.

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
- Understanding letter shape families and 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

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 English 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 specific homework will only be given if a child needs additional support to make good progress in their handwriting and presentation. Weekly spellings, for which handwriting patterns are taught, are sent home every Friday.

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