

The John Harrox Primary School Handwriting Policy

SCHOOL INTENT

At The John Harrox Primary School, our curriculum is designed to ensure children have a love for learning and a thirst for knowledge. It recognises children's prior learning, providing first hand learning experiences, allowing the children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become creative, critical thinkers. Children's learning is viewed as a sequence, building blocks of knowledge overtime to achieve a bigger picture; cumulative knowledge is developed. Every child is recognised as a unique individual. We celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We constantly provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in our lives where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a keen desire for new experiences and knowledge.

We promote 4 key outlooks on our world which include:

A Global Outlook

An Enterprising Outlook

A Creative Outlook

A Healthy Outlook

Each topic that is taught takes one outlook as a focus, ensuring a balanced coverage.

HANDWRITING INTENT

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Phonic Policy, Writing & Spelling policy and Marking policy. This policy shows the handwriting style to be taught at The John Harrox Primary School. It provides a list of the skills to be taught and the expected level of skill to be reached by the end of each academic year.

This policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the teaching staff, class teachers and teaching assistants, and has been approved by the Governing body.

We aim for all our children to develop a neat, joined, legible style of handwriting by the time they leave our school and to be able to adapt their handwriting style to suit a specific purpose.

Handwriting is to be taught in a consistent way that allows them to consolidate their skills in a progressive way.

IMPLEMENTATION

Handwriting should be taught as a lesson in its own right or combined with spelling practice. Handwriting should be taught little and often, with a minimum of three sessions per week in Key stage 1 and one session in keystage 2 once handwriting is neat and legible. 'Little and often' handwriting lessons prove more effective than long, one-off lessons.

Handwriting may be taught in whole class, small group or individual groupings. In all settings, the teacher or teaching assistant must demonstrate to the children the correct formation or join of letters.

Appropriate writing tools should be used.

Children should be encouraged to transfer what they are taught in handwriting lessons across into other lessons so that presentation of their work is consistently high in all areas.

Teachers should have an expectation for well-presented work and these expectations should be displayed within the classroom.

Reception

Stages of Teaching in Reception

- Develop hand and finger strength through fine motor activities
- Tracing
- Practising patterns
- Practising letter formation within RWInc lessons and learning the handwriting rhymes
- Writing over a teacher's writing or laminated cards
- Writing under a teacher's writing
- Writing independently

Expectations in Reception

- Comfortable pencil grip using thumb and index finger
- Correct position in a chair at a table
- Use of non-writing hand to steady paper
- Correct formation and orientation of lower case letters in line with Read Write Inc formation (see attached sheet). When teaching the f continue down and round to form a slight left bending curl.

- Handwriting of Speed Sounds Set 1 and 2 should be taught as they are introduced.
- Clusters of letters to be joined as they are introduced within the Read Write Inc scheme, for example th, sh, ch, ee etc
- 'Families' of letters should then be taught e.g a,o,c,d,g,q
- Children will write on plain paper and later onto 'wide lined' paper.

Year 1

National Curriculum

Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly begin to 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' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Year 2

Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:

- 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.

Year 3 and year 4

Handwriting Pupils should be taught to:

- 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, [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders do not touch.

Year 5 and year 6

Handwriting and presentation Pupils should be taught to:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Progression

Nelson Handwriting groups the letters into sets based on handwriting families. These are letters that are formed in similar ways.

Set 1: c a o d g q s f e

Set 2: i l t u j y

Set 3: r n m h k b p

Set 4: v w x z

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters:

Group 1: a c d e h i k l m n s t u (13 letters with exit flicks plus s).

Group 2: a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y (19 letters which start at the top of the x height).

Group 3: b f h k l t (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender).

Group 4: f o r v w (5 letters which finish at the top of the x-height).

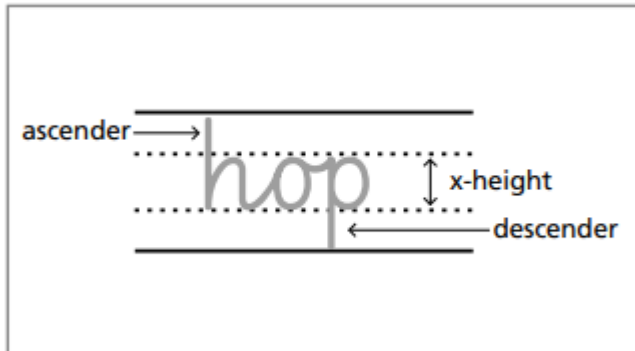
Capital letters and numerals are never joined.

Four different types of joins are taught:

The first join: Group 1 to 2 (diagonal joins to letters without ascenders)
The second join: Group 1 to 3 (diagonal joins to letters with ascenders)
The third join: Group 4 to 2 (horizontal joins to letters without ascenders)
The fourth join: Group 4 to 3 (horizontal joins to letters with ascenders)

Vocabulary

There are some technical terms which are extremely useful in discussion about handwriting. Teachers should ensure that children have a clear understanding of their meaning (at an age appropriate level) and refer to them throughout handwriting lessons. These terms include: clockwise, anticlockwise, vertical, horizontal, diagonal, parallel, ascender, descender, consonant, vowel, joined, slanted, x-height.



Writing Implements

Children in EYFS and Key Stage One should use a pencil to write. In the early stages, a soft pencil with a thick stem may be most appropriate. Too thin a pencil, offered too soon, may result in a tight grip. The standard pencil should be introduced as a child's motor skills begin to improve.

From Year 3 onwards, children continue to work in pencil. Once they are able to demonstrate they are using neat and consistently joined handwriting then they are given a handwriting pen to use.

Teachers and support staff should ensure the handwriting pen is working well as damaged nibs can make it very difficult for the child to write comfortably. Children are not permitted to use writing implements other than pencils or handwriting pens with the exception of homework.

Children use pencil within maths lessons, in notebooks, for lines when labelling and for drawing.

Once a child can write in a neat, joined style they can use a pen within all other books.

Handwriting books

Handwriting books are used from Year 1 to Year 6. From Year 2 onwards children are expected to include the long date (e.g. Monday 1st September) at the start of their work using the handwriting guidelines on the page as this will provide a useful opportunity to apply their handwriting skills.

Left Handers

Teachers need to be aware of left-handers in the classroom as they do have different needs. 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. The left-handed, like the right-handed child, needs to be shown as early as possible how to hold a writing implement correctly.

If possible, the teacher will demonstrate how to hold a pen and how to form and join letters with their left hand. The hand should be kept below the writing line. This enables the children to see what they are writing and encourages correct pen hold. The grip the left-hander uses means the pencil is pushed as the child writes, whereas the right-hander pulls their pencil across the page as they write. It is important therefore that the left-hander's pencil is not too sharp so that it will run smoothly across the page. The left-hander often crosses the 'f' and 't' from right to left. Many left-handers therefore will find it easier to leave the 'f' unjoined. The left-hander will find it easier if the paper is tilted slightly to the right, at about 8°. The higher the angle the harder it is for most children to write efficiently. The right hand is used to steady the paper, above the writing line. Bad habits are easily learnt and many left-handers adopt a hooked pencil hold which can result in a tired grip and affect the quality of their writing. When they begin to use a pen their hand can easily smudge the ink as they write.

Resources

We use the progression suggested in the Nelson handwriting scheme.

Other resources which may support handwriting are:

Cripps handwriting resources

Bubble writing techniques

<https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/handwriting/>

Children who require additional support

Some children find will inevitably find handwriting more difficult and will require additional support. Identifying problems early is very important (e.g. pencil grip, letter formation) as this can prevent children from developing bad habits which can quickly become ingrained.

Some pupils may need additional activities to help them develop their fine motor skills. If appropriate, we can also refer them to our Occupational Therapist. Teachers should discuss any concerns with the SENCo.

Handwriting interventions take place to provide additional support where required. These sessions will follow a similar structure to whole class lessons.

Whilst handwriting is important, teachers and support staff must take care that a child who finds handwriting challenging does not lose confidence in their writing ability. Support and encouragement to improve handwriting skills should be balanced appropriately with developing the skills the child needs to become an effective writer.

Assessment

Handwriting books must be marked in accordance with the feedback policy. Immediate (often verbal) feedback within the lesson is likely to have the most impact on progress. Pupil books from across the curriculum also provide valuable opportunities for feedback relating to handwriting objectives. Any incidents of poor effort with handwriting or messy presentation should always be addressed by the teacher in accordance with the feedback policy.

In the early stages of learning to write, the process is more important than the product. Irregular letter forms starting in the correct place with movement in the correct direction are to be preferred to uniformly regular letters achieved through wrong movements.

Every effort should be made to prevent significant faults becoming ingrained habits that will be difficult to break.

Common faults include:

- ☒ faulty pencil/pen grip
- ☒ incorrect letter formation
- ☒ reversals and inversions
- ☒ poor posture and paper positioning

Criteria relating to handwriting form part of the Writing Assessment Criteria which are used to track children's progress each term. Handwriting targets may form part of pupils' termly mentoring meetings when appropriate.


Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy should be reviewed by all staff and governors on a regular basis. To ensure that this policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, The English co-ordinators keep an updated record of developments and monitors progress within this curriculum area.

This policy will be reviewed in 2025. Evaluation of the policy and practice will take place annually.

English Coordinators: S Amess

Handwriting Rhymes - taken from Read Write Inc

 <p>Maisie, mountain, mountain</p>	 <p>Round the apple, down the leaf</p>	 <p>Slither down the snake</p>	 <p>Round his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet</p>	 <p>Down the tower, across the tower</p>
 <p>Down the body, dot for the head</p>	 <p>Down Nobby, over his net</p>	 <p>Down the plait and over the pirate's face</p>	 <p>Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl</p>	 <p>All around the orange</p>
 <p>Curl around the caterpillar</p>	 <p>Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg</p>	 <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle</p>	 <p>Down the laces to the heel, round the toe</p>	 <p>Down the stem, and draw the leaves</p>
 <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg</p>	 <p>Down the long leg</p>	 <p>Down the head to the hooves and over his back</p>	 <p>Down his back, then curl over his arm</p>	 <p>Down his body curl and dot</p>
 <p>Down a wing, up a wing</p>	 <p>Down a horn up a horn and under his head</p>	 <p>Down, up, down, up</p>	 <p>Zig - zag - zig</p>	 <p>Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair</p>
 <p>Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side</p>				

Handwriting Rhymes - taken from Read Write Inc

- a - All around the apple and down the leaf.
- b - down the laces, over the toe and touch the heel.
- c - curl around the caterpillar.
- d - Round the dinosaurs back, up his neck and down to his feet.
- e - slice into the egg, go over the top, then under the egg.
- f - down the stem and draw the leaves.
- g - round the girl's face, down her hair and give her a curl.
- h - down the horse's head to the hooves and over his back.
- i - down the insect body, dot for the head.
- j - down Jack's body, curl and dot.
- k - down the kangaroo's body, up the tail and down the leg.
- l - down the long leg.
- m - down Maisy then over the two mountains. Maisy, mountain, mountain.
- n - down Nobby and over his net.
- o - all around the orange.
- p - down the plait, up and over the pirate's face.
- q - round the quenn's head, up to her crown, down her hair and curl.
- r - down the robot's back, then up and curl.
- s - slide around the snake
- t - down the tower, across the tower.
- u - down and under the umbrella, up to the top and down to the puddle.
- v - (a vulture) down a wing, up a wing.
- w - down the worm, up the worm, down the worm, up the worm.
- x - cross down the arm and leg and cross the other way.
- y - (a Yak) down a horn, up a horn and under the yak's head.
- z - zig, zag, zig down the zip.

FORMATION OF INDIVIDUAL LETTERS.

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z

READY REFERENCE GUIDE

The letter forms

The lower-case alphabet for Starter Level:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

The lower-case alphabet for Books 1 to 6:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A letter slant of 8° from the vertical to the right is introduced in Pupil Book 3:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

The lower-case print alphabet:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

The capital letters and numerals:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

These are the same throughout the scheme.

The letter groups

Letter families

In year one, *Nelson Handwriting* groups the letters into sets based on handwriting families. These are letters that are formed in similar ways.

Set 1

c a o d g q s f e

Set 2

i l t u j y

Set 3

r n m h k b p

Set 4

v w x z

Joining groups

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

Group 1

a c d e h i k l m n s t u

Thirteen letters with exit flicks plus s.

Group 2

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y

Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height.

Group 3

b f h k l t

Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.

Group 4

f o r v w

Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height.

The break letters

b g j p q x y z

Eight letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.

The joins

	Group	→	Group	
The first join	1	→	2	in am
The second join	1	→	3	ab ch
The third join	4	→	2	oa wo
The fourth join	4	→	3	wh ob
The break letters				bigger

The joined style

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Letter size

Book	x-height of letter (mm)
Starter Workbook A	10
Starter Workbooks B & C	8
Book 1A and 1B	6
Book 2	5
Book 3	4
Book 4	4
Book 5	3
Book 6	3

Guidelines are provided in the Resources and Assessment Books and printable versions are available online.

- The Resources and Assessment sheets for Starter have tramlines with an x-height of 8mm.
 - The Resources and Assessment sheets for Books 1 and 2 have tramlines with an x-height of 6mm.
 - The Resources and Assessment sheets for Books 3 and 4 have tramlines with an x-height of 4mm.
 - The Resources and Assessment sheets for Books 5 and 6 have plain ruled lines.
-