



# Handwriting Policy

Policy Version			
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## **1. Why teach handwriting?**

Given effective teaching, handwriting can be mastered by most pupils by the time they are seven or eight years old. This will enable them to develop a faster and more mature hand, ready for secondary school and adult life. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and for many pupils this will require a lot of practice.

## **2. Key aims of teaching handwriting at Elmridge.**

- a) To develop pupils' ability to communicate through the written word; this is a fundamental life skill.
- b) To give pupils more confidence in their written work and presentation, thereby raising their self-esteem.
- c) To develop the pupils' ability to form their letters and joins correctly before moving on to the next stage in the development of their handwriting where they can create their own style and increase their speed and fluency.

## **3. Progression in handwriting in the Elmridge curriculum**

### **Foundation Stage and Year 1**

Children will develop hand eye co-ordination, gross and fine motor skills to support handwriting.

For example:

- a) Children will use a range of tools to develop drawing lines and circles using gross motor skills e.g swirling ribbons, batting balls, painting.
- b) Children will use a range of materials to develop fine motor skills e.g. wax crayons, markers, pencils, sponges, chunky brushes, cotton wool balls, shaving foam, finger paints, etc.
- c) Children will practice manipulative skills e.g cooking, playing with constructions, threading and playing instruments.
- d) Children will use variety of tools and paper, indoors and outdoors for purposeful writing. e.g role play, labelling, making cards.
- e) Children will physically develop the movements of letter shapes using gross motor skills (often linked to music and sounds) to gain confidence with the basic movements and flow of writing.
- f) In year 1 children sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. They begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place and form capital letters. Children understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and practise these.

### **How to hold a pencil**

From Foundation Stage onwards, pupils should be encouraged to hold a writing implement in the correct manner. The pencil should be positioned so that there is equal pressure between the thumb, the side of the middle finger and the tip of the index finger. All fingers are bent slightly. This is called a "tripod grip" or "tripod pencil grasp".

- The tripod grip allows a person to write more quickly and easily, while a tight or awkward grip can slow writing.

- The tripod grip avoids physical problems to the hand and wrist. Carpal tunnel syndrome can become a problem later in life when continual aggravation from clenching a pencil - a habit that is formed in childhood- causes the ligaments in the wrist to become inflamed.

## **Year 2**

Joins will be taught in formal, discreet lessons in accordance with the Nelson scheme.

Children will:

- 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
- When letters are formed correctly, children will begin practising the joins in their handwriting books.
- More able children aim to use joined writing in their classwork before the end of the academic year. And may begin using a blue ink pen during these sessions.

## **Lower Key Stage Two**

Pupils continue to develop their handwriting skills through discreet handwriting sessions. The four joins will once again be systematically revisited and the importance of joined writing to aid presentation and legibility is emphasised. All errors are to be identified by teachers and corrected through the setting of targets. Handwriting pens will be used in handwriting books, in special pieces of presentation work and when publishing final drafts of Literacy work. More able children in year 4 may begin using blue ink pens in more classwork where appropriate.

## **Upper Key Stage Two**

Handwriting practice will continue. Children will need reminders about joins and any remaining inconsistencies in letter formation. It is recognised that at this stage children like to develop a more personal style: this is permitted if neatness and legibility are maintained and the correct joins are used. Neatness of pupils' handwriting may fluctuate, for example if pupils are performing a timed piece of writing; however, letter forms, joins and sizes should be correct. The importance of handwriting should be emphasised in all curriculum areas, not just in literacy.

Throughout Year 4, 5 and 6 handwriting should continue to be taught. The lessons may be less frequent but good practice should be reinforced regularly in a structured manner so pupils do not let their standards dip or resort to printing.

## **4. Teaching**

Teaching of handwriting from the Foundation Stage to Year 3 should:

- be planned around specific objectives
- involve short, pacy lessons. Handwriting is to be taught regularly through short, focused sessions and may be linked with spelling, grammar or phonics objectives. Teaching generally

occurs outside English lessons, although shared and guided writing also provides additional opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting.

- include teacher modelling. Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet.
- involve a mixture of activities that engage visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners.
- incorporate structured progression according to the scheme of work/medium term plan
- be responsive to assessments made in work undertaken in handwriting lessons as well as other curriculum areas.

## **5. Scheme of work**

Elmridge Primary School uses the Nelson handwriting scheme. This involves the teaching of lower case, upper case, capital letters, ascending letters, descending letters, break letters and the four handwriting joins. Specific handwriting lines are used to demonstrate letter sizes and shapes. These lines are used in Nelson textbooks, practice workbooks as well as exercise books used for handwriting.

### **Progression of handwriting skills years 1-6**

#### Year 1

- Sit correctly 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' and practise these.

#### Year 2

- 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.

#### Years 3-4

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters, and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.
- Increase the legibility and quality of their handwriting e.g. by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

## Years 5-6

- 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 a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

### **6. Equal opportunities**

All pupils, regardless of ability, race or gender are given equal access to resources. Classroom Management takes into account such issues, and uses curriculum materials which are not biased.

### **7. Resources (See Presentation Policy)**

- Foundation Stage children are to be given access to a variety of suitable implements e.g. crayons, large felt pens, ribbons and sand.
- In Years 1 and 2 children are to use pencils beginning with thicker, triangular shaped pencils for easier grip. Pupils can then move on to regular sized pencils. Pencil grips can be used where appropriate. More able children in year 2 may use a blue ink pen if joining with accuracy for handwriting.
- In Years 3 and 4 children should use regular pencils. Ink pens are introduced for handwriting and special pieces of writing. No ink pens should be used in Mathematics work.
- In Years 5 and 6 children are to be encouraged to use ink pens for most classwork. This is at the discretion of the class teacher depending upon ability and need. No biros are to be used. In Mathematics work, no ink pens should be used.

### **8. Assessment**

Pupils' handwriting should be assessed in accordance with the English assessment policy. In Key Stage Two, Assessing Pupils' Progress sheets are used to regularly assess progress in handwriting.

Day to day assessments are undertaken from work in handwriting lessons and noted on the back of planning sheets. A different group of writers should be focussed upon each week and key areas for pupils to work on, which arise from teacher assessment should be communicated in the form of targets in the back of the front covers of the pupils' books.

### **9. Management and the co-ordinator's role**

The English co-ordinator, supported by all members of staff, is responsible for overseeing handwriting standards within the school.

The English co-ordinator should:

- develop own expertise and demonstrate good practice in their handwriting
- audit all aspects of the area of handwriting within the school

- agree curricular targets for the year
- Support the professional development of staff
- monitor teaching and learning of handwriting throughout the school
- keep school governors informed about handwriting standards in school and developments in the teaching and learning of handwriting.
- provide parents with guidance on the teaching of handwriting

This policy was reviewed in December 2020.

It will next be reviewed in September 2021.