

# Hose Church of England Primary School



## Handwriting Policy

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart" Colossians 3.23.*

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## Values

***We give our children the chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually so that they might prosper and flourish in all that they do.***

## Aims and Objectives

At Hose Church of England Primary School, we aim to offer a balanced and broad curriculum which aims:

- To develop pupils' handwriting to ensure that it is fluent, legible and consistent.
- To empower children to understand that the above underpins fluency and automaticity in their writing.
- To ensure systematic, consistent teaching of handwriting across all year groups.
- To foster high expectations for presentation and pride in written work.
- To support pupils' self-esteem and effective communication through handwriting.
- To ensure all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to achieve their potential in handwriting.
- To provide staff with the knowledge, skills and resources to deliver effective handwriting teaching.

## Statutory Requirements

- Deliver the handwriting objectives set out in the National Curriculum for English (2014).
- Comply with the Equality Act (2010) by making reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or motor difficulties.
- Adhere to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) by providing appropriate support and alternative methods as needed.
- Maintain safe, ergonomic classroom environments in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).
- Support the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, including fine motor development and early writing.
- Ensure secure handling of pupil data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).

## Curriculum Provision

We recognise that children develop at different rates and that some will find Handwriting more difficult than others. Through our progressive approach to teaching handwriting, the children develop their skills overtime to support them to learn to write with fluency and automaticity. An important component of this is the ability to write fluently, legibly and consistently.

We know that for our youngest writers in school, it is important that they develop the core strength and motor control before they can form recognisable letters. Therefore, in Foundation Stage our pupils learn through play and activities that are relevant to their age and stage including through the use of fine motor activities such as snipping with scissors, rolling with playdough or threading beads onto string. Children's pencil grips are assessed when they begin school to provide timely support to develop their use of a tripod pencil grip.

Handwriting is taught using the Nelson Handwriting scheme from EYFS to KS2. Children are taught print as early, emergent writers and progress to developing a cursive approach when developmentally appropriate. This is formally introduced in Year 1 but can be adapted to support individual needs.

Handwriting is taught as a core component of the English curriculum, with progression from early mark-making and letter formation to fluent, joined handwriting. The curriculum covers:

- Development of gross and fine motor skills to support writing readiness.
- Correct posture, pencil grip, and sitting position.
- Formation of lower-case and capital letters and numerals.
- Consistent size, spacing, and orientation of letters and words.
- Introduction and development of joining techniques for letters.
- Increasing speed, fluency, and legibility in independent writing.
- Application of handwriting skills across all subjects and writing tasks.
- Selection and use of appropriate writing implements for different tasks.

## Coverage

The aims of the 2014 National Curriculum	How <i>Nelson Handwriting</i> delivers these aims:
<b>Year 1</b>	
<p><b>Handwriting</b> Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly</li> <li>• begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</li> <li>• form capital letters</li> <li>• form digits 0-9</li> <li>• understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these</li> </ul>	<p><b>Nelson Handwriting</b> supports children from the earliest stages of learning to write. Guidance is given in the Teacher’s Book about how to create the conditions for good writing: atmosphere, seating and posture, and pencil and pen grip. Each Pupil Book has a flap on the front cover which reminds children how to prepare for writing. New videos show how children should sit, how they should hold their pencil and how they should position their paper on the desk.</p> <p>All of the lower-case and capital letters are covered in the Workbooks and online Teaching Software, with clear and consistent instructions about how to start and finish letters. The digits 0-9 are covered too.</p> <p><b>Nelson Handwriting</b> groups the letters into sets based on how they are formed, and children practise these in a cumulative manner.</p>
<p><b>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</b> <i>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</i></p>	<p><b>Nelson Handwriting</b> is designed to be used little and often. The Teacher’s Book gives guidance on direct teaching, and the online Teaching Software gives animated demonstrations of each letter and join.</p> <p>The Teacher’s Book also gives useful guidance about left-handed pupils and their specific needs in terms of grip, posture and paper alignment. A left-hander’s version of the Pupil Book cover flap is available.</p>
<b>Year 2</b>	
<p><b>Handwriting</b> Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters</li> <li>• use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters</li> </ul>	<p>In Year 2, <b>Nelson Handwriting</b> revises the previously-learned joins with an emphasis on relative height. Children re-cap their learning of lower-case and capital letters and practise forming them with consistency.</p> <p>Children are also given the opportunity to continue to practise using print letters, and are reminded that some letters are best left unjoined when next to other letters.</p>
<p><b>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</b> <i>Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.</i></p>	<p>Frequent practice and repetition is at the heart of <b>Nelson Handwriting</b>. The course provides ample opportunity for children to refine their writing skills as their motor control improves.</p>

The aims of the 2014 National Curriculum	How <i>Nelson Handwriting</i> delivers these aims:
<b>Year 3-4</b>	
<p><b>Handwriting</b> Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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 the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]</li> </ul>	<p>Throughout Years 3 and 4, children continue to practise and develop their handwriting skills. The idea of writing with a slant is introduced for the first time. <b>Nelson Handwriting</b> provides practice in joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes as well as the 'break letters' that are best left unjoined. There is an emphasis on spacing letters consistently and on keeping ascenders and descenders in proportion.</p>
<p><b>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</b> Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>	<p>Each of the <b>Nelson Handwriting</b> units is based on a context that links into areas across the curriculum, and/or picks up on a key spelling pattern, reinforcing the shape of the letters with the spelling pattern of the word.</p> <p>Guidance is given in the Teacher's Book about how teachers can best ensure that good handwriting is not just reserved for handwriting lessons, and about emphasising the importance of fluency, neatness and speed in writing across the curriculum.</p>
<b>Year 5-6</b>	
<p><b>Handwriting and presentation</b> Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</li> <li>• choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters</li> <li>• choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task</li> </ul>	<p>At Years 5-6, <b>Nelson Handwriting</b> continues to provide structured practice for the skills that have been developed so far.</p> <p>Children continue to practise the joins and the break letters, looking at consistency of sizing and spacing.</p> <p><b>Nelson Handwriting</b> empowers children to develop their own style of handwriting from a secure base, choosing their writing implement and style as appropriate to the occasion.</p>
<p><b>Notes and guidance (non-statutory)</b> Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra, and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.</p>	<p><b>Nelson Handwriting</b> continues to develop writing fluency. Speedwriting challenges help children practise automaticity and speed.</p> <p>Children are taught about the difference in expectation between informal jottings and final presented versions and given opportunities to practise these. A range of contexts, from writing addresses to labelling maps and diagrams, help them learn the contexts in which joined or unjoined writing is most appropriate.</p>

## Implementation

The Nelson Handwriting scheme is used consistently across all year groups to provide a clear, progressive structure.

- Handwriting is taught explicitly in Handwriting sessions on a Monday. These objectives and skills are then embedded throughout the week in additional handwriting tasks, teacher dictations and writing opportunities across the curriculum. Teachers make explicit reference to Handwriting objectives at points where handwriting is undertaken, regardless of the specific lesson focus.
- Teachers model correct letter formation, posture and pencil grip at all times when writing is to be seen by the children. This includes when writing is modelled as part of teaching and in feedback written in children's books.
- Systematic routines and consistent language are used to reinforce expectations.

- Short, frequent practice sessions are prioritised to build muscle memory and fluency.
- Teachers maintain high expectations for presentation. Pupils are therefore encouraged to apply handwriting skills in all written work.
- Adapted resources (e.g., pencil grips and alternative writing tools) are provided as needed.
- Opportunities for scaffolded self- and peer-assessment are included to develop metacognitive awareness.
- Children are praised for their resilience and effort and are provided with feedback so they know what they can do to improve.

## The Structure of a Handwriting Session

Children should be reminded of the 'Getting Ready to Write' guidelines (posture, pencil/pen grip and angle of paper).

1. The teacher introduces and models the key objective of the handwriting session. Younger children will often be invited to practice this using their 'magic finger' or on whiteboards before transferring this formation to paper. Younger pupils will be encouraged to 'verbalise' their handwriting to give meaning to the process of their writing.
2. Children in KS1 and lower KS2 use the Nelson Handwriting sheets to practise and apply the learning. Additional handwriting practise may then be completed in books using handwriting guidelines. Those in upper KS2 will transfer learning straight to lined books.
3. The teacher or supporting adult provides feedback and scaffolds further support where needed.
4. Children are celebrated for their stamina and success.

We recognise that for our younger learners in particular, that writing at a table is not always appropriate to the task and their stage of development. It is equally important that we encourage a love of writing and an understanding of writing for purpose. Our youngest writers will therefore be seen writing in all manner of places, from tables to carpets to sandpits.

## The Language of Letter Formation

The following is a set of verbal instructions that should be used to support children's handwriting in lessons. It is important that all staff and parents use this language in order to provide a clear and consistent set of instructions that describe the expected letter formation. Further guidance on this can be viewed in [Nelson's 'Techniques for Teaching Letter Formation' document](#).

Children in Foundation Stage are taught to write in print and understand that letters can be 'tall' (ascenders) or 'long' (descenders) and that all letters 'sit on the line'. The children are taught that all letters start at the top, apart from 'e' which starts in the middle. The children are taught to write these letters in print, starting in the position indicated by the dot as follows:

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

Children in Year 1 will then begin to learn to join with a move to a more fluent joined writing style developing in Year 2. Examples of cursive writing from the Nelson Handwriting scheme are as follows:

ccc church, accent  
ooo school, office  
aaa nail, aardvark  
ddd diamond, puddle  
iii indigo, Hawaii

## Assessment and Feedback

- Handwriting is assessed formatively during lessons through observation with feedback provided in the moment to support progression.
- Summative assessments are conducted termly, with evidence drawn from pupils' writing across the curriculum using tools from the Nelson Handwriting scheme for assessment.
- Assessment criteria are aligned with the National Curriculum and end-of-key-stage frameworks, focusing on legibility, consistency, joining and speed.
- Teachers use assessment to identify misconceptions, inform planning and provide targeted support.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- The English Subject Leader is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in Handwriting, as well as the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation. This includes through the use of lesson visits, discussions with pupils and book-looks.
- As handwriting is a fundamental component of any lesson in which writing is required, all subject leads are encouraged to play an active role in monitoring handwriting within their curriculum area(s). In this respect, monitoring of handwriting should be seen across all books and not in Handwriting or English in isolation.

## Equal Opportunities

- All pupils have access to high-quality handwriting teaching, with adaptations as required.
- We recognise that for left-handed pupils, handwriting can present more of a challenge. Considerations will therefore be taken to support these children with adaptations as needed.
- Individualised and additional support is provided for pupils with SEND.
- Resources such as pencil grips are available to support learners.
- Teachers work with the SENDCo to plan and review personalised strategies where appropriate.

- Progress is monitored to support all pupils to make expected gains and interventions are provided for those who would benefit from additional support.

## Support for Staff

- All staff receive training in the Nelson Handwriting scheme and effective handwriting pedagogy.
- Ongoing CPD is provided through staff meetings, coaching, and external courses where appropriate.
- New staff are inducted in the school's handwriting policy and practice.
- Opportunities for peer observation and sharing of best practice are facilitated.
- Subject leaders keep staff informed of research developments and statutory updates.