

Handwriting Policy



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To be reviewed	Jan 2029

Introduction

At St Philip's C.E. Primary School, we recognise handwriting as a fundamental skill that underpins pupils' success across the curriculum. The ability to write fluently, legibly and with increasing speed supports children in expressing their ideas confidently and accurately, allowing them to focus on composition, spelling and content rather than transcription.

This policy should be read alongside the English Policy and reflects our whole-school vision:

Happiness, love and security abound
Everyone is special
Every achievement is celebrated
Relationships and teamwork matter
A beacon of light in the community
Christ is in everything we do

Aims and Objectives

Through the teaching of handwriting, we aim for all pupils to:

- Develop fluent, legible and increasingly automatic handwriting
- Use correct letter formation, orientation and spacing
- Develop a consistent cursive (joined) handwriting style
- Write with confidence, stamina and pride across all subjects
- Apply handwriting skills independently and appropriately for different purposes
- Be supported through targeted intervention where handwriting presents a barrier to learning

Handwriting Scheme

St Philip's C.E. Primary School follows the Nelson Handwriting scheme (Oxford Owl) as our agreed whole-school approach.

Nelson Handwriting provides:

- A clear progression from pre-writing patterns to fluent joined handwriting
- Consistent letter formation and joins
- Structured lessons that build automaticity and muscle memory
- Alignment with phonics and spelling instruction
- Clear assessment and intervention opportunities

The scheme ensures consistency of approach, language and expectations for pupils and staff across the school.

Teaching and Learning

EYFS

In Early Years, handwriting is developed through a strong focus on fine and gross motor skills alongside early mark making and letter formation.

Provision includes:

- Daily fine motor activities (e.g. dough, threading, tweezers, funky fingers)
- Multi-sensory letter formation activities (air writing, sand, paint, chalk)
- Explicit teaching of correct letter formation alongside ELS phonics
- Adult modelling of writing during play and adult-led sessions
- Opportunities to apply writing independently during continuous provision

Children are introduced to pre-cursive letter formation in line with Nelson Handwriting guidance, ensuring consistency as they progress into Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 1

In KS1, handwriting is taught explicitly and systematically using Nelson Handwriting lessons.

- Minimum of two focused handwriting sessions per week (approximately 10-15 minutes)
- Handwriting is closely linked to phonics and spelling instruction
- Correct posture, pencil grip and paper position are taught and reinforced
- Letter formation and early joins are modelled clearly and practised regularly
- High expectations for presentation are embedded across all subjects

Key Stage 2

In KS2, pupils continue to develop fluency, consistency and speed in joined handwriting.

- Handwriting sessions are delivered regularly and linked to spelling and writing lessons
- Pupils are taught to write with increasing automaticity to support composition
- Expectations for presentation apply across all curriculum subjects
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a neat, personal handwriting style that remains legible
- Targeted handwriting intervention is provided for pupils who have not yet met age-related expectations.

Frequency of Handwriting

EYFS: Daily fine motor and letter formation opportunities within provision and adult-led sessions

KS1: Minimum of three short, focused handwriting sessions per week

KS2: Minimum of two short, focused handwriting sessions per week

Handwriting expectations apply in all books and across all subjects.

Progression and Assessment

Progression in handwriting is carefully sequenced using the Nelson Handwriting programme. See Appendix 1 for further curriculum detail.

Assessment is carried out through:

- Ongoing teacher assessment
- Book scrutiny and learning walks
- Monitoring of handwriting across English and foundation subjects
- Identification of pupils requiring targeted intervention

Clear progression is expected within year groups and across the school.

Intervention and Support

Where handwriting presents a barrier to learning, additional support is provided, including:

- Targeted handwriting intervention groups
- Additional fine motor support
- Adapted resources (e.g. pencil grips, larger writing tools, writing slopes)
- Adult modelling and guided practice

Interventions are time-limited, monitored and reviewed to ensure impact.

Inclusion

All pupils are entitled to high-quality handwriting teaching.

For pupils with SEND, EAL or fine motor difficulties:

- Adaptive teaching strategies are used
- Expectations are scaffolded appropriately without lowering challenge
- Support focuses on enabling independence

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure all pupils can access handwriting teaching successfully.

Left-Handed Pupils

Specific guidance is followed to support left-handed pupils:

- Demonstration of letter formation from a left-handed perspective where needed
- Correct seating position to avoid collision with peers
- Paper angled appropriately to support comfortable writing
- Pencil grip monitored to ensure visibility and control

Writing Tools

Pupils begin handwriting using pencils. Progression to pen is teacher assessed based on legibility and consistency.

Pupils typically begin using pen from Year 3, with all pupils using pen from Year 4 Spring term, unless handwriting or individual needs indicate otherwise.

Role of Staff

All staff model high standards of handwriting. Consistent language and expectations are used across the school. Staff engage in CPD to ensure fidelity to the Nelson Handwriting approach.

Role of Parents and Carers

Parents are supported through:

- Guidance on letter formation and handwriting expectations
- Workshops and resources where appropriate
- Communication about how handwriting is taught and practised in school
- A consistent approach between home and school is encouraged.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored through:

- Book scrutiny
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Pupil voice
- Assessment data

The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

Approved by Governing Body: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1



Guide to Curriculum Expectations

Year 1	Pupils should be taught to: • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) • leave spaces between words.
Year 2	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.
Years 3 and 4	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 (e.g. ensure downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).
Years 5 and 6	Pupils should be taught to: • write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: - o choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices - o deciding whether or not to join specific letters - o choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

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.