



# Handwriting Policy

(To be read in conjunction with our policy on English)

## February 2023

### Version 2

### Review Date: February 2026

## Version Control

Date	Version	Status / Comments / Description
Autumn 2020	1.0	Original Policy – agreed by Governors.
Feb 2023	2.0	<p>Policy reviewed – Charlotte Clarkson English Leader / Assistant Headteacher</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>1. Equality Statement</u></b> (new section added)</li> <li><b><u>2. Aims and objectives</u></b> (updated section)</li> <li><b><u>3. Handwriting Progression</u></b> (new section added)</li> <li><b><u>4. Support strategies, resources and adaptations</u></b> (new section added)</li> <li><b><u>5. Assessment of Handwriting</u></b> (updated section added)</li> </ol> <p>Approved by Headship Team, uploaded to Governor Hub and school website.</p>
March 2023		Noted as updated at FGB 13/03/23. Policy shared with all staff.

*“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”* (Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

*Nelson Handwriting provides a clear, practical framework for implementing and developing a progressive, whole school handwriting policy.*

### **1. Equality Statement for Park Hill Infant School**

At Park Hill Infant School, we continue to teach our children about what it means to be strong, positive and productive members of society. We have always taught our pupils about equality and this remains an important part of our curriculum. We ensure that we always celebrate diversity, promote equality, demonstrate respect and stand together to challenge all forms of discriminatory language and behaviour.

We recognise that education is a vital tool for powerful, permanent and informative change. Our continuously evolving curriculum demonstrates our determination to use education to tackle issues of racism and inequality. We strive to ensure our curriculum and supporting resources reflect values of inclusivity, diversity, equality and belonging. We do this by planning to meet the needs of all genders, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more-able, gifted and talented, of children with disabilities, of children from all socio-economic backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, religion and cultural backgrounds, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

At Park Hill Infant School we believe that children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work across the curriculum. We aim for handwriting to become a skill that requires little effort and that this in turn reduces cognitive load, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of written work, rather than upon the act.

We will further support any child who experiences difficulty with producing handwriting in line with this policy and will adapt the teaching of handwriting where necessary (See strategies outlined in **Section 4** of this policy).

At Park Hill Infant School we follow the ***Nelson Handwriting Scheme*** (Oxford University Press) alongside the transcription processes outlined in the Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme ***Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds*** (Wandle Learning Trust).

We aim for:

- pupils to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed.
- pupils to develop their handwriting skills progressively and to be able to write legibly at each point in their development.
- pupils to develop an effective and comfortable pencil grip.
- pupils to know that all letters start from the top (except d and e which start in the middle).
- pupils to form letters correctly; knowing the size and orientation of letters.
- pupils to produce legible handwriting in a style that can be joined by the end of KS1
- pupils to know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively across the curriculum.
- a consistent approach to handwriting and presentation throughout the school, including consistent modelling of writing in children's books, on the whiteboard, on hand written displays and resources.

## 3. Handwriting Progression

### 3.1 EYFS Provision and Progression

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, writing skills are encouraged through physical play and mark making. The development of fine motor skills is planned for within literacy sessions and is evident throughout continuous and enhanced provision creating opportunities for all pupils to produce an effective pencil grip and prepare for early writing. (See **Appendix 2: Preparation to write**).

As Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) are taught in Phonics sessions during the Autumn term, the children learn the formation phrases in line with Phase 2 sessions from ***Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds*** using the Grapheme and Mnemonic, Picture cards and Formation phrases which match the expected formation set out in the ***Nelson Handwriting Scheme***. (See **Appendix 1: Reference Guide: The Language of Letter Formation**.)



“Around the astronaut’s helmet and down into space”

*(Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds – Wandle Learning Trust)*

The children then choose and write the correct grapheme for each of the sounds they have learnt in order to form initial sounds in words and then progress to from simple CV, VC, CVC, CVCC, CCVC and CCVCC words. All of the GPCs taught are practised during daily Phonics sessions using whiteboards and are then applied in a writing context at least once a week using lined writing books, forming words and sentences containing the taught GPCs during weekly literacy focus sessions.

Children are taught the letters in their name when they are developmentally ready and are encouraged to write their name independently. Close attention is paid to using the tripod pencil grip, correct posture and the positioning of the paper to help children develop good handwriting habits for the future (See [Appendix 2: Preparation to write](#)).

Support is available within the classroom environment in the form of Grapheme Mats (which include the formation of Capital Letters) and Phonics displays. As pupils learn each GPC they receive three corresponding Letter formation practice sheets as Home Learning practice each week. In the EYFS Children also have access to a range of writing opportunities and mark making tools including (but not limited to): chubby crayons, big chalk, paint brushes, play dough and thick triangular pencils.

Within the Spring and Summer terms, pupils move on to apply their handwriting skills using an additional Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines where they practise letter formation following the *Nelson Handwriting Scheme*. Handwriting is modelled by teaching staff and pupils are supported with the positioning and sizing of letters. By the end of the EYFS we aim for all pupils to be able to write legibly using print:

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

ā 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

Nelson Handwriting Scheme (Oxford University Press)

By the end of the EYFS, all pupils are expected to be able to:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

### **3.2 Year One Provision and Progression**

In Year One the children take part in discrete, weekly handwriting sessions lasting 30 minutes. These sessions are structured in the following way:

- Each teaching session begins with reminders about physical preparation, getting ready to write, seating and posture, and encouragement to sit up straight (see **Appendix 2: Preparation to write**).
- A 5 minute 'Warm Up' follows, developing hand and finger strength using specific exercises, games and resources selected from ***Nelson Handwriting Scheme*** (these include smartboard resources and videos).
- Teachers then model the *weekly handwriting focus* as outlined in Long-Term Planning.
- There may be opportunities for tracing (over teachers writing, worksheets from the scheme or laminated cards etc) and following and creating patterns where appropriate.
- Pupils then have time (15-20 minutes) of independent practise in a calm environment. Pupils apply their skills and practise the weekly formation focus using the corresponding '*Unit Focus Resource sheet*'.
- When ready, pupils can attempt a further challenge using the '*Unit Focus Extension Resource Sheet*'.

Pupils use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines and written examples and models written by teaching staff. Teachers also keep additional handwriting folders containing any completed Handwriting Resource sheets.

In the Autumn term, children learn, consolidate and re-cap:

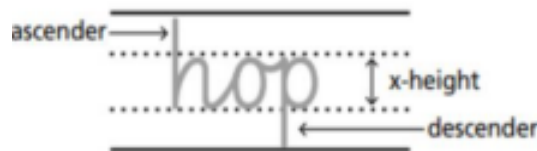
- How to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- They re-cap lower case letters in the correct direction
- Re-cap starting and finishing in the right place. Pupils also consolidate their handwriting practice to form capital letters and digits 0-9.

In the Spring term, pupils are taught which letters belong to which handwriting '*families*' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways). ***Nelson Handwriting Scheme*** groups letters into '*sets*':

- 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

In the second half of Spring term pupils begin forming diagonal joins and horizontal joins using these sets. 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).



### ***Nelson Handwriting Scheme*** (Oxford University Press)

In the Summer term the four joins and the following are reviewed:

- Break letters are the 8 letters after which no join is made.
- Joins are not made to or from the letter z: b g j p q x y z.
- Capital letters and numerals are never joined.

By the end of Year One, all pupils are expected 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

### **3.3 Year Two**

In Year Two the children take part in discrete, weekly Handwriting sessions lasting 30 minutes following the same outline as Year One (see section **3.2 Year One Provision and Progression**) with more advanced content (as outlined below).

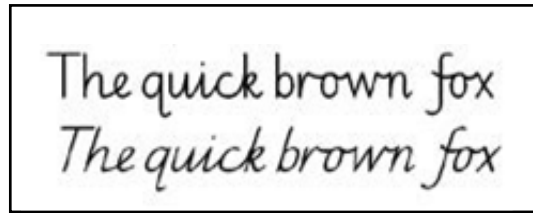
Pupils use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines and written examples and models written by teaching staff. Teachers also keep additional handwriting folders containing any completed Handwriting Resource sheets.

As pupils gain confidence in using joined handwriting during Year Two, there is an additional focus given to handwritten presentation. At the end of each half term, teachers teach handwriting skills in an extended context and children apply their skills within their usual writing book. Pupils copy passages of text using joined handwriting of the appropriate size

and consistency and spacing between words which reflects the size of the letters and are given an opportunity to present their writing to their best ability (decorating the page, taking extra time to ensure neat presentation etc).

By the end of the Year Two, all pupils are expected to be able to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- 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.



*Nelson Handwriting Scheme* (Oxford University Press)

#### 4. Supporting the process of Handwriting

##### 4.1 Right and Left handed support

- The left hand should be used to steady the paper for right handers with the paper placed to the right, slightly tilted to the left.
- Paper should be tilted to the right for left handers with the right hand used to steady the paper.
- Left handers may need to use a different pen to avoid smudging on the page (Used in Year Two for 'over-lining' and in KS1 for editing and self and peer assessment (See Inclusion Team or English Leader for resources).
- Left handed pupils should sit to the left of their partners where possible.
- All handwriting should be modelled to the class with a right-hand example as well as a left hand example by the teacher using a flip chart or 'drawing in the air' with the hand.

##### 4.2 Support strategies, resources and adaptations

- Where a pupil struggles to physically grip their pencil or form the required movements in order to form rounded letter shapes, support will be given and resources should be adapted. It may be more effective for a pupil to consolidate on their use of print until clear and legible as the introduction of joins may be unnecessary.
- The usual *Staedtler HB* school pencils should be replaced with triangular pencils to enable pupils who require extra support with their pencil grip to hold a pencil correctly.
- Pencil grips and tools should be selected appropriately for pupils with significant difficulty mastering an effective pencil grip. These should be chosen with guidance

from the Inclusion Team and should be made available during all teaching sessions and areas of the curriculum.

- Pupils who struggle to form letters in the correct direction and orientation should receive additional modelling of the letter formation and be given further opportunities to practise the movement in the correct direction 'in the air' with their finger, in resources such as sand trays and on a large scale using chalks etc. They should then trace over patterns and letters shapes in order to gain confidence and 'muscle memory' in order to attempt the written form independently in a handwriting book. Lined paper should be chosen in relation to the current ability of the pupil to form letters of the appropriate size and in accordance with the pupil's speed of writing. A pupil may make more effective progress using larger lines and can therefore be given different Handwriting books and Topic Work books to support this.
- Teaching staff can select the most appropriate focus resource sheets for a pupil and may decide to take further time to consolidate upon pupil's letter formation using the *Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds* letter formation sheets. Additional resources are also available through the English Leader and Inclusion Team.
- Pupils may be given additional resources and handwriting packs to practise at home in replacement of other written Home Learning, where appropriate. These packs should be discussed and made in consultation with parents and the English Leader and Inclusion team.
- Teaching staff should discuss significant needs with the Inclusion Team and should act upon any advice given by outside agencies for pupils with an EHCP. It may also be appropriate for a pupil with significant needs to work within the guidance '**GETTING READY TO WRITE**' from Croydon Occupational Therapy Services (Croydon NHS) in place of the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. This should be decided in consultation with the SENDco, Inclusion Team, English Leader and should be conveyed to parents. This resource is available from the Inclusion Leader.

## 5. Assessment of Handwriting

When assessing the quality and effectiveness of children's handwriting teachers should question:

- Is the writing legible?
- Are letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are capital letters taller than lower case letters?
- Are joins made correctly?
- Are spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is size of writing appropriate?

Children are observed closely as they write during weekly handwriting sessions – the teacher circulates, monitors and intervenes. Support or further scaffolding is then given when pupils are unable to fully access the handwriting taught within a session independently.

Handwriting outcomes are assessed mainly through the use of verbal feedback which happens 'live' within the session. We emphasise re-modelling of the written form by teaching staff where misconceptions or incorrect formation is evident. It is important that incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation are identified and corrected at the point it occurs.



## 6. Monitoring and review

The co-ordination and planning of the English curriculum including Handwriting are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping abreast of current developments in English and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the Headteacher an annual Subject Overview and action plan in which they evaluate the strengths and areas for development in English in the school, and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's learning, and to observe and review English lessons across the school.
- Monitors effectiveness and challenge of handwriting provision across the school in order to ensure consistency in teaching and learning and to enhance creativity and enthusiasm for the subject for all teaching staff.

A named member of the school's governing body is briefed to oversee the teaching of English, including Handwriting. The English governor meets regularly with the subject leader to review progress.






This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if necessary.

**Signed:**

**Print name:** Charlotte Clarkson

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Appendix 1: Reference Guide: The Language of Letter Formation.**

						
Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.	Down the stick, up and over the net.	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.
						
Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.	Round the goat's face, up to his ear; down and curl under his chin.	All around the octopus	Curl around the cat.	Down the kite, up and round, down to the corner.	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.
						
From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.	Down, up and over the helicopter.	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.	All the way down the lollipop.	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
						
From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. Quick, it's the queen!		

We use the Letter Formation phrases from *Little Wandle for Letters and Sounds* (Oxford University press) to support children to use accurate letter formation in line with their Phonic learning.

## Appendix 2: Preparation to write

### Tripod grip for left handers

### Tripod grip for right handers




### Getting ready to write


Are you sitting comfortably with both feet on the floor?



Are you holding your pencil correctly?




Is your paper at the correct angle?



### Getting ready to write

Are you sitting comfortably with both feet on the floor?



Are you holding your pencil correctly?



Is your paper at the correct angle?

