



# LONG SUTTON COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL HANDWRITING POLICY

## Principles

Handwriting is a movement skill and in order to write effectively and master the skill children need to be taught how to form letters with the correct sequence of strokes. It is a skill which is effectively taught by demonstration, explanation and practise. The skill of getting ideas down on paper is not a natural one and is one which must be taught carefully.

Children will be taught a style of handwriting that follows the conventions of English, including: 'writing from left to right and from top to bottom of the page; starting and finishing letters correctly; regularity of size and shape of letter; regularity of spacing letters and words'. (English in the National Curriculum')

## Aims

- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line
- Learn the conventional ways of forming letter shapes, both lower case and capitals
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
- Take pride in the presentation of work, developing handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
  - Having an efficient pencil grip
  - Knowing that all letters start at the top, except d and e which start in the middle
  - Forming all letters correctly
  - Knowing the size and orientation of letters

## Teaching Time

Foundation Stage - focused activities planned to develop gross and fine motor control as well as letter formation

KS1 - A minimum of 4x10min sessions

KS2 - A minimum of 2x15min sessions a week

Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for daily intervention

## Inclusion and equal opportunities

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in IEPs. Teachers of children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the Inclusion leader to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting, angle of table etc.

Teachers should be aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision. If a child has already developed a 'hooked' pencil control, do not force them to change. It is very difficult to alter the way you have learnt to hold a pencil and confidence can easily be destroyed. Encourage them instead to hold the pencil and tilt the paper as directed later in policy pencil grip section.

Teachers should be aware that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers may demonstrate on an

individual or group basis letter formation and joining with their left hand, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

We will ensure that each individual child receives an equal learning experience regardless of ability, culture and gender. We are committed to equal opportunities for all irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, disability or religion. We will monitor the impact of this policy to make sure that no group is adversely affected.

### **Model Used**

Long Sutton Primary School uses the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme. See Appendix D for progression

#### *Lower case 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

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

#### *Capitals*

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

#### *Digits*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

#### *The four joins*

1. to letters without ascenders
2. to letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

*The break letters* (letters that aren't joined from until children are introduced in Y4)

b g j p q x y z s

Children will be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individuals before joining them.

### **Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

*In FS1 the children are encouraged to:*

- Develop gross motor control (See appendix A)
- Develop fine motor skills (See appendix A)
- Use large equipment to make marks e.g. big chinks, large paint brushes, shaving foam, finger painting etc.
- Use a range of mark making equipment such as pencils, pens and crayons etc with confidence and enjoyment
- Develop a recognition of pattern
- Develop a vocabulary to talk about shapes and movements
- The main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; c, l and r

When children have developed appropriate gross and fine motor control, they will be gradually introduced to letter formation and encouraged to learn:

- How to write their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation
- Letter speak (See [Appendix C](#))

In the early stages of learning to write the process is of more importance than the product. Irregular letter forms starting in the right place and with movement in the correct direction are to be

preferred than uniformly regular letters achieved through wrong movements. Every effort will be made to prevent significant faults becoming ingrained habits which are difficult to break.

*In FS2 the majority of children will:*

- Learn letter formation alongside phonics using letter speak (See Appendix C)
- Use a pencil and hold it correctly to form recognisable letters (with 'kicks'/ 'flicks'), most of which will be correctly formed
- Receive instant feedback when errors in pencil grip or formation are seen
- When digraphs are introduced during phonics sessions, children will be introduced to the joins

Children should start writing on plain paper, and then widely spaced lines should be introduced. Formation practice will also occur without the restriction of lines, including the use of sand trays, white boards etc.

*At Y1 the majority of children will:*

- Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using the correct pencil grip
- Be introduced to the basic handwriting joins
- Write with spaces between words accurately
- Develop speed and stamina in writing

At the start of the year children should start writing on plain paper as above and then move on to wide lined exercise books. Handwriting books should be introduced at the appropriate time.

*At Y2 the majority of children will:*

- Write legibly, using upper and lower case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words
- Form ascenders and descenders consistently and correctly
- Practise writing at speed
- Form and use the basic handwriting joins
- Produce writing which sits on the line

Move from wider lined books at the beginning of the year to closer lines. For some children they will need to continue on wide lined books until ready and for a small number, (particularly those with SEND) it may be necessary to use plain paper. All children should be allowed to use unlined paper from time to time so that they can practise and apply skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

*At Y3 the majority of children will:*

- Develop joined handwriting
- Writing with a slight slope
- Ascenders and descenders in the correct place and writing on the lines
- Further develop writing speed and stamina

*At Y4 the majority of children will write with:*

- Joined handwriting the majority of the time
- Automacity (i.e. not having to think about formation)
- Introduced to joining from break letters

*At Y5 & Y6 the majority of children will write with:*

- Consistent size and letter spacing
- A cursive legible, accurate style, joining from the break letters
- Competency at a steady dictation speed
- Developing an individual writing style

## Aspects to be considered in lessons

### 1. Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The height of the chair should be at such a height that the thighs are horizontal and the feet flat on the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Make sure that right/left-handed pupils are seated to ensure elbows do not collide!

### 2. See Appendix B for warm up exercises

### 3. Pencil Grip

- Children should write with a pencil or pen when introduced with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

#### For right-handers

- Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be positioned to the right and tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

#### For left-handers

- Hold the pencil in the left hand in the same way as a right-handed person holds theirs. The pencil is held between thumb and forefinger, resting on the knuckle of the middle finger.
- Pencils/pens should be gripped about 3cm from the tip in order not to interrupt the pupil's the line of vision.
- Paper should be positioned to the left and tilted slightly to the right, (20-30°.)
- The right hand is used to steady the paper, just above the writing line.
- The grip the left-hander uses means the pencil is pushed rather than pulled across the page. It is therefore important that the left-handers pencil is not too sharp, so that it will run smoothly across the page.

### 4. Teacher Modelling

See Appendix D for progression

As teachers demonstrate the skills of handwriting it is important to describe the movements involved. Teachers will use and develop age appropriate descriptors however it is essential that children become familiar with the following terms:

*Clockwise, anticlockwise, vertical, horizontal, parallel, ascender, descender, consonant, vowel, joined, sloped, x-height.*

## Assessment

Children must be observed as they write during handwriting lessons, the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the writing appropriate?
- Is the pupil's handwriting in line with the level Descriptors in the national Curriculum?

Team leaders and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Is the writing legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the level Descriptors in the national Curriculum?

### **Links to spelling and other subjects**

Linking handwriting with spelling helps develop visual memory. Handwriting should be practised wherever possible using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised. Opportunities will be taken across the curriculum to reinforce and practice and apply the skills of good handwriting and to ensure children use different forms of writing for different purposes, such as applying print script to label maps and graphs or to write quickly without losing legibility when writing notes.

### **Review**

The Headteacher, Subject Leader and Governing Body will review this policy every two years in consultation with staff.

Policy Written – February 2013

Policy Reviewed – May 2015

Policy Review – May 2017

Claire Carr

Assistant Headteacher

## **Activities and exercises to develop motor control**

### Activities and exercises to develop gross motor control

Gross motor control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Fine motor control follows the development of gross. The development of good posture and balance also has importance in relation to handwriting.

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing
- Cycling
- Building with large scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music
- Rolling hoops
- Running with hoops
- Chalking
- Painting on a large scale
- IWB activities

Consolidate the vocabulary of movement by talking about such movements as going round and round, making curves, springing up and down, making long slow movements or quick, jumpy movements

### Activities and exercises to develop fine motor control

Fine motor control is the term used to describe smaller movements usually of the hand and fingers (or feet and toes). Activities also included to help development of the pincer movement.

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and woodworking tools
- Pegboards
- Moulding with malleable materials like playdough, Plasticene and clay
- Sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys, using tools
- Threading, lacing, sewing and weaving
- Peeling fruit
- Pegs on line
- Flicking marbles etc
- Using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers
- Sprinkling sand, glitter and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on large boards and easels and also on small surfaces
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movements e.g. action songs and finger puppets

- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of lines
- Tracing
- Colouring within guidelines and pictures
- Separating beads into colours

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Warm up/miming exercises to relax fingers before writing**

- Washing
- Shaking hands
- Wringing, rubbing, shaking and folding clothes
- Brushing hair
- Stroking a cat/hands
- Playing a musical instrument
- Playing with snow, bubbles, feathers, balloons
- Picking up sweets to put in a dish or in your mouth
- Sit in the writing position but with arms dangling limply, let the hands flutter loosely
- Let the forearms lay limply on the table in the correct writing position. Raise and lower the elbows several times
- Place the elbows on the table with the forearms held upright, let the hands flap loosely backwards and forwards
- Clench and unclench the fists
- Drum fingers lightly on the table
- Circle the hands, inwards and then outwards
- Hold the pen in the tripod grip lightly. With the forefinger tap the pen lightly

**Letter Speak**

Based on Jolly Phonics?

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

**Order of teaching**

Reception

Blue Level

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 25

Single letters

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

Numerals and number words

Question mark formation

Year 1

Red Level

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 30-53

Introduction of the four handwriting joins

- First join: un um ig id ed eg an ar ing ung
- Second join: ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti ink unk
- Third join: od og re ve oon oom
- Fourth join: wl vl of ff fl flo
- Practise the break letters: b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters

Year 2

Yellow Level

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 54-77

- Revising the first join: in ine
- Revising the second join: ut ute
- Revising the third join: ve vi
- Revising the fourth join: ok oh
- Practising the two ways of joining the letter s: sh as es
- Practising joining from the letter r: ri ru ry
- Practising the join to and from the letter a: oa ad as
- Practising the join from the letter e: ee ea ed

- Practising the join from the letter o: ow ov ox
- Practising joining to the letter y: ky hy ly
- Practising joining to the letter a: ha ta fa
- Practising joining from the letter o: od oo og
- Practising joining to the letter r: er ir ur
- Practising the first and second join: ai al ay
- Practising joining from the letter o: oy ou oi
- Practising the horizontal join to the letter e: re oe fe
- Practising the horizontal join to the letter u: fu wu vu
- Practising print
- Practising joining to ascenders: ot ol ok
- Practising all the joins: ai al ow ol

### Year 3

#### Developing Skills Book One

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 78-101

- Practising writing with descenders: ning ping ting
- Practising joining from the letter o: oc od oo
- Practising joining to the letter e: ake ome are
- Practising joining to the letter l: fla flo fle
- Practising joining from the letter w: who wha whe
- Practising joining from the letter i: ie in il
- Practising diagonal joins to the letter y: ly ky ny
- Practising joining from the letter a: ap ar an
- Practising joining to the letter k: ick uck ack
- Practising writing with a slope
- Practising joining to the letter e: he we re
- Practising joining from the letter: fte fir fin
- Practising writing silent letters: wra wri kno
- Practising forming double letters: ii ll tt rr nn mm cc oo dd ss ff ee
- Practising spacing letters consistently: ew ev ex
- Practising writing letters with descenders in proportion: th ht fl
- Practising joining from the letter a: ac ag af
- Practising forming capital letters
- Practising writing decorated capital letters
- Practising with punctuation

### Year 4

#### Developing Skills Book Two

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 102- 125

- Practising consistency in size and proportion of letters: rr ll tt dd
- Practising using a diagonal join line: ship ment ness less
- Practising leaving an even space between letters: ary ery cry dry
- Practising joining to the letter y: ly ily ity ify
- Practising using a horizontal joining line: row now how
- Practising the size and height of letters: ried ries rief
- Practising joining from the letter i: lig rig nig mig

- Practising joining to and from the letter v: live tive sive five
- Practising consistency in forming and joining letters: ear are rew new
- Practising speed writing
- Practising crossing double tt on completing the word: itt utt att ott
- Practising joining to and from the letter e: rec red ved ves
- Practising joining to and from the letter w: wan was wav wax
- Practising speed writing
- Practising printing
- Practising drafting and editing
- practising speed writing
- practising joining to the letter t: its Its tts uts
- Practising printing

## Year 5

### Developing Skills Book Three

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 126- 149

- Ensuring letters are consistent in height and size
- Practising with punctuation
- Practising break letters
- Practising joining from the letter m
- Ensuring the ascender on the letter t is the correct height
- Practising spacing within words
- Developing fluency
- Practising writing a playscript
- Practising printing
- Practising forming and joining the letter f
- Practising punctuation
- Practising writing shape poems, copying antonyms in a style of writing suited to each word
- Practising printing, copying address label in print handwriting
- Practising speedwriting
- Practising writing decorated capital letters
- Practising writing letters, practising writing addresses correctly
- Practising paragraphs
- Practising presentation, copying border patterns
- Revising difficult joins: ve we oe fe re, copying words they drop an e when ing is added
- Looking at different handwriting styles, joining from break letters

## Year 6

### Developing Skills Book Four

See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book Pg 150- 173

- Revise sloped writing
- Ensure letters are the correct height and size
- Practising spacing
- Practising speedwriting
- Practising drafting and editing
- Practising writing capital letters
- Practising fluency

- Practising paragraphs
- Practising keeping letters in the same proportion
- Practising presentation
- Practising writing instructions
- Practising presenting a project (handwriting for different purposes)
- Practising fluency
- Practising writing double letters
- Practising speedwriting
- Ensuring letters are in the correct proportion
- Practising presentation
- Practising printing
- Developing an individual handwriting style

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii  
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq  
Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg  
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn  
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu  
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

