

DRAYTON PARK SCHOOL HANDWRITING POLICY

Policy approved: November 2016

Reviewed in: September 2023



Aims

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively and review one's own work.
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - Having a correct pencil grip
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
 - Forming all letters correctly
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters
 - Knowing how to join letters correctly

Teaching time

Handwriting is practised 4-5 times a week, for 10 minutes, in Years 1, 2 and 3. In Years 2 to 6, children write daily, and they are expected to use correct, well-formed handwriting at all times. Teacher modelling and feedback is aimed to help pupils practise and deepen their handwriting and presentation skills. Additional handwriting teaching and practice may be put in place for specific children where needed.

Model used

The school uses the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. According to the scheme, letters and numerals are formed the following ways:

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Joins

There are four types of join:

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) are b g j p q s x y z

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Progress to a fully joined font when the children are ready

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

NB: children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units BEFORE learning to join.

Accessing the Nelson Scheme

Teachers are given individual log-ins to the Nelson Handwriting Scheme via Oxford Online Platform.

Using the Nelson Scheme

All lessons should begin with some brief finger and arm exercises, to prepare for handwriting. There are a series of warm-up videos to support this available from Nelson.

Lessons should start with the Activity resource. Letter formation and joins should be introduced using the resource. Children can be asked to model letter formation in the air or on the table with a finger.

Children should then be given the 'Focus' resource sheet or their handwriting book to practise on.

Links to Spelling

Teachers are encouraged to make as many links as possible between handwriting and the school's spelling programme. Handwriting lessons should be used to reinforce weekly spelling patterns, if appropriate.

Home Learning

One appropriate 'Focus' or 'Extension' sheet should be given out as home learning once a week, until children are ready to move off this. Parents will be given general handwriting information at the beginning of each year (see the Parent Handout in the appendices to this policy)

Moving on from Handwriting

Once a child has mastered a legible, neat style, in which letters are formed and joined correctly, they no longer need to engage in handwriting lessons. The next step is to ensure that the child uses their handwriting skills consistently and quickly across all written work. We aim to move children on from daily handwriting practice as early as possible, encouraging them instead to apply their skills across their written work.

From Year 3, children work towards earning a "pen licence", allowing them to write with a handwriting pen. To earn this, children must be nominated by their teacher to show the head of learning their work. They must demonstrate that they are using their handwriting and presentation skills consistently and to a high standard over several pieces of work.

The head of learning visits classes regularly to give out special 'presentation star' stickers to children who have made good progress with their presentation and handwriting or to those children presenting their work neatly.

EYFS

In EYFS children are taught gross and fine motor skills. Pencil grip and letter formation are introduced through our Phonics RWI scheme (letter formation aligns with the Nelson scheme).

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time. It is expected that teachers will aim to use the Nelson Handwriting font, with appropriate joins for their age-group, when writing on boards and in pupils' books.
- Demonstrate the technique
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in plasticine
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

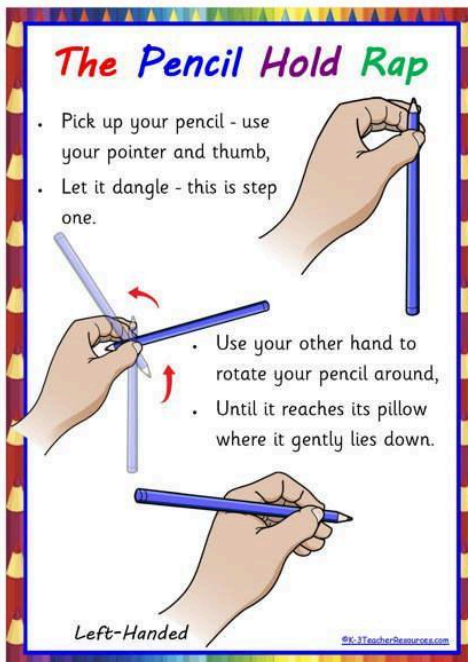
Pencil grip

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



For right handers

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



For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

The Nelson resources contain specific guidance on teaching handwriting to left-handed pupils.

The 'pencil hold rap' is a useful way to encourage children to use a tripod hold. If children are struggling with their pencil hold, it may be appropriate to give them a pencil grip to use in class. These can be requested from the SEN team. If a pupil is given one, they should use it at all times when using a pencil or pen in class.

NB: It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

Monitoring

Phase leaders and senior leaders will monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly when completing book scrutiny. The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?

- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with expectations in the National Curriculum?
- Is handwriting being taught effectively and consistently, in line with school policy?