CLOCKHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

Mission Statement

Our School – A family and a home for everyone

Working and Learning together to be the best that we can be

Our Vision

We are not just a school, we are home!
We lay the foundations for each individual's future and for dreams to be fulfilled - whatever they may be.
No two bricks are the same but are accepted for their uniqueness and are placed in their own special way to meet their needs.
The cement bonds us together as a family to keep us strong, stable and safe.
We are all safe and happy under one roof, we are protected from the elements and prepared to weather every storm.
The key to success unlocks the door to future achievements unseen before.
The windows show us the reflections of our future self as ready, respectful and responsible adults.
Collaboratively, together our home is decorated with challenge and the rooms are furnished with fun.
All around, a variety of trees grow naturally from the seed of success, with nurture and care anything is possible.
So we are not just a school, we are a home that provides a champion for all as well as timeless experiences and skills for a brighter future.
And that is why we are called Clockhouse.
Ring the bell, we're always here!

School Aims

- To enable all children, members of the school community and the wider community to contribute to school life.
- To promote high standards and provide opportunities for all to achieve their full potential.
- To encourage a sense of self–worth and confidence empowering children to fulfil a contributing role in society.
- To create a diverse and challenging learning environment in which children are cared for and feel safe.
- To provide leadership and management which focuses on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of all members of the school community.

Rationale

- By teaching children to write fluently and legibly, we make letter formation automatic. This unburdens the working memory, allowing pupils to focus fully on creative composition and higher-level thinking as they move through the school. Joined handwriting also helps children to learn and remember spelling patterns. It is an integral part of the multisensory technique, enabling pupils to make the automatic symbol-sound relationship for spelling. All children are introduced to Nelson Handwriting from the start of Early Years Foundation Stage in order to create those all-important strong foundations. We believe these strong foundations raise standards in handwriting throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy and fluency and improved presentation.

Nelson Handwriting:

- Provides a step-by-step approach to teaching and learning: it moves smoothly from un-joined print in early years to precursive letters with lead-out strokes, and finally to a fluid, joined style by the end of KS1.
- Groups letters by similar formation shapes so children recognise patterns rather than memorising every single letter in isolation.
- Introduces specific diagonal and horizontal joins progressively as children mature through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

- Offers a unified policy covering posture, pencil grip, spacing, speedwriting, and slanting to help pupils meet expected national writing standards.

Through the use of the Nelson Handwriting scheme, our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride. We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing by:

- providing equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting.
- producing clear, concise, legible handwriting in all areas of the curriculum.
- developing accuracy and fluency.
- helping children recognise that handwriting is a form of communication and as such should be considered important in order for it to be effective.
- promoting confidence and self-esteem.
- encouraging children to take pride in their work.
- helping children recognise that handwriting as a life-long skill and will be a fundamental element of all forms of written communication throughout their lives.
- adopting a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays/resources. having a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of handwriting.

To Achieve These Aims We Will:
Comply with Statutory Requirements:
Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2013) which details specific requirements and expectations for the teaching of handwriting from Year 1 to Year 6. At EYFS requirements and expectations for writing development are detailed in the Physical Development and Literacy section of the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

- Nelson Handwriting is taught using the following guidelines:


Handwriting

Nelson Handwriting is our chosen style. In the Early years we teach pre-cursive printing of 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

Then we move towards joining and we teach lower case letters like this (cursive)

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

We teach these joins:

An example of writing using the Nelson Handwriting font:

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Some letters do not join:

The break letters (5 letters that aren't joined from) are: b g j p q x y z

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Nursery, children will develop their early mark-making skills through regular, purposeful opportunities to explore and practise making a wide range of marks. Children will be encouraged to experiment with different tools, materials and surfaces, developing their fine-motor control and confidence.

Children will regularly practise making a range of marks, including **lines, zigzags, circles, curves, dots and waves**. These activities will support children in developing the hand strength, pencil control and coordination needed for later handwriting. Adults will model and encourage appropriate pencil grip, posture and control while allowing children opportunities to develop their own mark-making styles through play and exploration.

During Reception, this skills will be consolidated and children will continue to access a range of learning opportunities to develop essential pre-writing skills.

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Development of balance skills/upper body strength puzzles or crayons and paper on the floor while on stomach, puzzles, crayons and paper on all fours on floor encourages shoulder/hand strengthening, squeezing wet sponges, finger painting, water play, sand play, play dough, rice play, gloop, cooking, cornflour and water.
- They will develop fine motor skills, fastening, buttons, pull up a zip, threading, tweezers, cutting, pinching clay. The children will access a range of activities that requires them to grasp small objects: Making collage pictures using pieces of wool or string, decorating iced biscuits with small cake decorations, posting small items into narrow necked bottles.
- The children will access a range of learning opportunities that will support the development of their shoulder, elbow, wrist stability and bi-lateral use of their hands. They will also develop control of writing implements and develop hand eye co-ordination and fine motor strength. They will learn directional sequences and movements.
- The children will learn to sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib. They will hold a pencil using a tripod grip for writing and will be encouraged to correct any errors in grip and will understand the language “patter” to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation.
- The children will understand that letters are written on a base line and that all letters ‘start on the line’. They will learn that letters are part of “Letter Families” and will begin to form recognisable letters, capital letters and numerals.

When learning letter sounds, we follow the Jolly Phonics scheme. Children need to know that there are different types of font as books, computers etc all produce a wide range of writing styles. For the purposes of learning letter sounds – recognition of the letters - children will be shown regular print but when they are learning diagraphs this will be joined.

Pencil grips and triangular pencils are used to encourage a good grip, and children are monitored so that they do not hold the pencil too tightly which produces tension in the arm and shoulder. Children who are left handed are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so that they can more easily see what they have written.

Children are provided with a designated ‘writing area’ to give status to their early independent writing and develop a positive attitude to the act of writing, and left-right orientation is encouraged.

By the end of the foundation stage, our aim is that all children are able to use a pencil, holding it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, building on the Foundation Stage, pupils develop a legible style. This is achieved by reinforcing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Children are reminded of the correct letter orientation, formation and proportions. Children learn how to join as detailed in the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

Formal handwriting practice is undertaken at least for 10 minutes every day in Year 1 and individual letter formation is consolidated and similarly formed letters are joined together.

Formal handwriting practice is undertaken at least 10 minutes every day in Year 2, and spelling patterns and letter strings are rehearsed to reinforce and improve spelling skills.

Specific needs of individual pupils are met through individual or small group support with the teacher or teaching assistant.

Key Stage 2

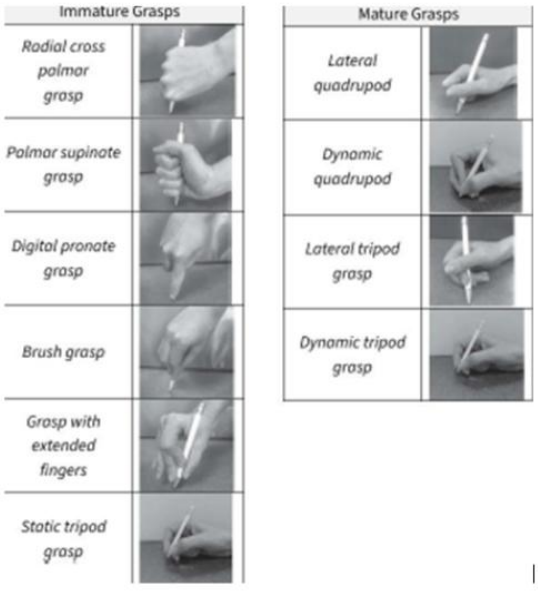
In Key Stage 2 pupils handwriting speed, fluency, and legibility are built up through practice. Children use joined handwriting for all writing unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, note taking, posters etc- appropriateness to the task being paramount.

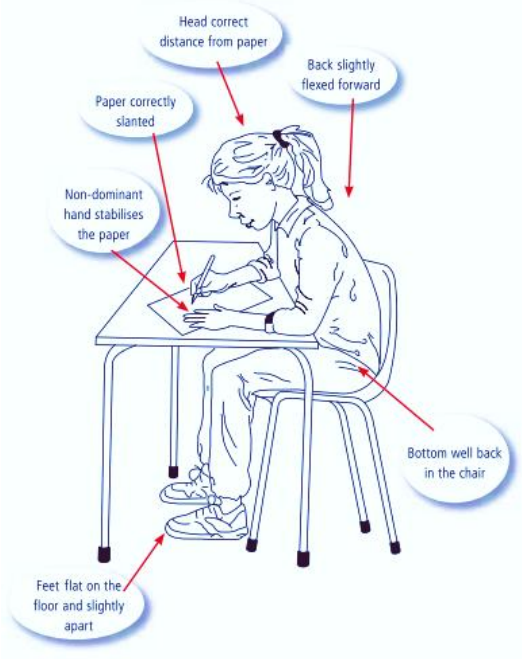
All children will begin to use a ballpoint pen for most of the classwork by Year 5, however some children will receive a 'pen license' before Year 5 if their handwriting is of the correct standard. This will be at the discretion of the Heateacher.

Teaching of handwriting is taught every day and generally occurs at the beginning or end of an English lesson, although shared and guided writing provides many opportunities for modelling and the monitoring of handwriting. There are times at both key stages when this aspect of writing is a focus for attention and more time is devoted to the objectives relating to handwriting and presentation.

Pencil Grip and Seating Position

The dynamic tripod grasp (with the pen pinched between the ball of the thumb and the fore-finger, supported by the middle finger with the other fingers tucked into the hand) is recommended once the child is old enough to hold a writing implement. This minimizes the risk of strain and offers the greatest control. The diagrams below show the development of an effective writing grip.
Link to see the correct pencil grip. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPg9qpq6Hhg





Learning environment

A Nelson Handwriting style (using Twinkl cursive un-looped or Playwrite Moderne FR) should be displayed around each classroom and on display boards and around the school. At times it may be necessary for print to be used if it lends itself to the work being displayed. Display titles may use a print format to ensure it stands out.

Discrete Handwriting Lesson

Discrete teaching requires clearly structured and focused teaching and learning. It involves explanation, demonstration and practice of the skill of handwriting. This skill can then be applied or used in contexts across the curriculum. Discrete teaching can help to prevent poor handwriting by clearly indicating the relationships between letters and the relationship of each letter to the writing base line.

In the discrete teaching of handwriting, each lesson should have a clear and simple focus (eg the correct formation of a single letter, revision of a group of letters such as those requiring clockwise movements, the introduction of a particular aspect of linking such as hooks, or the practice of linking letters in commonly found patterns) following Nelson's Handwriting scheme.

Letters should be taught in letter family groups and their similarities and differences should be stated clearly as this reduces the amount of new information to be learned as each new letter or type of linking is introduced.

Letter Formation

It is vital that children are taught the correct formation from the outset. Incorrect formation of letters leads to fluency problems later on, this may need to be corrected with children throughout key stage one and two.

- Letters can be grouped by the way in which they are formed. This can help children to orient their letters correctly. E.g. 'Start with a c, turn it into a d!'
- When teaching handwriting **letter names should be used** and the movement used to create each letter should be explained e.g. down, up, round, top, bottom, lift, over, back, clockwise, anti-clockwise, vertical, horizontal, diagonal, vowel, consonant, sloped, ascender, descender, x-height and parallel. Letters should be referred to as **capital letters** and **lower-case letters**.

Nelson Handwriting Scheme

The school follows the Nelson Handwriting scheme from Reception to Year 6. The scheme provides a progressive approach to handwriting, beginning with fine-motor development, pencil control and correct letter formation before moving towards cursive and joined handwriting.

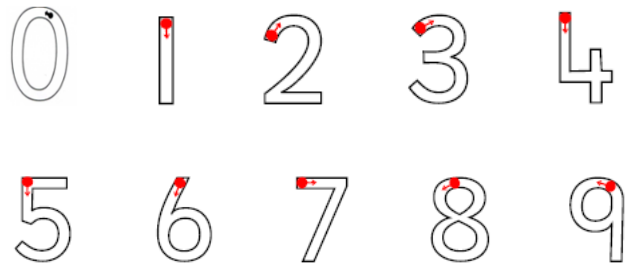
Progression is carefully sequenced so that pupils revisit and consolidate previously taught skills while developing increasing fluency, accuracy, consistency and speed. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to demonstrate a fluent, legible and increasingly individual handwriting style.

Teachers assess handwriting through direct observation, handwriting practice and pupils' everyday written work. Assessment considers **letter formation, size and proportion, spacing, joins, alignment, fluency, speed and presentation**. Where pupils require additional support, teachers provide targeted practice and intervention to secure the relevant stage of development. Poor handwriting in all books and subjects is picked up with yellow highlighter and children should be given time to correct their handwriting with purple pen. If it is an ongoing issue, children should be placed in a targeted intervention to improve their handwriting.

Joining and Phonics

The school uses Jolly Phonics as a phonic scheme which does not always have a cursive font. Therefore, joined handwriting should be modelled by the class teacher to support the teaching of digraphs and trigraphs. This begins in the reception class.

Number Formation
It is important that children form numbers accurately in the way shown below.



Writing Equipment

Children should have access to a range of different writing implements in nursery and reception. Chunky pencils should be made available for those struggling to grip a regular pencil.

Handwriting is taught using books and a pencil or pen in upper KS2. Whiteboards and pens should not Souley be used to teach handwriting as they force the children to lift their hand off the surface they are writing on and do not provide adequate opportunity for the children to practise a fluid handwriting style.

Intervention

Teachers should observe children as they write to pick up on any incorrect letter formation or joins and provide intervention support where necessary.

Although there are age related expectations for handwriting skills, it is essential that a child successfully achieves each stage of development before moving on. A solid foundation of correct, fluid letter formation is essential for later fluent, cursive, legible handwriting. Therefore, handwriting sessions need to be differentiated to meet the needs of the class and individual children. Bubbl Handwriting sheets maybe used a temporary scaffold in lessons and interventions to support children's sizing and formation of letters.

If teaching assistants are used to deliver interventions, they must be given this policy to refer to before beginning the sessions.

Handwriting Problems

By the age of 8, most children should have mastered the basics of legible, joined handwriting. However, there are some children in Key Stage 2 who still struggle with handwriting and may:

- exert heavy pressure through the writing instrument
- show signs of stress when writing
- be unable to produce the same amount of writing as peers
- complain of aching wrist and cramps
- have long pauses in writing tasks
- be reluctant to write.

Possible causes of this are:

- Incorrect orientation of letters leading to joining problems
- Pressure to write faster reduces motor confidence
- Lack of rhythm in motor co-ordination
- Reliance on visual feedback
- Poor pencil/pen grip

In some cases poor handwriting can be a sign of:

- Dyslexia

- ADHD
- Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

If you have concerns about a child, please speak to the Learning Support Manager (Lauren Ward) or The English Leader (Emily Jarvis) who will advise you on the next steps to take.

Computing

The growth in the use of word processing and desktop publishing means there is an increased importance placed on pupils' ability to present their work. Pupils are encouraged to use and evaluate a range of fonts and styles and select an appropriate style to suit a particular purpose.

This policy has been reviewed and no individual or group are disadvantaged by the policy or process therein.

Date Reviewed: **Autumn 2026**

Review Date: **As required**