



Thameside Primary School: Handwriting Guidelines

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Policy reviewed by:	Ingrid Burton
Key Changes:	No changes policy remains fit for purpose



Handwriting contributes directly to compositional fluency and quality for all writers” (Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott & Whitaker, 1997).

Our guidelines for Handwriting at Thameside Primary are based on the Nelson Thomes Handwriting Scheme and our bespoke handwriting books that have been designed to support handwriting in Foundation and Key Stage 1.

Handwriting objectives

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
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

Teaching and Learning

In order to achieve these objectives, the following principles are followed:

- The bespoke Thameside handwriting books are introduced to Foundation children in Term 2 and used daily to support the teaching of correct letter formation. Children in Foundation and Key Stage 1 will have daily handwriting lessons from the start of Term 1. Where required children in Year 3 and above will take part in handwriting interventions as deemed necessary to ensure they have developed a neat cursive script.
- Patterns relating to letter formations will first be introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength.
- Letters will also be introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using ‘letter speak’; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc., writing over highlighter.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling (see appendix 4 for further details)
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate. Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Gross and fine movement warm up (see appendix 3 for possible warm up exercises or refer to Nelson Thornes CD ROM)
- Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair. The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Use of the Nelson Thornes Handwriting animation to model correct letter formation or teacher to model.



- Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory

Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen as soon as a neat cursive script has been developed) 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 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 nger 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

NB Ensure a right handed child is **NOT** seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide.

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

The SENCO will provide resources for those who have difficulty with fine motor skills – pencil grips, writing slopes, fine motor control programmes and referrals where necessary.

Assessment

Individual assessment

Children should 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 revered or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?

Support for staff

At induction new staff will be made aware of the school handwriting guidance and shown the Nelson Thornes script on which our school hand is based.

Handwriting will be monitored through diagnostic learning walks, work/book sampling, teacher self-evaluation forms, pupil voice and other methods deemed appropriate. If there are any queries, we will have professional dialogues with staff and offer further support and guidance where it might be required



I Burton

Appendix 1

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

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

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

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

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

The **break letters** (letters that aren't joined **from**) are:

b g j p q x y z s



Appendix 2

Order of teaching

Stage 1 (Book 1 -4) – Foundation Stage

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

Supporting activities

- tracing patterns
- copying over (letters, numbers and words)
- copying under (letters, numbers and words)

Stage 2 (Book 1-4) – Year 1

Introduction of the four handwriting joins

- Practise capital letters and digits 0-9
- 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
- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z

Stage 3 (Book 1-4) –Year 2

Further practise of the four handwriting joins and application to words.



Appendix 3

Here's a warm up that's great for posture and a positive attitude. Use it before cursive handwriting lessons and during the day. It's refreshing and can be done even in a crowded class. If it's manageable, let your students jump in place first.

APPENDIX 1



Push palms



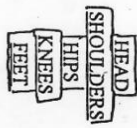
Pull hands



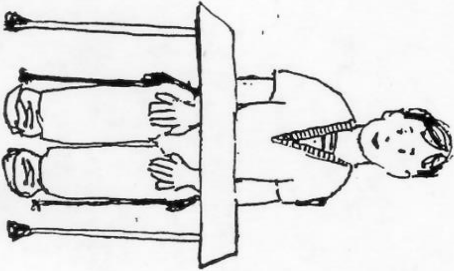
Hug yourself tightly



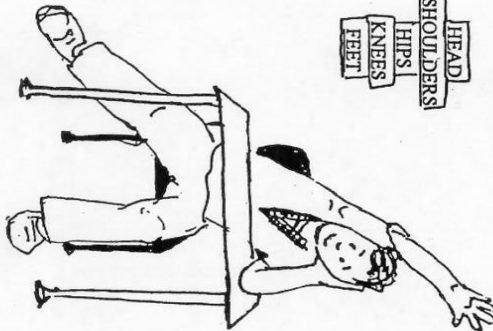
Reach high, one hand, then other
Reach - make circles in the air



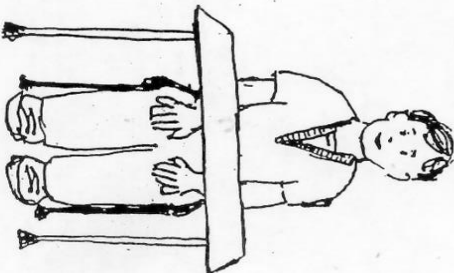
* BLOCKS



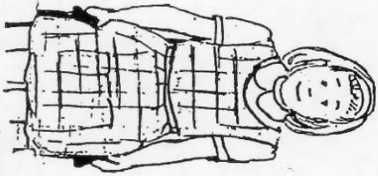
* Stack your blocks



Assume an outrageous posture



Stack your blocks again!



Pull up on chair



Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Two spelling strategies that link particularly well to handwriting are:

Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check

The child:

Looks at the word carefully

Says the word

Covers the word so that it can't be seen

Writes the whole word from memory

Checks the word is written correctly

If not, repeat.

or

Spelling steps

School

s

sc

sch

scho

school

school