

Matthew Arnold Primary School and Dingle Lane Children's Centre



Handwriting Policy

Curriculum policy: Handwriting

Subject definition

In line with the primary curriculum statutory expectations children must be taught to write with ease, speed and legibility. It is important that the child's handwriting becomes a skill that ultimately requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing rather than upon the act.

The style is intended to be relatively quick and easy to learn, particularly when it is practised from an early stage. Pupils will learn to form individual letters appropriately and accurately first, and then during Year 1, will learn to join letters.

Aims/objectives

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly using the tripod grip
- 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' and to practice these.

Handwriting Style

The style is an all-joined style with two main joins - a **diagonal join** which starts with the pencil point on the writing line and a **washing line join** which connects two lowercase letters together from the top. The descenders of letters g, j and y go straight down through the writing line and are not joined to the following letter in accordance with the Nelson scheme Matthew Arnold follow.



= Diagonal Join



= Washing Line Join

The joins are very important for spacing letters evenly and learners need to understand that there must be a clear 'join' between all the letter shapes. Learners are taught to think carefully about which part of each letter is the letter shape and which part of the letter is the join.

Not only are learners taught to form each individual letter shape to fluency, they are also taught to think carefully about the letters they write and the join each letter needs in whole words. This engagement with the mechanics of the writing style instead of just mindlessly copying strings of letter shapes and words results in learners proceeding rapidly to joining any words they wish to write independently. Some learners may be able to convert to this style almost immediately.

All upper case, or capital, letters are simple print letter shapes which do not join other letters.

Teach that capital letters start from the top – that is, from just below the upper writing line. When writing a whole word which requires a capital letter at the beginning, a small space is left after the capital letter and the next letter starts on the line and all subsequent letters in the word are joined.

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

Curriculum organisation

The order of teaching the lower case letter shapes is as follows:

1. Letter families set 1:

c o a d g f s q e

2. Letter families set 2:

i l t j u y

3. Letter families set 3:

b h k m n p r

4. Letter families set 4:

v w x z

EYFS: Children will be taught to use the print version of all letters; taught in the same order as above.

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

Yr1: Children will be taught all letters taught in the same order as above.

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

Yr2: Children will then be taught to join in cursive, using diagonal and washing line joins.

Yr3 – 6: Children will use the fully joined style in all writing in all books.

Teaching and learning strategies

All teachers and supporting adults who write on boards and mark work should use the school's handwriting style consistently. If the pupils are writing in print – the adults write in print, if the pupils are at the stage of writing in joined writing then all adults should model the joined writing.

Have high expectations for writers: to sit with good posture at correct-height desks facing forwards to the front of the class; to hold the writing implement with the correct tripod grip, slanting the paper slightly (right for right-handers, left for left-handers) and securing it with the spare hand.

In the Autumn term handwriting will be taught daily in all classes in all year groups for at least 10 mins. The suggested time is during morning or afternoon registration however this is flexible depending on timetables.

Work should be dated by the children, with quick 'maths' date for monitoring purposes. Teachers do not need to mark work but should be corrected and modelling each day and working with those children who have been identified as needing extra support.

Children can receive a special 'pen licence' in Year 5 when they are successfully and accurately joining all letters. **This can be revoked at any point if the standard of handwriting deteriorates.** All handwriting pens have blue ink only.

Resources

- Slanted writing slopes are available for children who need them.
- Various pen/pencil grips in school and a selection of handwriting pens with various shaped and sized barrels. Some specific left-handed resources are available.
- Handwriting books - Nelsons scheme is available for each year group for pupils to practise from in addition to teacher's modelling.
- Nelson letters, lower and upper case, displayed in classrooms.
- Pen licences (Year 5+)

Assessment and reporting

Children should work in a separate handwriting book, which should be dated each time the child writes in it to show frequency of teaching and as a measure of progression. Children should be encouraged to join their handwriting in all subjects.

Handwriting books will be taken in regularly to monitor teaching and progression.

Homework

Appropriate photocopied practice sheets should be sent home in KS1 and in KS2 if needed.