



Ivingswood Academy
Handwriting Policy
Summer 2024

This policy was approved by the Local Governing Board in Summer 2024.

Next review Date: Summer 2026

Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly, and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly.

The Scheme of work that teachers are to follow is the Nelson handwriting guide. This has links to our phonics programme.

The following is a brief outline of our agreed policy:

Gross and fine motor skills: activities to develop gross and fine motor skills are essential to the development of good handwriting.

Posture: Children are shown how to sit well:

- ✓ Back is supported by the chair
- ✓ Body leaning slightly forward
- ✓ Hips, knees and ankles at 90 degrees, feet flat on the floor
- ✓ Arms resting comfortably on the table
- ✓ Sitting a fist distance from the table
- ✓ Non-dominant hand used to stabilise paper

Pencil grip: Children should use a tripod grip and be given constant reminders until this is established. The pencil is held between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger. The pencil should be held about 3cm from the tip.

Paper: Early writers will write on unlined paper so that they are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as children are beginning to control the size of their writing, they will be given lined paper and exercise books, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line. Where work is redrafted and presented for display, children may use plain paper and guidelines, with the same line spacing.

Correct letter formation: Children are taught to form letters correctly, paying attention to the starting point for each letter; the direction of pencil movement; the shape and orientation of the letter; the relative heights of the body of each letter, and any ascender and descender. Teaching will be multi-sensory and appropriate to the needs of the child. Our policy is to teach a letter shape which closely resembles print for early readers, and which will not need to be changed as handwriting becomes joined.

Joining letters: Children should be introduced to joined handwriting as soon as they have mastered the shape of individual letters, about halfway through Year 1. They will begin by joining vowel and consonant digraphs, to facilitate the recall of spelling patterns. Later, the four basic handwriting joins will be taught systematically. All children should have the opportunities to watch adults writing and have opportunities to write for themselves.

Correcting mistakes: Use of rubbers is to be discouraged except in the case of work in pencil for display. Otherwise, mistakes in pencil should be crossed out using a single horizontal line, and the whole word rewritten.

Atmosphere: Children are to be relaxed. Wrist shaking exercises, scribing and practicing patterns help to loosen up muscles ready for writing.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to monitor the teaching and learning of handwriting throughout the school and school year. This is done through regular work sampling, analysis of assessment pieces and lesson observations. Feedback from this monitoring is used to inform staff of necessary developments in order to raise standards. Assessment will be completed following the Nelson Handwriting Assessment, across the school. Teachers need to watch the children as they write the letters to assess their formation.

Left-Handed Children

If a child already has a 'hooked' pencil hold, 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 angle their paper 8 degrees top the left (the same angle as for right-handed children). The left-hander should hold the pencil in their left hand in the same way as a right-handed person holds theirs. The pencil is held between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger. The pencil should be held about 3cm from the tip. The hand should be just below the writing line. This enables the children to see what they are writing and encourages correct pen hold. The grip the left-hander uses means the pencil is pushed as the child writes, whereas the right-hander pulls their pencil across the page as they write. It is important therefore that the left-hander's pencil is not too sharp, so that it will run smoothly across the page. Teachers need to know where their left-handed children are sitting so that their elbows don't collide with other children.

Handwriting Principles

✓ Handwriting should be taught explicitly in short, frequent sessions. It should be modelled by the teacher and then supervised. Children should be self/peer assessing, looking for consistency.

✓ Where possible, it should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns, this will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings

✓ When ready, pupils should be practising on the lines they are going to use in their writing books. High expectations of writing are needed. Children need to repeat work that is not satisfactory.

✓ Teachers need to model good handwriting at all times e.g., when writing on the whiteboard, displays and when marking.

Handwriting throughout the school

Handwriting in the Foundation Stage

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Foundation Stage should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- ✓ Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- ✓ Use one-handed tools and equipment
- ✓ Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- ✓ Manipulate objects with increasing control - Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- ✓ Begin to form recognisable letters
- ✓ Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- ✓ Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play.
- ✓ Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- ✓ Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- ✓ Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through largescale movements, from the shoulder. In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as: sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils.

Reception

- ✓ Pre-writing stage- patterning
- ✓ Individual letter formation
- ✓ Word formation based on letter groups
- ✓ Pencil Grip

The National Curriculum English Programmes of Study provide guidance on teaching handwriting:

Year 1 pupils should be taught to:

- ✓ Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly

✓ Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (ascenders and descenders included)

✓ Form capital letters

✓ Form digits 0-9

✓ Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e., letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

✓ Make links with phonics and spelling

Year 2 pupils should be taught to:

✓ Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another

✓ Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined

✓ Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters

✓ Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Year 3-4 pupils should be taught to:

✓ Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined

✓ Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g., by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to:

✓ Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:

✓ Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters

✓ Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g., quick notes, letters)

Appendix

READY REFERENCE GUIDE

The letter forms

The lower-case alphabet for Starter Level:

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 lower-case alphabet for Books 1 to 6:

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 letter slant of 8° from the vertical to the right is introduced in Pupil Book 3:

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 lower-case print alphabet:

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 capital letters and numerals:

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

These are the same throughout the scheme.

Letter families

In year one, Nelson Handwriting groups the letters into sets based on handwriting families. These are letters that are formed in similar ways.

Set 1

c a o d g q s e

Set 2

i l t u j y

Set 3

r n m h b p

Set 4

v w x z

Joining groups

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

Group 1

a c d e h i l m n s t u

Thirteen letters with exit flicks plus s.

Group 2

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y

Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height.

Group 3

b f h l t

Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.

Group 4

f o r v w

Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height.

The break letters

b g j p q x y z

Eight letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.