

HANDWRITING PRINCIPLES

Handwriting is a motor activity. A movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting. It is in our hands that the kinesthetic memory lies, controlling the direction and shape of each letter.

Effective teaching of handwriting is best achieved through live modelling and explicit instruction. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and letter-joins regularly, with children practicing by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children at the point of writing, to ensure they are forming letters correctly and using a secure tripod grip.

Through regular modeling and repetition, pupils develop the ability to produce and join letters without thinking. This automaticity releases the brain to concentrate on other elements of the writing process, including spelling, grammar, style and content. Where possible, handwriting should be linked to phonics and spellings. This will help pupils develop a 'muscle memory' for familiar spellings or graphemes.

INTENT

We aim for all our pupils to fulfil the national expectations for handwriting as laid out for Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4 pupils) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 and 6 pupils) in the National Curriculum for English.

A greater emphasis is placed on teaching and developing handwriting in Lower Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 3, to enable pupils to master the correct letter formation and the entry and exit strokes for cursive writing. In Year 4, pupils build competency in joined handwriting. They are introduced to writing in pen in the summer term of Year 4. In Upper Key Stage 2, progressively less teaching time is devoted to handwriting as there is an expectation that pupils will now be proficient in their use of a cursive script and able to apply this consistently to their writing across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work in English and across the curriculum. **Please see our Presentation Pledges for further details.**

IMPLEMENTATION: QUALITY FIRST TEACHING OF HANDWRITING

- Plan and teach regular short sessions of handwriting which feature live modelling by the teacher, followed by time for children to rehearse a specific skill.
- Build-in opportunities for all children to succeed.
E.g. identify pupils who may need additional support from an adult, or access to a specialized resource such as a pen grip, or bigger line guide.
- Reinforce handwriting alongside phonic or spelling knowledge, e.g. *model joining the grapheme 'igh'.*
- Marking or verbal feedback includes specific 'next steps' for handwriting, as required.
- Teachers and teaching assistants model the handwriting script and expectations through their own writing, e.g. *when writing on the whiteboard, when marking and labelling books.*
- Classroom and school displays feature WAGOLLS of pupils' handwriting.

HANDWRITING SCRIPT

We use the Nelson handwriting script and follow the Nelson Handwriting scheme. This is a research-informed approach, which supports pupils in writing fluently and efficiently. From Year 3, pupils are taught the entry and exit strokes for each letter and the cursive form of the letter k, ready for joining. They are introduced to the 'break letters': b, g, j, p, q, s, x, y, z



ASSESSING HANDWRITING.

Teachers plan, teach and review pupils' handwriting skills against national expectations for the year group/s they teach. These are specified on the school Writing Assessment Framework and summarized below:-

HANDWRITING EXPECTATIONS	
Below (B2) (Year 1 NC)	Form capital letters and the digits 0-9. Form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another in some of my writing. Use spacing between words
Below (B1) (KS1 WTS TAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another in some of their writing use spacing between words.
Working towards Year 3 (KS1 EXS TAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> form 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	Letters are the correct size and writing is well-spaced. Begin to use the correct joins for each letter.
Year 4	Write neatly, with letters evenly sized and spaced.
Year 5	Write legibly and fluently with joined handwriting.
Year 6 – WTS* (KS2 TAF)	Write legibly.
Year 6 – EXS* (KS2 TAF)	Maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.

*Statements taken from the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Teacher Assessment Frameworks

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS IN HANDWRITING

Where a pupil is demonstrating a particular difficulty with pencil grip or control, class teachers will take an active role in supporting that pupil to make progress. Strategies for this include:-

- adapting handwriting tasks to include additional modelling
- TA or teacher support during handwriting, e.g. small step modelling and feedback.
- exercises and activities that develop fine and gross motor control
- pencil grips or ergonomic pens to ensure correct finger position

- use of a specific intervention: Speed Up, Write from the Start
- provision of a laptop and the rehearsal of touch-typing skills for pupils for whom handwriting is a barrier to wider achievement in writing
- use of a scribe or an amanuensis in SATs tests and PiXL assessments

These pupils are likely to need opportunities for writing tasks to be broken down, so that the physical aspect of writing is not a barrier to attaining success in other aspects of writing.

Pupils exhibiting persistent difficulties in handwriting should be made known to the SENDCo and English Leads, so that any additional resourcing or specialist assessment can be arranged.

KS2 STATUTORY ASSESSMENT AND HANDWRITING

Pupils cannot achieve the 'expected standard' for writing by the end of Year 6 unless they have met all the criteria for writing at the expected standard, this includes the handwriting statement. The only exception to this, is if there is clear, documented evidence that handwriting is a 'particular weakness' for that pupil. Pupils with a specific handwriting difficulty will be given an Individual Education Plan target for handwriting which details support or adaptations to be provided.

All teachers at Watton Junior school have a responsibility to teach children the age-appropriate handwriting skills, so that pupils are enabled to write confidently and efficiently, in a joined style.