



Crown Imperial School Primary Handwriting and Pen Policy

Introduction

This policy is written after consultation with the Handwriting experts, English co-ordinator and teaching staff. It is a working document, which reflects the ethos and practice within Crown Imperial school in relation to the teaching of handwriting. It has been written with due regard to the requirements of the New British Curriculum for English and will be evaluated according to changes within these documents as and when they arise.

Crown Imperial School has chosen the Nelson handwriting style which is a plain, modern and upright style that is accessible from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2. The majority of letters start at the top and no capital letters join the rest of the word. It provides a clear, practical framework for implementing and developing a whole-school handwriting policy. Pupils are actively encouraged to explore different styles of handwriting and develop their own style.

Aims and objectives

- 1.To understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly
- 2.To take pride in the presentation of work and a sense of achievement with regard to handwriting
- 3.To develop a fluent, joined (semi-cursive) and legible style of writing where letters are accurately formed and consistent in size, and ascenders and descenders are in proportion and predominantly parallel
- 4.To be able to write quickly to aid creative and imaginative expression of ideas
- 5.To use writing skills with confidence in real life situations

Teaching

Getting ready to write

The teacher's role in raising children's awareness of the technical aspects of handwriting is essential. At Crown Imperial School we insist on clear expectations for teaching handwriting and before starting to write:

Teachers should:

- 1.Ensure that children have adequate space to write. (see Nelson guidelines on left handed children)
- 2.Tables should be free from clutter
- 3.Equipment must be ready and available for children to use.
- 4 Children are writing in quiet conditions where they are able to concentrate fully.

Children should:

- 1.Be sitting with both feet on the floor, back and bottom on the chair and tummy near the table
- 2.Be holding the pencil or pen correctly
- 3.Have their paper or book flat on the table and at the right angle
- 4.Concentrate fully on the task in hand.

Handwriting checklist

- Are you forming your letters correctly?
- Are any letters too tall or too short?
- Are any descenders too long or curly?
- Is there a space between your letters?
- Is there a space between your words?
- Are you making the four joins correctly?

How often should handwriting be taught?

Foundation – children should receive daily handwriting sessions.

KS1(Year 1 and 2) – children should receive daily handwriting sessions, following the 'Nelson Handwriting' scheme. In handwriting books (using guided lines)

LKS2(Year 3 and 4) – children should receive daily 30 minute handwriting sessions, following the 'Nelson Handwriting' scheme. In handwriting books (using guided lines). Children should only use guided lines in their written work if necessary.

UKS2(Year 5 and 6) – identified children should be given handwriting intervention and taught as needed

Opportunities for practicing handwriting

All phases should produce at least one presentation piece of writing per half term, where children are creating a top copy of a piece of writing they are proud of.

Handwriting can be developed through creative display pieces, using different coloured pens and paper and using handwriting to create art work.

When do children learn to join?

Joining is introduced midway through Year 1 for most children.

Children in EYFS and Year 1 are taught to include a **flick** at the end of each letter but are not taught to use a lead in until they are ready to learn to join.

Children **should not** be taught to join until they are able to form all their letters using the correct letter formation and orientation.

Writing equipment

At Crown Imperial School, we ensure that all children are provided with good quality writing equipment throughout the school. Children are not allowed to bring in their own pencil cases or writing equipment. School provides appropriate pencils and pens for children to use to write and ensures that all classrooms are well equipped.

Pencils: should be kept sharpened and should be discarded when they are less than half size.

Pens: Children write in blue pen. Red pen is used for editing and corrections.

Pen licences are awarded in KS2. In KS1, all children write in pencil.

Handwriting lines in work books

The following are guidelines for each year group. However, teachers are encouraged to progress the children onto standard 8mm lined books as soon as possible.

Year 6: 8mm lined books across all writing books

Year 5: 8mm lined books across all writing books

Year 4: 8mm lined books across all writing books

Year 3: 4mm lined books across all writing books

KS1: Special lined 4mm across all writing books

Assessment

It is important to establish ways of assessing handwriting at several levels:

- Whole school
- Class assessment
- Individual assessment
- Self-assessment

Whole -school and class assessment criteria:

Phase leaders in team meetings and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly).

The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with age related expectations?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing.

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 reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with age related expectations?

Self Assessment

Children can be encouraged to self-assess using the handwriting checklist:

- Are you forming your letters correctly?
- Are any letters too tall or too short?
- Are any descenders too long or curly?
- Is there a space between your letters?
- Is there a space between your words?
- Are you making the four joins correctly?

Where a child is struggling to make progress in developing their handwriting style, they should be given additional support through 1:1 or small group interventions. In cases of extreme difficulty, teachers should seek advice and support from the English Coordinator..

Handwriting pen licence

Pen licences are awarded in KS2. In KS1, all children write in pencil.

Aims:

- 1.To encourage all children to take pride in their written work and always present their work as neatly as possible.
- 2.To improve standards in writing across the school.
- 3.To celebrate the achievements of children and allow them to celebrate these achievements with their families at home.

Qualifying for a pen licence

To earn a pen licence children must meet the following criteria:

Criteria:

- All letters must be formed correctly in the correct orientation.
- All writing must be on the line.
- All handwriting must be the correct size and not too big or too small.
- All handwriting must be joined up where appropriate.
- Children are able to write correctly without the support of handwriting line guides.
- Children should have a good degree of fluency.

To be awarded a pen licence, the child **MUST** meet these criteria consistently across the curriculum for a period of half a term.

Award

For pen licences to be successful in improving the presentation of written work across the school, they must be encouraged, referred to and viewed as something worth receiving.

Once a child has met the required criteria, that child will be awarded their pen licence and certificate in assembly.

Their certificate may be taken home so that they can celebrate their achievement with their family. The child will also be added to the school's role of honour on a display in school. In addition children are awarded exceptional points for receiving a pen licence.

This child is now allowed to use their pen for any written work. Pencil will still be used for maths work, art work or any other work where a pencil is more appropriate.

USING the NELSON SCHEME

Terminology

Teachers should use the correct terminology when teaching handwriting so that this is consistent across the school and becomes familiar to the children.

It is important to describe the movements involved. A list of recommended terminology is provided in the Teacher's Book . There are also some technical terms which are so useful in discussion about handwriting that it is important for pupils to understand them. These include:

Clockwise, anticlockwise, vertical, horizontal, diagonal, parallel, ascender, descender, consonant, vowel, joined, slanted, x-height.

The four joins:

Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders

Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders

Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders

Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

The joins

Joins between the letters increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility. Nelson have split the 26 lower case letters into five joining groups (which are not the same as the letter sets/families), according to the nature of the joins they require. There are four types of join and a set of 'break' letters after which joins are never made (Teacher's Book for details of the joining groups and letter sets).

Joining

Joining is introduced midway through year one, and/or once children can confidently form and write letter correctly. This helps with spelling, as research tells us that seeing words as a whole, rather than a series of isolated letters, helps us memorise and spell words correctly. Joined writing also helps pupils write more increasing the speed of writing and fluency. Nelson teaches the four joins at the same time as teaching the letter sets/families.

For more details on the four letter joins and the break letters refer to the Teacher's Book .

Teaching the joined style

- In the early stages the correct movements are more important than the appearance of the writing.
- As joined handwriting is a movement skill, it is essential for teachers to provide demonstrations.
- Observe individuals as much as possible while they practise. This enables the teacher to recognise and correct bad habits as they arise.
- Talk the children through the process, using appropriate language.
- Encourage children to verbalise what they are doing from time to time. This gives a window into the thought process they are using as they write.
- Most children will need extra practice with making joins. These can be found in the Resources and Assessment books.
- Encouraging children to use the basic handwriting patterns both for practice and for decorative purposes is a valuable technique.

Pencil grip

Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced) 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 resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold 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 It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

The left-handed writer may often cross the 'f' and 't' from right to left. Many left-handers therefore will find it easier to leave the 'f' unjoined.

Teachers should demonstrate writing with their left hand wherever possible or use the expertise of left handed writers.

Appendix 1

British Curriculum Requirements

Key Stage 1

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
- 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.

Notes and Guidance

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

How Nelson Handwriting delivers these aims

Nelson handwriting supports children from the earliest stages of learning to write. Guidance is given in the Teacher's Book about how to create the conditions good for writing: atmosphere, seating and posture, and pencil and pen grip.

All of the lower-case and capital letters are covered with clear and consistent instructions about how to start and finish letters. The digits 0-9 are also covered.

In Year 1, Nelson groups the letters into handwriting families, i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways, and children practise these in a cumulative manner.

The Teacher's Book also gives useful guidance about left-handed pupils and their specific needs (this can also be found in this policy).

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 unjoined
- 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.

Notes and Guidance

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

How Nelson Handwriting delivers these aims

In Year 2, Nelson revises the previously-learned joins with an emphasis on relative height. Children re-cap their learning of lower-case and capital letters and practise forming them with consistency.

Children are also given the opportunity to continue to practise using print letters, and are introduced to the idea that some letters are best left unjoined when next to other letters.

Frequent practice and repetition is at the heart of Nelson Handwriting. The course provides ample opportunity for the children to refine their writing skills as their motor control improves.

Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 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 unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Notes and Guidance

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

How Nelson Handwriting delivers these aims

Throughout Year 3 and 4, children continue to practise and develop their handwriting skills. The idea of writing with a slant is introduced for the first time. Nelson provides practice in joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes as well as 'break letters' that are best left unjoined. There is an emphasis on spacing letters consistently and on keeping ascenders and descenders in proportion.

Guidance is given in the Teacher's Book about how teachers can best ensure that good handwriting is not just reserved for handwriting lessons, and about emphasising the importance of fluency, neatness and speed in writing across the curriculum.

Upper Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught to:

write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters

choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Notes and Guidance

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. **They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.**

How Nelson Handwriting delivers these aims

At Years 5 and 6, Nelson continues to provide structured practice for the skills that have been developed so far.

Children continue to practise the joins and the break letters, looking at consistency of sizing and spacing.

Nelson empowers children to develop their own style of handwriting from a secure base, choosing their writing implement and style as appropriate to the occasion.

Children are taught about the difference in expectation between informal jottings and final presented versions and given opportunities to practise these. A range of contexts from writing addresses to labelling maps and diagrams, help them learn the contexts in which joined or unjoined writing is most appropriate.

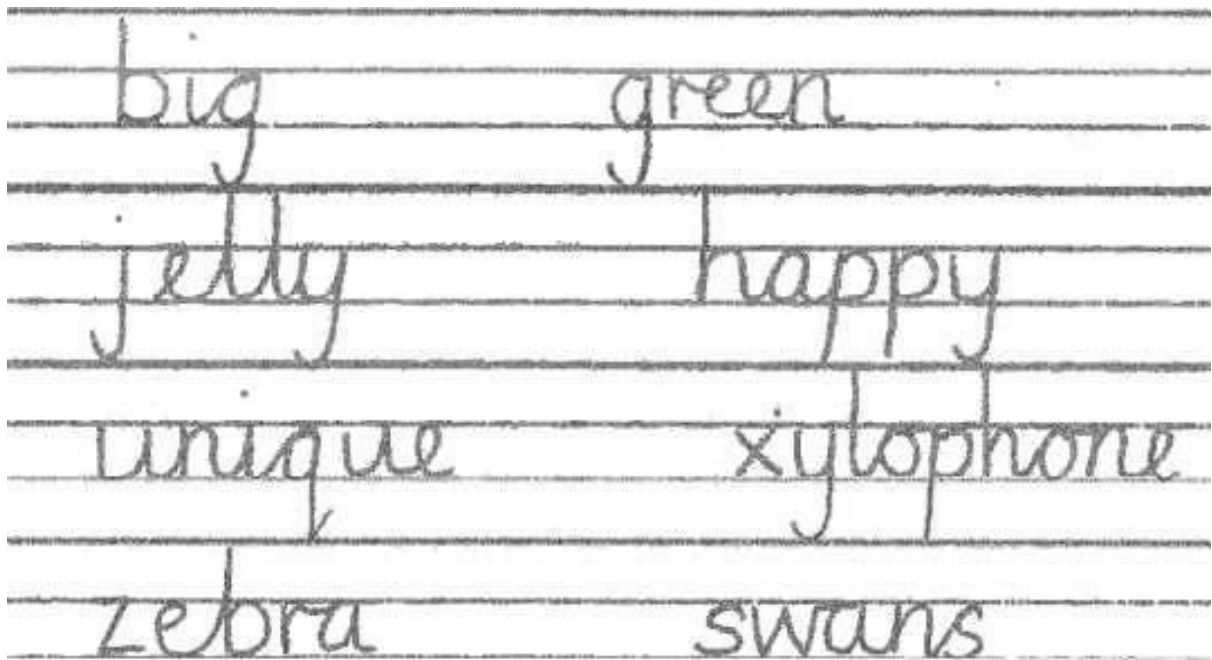
Appendix 2

Examples of the letter breaks that do not join to the next letter.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

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

b g j p q x y z s



Examples of the four joins

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

I felt asleep in class
today
as I was awfully bored
I laid my head upon
my desk
and fell asleep and snored