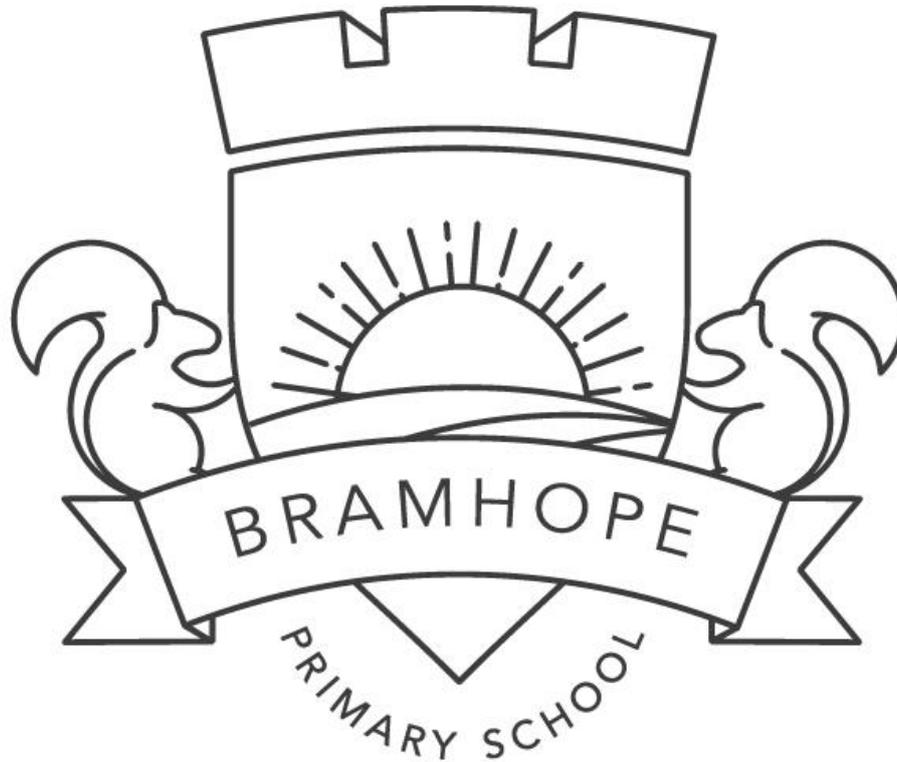


General Policy Document

**Document Name: Handwriting Policy**

First Written Date: May 2022

**Review Date: May 2023**



# **Bramhope Primary School Handwriting** **Policy**



## **Intent**

- To enable all pupils to learn to write with fluency, clarity and speed
- To enable all pupils to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed (and joined) cursive handwriting
- To make handwriting automatic so that it doesn't require undue thought during the writing process.
- To create a sense of pride in producing work to a high standard.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting (by all adults) when writing in children's books and whiteboards, and when modelling writing.
- To aid spelling through visual and kinaesthetic memory of spelling patterns (as recommended by the British Dyslexia Association).
- To encourage parents to support the use of accurately formed cursive script in all work completed at home.
- To value, encourage and reward good handwriting.
- To adopt an ethos of 'All Writing is Best Writing'.
- To have a consistent approach across the whole school

## **Implementation**

At Bramhope Primary School, children are initially supported to develop gross and fine motor skills. This is an essential step needed to help prepare pupils to write. Activities including climbing, stretching and other large body movements help to develop gross motor skills. Pupils develop fine motor skills through activities including squeezing pegs, sorting items with tweezers, picking up coins and buttons and posting them into small slots.

We then follow the Nelson Thornes Handwriting scheme which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Initially pupils are taught to form letters in print before moving onto the introduction of cursive handwriting. Children are taught the correct posture, pencil grip and paper position. They initially learn the correct formation of the letters and joins and then advance to developing speed, automaticity and fluency. This then allows for greater creativity and mental capacity when writing. In addition, it improves presentation which in turn promotes confidence and self-esteem.

## **Progression through the scheme**

The formation of the letters is consistent throughout the scheme. In year 1 Nelson Handwriting groups the handwriting into sets based on handwriting families. The joining groups then divide the letters into groups according to how they join other letters. A letter slant of 8 degrees from the vertical to the right is introduced in pupil book 3 (year 3). The scheme also teaches the following break letters (letters which do not join onto subsequent letters): b g j p q x y z (no joins are made before or after z).

For further details of please see the Ready Reference Guide from Nelson Thornes. (Appendix 1).



### **The language of letter formation**

All teachers use the same consistent language to describe the letter formation. From September 2022 teachers in Reception will introduce the letter formation using the guidance from Read write inc as letter formation will be taught alongside phonics. However, once the pupils move into year 1 the letter formation is then described in the Nelson Thornes handwriting book (see Appendix 2)

### **Individuality**

As children become skilled at handwriting they develop their own handwriting style. Children are not expected to make exact reproductions of the letter forms presented as models in *Nelson Handwriting*. Many children will develop individual variations on this style which will give their writing character. Providing their handwriting is legible and they are able to write with speed, individual handwriting styles are to be encouraged. Developing a personal style is explicitly taught in year 5 and year 6.

### **Posture, Pencil /Pen hold, Paper Position**

In each lesson, pupils are reminded of the correct posture, pencil/ pen hold and paper position.

**Posture** – Children should be encouraged to sit up straight and not slouch when writing. Both feet should be on the floor and tables should be free of clutter.

**Pencil/pen hold** – The pencil/ pen should be held in a tripod grip about 3 cm from the tip. It should be held lightly between the thumb and the forefinger and the middle finger should provide support.

**Paper position** – The book or the paper should be tilted slightly to the left and the left hand used to steady the paper. Left handers should hold their pencil in the same way as the right hander but tilt their paper slightly to the right.

### **Left handed writers**

Teachers are aware of the left-handed pupils in the class and ensure that they are given clear advice to help them develop their handwriting. The left-handed writer often crosses the 'f' and 't' from right to left. Many left handers therefore find it easier to leave the 'f' unjoined.

### **Equipment used**

Pupils initially use an HB pencil to help them develop their handwriting. When pupils reach year 3, the teacher will encourage them to use a pen. Writing is usually done either on lined paper or on plain paper with a line guide underneath. This is because the lines help the pupils to produce a neater style. During handwriting lessons, pupils either write in Nelson Thornes handwriting work books or exercise books with handwriting guidelines/ tramlines in. These guidelines (or tramlines as they are often referred to) show the pupils where to take the ascenders and descenders to. This is explicitly modelled to the pupils by the teacher. In year 5 and 6 most pupils will no longer need or use these tramlines.

Teachers use the full Nelson Thornes Handwriting system. This includes online videos and pupil books and workbooks.

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### **Organisation of lessons**

In Early Years and KS1 we teach handwriting a minimum of three times per week. In some classes it may happen daily.

In KS2 we teach handwriting a minimum of once per week and we aim, where possible, to teach it twice per week.

### **Impact**

#### **Assessment:**

Handwriting is assessed regularly using the assessment resources in Nelson Thornes. These resources assess the following:

Shape – Are all letters properly formed and clear?

Joining – Are as many letters as possible joined consistently (or cursive flicks present in preparation)?

Slope/Slant – If the personalised/ adapted 'style' of writing has a slope, is this consistent?

Evenness – Are letters of a consistent and reasonable size?

Capitals can be too big, tall letters/ascenders too tall, ascenders not formed long enough, small letters too small

Floating and sinking – Do letters sit on the line? Words sometimes float above the line or sink below the line.

Particular letters – Which letters are really well formed (and accurately joined where relevant)?

Which ones need careful practise and possible intervention?

Spacing – Are the spaces between each word (and, in some instances, between each letter) appropriate in relation to the size of the letter formations?

Fluency/Speed – Can pupils produce quality writing at a reasonable pace, whilst maintaining presentation?

A pupil's standard of handwriting should be evident throughout their writing. When assessing it, teachers should consider evidence from a pupil's independent writing to judge whether the statements have been met. Handwriting books or handwriting exercises can provide additional evidence, but this would not be sufficient on its own.

**End of Key Stage 1 Assessment Working towards the expected standard:** Pupils form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. Pupils form lower-case letters in the correct size relative to one another in some of the writing. Pupils use spacing between words.

**Working at the expected standard:** Pupils form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters. Pupils use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

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**Working at greater depth within the expected standard:** Pupils use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in some of their writing.

**End of Key Stage 2 Assessment Working towards the expected standard:** Pupils write legibly (at this standard, there is no specific requirement for a pupil's handwriting to be joined).

**Working at the expected standard:** Pupils maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed (The national curriculum states that 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)

**Working at greater depth within the expected standard:** At Bramhope Primary School we would aim for pupils to have developed an individual style which is both legible and allows the pupils to write neatly at speed.