




Seaton Academy Handwriting Policy

Relevant roles held and by whom (correct at the time of publishing)	
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Signed:	
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SEATON
ACADEMY

'Nelson Handwriting provides a clear, practical framework for implementing and developing a progressive, whole school handwriting policy.'

1. Introduction and Vision

We believe that children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work across the curriculum. We aim for handwriting to become a skill that requires little effort and that this in turn reduces cognitive load, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of written work.

At Seaton Academy, children in Reception are taught to write using the *Little Wandle Handwriting programme*.

This programme provides a structured approach to teaching handwriting right from the start of Reception. This programme is based on the principle of direct teaching of transcription skills. It has been developed around research into the teaching of writing and national requirements and guidance, including the National Curriculum in England, the Writing Framework and Ofsted findings.

The programme has been carefully designed to support the development of legible and fluent handwriting using an easy-to-follow approach with consistent routines and memorable mantras.

The Writing Framework 2025 highlights the importance of this approach. It states: *Pupils should be taught handwriting precisely, in a clearly sequenced progression, starting from reception, to support their gradual acquisition of skills.*

In Key Stage 1, we follow the *Nelson Handwriting Scheme* (Oxford University Press).

Our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- For children to develop a well-formed, legible and fluent handwriting style and use this confidently with increasing speed.
- For children to develop their handwriting skills progressively through a consistent approach using '*Little Wandle Letters*' and Sounds' and '*Nelson Handwriting*'.
- For '**Ready to Write**' checklists are encouraged and referred to, not only during handwriting sessions, but across all writing activities throughout the curriculum, ensuring clear and consistent expectations, including considerations of posture, pencil grip, paper and pressure.
- To develop an effective and comfortable (tripod) pencil grip.
- Form lower-case letters beginning at the correct starting point and follow the correct direction by the end of EYFS.
- To produce legible handwriting in a style that can be joined by the end of KS1, in readiness for transition to Junior School.
- To have high expectations for presentation and for children to know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively across the curriculum.
- To ensure a consistent and coherent approach to handwriting and presentation throughout the school, including: consistent modelling of writing in children's books, on the whiteboard, on hand written displays and resources.

- To provide provision for left handed children to develop free flowing writing.

We will further support any child who experiences difficulty with producing handwriting in line with this policy and will adapt the teaching of handwriting where necessary (See strategies outlined in **3. Teaching Approaches** section of this policy).

2. Handwriting Progression

Nursery Provision and Progression

Our youngest pupils are encouraged, from the beginning, to see themselves as writers and to have confidence to express themselves through print.

Nursery staff have been trained to deliver ‘**Move to Write**’.

This programme gives the children opportunities to develop core strength and muscle isolation; an important step towards writing. The children use large scale movements, using each side of their body to make shapes. Activities to work at large scale are incorporated daily into the provision using brushes, chunky crayons or pencils. Through the development of their gross motor skills, muscle control becomes more defined until they develop an ability to use straight lines and curves to form symbols.

To develop a foundation for writing and to support transcription, daily opportunities to develop finger strength are also incorporated, through fun, play activities. All children are given access to a wide range of activities in continuous and enhanced provision to develop a tripod pencil grip and enhance their early writing skills.

Opportunities include:

- Mark making using a wide range of writing tools and mediums
- Fine motor skill activities with a focus on pre-writing shapes
- Threading
- Play dough
- Peg boards
- Tracing and following letter/writing patterns
- Cutting opportunities
- Dough Disco
- Squiggle While You Wiggle

At Seaton Academy, we believe it is crucial for children to develop their hand and finger strength. Through carefully planned activities, EYFS staff support the children to use pencils comfortably in the tripod grip and with control.

When developmentally ready, children are taught the letters in their name and are encouraged to write their name independently. Close attention is paid to correct posture for writing, using the tripod pencil grip and the positioning of the paper to help children develop good handwriting habits for the future.

Reception Provision and Progression

In Reception, children are taught to write using the Little Wandle Handwriting programme. This programme is based on the principle of direct teaching of transcription skills, aligned with the Writing Framework 2025. It has been carefully planned to develop the children's skills in accurate letter formation, with regular review and assessments.

At Seaton Academy, it is an expectation that handwriting is consistently modelled to a high standard. Each letter must be correctly formed and be consistent in size, with clear starting and finishing points. **'Ready to Write'** checklists are encouraged and referred to, not only during handwriting sessions, but across all writing activities throughout the curriculum, ensuring clear and consistent expectations.

Each handwriting lesson is delivered by a teacher or trained teaching assistant. The children should not be left to practise without supervision. Strong modelling of starting points for letters and the correct orientation is essential. When forming the letters, the Little Wandle formation phrases will be used. Teachers will refer to the sound of the letters but the focus of the lesson must remain clearly on handwriting.

Lesson Structure and programme content

The handwriting lessons are designed to be short and focused, involve recall from the previous day, with direct, explicit teaching through strong modelling. This is followed by repeated practice, accompanied by precise feedback, to embed the learning in the long-term memory and ensure it becomes automatic.

Handwriting lessons are timetabled and prioritised in Reception. It is taught 4 times per week for 15 minutes.

Little Wandle Handwriting lessons in Reception focus on:

- Correct pencil grip
- Correct starting point for each letter
- Letter formation and orientation
- Families of letters
- Capital letters
- Reinforcing the link between letters and sounds.

In Reception, the first few weeks of teaching focus on patterns to provide the opportunity for children to practise correct grip of the pencil, pressure on the page and flow of handwriting.

Lessons then move on to letter families. Letters are taught in families rather than following the order of the Little Wandle phonics progression because this enables the children to practise letters that have the same direction, thereby reducing the cognitive load.

The correct formation of lower-case letters is the key priority in Reception handwriting. Lower-case letter formation is taught in letter families in Units 2 to 5. It is then practised in Unit 6, when capital letters are introduced, and further embedded in Unit 7 by practising with digraphs and trigraphs.

For children needing extra support, scaffolding is provided through tracing letters before progressing to independent writing. Children with more advanced pencil control and letter formation skills can bypass tracing and practise forming letters independently after teacher modelling.

By the end of the EYFS, all pupils are expected to be able to:

- Hold their pencil with correct pencil grip
- Form lower-case letters beginning at the correct starting point and follow the correct direction
- Begin to form capital letters correctly

Year 1 Provision and Progression

In Year 1, the children take part in two discrete Nelson handwriting sessions each week, lasting 20 minutes. These sessions are structured in the following way:

- Each teaching session begins with reminders about physical preparation, getting ready to write, seating and posture, and encouragement to sit up straight.
- A 5-minute 'Warm Up' follows, developing hand and finger strength using specific exercises, games and resources selected from the *Nelson Handwriting Scheme* (these include smartboard resources and videos).
- Teachers then model the weekly handwriting focus as outlined in Long-Term Planning.
- There may be opportunities for tracing (over teachers writing, worksheets from the scheme or laminated cards etc) and following and creating patterns where appropriate.
- Pupils then have time (15 minutes) of independent practise in a calm environment. Pupils apply their skills and practise the weekly formation focus.
- Pupils can attempt a further challenge using the 'Unit Focus Extension Resource Sheet'.

Pupils may use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines, written examples and models written by teaching staff or complete the 'Unit Focus/Extension Resource Sheet'. Teachers also keep additional handwriting folders containing any completed handwriting resource sheets.

In the Autumn term, children learn, consolidate and re-cap:

- How to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- How to form lowercase letters in the correct direction starting and finishing in the right place.
- Forming capital letters and digits 0-9.

In the Spring 1 term, pupils are taught which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways). *Nelson Handwriting Scheme* groups letters into 'sets':

- Set 1: c a o d g q s f e
- Set 2: i l t u j y
- Set 3: r n m h k b p

- Set 4: v w x z

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

Nelson Handwriting (Oxford University Press)

In the Spring 2 term, pupils begin forming diagonal joins and horizontal joins using these sets. The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters:

- Group 1: a c d e h i k l m n s t u (13 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 (19 letters which start at the top of the x height).
- Group 3: b f h k l t (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender).
- Group 4: f o r v w (5 letters which finish at the top of the x-height).

	Group	Group	
The first join	1 → 2		in am
The second join	1 → 3		ab ch
The third join	4 → 2		oa wo
The fourth join	4 → 3		wh ob
The break letters			bigger

Nelson Handwriting (Oxford University Press)

In the Summer term the four joins and the following are reviewed:

- Break letters: b g j p q x y z are the 8 letters after which no join is made.
- Joins are not made to or from the letter z:
- Capital letters and numerals are never joined

By the end of Year 1, all pupils are expected 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.

Year 2 Provision and Progression

In Year 2, the children take part in two discrete handwriting sessions each week, lasting 20 minutes.

The children revise the previously learned joins with an emphasis on relative height. As the children gain confidence in using joined handwriting, there is an additional focus given to presentation. Pupils apply their skills by copying passages of text using joined handwriting of the appropriate size, consistency and spacing between words which reflects the size of letters.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Nelson Handwriting (Oxford University Press)

Pupils may use a Handwriting Book with handwriting guidelines, written examples and models written by teaching staff or complete the 'Unit Focus/Extension Resource Sheet'. Teachers also keep additional handwriting folders containing any completed handwriting resource sheets.

By the end of the Year 2, all pupils are expected to be able to:

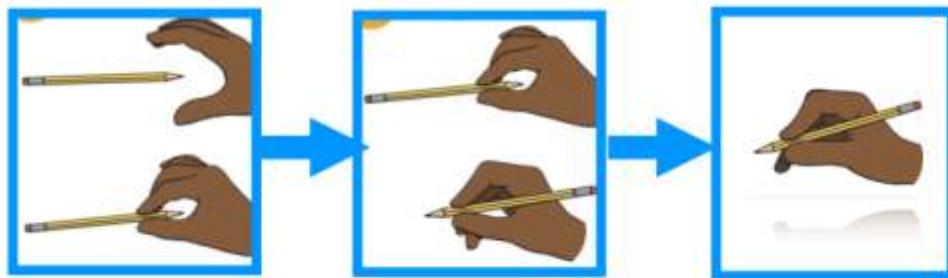
- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Teaching Approaches

At Seaton Academy, we use a consistent, school-wide approach to ensure our children are 'Ready for Writing'.

In every classroom, expectations for handwriting area displayed, with a focus on 'tripod' pencil grip.

Children are supported with the: **nip, flip, grip** approach.



In every classroom, an excellent example of 'sitting position' for writing is displayed, with clear expectations that are reinforced before any mark making/writing exercise.

These are:

1. Sitting up straight on your chair.
2. Both feet flat on the floor.
3. Rest your arm on the table so it is level.
4. Position your paper correctly.
5. **Nip, Flip, Grip!**

In addition:

- All children will be taught to write with a pencil from EYFS.
- In KS1, pens may be used for over-lining and self-editing/peer assessment.
- Formation and joins are modelled by the teacher using *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* and *Nelson Handwriting* interactive resources.
- A right-handed child should have their book tilted to the left.
- A left-handed child should have their book tilted to the right.

Left handed support

Left handed children are supported, where required.

Strategies may include:

- Class teacher modelling formation using a left-handed example.
- Sitting to the left of their partners where possible to ensure the correct positioning and posture is encouraged.
- Paper should be titled to the right with the right hand used to steady the paper.

Support strategies, resources and adaptations

Children who are identified as having difficulties with certain aspects of handwriting will be provided with further support, including:

- Re-visit the pre-writing shapes.
- Adapted resources e.g. appropriate pencil grips, triangular pencils, line sizing.
- Consolidation of print until clear and legible- as the introduction of joins may be unnecessary.
- Additional modelling and support using the most appropriate focus resource sheets for a child. Teachers may take further time to consolidate upon children's letter formation using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* formation sheets.
- Further opportunities to practise 'in the air' or with their finger in resources such as sand.
- Opportunity to trace over patterns and letters shapes in order to gain confidence and 'muscle memory' in order to attempt the written form independently in a handwriting book.
- Seating position at the table.
- Positioning of book/paper.
- Advice from the SENDCO.

Pupils may also be given additional resources and handwriting packs to practise at home, where appropriate. These packs should be discussed and made in consultation with parents and the Literacy Leader and SENDCO.

4. Assessment

When assessing the quality and effectiveness of children's handwriting teachers should question:

- Is the writing legible?
- Are letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are capital letters taller than lowercase letters?
- Are joins made correctly?
- Are spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is size of writing appropriate?

Handwriting outcomes are assessed through 'live' feedback from the class teacher as they circulate and monitor during handwriting sessions. Pupils will be provided with specific guidance, support or further scaffolding in order for them to make improvements to their own work.

We emphasise re-modelling of the written form by teaching staff where misconceptions or incorrect formation is evident. It is important that incorrect pencil grip and incorrect letter formation are identified and corrected at the point it occurs.

Handwriting is assessed termly using the Seaton Academy Writing Assessment Grids.

5. Monitoring

Monitoring of handwriting and presentation comes under the main subject of English and is the responsibility of the Literacy Lead.

Monitoring will take place through: observations, learning walks, book looks and writing moderation.

The following is useful to consider in the moderation of handwriting:

- Clear and neat presentation of writing.
- Correctly formed letters of the correct size, spacing and orientation.
- Consistent and coherent modelling of handwriting by all staff.