

“Hand in hand we learn”

Whitestone Infant School



A guide to Handwriting and Presentation



Handwriting is a physical skill that demands attention to detail.

What are the expectations?

Writing depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Your child should be able to do the following:-

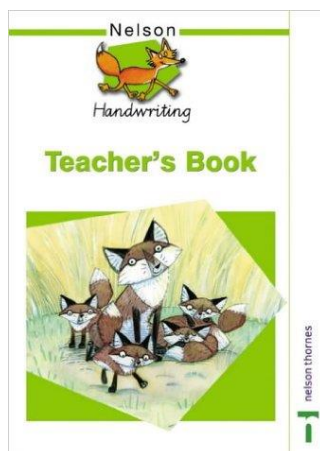
- Know that writing goes from left to right across the page.
- Leave spaces between words that reflect the size of the letters.
- Write lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another.
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.



The children are required to write with accurate letter formation using correctly sized letters which sit on the line. Ascenders (tall letter) and descenders (those which hang below the line) should be clear and in year 2, some joins will be used. Presentation is important when we communicate through writing and it is necessary to rehearse how to form letters correctly.

.As children progress and join their letters, it is necessary that formation is already second nature to them, to enable letters to flow and join easily. If they finish letters in the wrong place they will not be able to join their letters easily, neatly and effectively.

We use a scheme and font called Nelson at school, which is the same as at Chetwynd Junior School.



Essentials for good handwriting.

Learning how to sit, the optimum angle at which to place the paper and how to hold the writing tool are all important factors.

Posture

- You should have two feet on the floor, making sure that your body faces the table.

- The chair should be a comfortable distance from the table and should be suited to the height of the table.
- You should be able to rest your elbows and forearms on the table.
- Your non-writing hand should support the work.



Paper Position

The angle of the paper is very important, especially for left handed writers.

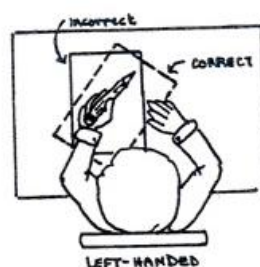
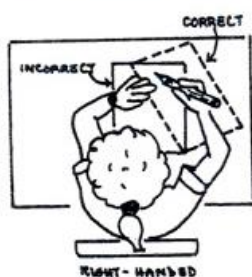
-Right handed writers:

- Angle the paper slightly so that the bottom-left corner is lower than the bottom-right corner of the work.
- The non-writing hand should support the work, preventing it from moving.

-Left handed writers:

- You need to be able to see what you are writing.
- Angle the paper so that the bottom-right corner is lower than the bottom-left corner.
- The non-writing hand should be placed above the writing hand. This makes sure nothing gets in the way of the writing hand, as well as stopping a hook-grip from developing.

How to position Writing Exercise Book



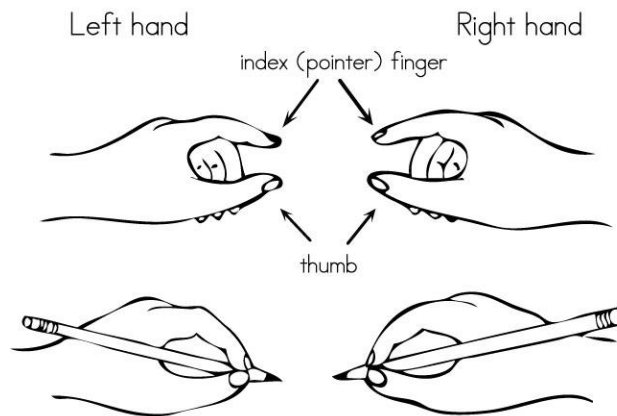
Pencil/pen hold

By the end of Year 1 a pupil's grasp should have developed from holding a pencil/pen with more than one finger on the barrel, to holding it between the pads of the thumb and index finger.

Writers should be encouraged to hold the pencil/pen at least 2cm from the point. A good guide is that pencils should be held on the coloured part of the shaft, not the wood at the tip. This encourages better hand movement and improves fine motor control.

How should my child grip the pencil?

When your child is developmentally ready to write, the pencil grip should be firm but relaxed. The pencil should be held between thumb and first finger, resting against the middle finger. Holding the pen or pencil correctly allows the fingers and wrist to move freely, without putting strain on the hand, helping to improve handwriting and making it more comfortable.



Some left handed children may need to hold the pencil a little further away from the point to avoid obscuring the writing with their thumb or knuckle.

Children are encouraged to use a correct pencil grip and write with good pressure on the page.

If they form bad habits with their pencil grip, it can cause problems as they become more proficient writers as it can cause strain as their hand and fingers are in the wrong position. We use pencil grips to try to help the children to correct this and 'feel' what correct grip is like. Grips come in many shapes and sizes and children may need to try out several before they become comfortable with their grip.

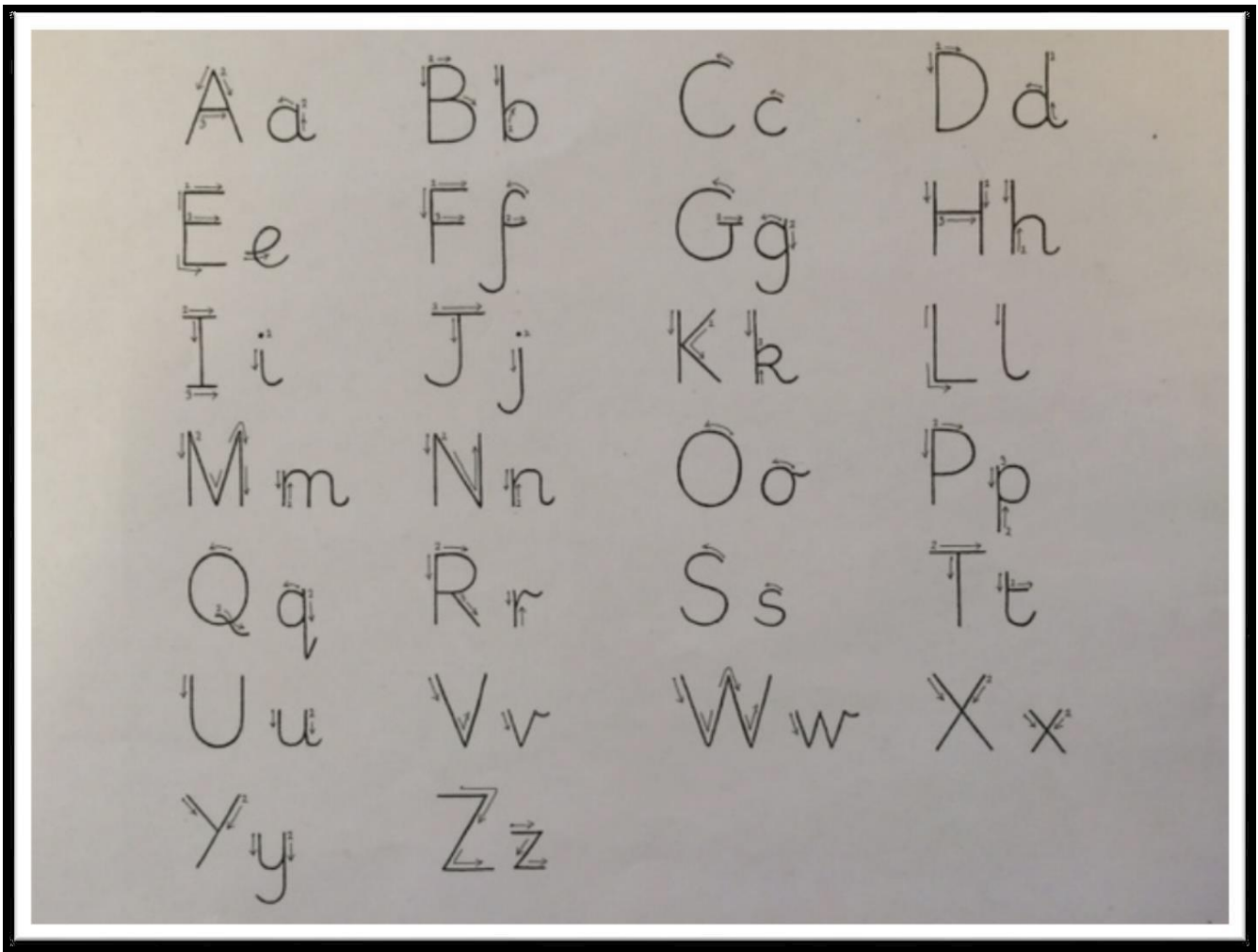


Children who write with their left hand are monitored carefully, as many young writers tend to turn their wrists and hands so that they can see what they have written. We are very aware of how difficult it can be for left handed children to develop skills such as using paintbrushes, scissors, cutlery and other daily equipment.

Developing handwriting

Early handwriting lessons will focus on starting letters in the correct starting place. This is at the top for all letter except 'd' and 'e'. The children will not use lined paper at this stage as they are experimenting with holding their pencil accurately. Children will learn to write their names using an initial capital but the main focus of early writing is forming lower case letters.

We use the formation shown below:-



As they develop they learn that there are families of letters that are formed in the same way. Again, the children are encouraged to start each letter in the correct place. They will use lined paper at this stage

Letter families

For teaching letter formation

Letter family 1

Down and off in another direction

l i t j u y

Letter family 2

Down and retrace upwards

m n r b p h k

Letter family 3

Anticlockwise round

c a d o q g e f s

Letter family 4

Zig-zag letters

v w x z

Children need to clearly establish the following:-

Some lower case letters have *ascenders* (tall letters)

e.g., b d f h k t

Some lower case letters have *descenders* (letters that go under the line)

e.g., g j p q y

How should my child join their letters?

In Year 2, when your child is ready, they will be taught how to join letters.

There are four basic handwriting joins:

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai ar un
2. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou or oi
3. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ul it
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol fl

Some letters do not join to others such as g, j, q, x, y and z. We do not use loops in the scheme that we follow in school.

Capital letters are printed and do not join to other letters.

..