

Offenham CofE First School

Handwriting Progression Document

At Offenham CofE First School, we recognise that clear, fluent, and legible handwriting is an essential skill that supports children's confidence and success in all areas of learning. Our handwriting progression document outlines a structured approach to developing handwriting from the early years through to Year 5, ensuring consistency and progression across the school.

We follow an adapted version of the Nelson Handwriting scheme, which provides a systematic approach to teaching letter formation, joins, spacing, and fluency. In the early years and Year 1, pupils focus on correct letter formation, ensuring they develop secure fine motor control and an understanding of letter sizing and orientation. As they progress into Year 2, children begin to join letters in a structured and sequential manner, reinforcing consistency in letter size, spacing, and flow. By Key Stage 2, pupils refine their handwriting style, working towards developing fluent, joined, and increasingly speedy handwriting while maintaining neatness and readability. By Year 5, children are encouraged to develop their own personal style within the expectations of legibility and presentation, preparing them for future academic writing.

To support this progression, handwriting is taught regularly through explicit lessons, with reinforcement across the curriculum. Teachers model high expectations for handwriting, and pupils are encouraged to apply their skills in all written work. Additional support and interventions are in place for pupils who require extra guidance in developing fine motor skills or handwriting fluency.

By providing a clear and consistent approach, we aim to ensure that every child at Offenham CofE First School develops confidence in their handwriting, equipping them with an essential skill that will support their learning and written communication throughout their education and beyond.

Whole School Overview - Handwriting

Blue Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

Children in Avon Class will work through the following units, focusing on developing their handwriting skills. Each unit will provide opportunities to practise one or more letters, with an emphasis on correct pencil grip and early letter formation. Through structured activities, children will refine their control, fluency, and consistency, laying the foundation for confident and legible handwriting.

Unit	Title
1	practise the letters: c and a
2	practise the letters: d and g
3	practise the letters: q and o
4	practise the letter: e
5	practise the letters: s and f
6	practise the letter: i
7	practise the letters: l and t
8	practise the letters: u and y
9	practise the letters: j and k
10	practise the letter: r
11	practise the letters: n and m
12	practise the letter: h
13	practise the letters: b and p
14	practise the letters: v and w
15	practise the letters: x and z
16	practise the numbers: 0-4
17	practise the numbers: 5-9
18	practise the capital letters: C, A, D, G, Q, O, E, S
19	practise the capital letters: F, I, L, T, U, Y, J, K, R
20	practise the capital letters: N, M, H, B, P, V, W, X, Z

Blue Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

After completing the 20 units of the Blue Level, children will continue to build upon their handwriting through targeted handwriting instruction of phonic digraphs and key words. This next phase reinforces and deepens their understanding by consolidating key skills from Units 1–20 while providing further opportunities for practice and application. In phase 2 and 3 phonics lessons children will be taught digraphs / trigraphs as a join, these will also be discretely taught in handwriting lessons - these are listed below (in order).



After mastering the digraphs and trigraphs above, children will progress to writing full words during handwriting lessons. The list of words to be taught is outlined below.

2	to, the, no, go, I
3	he, she, we, me, be, was, my, you, they, here, all, are
4	said, so, have, like, come, some, were, there, little, one, do when, out, what

Red Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

Children in Malvern Class will work through the following units, focusing on further developing their handwriting skills. Each unit will provide opportunities to practise one or more letter joins, apply them within words, and incorporate them into simple phrases / sentences.

Unit	Title
1	practise the first join: un
2	practise the first join: ig
3	practise the first join: ed
4	practise the first join: an
5	practise the first join: ng
6	practise the second join: ch
7	practise the second join: th
8	practise the second join: ill
9	practise the second join: sl
10	practise the second join: ck
11	practise the second join: st
12	practise the second join: nk
13	practise the third join: og
14	practise the third join: re
15	practise the third join: oo
16	practise the fourth join: wl
17	practise the fourth join: of
18	practise the fourth join: fl
19	practise the break letters: y
20	practise capital letters: A

Red Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

After successfully completing Red Level Units 1–20, children will progress to developing their handwriting further by learning to join the Year 1 and Year 2 common exception words. This next stage builds on their foundational skills, helping them apply correct letter joins with fluency and accuracy. Through structured practice, they will refine their handwriting technique, ensuring consistency and confidence when writing these Year 1 & 2 words. The specific words to be taught are listed below.

Year 1	a, are, ask, be, by, come, do, friend, full, go, has, he, here, his, house, I, is, love, me, my, no, of, once, one, our, pull, push, put, said, says, school, she, so, some, the, there, they, to, today, was, we, were, where, you, your
Year 2	after, again, any, bath, beautiful, because, behind, both, break, busy, child, children, Christmas, class, climb, clothes, cold, could, door, even, every, everybody, eye, fast, father, find, floor, gold, grass, great, half, hold, hour, improve, kind, last, many, mind, money, most, move, Mr, Mrs, old, only, parents, pass, past, path, people, plant, poor, pretty, prove, should, steak, sugar, sure, told, water, who, whole, wild, would

Yellow Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

Children in Cotswold Class will work through the following units, focusing on enhancing their handwriting skills. Building on the letter joining techniques learned in Malvern class, they will practise joining most letters consistently and confidently. Each unit will provide opportunities to apply these joins within words and use them in longer sentences, helping to build stamina and endurance in their writing. As they progress, the emphasis will be on refining their fluency, accuracy, and legibility, ensuring their writing is both neat and efficient.

Unit	Title
1	revise the first join: in
2	revise the second join: ut
3	revise the third join: ve
4	revise the fourth join: ok
5	practise the two ways of joining the letter s : sh, es
6	practise joining from the letter r : ri
7	practise the join to and from the letter a : oa
8	practise the join from the letter e : ee
9	practise the join from the letter o : ow
10	practise joining to the letter y : ky
11	practise joining to the letter a : ha
12	practise joining from the letter o : od
13	practise joining to the letter r : er
14	practise the first and second join: ai
15	practise joining from the letter o : oy
16	practise the horizontal join to the letter e : re
17	practise the horizontal join to the letter u : fu
18	practise printing: print
19	practise joining to ascenders: ot
20	practise all the joins: ai, ol, al, ow

Yellow Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

After successfully completing Yellow Level Units 1–20, children will continue to develop their handwriting by learning to join the Year 3 and Year 4 spelling words. They will first practise writing the words individually, then incorporate them into longer sentences. The expectation is that most children will be able to join these words confidently and use them in their independent writing.

Year 3 & 4	accident, accidentally, actual, actually, address, although, answer, appear, arrive, believe, bicycle, breath, breathe, build, busy, business, calendar, caught, centre, century, certain, circle, complete, consider, continue, decide, describe, different, difficult, disappear, early, earth, eight, eighth, enough, exercise, experience, experiment, extreme, famous, favourite, February, forward, forwards, fruit, grammar, group, guard, guide, heard, heart, height, history, imagine, important, increase, interest, island, knowledge, learn, length, library, material, medicine, mention, minute, natural, naughty, notice, occasion, occasionally, often, opposite, ordinary, particular, peculiar, perhaps, popular, position, possess, possession, possible, potatoes, pressure, probably, promise, purpose, quarter, question, recent, regular, reign, remember, sentence, separate, special, straight, strange, strength, suppose, surprise, therefore, though, thought, through, various, weight, woman, women
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Purple Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

The Purple Units in handwriting are designed for Year 4 and 5 students in Severn Class, focusing on refining accuracy when joining letters. Children will practise the joins, the words themselves, and incorporating them into sentences, gradually improving their handwriting skills. A key focus will be on maintaining the correct size, legibility, and overall consistency in their writing. The expectation is that their writing will become more fluent and uniform, joined on a regular basis, making it easier to read while building their confidence in independent writing.

Unit	Title
1	practise writing descenders: ng
2	practise joining from the letter o : oc
3	practise joining to the letter l : fl
4	practise joining from the letter w : wh
5	practise joining to the letter k : ck
6	practise writing with a slope: it
7	practise joining from the letter f : ft
8	practise forming double letters correctly: ff
9	practise forming double letters correctly: rr
10	practise writing letters with ascenders in proportion: th
11	practise with punctuation: !
12	practise joining to the letter y : ly
13	practise using the horizontal joining line: ro
14	practise joining from the letter i : ig
15	practise joining to and from the letter v : ive
16	practise crossing double tt on completing the word: tt
17	practise joining to and from the letter e : rec
18	practise joining to the letter a from the letter w : wa

Purple Level - Nelson Handwriting Scheme - Progression Overview

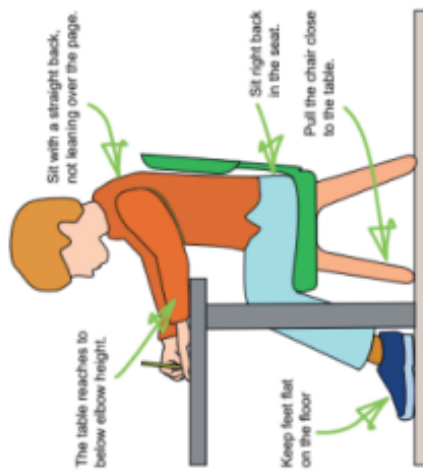
After completing the Purple Units, children will progress to practising spelling words, with the specific words chosen depending on their year group. There will be high expectations for accuracy and consistency in their handwriting as they work through these words. The focus will be on developing stamina, ensuring children can maintain legible and fluent writing over longer periods of time. As they practise, children will continue to refine their skills, building confidence in using their handwriting effectively in independent writing tasks. The specific words to be taught are listed below.

Year 3 & 4	accident, accidentally, actual, actually, address, although, answer, appear, arrive, believe, bicycle, breath, breathe, build, busy, business, calendar, caught, centre, century, certain, circle, complete, consider, continue, decide, describe, different, difficult, disappear, early, earth, eight, eighth, enough, exercise, experience, experiment, extreme, famous, favourite, February, forward, forwards, fruit, grammar, group, guard, guide, heard, heart, height, history, imagine, important, increase, interest, island, knowledge, learn, length, library, material, medicine, mention, minute, natural, naughty, notice, occasion, occasionally, often, opposite, ordinary, particular, peculiar, perhaps, popular, position, possess, possession, possible, potatoes, pressure, probably, promise, purpose, quarter, question, recent, regular, reign, remember, sentence, separate, special, straight, strange, strength, suppose, surprise, therefore, though, thought, through, various, weight, woman, women
Year 5	accommodate, accompany, according, achieve, aggressive, amateur, ancient, apparent, appreciate, attached, available, average, awkward, bargain, bruise, category, cemetery, committee, communicate, community, competition, conscience, conscious, controversy, convenience, correspond, criticise, curiosity, definite, desperate, determined, develop, dictionary, disastrous, embarrass, environment, equip, equipped, equipment, especially, exaggerate, excellent, existence, explanation, familiar, foreign, forty, frequently, government, guarantee, harass, hindrance, identity, immediate, immediately, individual, interfere, interrupt, language, leisure, lightning, marvellous, mischievous, muscle, necessary, neighbour, nuisance, occupy, occur, opportunity, parliament, persuade, physical, prejudice, privilege, profession, programme, pronunciation, queue, recognise, recommend, relevant, restaurant, rhyme, rhythm, sacrifice, secretary, shoulder, signature, sincere, sincerely, soldier, stomach, sufficient, suggest, symbol, system, temperature, thorough, twelfth, variety, vegetable, vehicle, yacht

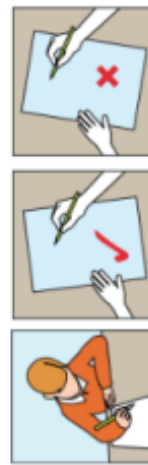
		KS2				
		Year 5	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
Letter Formation, Placement and Positioning	Early Years Foundation Stage					
	<p>3 and 4 olds Reception ELGs</p> <p>Use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks.</p> <p>Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.</p> <p>Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils</p> <p>Shows a preference for a dominant hand.</p> <p>Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page, write 'm' for mummy.</p> <p>Write some letters accurately.</p> <p>Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paint-brushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.</p> <p>Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.</p> <p>Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.</p> <p>Form lower case and capital letters correctly.</p> <p>Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.</p> <p>Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</p>	<p>To increase the speed of their handwriting so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of writing down what they want to say.</p> <p>To be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version.</p>	<p>To increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and by ensuring that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.</p>	<p>To use a neat, joined handwriting style with increasing accuracy and speed.</p>	<p>To write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.</p> <p>To form lower case letters of the correct size, relative to one another.</p> <p>To use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</p>	<p>To write lower case and capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place with a good level of consistency.</p> <p>To sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.</p> <p>To form the digits 0-9.</p> <p>To understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.</p>
Joining Letters		<p>To confidently use diagonal and horizontal joining strokes throughout their independent writing in a legible, fluent and speedy way.</p>	<p>To confidently use diagonal and horizontal joining strokes throughout their independent writing to increase fluency.</p>	<p>To continue to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and to understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.</p>	<p>To begin to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters.</p>	

Right handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

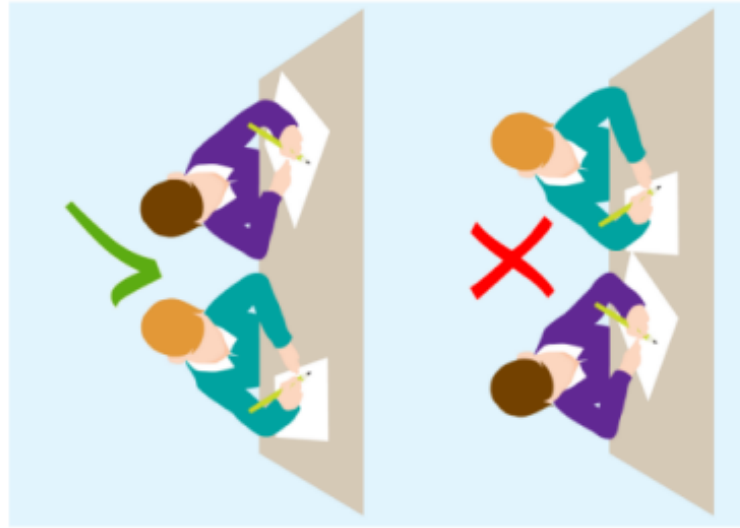


How to hold and position the paper.



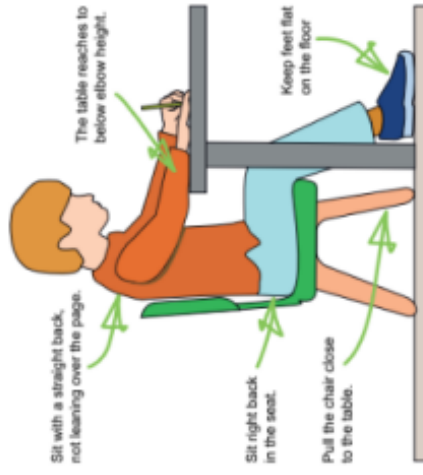
Sitting position

Sit left-handed children to the left of their partner so they have plenty of room to write.



Left handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.



How to hold and position the paper.



Stages of Pencil Grip in Chronological Age

1 to 2 Years Old: Fisted grasp or Palmar Supinate Grasp



- Pencil is held in the palm.
- All fingers and thumb are used.
- Movement is from the shoulder; the arm and the hand move as a unit.
- Light scribbles are produced with this pencil grip.

2 to 3 Years Old: Digital Pronate Grasp



- All fingers are holding the pencil but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page.
- Movement comes mostly from the elbow and the shoulder is now stabilized.
- Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied.

3 to 4 Years Old: Four-Finger Grasp



- Fingers are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb, beginning to form the arc between the thumb and index finger.
- Movement occurs from the wrist; the hand and fingers move as a whole unit.
- Zigzag lines, crossed lines and simple humans can be drawn with this grip.

4 to 6 Years Old: Static Tripod Grasp or Static Quadropod Grasp



- A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit.
- Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp.
- A static quadropod grip has a fourth finger involved.
- Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.

6 to 7 Years Old: Dynamic Tripod Grasp



- Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger.
- The ring and little fingers are bent and rest comfortably on the table.
- The index finger and thumb form an open space.
- Movement comes from the fingertips.
- This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.