

Rationale

A Curriculum for Excellence states that children should experience the following Literacy outcomes:

As I play and learn, I enjoy exploring interesting materials for writing and different ways of recording my experiences and feelings, ideas and information.

LIT 0.21b

I can present my writing in a way that will make it legible and attractive for my reader, combining words, images and other features.

LIT 1-24a

I consider the impact that layout and presentation will have and can combine lettering, graphics and other features to engage my reader.

LIT 2-24a

"Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. It needs to be systematically taught." (National Handwriting Association)

Our Aims

We aim for our pupils to:

1. Develop a legible style of handwriting.
2. Develop a consistency in the size and shape of letters.
3. Develop fluent and smooth flow and join of letters.
4. Raise their self-motivation and esteem through the establishment of best handwriting practice.
5. Establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills.

Handwriting Scheme

In order to achieve these aims in Cornbank Primary, we have chosen to use the "Nelson Thornes" handwriting scheme.

Nelson Handwriting 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 whilst learning to form letters and joins accurately. The scheme is introduced to children in Primary 1 and continues and develops with children throughout the stages into Primary 7. Children in Primary 1 will be introduced letters through Jolly Phonics. Teachers will link the handwriting lessons with Nelson Thornes style.

The scheme includes a Teacher's Book which contains full lesson plans and helpful advice on how to develop and assess handwriting skills. Each corridor has their own book which is to be shared between the classes.



Each stage has a "Developing Skills" book. These provide full coverage of the technical aspects of writing including letter formation, basic joins, printing, speedwriting and slope, as well as links with phonics and spelling. Although these books are kept in the associated stage classroom they will be available for any child showing the need for a differentiated approach.



Printed Font

Children will also experience different styles of printed font. The University of Edinburgh highlights that children need to be exposed to a wide range of styles and sizes to aid their reading skills.

Handwriting lessons

The frequency and length of handwriting lessons will vary according to the age and competence of the pupils. With Early Level pupils it is appropriate to have short, daily lessons. Children within First and Second Level will experience at least one focused session per week lasting approximately 20-30 minutes. However, good handwriting skills and neat presentation needs practised and needs to be continually reinforced in all work across the curriculum.

Introducing Joins

As children learn their blends and digraphs, (*ai*) they will be taught to join these letters correctly. This reinforces an understanding of the sound as well as preparing the children for joined handwriting. The teaching of joining other letters will generally begin in Primary 2, although this might be earlier/later for some children.

Tools

Children should use a good quality HB handwriting pencil. Teachers and children should ensure it is always sharp and is not too short. Pens may be introduced as the handwriting improves as a motivation to earn the privilege. Competent writers can use pens for best writing tasks.

Grip

Children should be taught and continually encouraged to hold their pencil using the tripod grip, commonly referred to "froggy fingers". Pencils should be held lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support. Children should be sitting comfortably with both feet on the floor.

Left Handed Children

Children who are left handed should also be encouraged to hold their pencil with this grip. When joining letters some left handed children may find it more appropriate to leave 'f' and 't' unjoined. During handwriting sessions, it is recommended that right handed children will not be seated on the left hand side of a left handed child. This ensures that their elbows do not collide.

Assessment

All handwriting skills are assessed by the teacher on an ongoing basis. Children will also have the opportunity to self and peer assess their work. They may use formative assessment strategies to highlight their best piece of work as well as areas that they feel they need to improve on, for example, using traffic lights or circling best letter/join. "Nelson Thornes" handwriting scheme also provides success criteria designed for children and teachers to assess progress. Children experiencing difficulties with handwriting will be supported by the class teacher and may receive extra practise or activities.

Evaluation and Review

We will review this policy at the end of the academic school year. As a staff we will look at evidence of progress in jotters and assessed pieces of work. We will evaluate the "Nelson Thornes" Materials.