



Rationale

Our policy is in place to ensure that the teaching of handwriting is a progression from mark-making to formal handwriting that enables children to communicate their needs and thoughts and to present their work in a way that is legible and will engage the reader.

Our policy also ensures that handwriting is taught at the correct developmental stages with appropriate activities and assessment in place prior to formal teaching.

Assessment

Assessment in the nursery is ongoing and children are given many opportunities for mark-making and activities to develop fine motor skills. The Highland literacy Pre-writing skills assessment tool is useful in identifying what stage the children are at and what the focus might need to be for individuals.

The development of these skills should be passed on to the P1 teacher at transition times. The P1 teacher may also carry out an assessment using the same tool when the children have been in school for a period. This assessment will dictate readiness for formal writing and the P1 teacher will plan a programme of fine motor skills activities in preparation for starting writing.

Children who have not reached the stage of readiness may need extra support to develop their Fine Motor skills and may become part of a FMS group.

Involving Parents

When children are in nursery, the development of FMS and the purpose of mark-making should be explained during a parent café or learning event. Parents will be advised that formal writing will not be taught other than support given to those who demonstrate a readiness and motivation.

At transition to P1, the teaching of handwriting and the formation of letters will be explained to parents with a booklet to take home that will help them to support their child with the correct formation of letters.

Resources

- Highland Literacy Emerging Literacy assessment for pre-writing skills
- Highland Literacy Emerging Literacy activities for Pre-writing and Fine Motor Skills
- Nelson Handwriting Scheme (Oxford)
- Nelson, Blue Level smartboard programme, currently available in Rooms 1, 7 and 8.
- New writing workbooks in Primary 1 and 2 (Nelson)
- Discovery Education (Espresso) has some really useful videos but please make sure that the letter is formed the way it is in the Nelson scheme.
- 2write on all curricular machines is also an excellent place to show children how to write a letter – your work can be recorded and replayed to them several times.
- Handwriting jotters from P3 upwards. There are two sizes of lines available – wide-ruled and narrow-ruled. It is thought that the wide-ruled should be used for P3 and narrow from P4 to P7.
- Due to the cost of buying the whole scheme, the progression for teaching writing should be taken from the Teacher's manual.
- In the 2018-2019 session, one copy of each text will be bought for ease of use.



Practical Items

Care needs to be taken with the teaching of the following letters so that joining handwriting is consistent across the school:

1. The lower case letter f. This should be taught with a descender, the bar across the middle should be the joining point. The bar does not sit on the line. See sample attached.
2. The lower case letter k. This should be taught with a curl / loop. Please see example attached.
3. Capital letters with serifs, i.e., the bars that are sometimes found on the bottom and top of the capital letters I and J. These are not taught in the Nelson scheme and we are better to go with that, again for consistency. Children can stylise their own writing when they get to the point in P6 / P7 where their writing is fluent.
4. Children should be taught formal writing with a sharpened pencil, correct posture and pen-hold. This pen-hold should be encouraged from a very early stage in nursery.
5. Children at the early level will often use a felt tip pen in the early stages of mark-making and developing writing as it flows better.
6. Children should only use a handwriting pen when you feel they are ready to do so.
7. Joined handwriting should be taught as dictated in the teacher’s handbook.

Capital Letters

Capital letters are grouped into 3 sets and all letters start at the top:

- One stroke letters: C, O, G, I, J, L, S, U, V, W, Z
- Two stroke letters: B, D, M, N, P, Q, R, T, X, Y
- Three stroke letters: A, E, F, H, K

Capital letters are stand-alone letters and do not join to anything.

Lower case letters

- Most get taught initially with an ‘exit flick’ for subsequent joining except for letters with descenders.
- Letters with descenders i.e., f, g, j, p, q, y, are not joined onto the next letter.
- The join for the f comes from the bar and sits between the two lines. Please see example attached.
- All letters start from the top.

Left-hand Writers

Advice for left-handers is given on page 19 of the Nelson manual – please review this.

Seen and read by:	