

Moorside Primary School



Handwriting Policy

Intent

At Moorside, our aim is that children will be supported to develop a handwriting style which is clear, joined and fluid. Inevitably, some will be neater than others, however each child can acquire a consistent and fluent style. 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. Cursive handwriting teaches children to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting is closely linked with the practising of spelling. Thus giving children a purpose for the activity as well as providing them with many opportunities to link phonemes with graphemes.

Implementation

Although there are many opportunities to practise handwriting across the curriculum, we will also provide regular lessons for teaching and revisiting these skills. The frequency and length of these lessons will vary according to the age and competence of the children. Formal handwriting skills will be taught regularly and systematically through the use of Penpals handwriting scheme.

It is important to strengthen the child(ren)s muscles in both their hands and upper body as this contributes and benefits them when practising handwriting. The gross motor skills involved in handwriting mainly refer to the postural control that is required for writing. Effective control of the larger muscle groups in the neck, shoulder, chest and back is necessary to maintain stability in order for the fingers and hands to move to complete the handwriting task. As children develop, control and stability begins at the chest, back, neck and shoulders, progressing to the elbow, wrist and finally the hand. With normal development, fine motor skills are developed from gross motor skills. Please see the fine and gross motor skills booklet for further advice.

Teaching approaches

Handwriting is taught regularly and systematically in classes, groups or individually as appropriate.

- Patterns are used initially, by writing with a variety of tools and using multisensory methods, to help free flowing hand motions
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- Correct posture will be encouraged with children sitting at the appropriate height with both feet on the floor
- Patterns are also re-introduced and extended later on to develop fluency, regularity and consistency
- Left-handed children sit to the left side of the right-handed children
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate
- Display writing throughout the school includes cursive writing and computer generated writing

Organisation

Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically through high quality modelling.

Children practise their handwriting skills daily in timetabled sessions across the school day.

In the Foundation Stage Early Years children take part in activities to develop gross and fine motor skills and recognition of patterns. Individual letter formation is taught, modelled and practised in working towards the objectives listed at Key Stage One. The style is closely linked with phonics and reading.

Pencil is used in Key Stage One and the Foundation Stage Early Years. Black pen is used in Key Stage Two for all children. In Year Three children continue to use pencil in autumn term in their written work but are introduced to a pen in their handwriting sessions before transitioning to using a pen in all written work in spring.

All children, regardless of their level of neatness and presentation will have the opportunity to use pen for equality purposes. Children will not be held back from using different writing tools as we believe this will lower children's self-esteem.

Marking and feedback

The child's handwriting should be acknowledged by a practitioner and any misconceptions should be addressed and modelled back within the book following the school's cursive script. If the child is not yet joining themselves then the practitioner should print any feedback given.

Differentiation

Assessment for learning strategies will be used to ensure the delivery of handwriting skills is specific to the individual child's stage in development. The model of group teaching and one to one support will ensure children are practising their number, letter formation and joins at a level and pace appropriate to them.

A number of children in class will be SEND or EAL, therefore after having exposure to fine and gross motor development activities, the developmental stages of mark making can be introduced. (See appendices)

Resources

Children will use a variety of resources to stimulate learning eg a range of pencils and pens, whiteboards, writing frames, handwriting worksheets, ICT, handwriting books and Lexia program in order to engage them in the learning process.

Extra support will be provided for particular groups of children in the form of another adult or more practical based interventions.

Equal Opportunities

As a staff we endeavour to maintain an awareness of, and to provide for, equal opportunities for all children. We aim to take into account cultural background, gender and any special need, both in our teaching attitudes and in the published materials we use.

Where necessary teachers will, in consultation with the SENCO and SLT, draw up an individual plan for the child. Where appropriate, children may work on an individualised programme with support staff. Children may also receive targeted support within the classroom. Specific planning to meet the needs of such children is identified in the teachers' short term planning. Where appropriate, a group plan is developed with common intentions for an intervention to begin.

Statutory requirements

The National Curriculum describes what must be taught in Key Stages One and Two.

Key Stage One:

- Handwriting - children should be taught:
- a. how to hold a pencil / pen
 - b. to write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
 - c. to start and finish letters correctly
 - d. to form letters of regular size and shape
 - e. to put regular spaces between letters and words
 - f. how to form lower- and upper-case letters
 - g. how to join letters

Key Stage Two:

Handwriting and presentation - children should be taught:

- a. write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed
- b. use different forms of handwriting for different purposes [for example, print for labelling maps or diagrams, a clear, neat hand for finished presented work, a faster script for notes].

Each teacher at Moorside Primary follows the National Curriculum in English thus ensuring continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of handwriting.

In the Foundation Stage Early Years - the curriculum is guided by the Early Learning Goals (Development Matters) which lead directly into the National Curriculum.

Penpals handwriting scheme

Penpals handwriting scheme is taught alongside a range of gross and fine motor exercises. You will find ideas for these in the fine and gross motor guide.

The stages are identified and these form the basic organisation of the scheme:

- Readiness for writing – gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation ➤ Beginning to join
- Securing joins
- Practising speed and fluency
- Presentation skills

Posture and pencil grip

It is important that children hold their pencil correctly and ensure their posture is correct.



Stage 1 - Palmer-supinate grasp

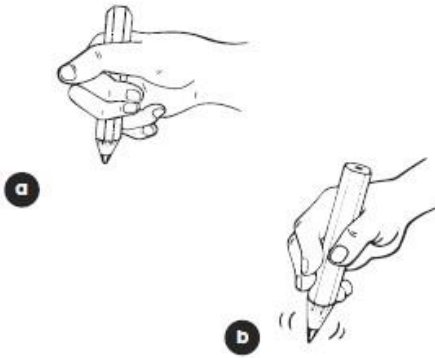
Hold the pencil in a fist (whole hand) like a dagger. They use whole arm movements from the shoulder to mark-make.



Stage 2 - Palmer or digital-pronate grasp

Holds the pencil with the palm of the hand facing down towards the paper. The pencil is held by all the fingers and the thumb. The movement comes from the shoulder and elbow.

Stage 3 - Static quadruped or tripod grip



Holding the pencil in a very nearly correct position however the web space is narrower than it would be if held in the mature tripod grip. This means that the movement is coming from the wrist and large finger movements.

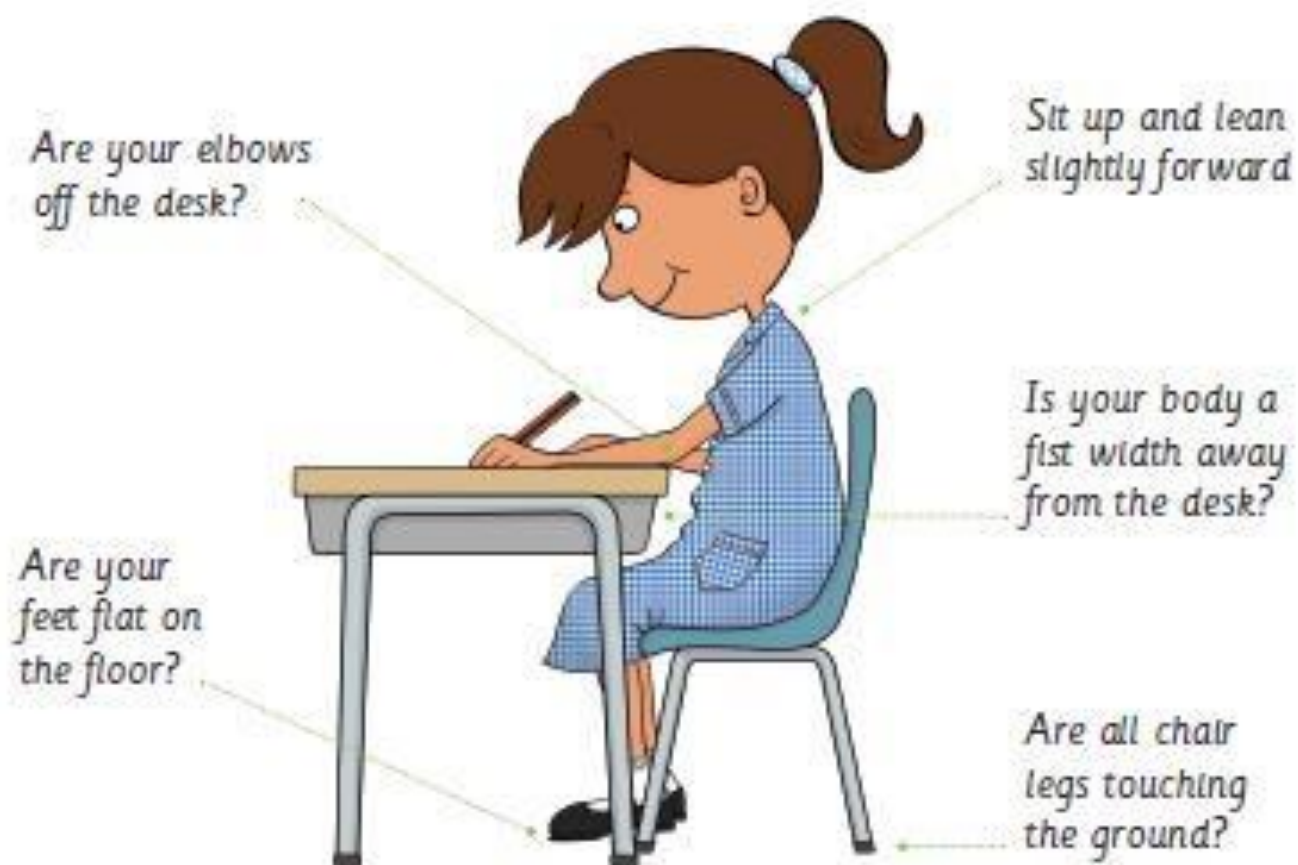


Stage 4 - mature/dynamic tripod grip

Holding the pencil between the thumb and the index finger with the pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers.

Posture is very important when practising handwriting. It is important for all children to sit properly when writing. Being seated properly gives a child good stable posture from which they can develop their handwriting. A well supported chest and back is essential for good shoulder control.

Are you ready for handwriting? Relax!



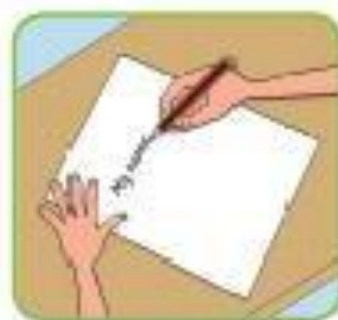
Left Handers



Is there a circle gap between your thumb and finger?

Is your paper tilted at a slight angle?

Right Handers



How to help a child?

To support the child(ren) with their handwriting there are a variety of ideas and activities including: ➤

- Pick a pencil grip (see appendix)
- Correct their posture (see appendix)
- Writing lists and labels
- Write notes to each other
- Praise their efforts

See the appendices for pencil control and other ideas.

Progression of Handwriting

Readiness for writing – gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation

Letters are written separately (not joined up yet). When the letter formation is accurate we then introduce joins.

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

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

Beginning to join

During the school year children will begin to join some pairs of letters within a word. They will be introduced to two types of join.

- Diagonal joins am, un at, th, ck
- Horizontal joins on, wi oc, oo

Securing joins

The main aim here is for children to become fluent and develop an automatic style. New joining letters are:

- Joins from 'q' quick, quiet, queen
- Joins to and from 'r' ran, her, hurry
- Joins to and from 's' has, sent, class
- Joins from 'f' far, fluffy

Size and proportions

Children will refine their handwriting and make sure that the size and proportions of all letters and the spaces between letters and words are consistent. New joins introduced are:

ph, bb, pi, be po, ba

Practising speed and fluency

Children will begin to slope their handwriting and will keep ascenders and descenders parallel. Children will begin to practise writing at increased speed and will be introduced to the print alphabet for captions, headings, labels and posters. Presentation skills

By this stage children should be secure at joining and able to use joined up writing for most of their work. Children will be experimenting with slopes and will have a more mature and comfortable style.

Each stage of the Penpals handwriting scheme

Each stage plays an important role in the child(ren)s learning to write with a fluent and legible style. Here you will see what each stage consists of in developing the child(ren)s handwriting.

Readiness for writing

At this stage the child will be focusing on developing the necessary fine and gross motor skills in readiness for handwriting. They will practise a range of patterns including dots, waves and zig zags to prepare them for letter formation (see appendix).

Before practising writing any letters children must develop:

1. Gross motor control:
The control and co-ordination of big movements the body can make.
2. Fine motor control:
Being able to fine tune the movements of the arm, hand and fingers.
3. Visual control:
Making sure hand and eye movements are working well together.
4. Spatial control:
Helping children to be able to move themselves confidently in a space with an awareness of direction (left/right) and plane (horizontal/vertical) and eventually helping them to transfer that sense of space on to paper.

As part of developing confidence in these key areas children begin to explore patterns and basic letter shapes.

1. Investigating dots.
2. Investigating straight lines and crosses.
3. Investigating circles.
4. Investigating curves, loops and waves.
5. Investigating joined lines and angled patterns.
6. Investigating eights and spirals.

You will find these in the appendix.

Here are some things that can be done at home to develop these key areas:

1. Play with a ball, e.g. kick, catch, throw and bounces.
2. Enjoy finger rhymes.

- Enjoy household task together (e.g. mixing ingredients with implements or hands, using a dustpan and brush, scooping compost into plant pots and digging the garden).

Letter formation

During this stage correct letter formation should become automatic where children do not need to use the short term memory. It is important not to encourage children to write small or too quickly as trying to enforce small handwriting too soon can lead to a very cramped style, which can be difficult to become fluent. At the end of this stage children will begin to join some pairs of letters within word.

As a reminder, correct letter formation for lower- cases is as follows:

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

Capital letters are formed as follows:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

There are four letter families (similar shapes grouped together to help children form the letters consistently) See below for letter families.

Long-legged giraffe	l i t u j y	ll	L I T U J Y
One-armed robot	r b n h m k p		R B N H M K P
Curly caterpillar	c a d o s g q e f	ff ss	C A D O S G Q E F
Zig-zag monster	z v w x	zz	Z V W X
Letter combinations	ck qu	ai igh oo	ee oa ow ch wh

Joins – These four joins are introduced at the end of the year, so if the child is keen to start joining, then these are a good place to start.

Diagonal join to ascender *ch*

Diagonal join, no ascender *ai*



Horizontal join to ascender *wh*

Horizontal join, no ascender *ow*

Beginning to join

During this stage, the child will learn all of the basic handwriting joins. However, if the child isn't confident forming all their letters yet, they should concentrate on this before they worry about joining. The child will gradually be introduced to more pairs of letters that are joined in the same way encouraging them to explore and experiment joining more letters with the joins they know.

This should be encouraged if they begin to naturally explore-there's no point in holding them back.

1. Forming lower-case letters, correctly, using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters.
2. Writing capital letters of the correct size and relationship to lower-case letter.
3. Spacing their words correctly.

Join	Letters in this box	To letters in this box	Joins taught
Diagonal join to ascender	<i>a c e i l t</i>	<i>h k l t</i>	<i>ch, th, ck, al, el, at, il, ill, ok, ot, ob, ol</i>
Diagonal join, no ascender	<i>a c d e i k l n t u</i>	<i>e i n r y</i>	<i>ai, ay, ir, er, ie, ue, ee, le, ar, ur, in, ui, ey, aw, an, ip</i>
		<i>a c d g s</i> (anticlockwise letters)	<i>ea, ig, dg, ng, ed, cc, eg, ic, ad, ug, dd, ag, as, es, os, ns, ds, is, ls, ts, ks</i>
Horizontal join, no ascender	<i>o v w</i>	<i>e i n p r u v w y</i>	<i>ow, ou, oe, ve, or, oi, oy, on, op, ov</i>
		<i>a c d g o s</i> (anticlockwise letters)	<i>oo, oa, wa, wo, oc, og, od, va, vo</i>
Horizontal join, to ascender	<i>o w</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>wh, oh</i>

Break letters

These letters do not join: *g j x y z*

We do not join from these letters yet: *b f p q s r*

Securing joins

During this stage the child will be introduced to the ideas of joining most of the letters in a word and to trickier joins such as joining from r, s and f.

As the movement for joins becomes familiar and fluent, the focus moves to develop to neat and even style by looking at size and proportion, parallel downwards stroked and spacing.

Diagonal join to ascender (e.g. at)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

a b c d e h i k l m n p s t u

to letters in this box.

b f h k l t

Diagonal join, no ascender (e.g. da)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

a c d e h i k l m n q s t u

to letters in this box.

e i j m n p r u v w y

* a c d g o q s

Horizontal join, no ascender (e.g. wo)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

f o r v w

to letters in this box.

e i j m n p r u v w y

* a c d g o q s

Horizontal join to ascender (e.g. oh)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

f o r v w

to letters in this box.

b f h k l t

Break letters

These letters do not join.

g j x y z

These letters do not join yet.

b p

* anticlockwise letters

* Later in the stage b and p become joined letters.

Size and proportion

At this stage we are working on a move sloped style to enable speedier writing. All of the letters and joins taught previously will be revisited to enable your child to practise the slope in familiar contexts. We will also focus on issues of proportion, size, legibility and different styles for different purposes.

For reference, here are the lower-case letters in the more sloped style:

*abcdefghijklmnop
pqrstuvwxyz*

Capital letters are written as follows:

*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO
PQRSTUVWXYZ*

Practising speed and fluency

Our emphasis at this stage is on developing a personal, fast, fluent and legible handwriting style. Children are given the opportunities to practise a range of ways of joining, with the expectation that they will develop a style that works for them. Additionally, children continue to focus on key issues for legibility and speed as well as styles and writing tools for different purposes.

At this stage children should be:

1. Producing legible joined handwriting.
2. Maintaining legibility, fluency and speed in handwriting by choosing whether not to join specific letters.

Diagonal join to ascender (e.g. *at*)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

abcdefghijklmnopstu

to letters in this box.

bfhklt

Diagonal join, no ascender (e.g. *da*)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

abcdefghijklmnopqstu

to letters in this box.

eijnpruvwy

**acdgoqs*

Horizontal join, no ascender (e.g. *wo*)

This join is used to join letters in this box ...

forvw

to letters in this box.

eijnpruvwy

**acdgoqs*

Horizontal join to ascender (e.g. *oh*)

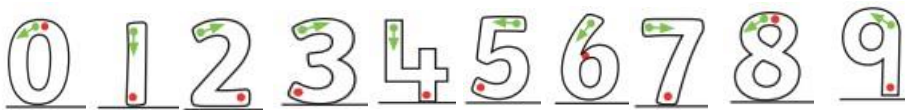
This join is used to join letters in this box ...

forvw

to letters in this box.

bfhklt

Number Formation



Date Policy Implemented	May 2022
Date to Review Policy	May 2024

Appendices

1. Handwriting grips
2. Handwriting posture
3. Handwriting warm-up exercises
4. Pencil control mazes
5. Developmental stages of writing
6. Pencil control patterns
7. Letter formation exercises
8. PenPal script on how to form and join letters
9. PenPals information powerpoint

