



Inspire Learning, Ignite Curiosity

Marlow C of E Infant School Handwriting Policy 2025

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness”

Genesis 1:26

Rationale

At Marlow Church of England Infant School our curriculum vision is to inspire learning and ignite curiosity within a welcoming Christian and spiritual community. We embrace the uniqueness of everybody and are inclusive of all. Our values of respect, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness and service guide all that we do and our aim is for every child to feel nurtured, supported and safe.

Our belief is that every individual is created in God's image and therefore is precious and valuable. We believe in treating everybody with respect and dignity because we acknowledge everyone's God given value and unique identity.

We aim to achieve this by providing children with the opportunity to work towards achieving their full potential by:

- Embracing the uniqueness of everybody and be inclusive of all
- Empowering all to be enthusiastic learners
- Ensuring that every child feels nurtured, supported and safe
- Enriching learning through progressive teaching methods and technology
- Being responsible to and for society
- Being good citizens of the planet

As a school we support the rights of children and these rights are encompassed in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This policy focuses on helping to realise Article 28 *All children have the right to a good quality education*

Handwriting Intent

Even in this technological, computer literate age, good handwriting remains fundamental to children's educational achievement. A fluent, cursive and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. Our aim is that the children will be able to write clearly and fluently so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school. At our school cursive, joined up handwriting is taught from Year 1 as it is considered to be the most natural development of children's earliest attempts at writing.

‘The ability to write quickly and legibly affects the quality of a child's written output, for difficulty with handwriting can hamper his thoughts and limit his fluency.’

‘A language for Life’ Department for Education and Science

We encourage the children to

- To develop fine and gross motor skills to assist in successful handwriting
- To develop an effective pencil grip
- To form letters with correct letter formation
- To write with a flowing hand which is legible, swift and pleasant to look at
- To take pride in the presentation of their work.
- To appreciate handwriting as an art form.

Handwriting Implementation

Reception

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

Additionally, during the reception year, children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop an understanding that writing conveys meaning through exposure to a range of sources, e.g. books, storytelling, signs, labels etc.

A holistic and kinaesthetic approach is adopted and delivered through all 7 areas of learning. The emotional skills such as confidence and self-esteem are just as important as the physical development.

Provision such as well-resourced writing areas, role-play, construction and creative activities help the children to develop gross and fine motor control. This helps them to gain confidence to make and develop emergent writing skills in a meaningful way. A wide range of apparatus and equipment is used, e.g. sand trays, shaving foam, etc, leading onto and developing the correct use of conventional writing tools, pencils and brushes.

Children experience a wide range of handwriting-related skills, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, shaving foam, through tracing, use of ribbons, with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media.

Key Stage 1

Year 1

Children work on handwriting skills daily and in a variety of activities, e.g. through phonic work and writing activities. Exercise books with lines of an appropriate width for the individual child and standard-size pencils are used. Handwriting practice takes place at least three times a week. During the year the cursive formation is practised and children are encouraged to use this in their daily work.

Year 2

Children work on handwriting skills daily and in a variety of activities, e.g. through phonic work and writing activities. Exercise books with lines of an appropriate width for the individual child and standard-size pencils are used. Handwriting practice takes place at least three times a week. During the year the cursive joins are practised and children are encouraged to use this in their daily work. Children are encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work.

Handwriting Progression

This list of year-by-year progression has been drawn together from the National Curriculum 2014 and Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Reception (Foundation Stage Curriculum)

Handwriting will be taught as part of phonics lessons every day and supplementary sessions for children who find this skill more challenging.

In the Foundation Stage children will:

- Have opportunities to watch adults writing and to write for themselves.
- Attempt writing for various purposes using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions.
- Write their own names and other writing forms such as labels and captions and begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation.
- Use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words.
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters and numbers, most of which are correctly formed.

- Opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills across all areas of the curriculum.

By the end of the Foundation Stage Curriculum

By the end of Reception year children will have been introduced to:

- a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- producing a controlled line which supports letter formation
- writing letters using the correct sequence of movements
- use an unjoined printed letter style
- pattern-making and letter/number formation in various media
- Capital letter formation

Key Stage 1

Handwriting will be taught through formal handwriting lessons and supplementary sessions for children who find this skill more challenging. There will be at least 2 sessions that should take about 15-20 minutes but teachers will use their professional judgement if more are required.

Differentiation can be achieved in a number of ways:

- children being supported in class sessions by teaching assistant
- higher achieving children can be challenged by higher expectations of control, evenness of letters and line width. They may be able to transfer more joins between sessions

Year 1

Throughout the year there will be continuous development of pattern work, fine and gross motor skills and refining size of letters and ensuring clear ascenders and descenders. The children will be given an assessment at the beginning and at the end of each term to assess their progress. The correct cursive formation will be taught for all individual letters throughout the year:

- Revision of number formation
- Revision of capital letters
- Introduction to the cursive style:
 - Long ladder letters: l, i, t, u, y, j
 - Robot letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p
 - Curly caterpillar letters: c, a, d, o, s, g, q, e, f
 - Zig zag letters: z, v, w, x

By the end of Year 1

By the end of Year 1 the expectation is that children will

- have an effective tripod pencil grip
- be able to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- start to apply handwriting skills in everyday writing

Year 2

Throughout the year there will be continuous development of pattern work, fine and gross motor skills and refining size of letters, and fluency of joined writing. The correct joining patterns will be taught for all spelling patterns taught in phonic sessions. The children will be given an assessment at the beginning and at the end of each term to assess their progress.

Throughout the year the children will practise:

- Diagonal joins to ascenders (e.g. at, all)
- Diagonal joins no ascenders (e.g. in, cr)
- Diagonal joins, no ascenders to an anticlockwise letter (e.g. id, nd, ng)
- Horizontal joins to no ascenders anticlockwise letter
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou, vi, wi
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol, wh, ot
- Combine different join patterns to write words
- To use combination of joins to write words
- Joins in high frequency and spelling words

By the end of Key Stage 1

By the end of Year 2 the expectation is that children will:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to join lower case letters
- use spacing between letters that reflect the size of the letters

Assessment

On-going assessment in handwriting is a key component to success as this gives the teacher the chance to spot any errors and inconsistencies that are likely to impede a swift and fluent hand in the future.

At Key Stage 1 a beginning and end of year assessment will be used

Key issues to consider in summative assessments of handwriting

- Is the child using an effective pencil grip?
- Are all letters correctly formed?
- Are letters consistently sized?
- Are known joins used?
- Are they used correctly?
- Are ascenders and descenders of an appropriate size?
- Are spaces between words regular?
- Is good handwriting carried over into cross-curricular activities?
- What are the next handwriting targets for this child?

Left Handed Writers

See **Appendix 3** for details of specific advice, support and strategies for left-handed children.

SEN

See **Appendix 5** for each school details how provision and support will be provided for children with SEN.

Home School Links

Information will be shared with parents so that they understand the formation of the cursive script being used in school and to enable them to support children with their handwriting at home. Home learning activities will be set where deemed appropriate. Training sessions will be provided where relevant.

Policy reviewed: April 2025

Policy next review: April 2028

Number Formation



Appendix 2

Progression of letter formation

Year R

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Year 1

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Year 2

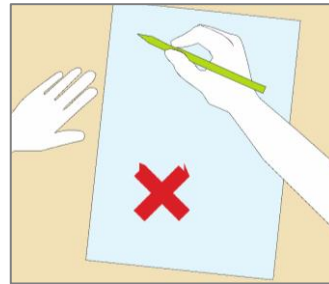
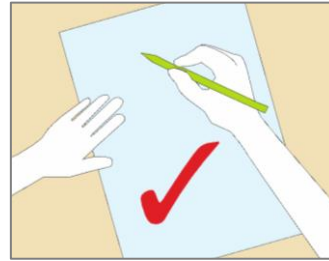
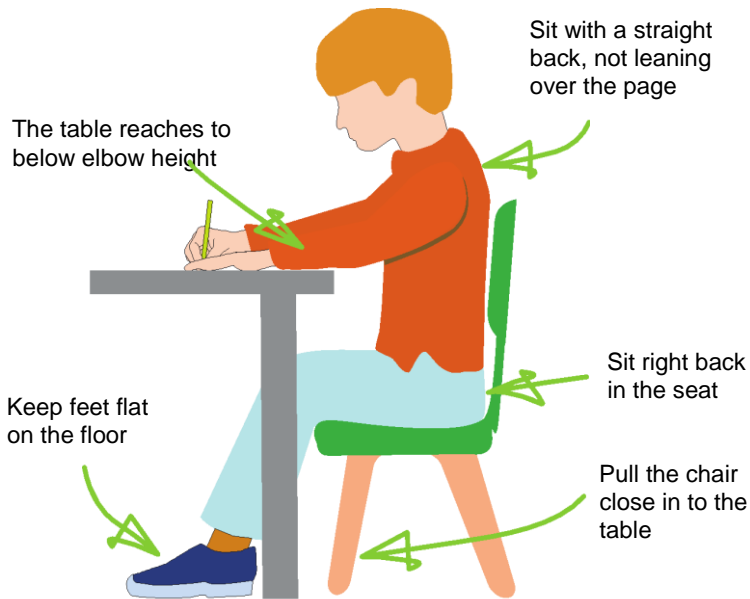
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Appendix 3

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children.

Left-handed children

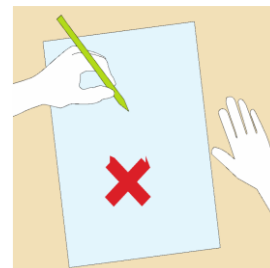
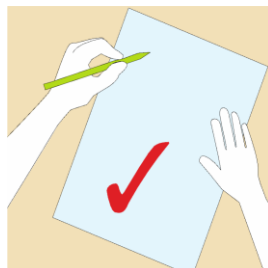
Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.

Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.

Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.

Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children.

Appendix 4

The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib. We use the Tripod Grip Rhyme:



Appendix 5

SEN support

Support for children with SEN or difficulties in handwriting

Resources and programmes to support handwriting Development

- Beat Dyslexia Programme
- Raindrops Programme
- Rainbow Road Programme
- Writing Without Tears

Children who show difficulties with handwriting will be able to access additional support for this area of their learning.

Support will be provided in line with our SEND policy. Children will have access to additional class support from either the class teacher or teaching assistant during handwriting sessions, where differentiated work will be provided.

They may also require access to handwriting aids such as pencil grips or writing slopes to help with motor control, pencil grip and hand strength.

Children needing further support will then be identified to the school SENCO and may require additional support in the form of targeted support following one of the above mentioned programmes. Parents will be informed if their child requires additional support beyond in-class strategies.

If a child is still experiencing difficulties with handwriting then consideration will be made to referral to the Occupational Therapy department for a motor skills assessment. The school will then implement any recommendations made by the occupational therapist.