



HANDWRITING POLICY

2021-2022

Effective Date: January 2019

Last Reviewed: May 2021

Reviewed by: Mrs L Robbins

Next Review Date: May 2022

“Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible.”

(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Intent

The first priority in the Moggerhanger Primary School handwriting programme is the aim to develop legibility. Handwriting is a means of communication and so should be easy to read with letters properly formed. The second priority is speed. “It is necessary to insist on the correct movement from the earliest days to ensure smooth progress to a flowing hand.” (Rosemary Sassoon). The third priority should be to promote a personal hand. After being taught correct letter formation which includes modelling by adults at Moggerhanger Primary School and when the pupil is ready, he/she should be encouraged to develop his/her own personal handwriting style – one which is legible, cursive, fluent and in line with the pupil’s natural inclination. Ultimately, handwriting should be an expression of ‘self.’

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. It is important that the child’s handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought, so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, rather than upon the act.

The key advantages of joined handwriting are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children’s hands develop a ‘physical memory’ of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations

Implementation

In order to achieve these aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi-sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using ‘letter speak’; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, shaving foam, etc.
- The cursive font (see Appendix 1), is taught as a specific skill, at least once a week for about 20 minutes, with additional, individual or group practise where necessary

- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling
- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught in daily phonics lessons
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts, etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts
- The cursive font should be displayed in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

Left-handed pupils

- Care will be given to seat these pupils in such a way that their writing hands are not coming into conflict with right handed pupils
- Special care will also be given to ensure that appropriate resources and tasks support the development of their handwriting
- Their paper is tilted clockwise so they can see what they have written.

Curriculum Time

Early Years – Pre-School and Reception

- To use a variety of media (sand, paint brushes, crayons etc) to develop the gross and finer motor controls necessary for mark-making and pre writing skills
- To become comfortable with efficient pencil grip
- Correct formation of lower case letters in daily phonics lessons – see **Appendix 2 - Starting position for correct letter formation**
- Children who are identified as gifted, talented and more able in writing may be introduced to joining connectors at the discretion of the Early Years teacher.

Year 1 and 2

- To consolidate letter formation from Reception, in daily phonics lessons
- Practise handwriting patterns to increase fluency
- Correct formation of all upper and lower case letters (by the end of Year 1), developing joining connectors
- To begin using and practising basic handwriting joins
- Diagonal joins to letters with and without ascenders
- Horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders
- Correct joined handwriting – joining all letters by the end of Year 2
- See **Appendix 1 and 2** for correct formation. **Year 3 and 4**
- To reinforce work from Year 1 and 2, by using correct joined handwriting – joining all letters at all times, in daily phonics lessons
- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters
- To ensure consistency in spacing between letters and words
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practise and application
- Children who are writing in a joined, legible and consistent style will be allowed to write with a pen.

Year 5 and 6

- To reinforce work from Year 3 and 4
- To develop own handwriting style, ensuring speed, stamina, fluency and legibility
- To use different forms of handwriting for different purposes
- As in Year 3 and 4, children who are writing in a joined, legible and consistent style will be allowed to write with a pen.

Pen Policy

By Year 3 or 4 upwards, some children will have developed their own neat, consistent, joined handwriting style, and be using this writing across all areas of the curriculum. In recognition of this achievement, children will then be allowed to use a pen to write at school.

Any child who has been allowed to write with a pen, must continue to produce handwriting that complies with the criteria above. If they do not, this must be addressed during marking and the child reminded of the criteria and encouraged to take pride in their work. In a small minority of cases, it may be necessary to ask the child to write in pencil again for a short period of time until the child reaches the required standard. This is a last resort and to avoid this, it is important that a child is only put forward to write with a pen when their teacher is completely confident they can produce this standard of handwriting consistently.

Choice of Pen

Moggerhanger Primary School forms part of the Greensand Federation with Sandy Secondary School, and we work hard to ensure continuity across both our primary and secondary sites. For this reason, we require children to use black ink. This is to ensure that children are prepared for examinations during secondary school. Within the primary setting it means that marking, done by the teacher in green, will be clearly visible, as will pupil editing which is done in purple pen.

In order to maintain a high standard of handwriting whilst using a pen, it is important that children are provided with a variety of writing implements, and are then able to choose independently which tool best suits their needs. There are a range of pen styles which are suitable including ergonomic hand grip. Moggerhanger Primary School provides children with a Bic Gelocity Stick in black.

Impact

All children will have a high standard of handwriting, in line with age-related expectations. Children will meet, and exceed, the requirements of the National Curriculum for handwriting. Children's work will be beautifully presented across all areas of the curriculum, and children will take pride in their work.

Appendix 1

Agreed Letter Formation – including joins

- The letters b, d, h, k, and l are called **ascenders**. The top of the letter should reach very close to the line above (it shouldn't touch!). The letter t is **not an ascender** – it is a three quarters letter, rather than an ascender. Formation should be as follows:

b d h k l t

- The letters g, j, p, q and y are called **descenders**. The flourish (the tail) of these letters goes below the line. Formation should be as follows when first learnt and then when joined:

g j p q y

g j p q y

- Capital letters should be no higher than ascenders. Formation should be as follows:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

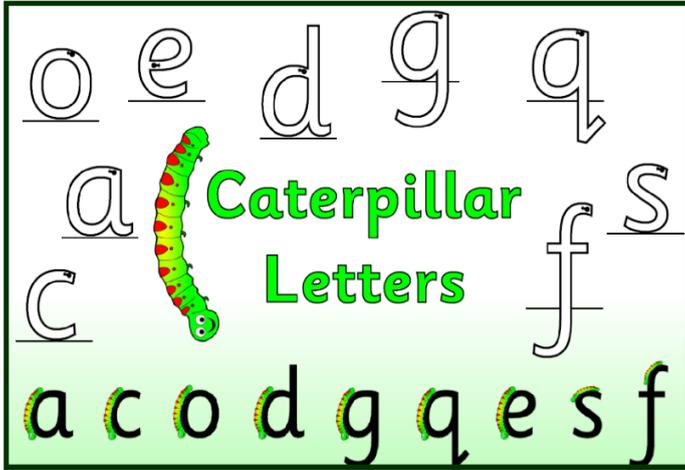
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

- By the end of Year 2 all letters should join as follows, although there may be minor variation when joining x and z:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Appendix 2

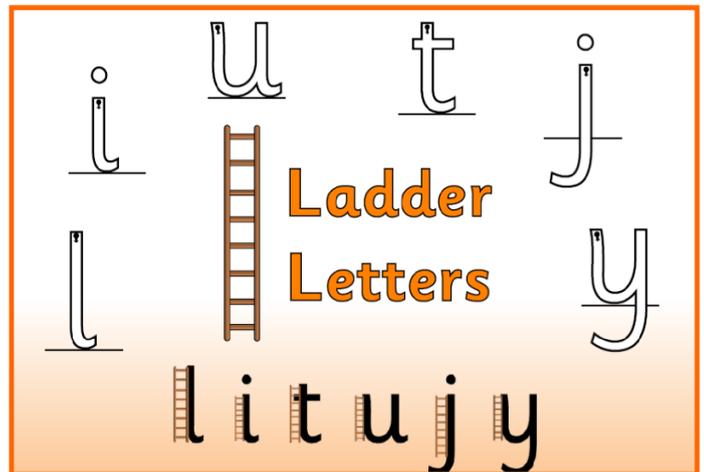
Starting position for correct letter formation



Caterpillar Letters

o e d g q
a c f s
a c o d g q e s f

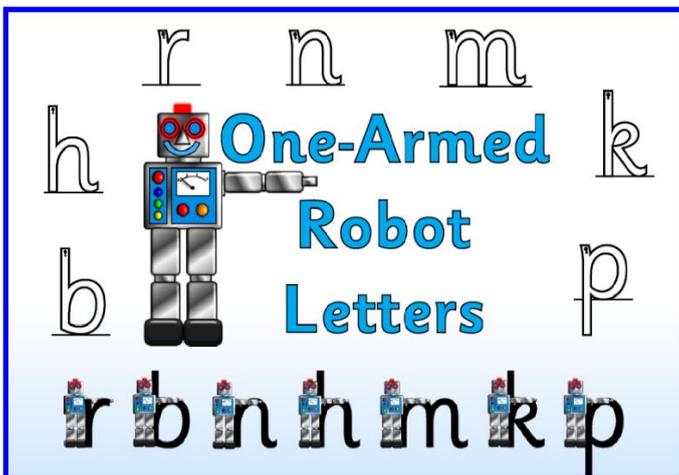
This block features a green caterpillar illustration. The letters o, e, d, g, q, a, c, f, and s are shown in their starting positions with arrows indicating the direction of the stroke. Below, the letters a, c, o, d, g, q, e, s, and f are shown with the caterpillar's body tracing the path of each letter.



Ladder Letters

i u t j
l y
l i t u j y

This block features a brown ladder illustration. The letters i, u, t, j, l, and y are shown in their starting positions with arrows indicating the direction of the stroke. Below, the letters l, i, t, u, j, and y are shown with the ladder's rungs tracing the path of each letter.



One-Armed Robot Letters

r n m
h k
b p
r b n h m k p

This block features a blue and silver one-armed robot illustration. The letters r, n, m, h, k, b, and p are shown in their starting positions with arrows indicating the direction of the stroke. Below, the letters r, b, n, h, m, k, and p are shown with the robot's arm tracing the path of each letter.



Zigzag Monster Letters

X W
V Z
v w x z

This block features a red monster illustration with horns and a zigzag body. The letters X, W, V, and Z are shown in their starting positions with arrows indicating the direction of the stroke. Below, the letters v, w, x, and z are shown with the monster's body tracing the path of each letter.