

Miers Court Primary School Handwriting Policy

November 2025

It is our aim to encourage the progression and development of each child's handwriting throughout the school into a fluent, legible and individual style, that can be adapted for a range of purposes and will support their spelling and composition. The increased automaticity of handwriting will then mean that children's working memory is freed up to focus on other elements of their learning.

The Learning Environment

In all classes, easily located pots or packs, with suitable materials, are available for pupils to work.

Classrooms are equipped with a range of writing implements, line guides, word lists and dictionaries. Our handwriting style should be displayed in every classroom for children to refer to and on the tables to support as necessary. In classrooms where phonics is still being taught, this should include the ELS rhymes.

The Role of Parents/Carers



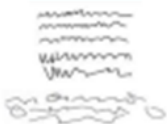

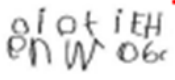



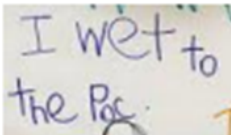

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practice this with their children at home.

Expectations and Requirements.

EYFS

Before a child has enough control to form letters correctly, they need to **understand patterns and shapes in letters**. This is done long before letters are introduced, through simple activities with shapes, puzzles, pegboards, drawing patterns, etc.

Emergent writing is **the first step taken by children learning to write**. Emergent writing develops as children begin to understand that writing is a form of communication, and that their marks on paper can be used to convey a message. The stages of this are as follows:

	<p>Scribbling. Experimental marks and mark making.</p>
	<p>Random scribble. Children are experimenting with making a mark and will probably be able to say what their marks mean. It may be a little more deliberate.</p>
	<p>Controlled scribble/wavy scribble . Children will often scribble in rows across the page and give meaning to the lines of their writing. This could be a long continuous line or a wiggly line and may go left to right, top to bottom.</p>
	<p>Mock letters Letter like forms and familiar shapes, often circles and lines.</p>
	<p>Random letters. These may be letters in their name or letters they have seen out in the environment.</p>
	<p>Patterned letters/ Letter strings. These may be random letters in strings, or lines. The letters are unrelated. There might be a mix of upper case ('big' letters') and lower case letters ('small letters')</p>
	<p>Transitional writing. There may be some spaces between the words to resemble sentence writing. Words and letter may be copied from around them.</p>
	<p>Partially Phonetic. May happen once the child is introduced to phonics with a different sound ('phoneme') that is linked to a different letter shape (graph). Children will start to use this in their writing. Often the beginning and/or end sound is used to represent the whole word.</p>
	<p>Beginning of phrase writing. Words have a beginning middle and end. Often only short words to start with, but progresses as phonic knowledge grows with invented spelling based on this.</p>
	<p>Conventional spelling beginning to be seen. An understanding of sentence writing with capital letters, full stops and spaces between the letters. Writing can be read more easily by others.</p>

The Early Learning goals for writing in EYFS are as follows:

Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will: - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

Writing

Children at the expected level of development will: - Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;

At Miers Court Primary we focus on gross motor - skill development. Our EYFS children receive daily instruction in, and opportunity to practise, letter formation both discretely, as part of continuous provision and as part of their phonics teaching (ELS). This is then reinforced by playful letter forming activities using a wide variety of media and tools, such as in sand, in the air, chalk on the ground, paint brushes, as well as with pencils.

Detailed information supporting the teaching of handwriting in EYFS is available at:

<https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/foundation-stagehandwriting.html>

covering:

- the best seating position;
- development of pencil grip;
- paper position for left and right-hand writers;

The National Curriculum for English places emphasis on the acquisition of letter shape, space and size before joins are taught and delivers clear messages that some letters are best left un-joined. The requirements for each year group are as follows:

Year 1 (ages 5-6)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin 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' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.

Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

Year 2 (ages 6-7)

Statutory guidance

In writing, pupils should be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.

Year 2 Notes and guidance: non-statutory

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently.

They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can securely form letters with the correct orientation.

Years 3-4 (ages 7-9)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be joining handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Years 5 & 6 (ages 9-11)

Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:



























- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form

Letter formation.

In school we follow the ELS phonics scheme and teach the phonemes within this with an accompanying rhyme. Then children will be taught to recognise these sounds and then to form their letters using these rhymes:

	Swerve around the snake		Around the ostrich's body		Down the long ladder
	Around the head, down the body		Curl around the camel's back		Swoop down the tentacles and dot the head
	Down her body and cross her shoulders		Down the body, up the arm, down the leg		Down the tongue, up the tongue
	Down his body, around his face		Around the head and down the trunk		Hop to the top, land and hop, land and hop
	Down her body, spot her idea		Under the umbrella and down to the tip		Criss-cross the kiss
	Down the bird and over the nest		Down her body, up over the arm		Under the hull and down to the anchor
	Meerkat, mound, mound		From his head to his feet, up and over his back		Zig and zag
	Over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet		Down the person and around the wheel		Around the feather and down the pen
	Start at his ear, around the face and down the beard		Over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw		

These rhymes will continue to be used in Years 1 & 2 for phonics teaching and also for any phonics intervention work. They show the correct way for the letters to be formed.

Teaching of handwriting

During handwriting sessions, letters should be taught in the following sets. These sets are based on handwriting families where the letters are formed in the same way:

Set 1

c a o d g q s f e

Set 2

i l t u j y

Set 3

r n m h k b p

Set 4

v w x z

Children must be taught the individual letters first so that they see them as individual units before learning to join them. These letters can be worked through progressively during handwriting sessions. As children progress, they will be taught to start joining letters, apart from the break letters which are: **b g j p q x y z s**

The move towards joining should start in **Term 6 of Year 2**, for those children who are secure with their printed letter formation.

Joins between letters increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility.

This helps with spelling, as research suggests that seeing words as a whole, rather than a series of isolated letters, helps children to memorise and spell words correctly.

Joining Groups

The joining groups divide the letters into groups according to how they will join to other letters: The groups are as follows:

Group 1	a c d e h i k l m n s t u	13 letters with an exit flick plus the letter 's'
Group 2	a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y	19 letters which start at the top of the x-height
Group 3	b f h k l t	6 letters which start at the top of the ascender
Group 4	f o r v w	5 letters which finish at the top of the x - height
Break letters	b g j p q x y z	8 letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.

The first join

The join from any member of joining group 1 to any member of joining group 2 is made with exactly the same movement as a diagonal join from one letter to the start of the next ie

in

Teaching the first handwriting join is linked to the letter sets/families:

- When the first diagonal join is introduced, from the bottom of a small letter to the top of the next, we teach

the diagonal join to Set 1 letters first, e.g. *ed, eg, ac, as*

- This is followed by the diagonal join to Set 2 letters e.g. *iu, ig, iy*

- Then diagonal joins to Set 3 letters e.g. *ar, an, am, ap*

- Finally the diagonal join to Set 4 letters e.g. *aw, ew, ex, ux*

The second join

The join from any member of joining group 1 to any member of joining group 3 is the same as the first join except that the join meets the ascender halfway up the letter and then continues to the top of the ascender ie

il

Teaching the second handwriting join can be linked back to letter families too:

- The second join, a diagonal join from the bottom of a small letter to the top of an ascender, is taught using

Set 1 letters first, then Set 2, 3 and 4.

- For example to Set 1 letters *if, ef, uf* to Set 2 letters *il, it* to set 3 letters *ck, ch*

The third join

The join from any member of joining group 4 to any member of joining group 2 is a horizontal curve because the join is from the x-height of one letter to the x-height of the next: *og*

Teaching the third join, the horizontal join from the top of one letter, across and to the top of the next, is also

taught using letter families:

- The third join to Set 1 letters e.g. *wa, wo, fo* to Set 3 letters *on, om*
to Set 4 letters *ow*

The fourth join

The join from any member of joining group 4 to any member of joining group 3 is the same as the first join except that it goes from the x-height of one letter to the top of the ascender of the next.

ob

The fourth join is the join from the top of a small letter to the top of an ascender.

- To Set 1 letters e.g. *of, ff* to set 2 e.g. *wl, rl* to Set 3 e.g. *ob, oh, ok*

Teaching handwriting in the classroom non negotiables

- In the early stages the correct movements are more important than the appearance of the writing. Children should be discouraged from forming writing with incorrect movements, even if they manage to achieve results that appear satisfactory. However, in later stages a more individual style based around the principals which have been previously taught is encouraged.
- As joined handwriting is a movement skill, it is essential for teachers to provide demonstrations. There should be **three 10-15 minute sessions of handwriting taught each week** wherein the teacher actively demonstrates careful modelling. This should be combined with dictation to help increase the automaticity of pupil handwriting. These sessions are to be timetabled as handwriting. (Dictation could include the focus common exception words or spelling rule for that week.) These sessions should give children time to practice transcription in isolation to avoid an overload on working memory.
- Adults are to observe individuals as much as possible while they practise. This enables the adult to recognise and correct bad habits as they arise.
 - Children are to be actively encouraged to use the pencil grip and seating position desk prompts which should be out on their tables when they are writing (including across the wider curriculum.)
- Adults are to talk the children through the process, using appropriate language. There should be careful modelling of the correct letter formation and any mistakes need to be addressed explicitly either 1:1 or as a whole class using the visualiser or smartboard.
- Adults are to encourage children to verbalise what they are doing from time to time. This gives a window into the thought processes they are using as they write.
- Most children will need extra practice with making the joins. Opportunities for this can be combined with spelling and dictation.

Books

Handwriting work should be done on lined paper where, the lines are the same size that you would use for the children's wider English writing. These sheets of paper can then be kept in the children's individual spelling folders. In Year 1 where children do not have spellings, the children will have an individual named folder in which their handwriting paper can be kept.

Capital Letters

Capital letters stand alone and are not joined to the next letter. Children must practice starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter and not joining the subsequent letter. This should be modelled by the teacher during English, phonics and wider curriculum sessions.

Pen licenses

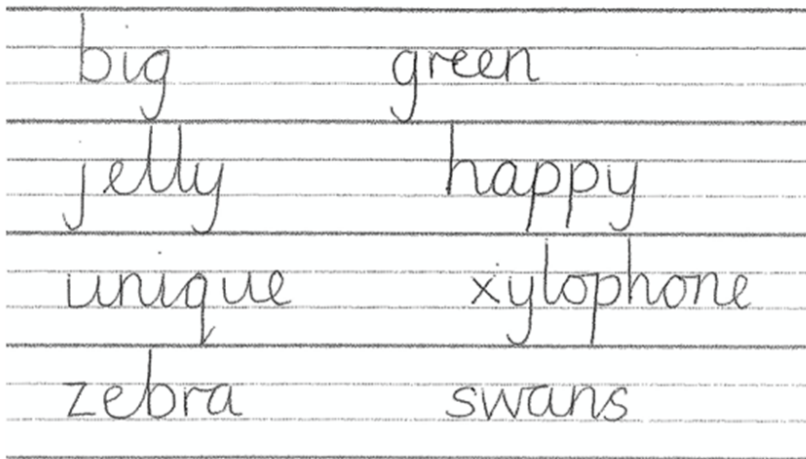
Pen licenses are awarded by the Principal from Year 3 upwards, to children who are consistently showing correct letter formation, letters of a consistent size and finger spaces. These children are then able to use a pen supplied by school. Careful observation should be given to any children who are appearing to fall behind their peers in achieving this so that any necessary support can be given.

Left-Handed Children

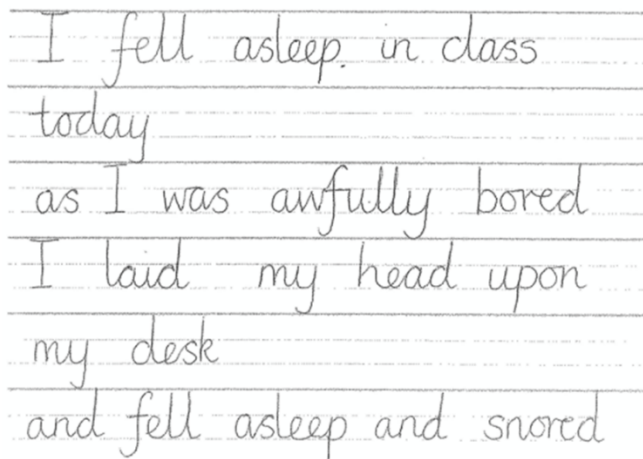
Further advice to support left-handers:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVJLS-xskRo>
- <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformationsheets/handwriting-advice-for-left-handers/>
- <http://handedness.org/action/leftwrite.html>
- <https://www.lwtears.com/blog/left-handed-handwriting-tips-guide>

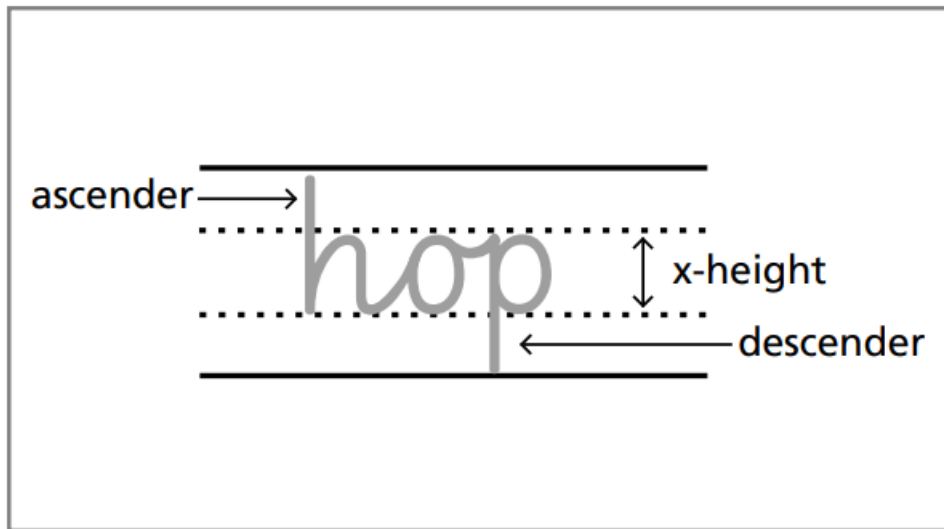
Examples of the break letters are:



Examples of joining:



Guidance for positioning:



Children with SEND

If a child is showing difficulty with fine motor control, then there are specially made boxes of Clever Fingers resources which can be used as an intervention to support the development of finger strength and motor control.

If a child is displaying a particular weakness with handwriting and explicit teaching of handwriting has not proven successful by the end of Year 3, the Bubble Handwriting intervention can be used.

Bubble Handwriting is a simple scaffold that places a bubble either side of the line to support letter formation. This simple scaffold provides a guide to consistently form cursive letters and ensure each letter is uniform in both height and width. Children are able to leave equal spaces between words and see clearly whether or not there is enough space at the end of each line for the next word they intend to write.

If a teacher feels a child would benefit from the Bubble Handwriting interventions, then they should first discuss this with the SENCO and can seek support with implementation from the SENCO and English Lead.

The bubble handwriting intervention should then be delivered 3 times per week with a child. (This can take place during the timetabled handwriting sessions.)

There is an introductory PowerPoint for anyone who is due to deliver this intervention.

Resources for delivery can then be found on Teacher Share in the following location:

TEACHERSHARE > SEND > Handwriting Interventions > Bubble Writing >

OT referrals

Children with handwriting difficulties may be referred to the occupational therapist for extra advice and guidance. Staff should speak to the SENCO if they believe this would be beneficial.

