

Handwriting in Mary Dean's Primary School

General

The handwriting scheme we use is the Nelson handwriting. Joined up writing will begin in Year 2, or when it is assessed that the children are consistently forming letters correctly. This will be used to reinforce the work completed in Phonics, especially joining digraphs and seeing this as a unit, and practising tricky words to help reinforce the fact that these words need to be remembered as wholes. The emphasis is upon developing a fluent, readable style. When this has been achieved other possibilities will be explored. Children will initially write in pencil, however when they are able to join fluently they will use pen. Upper Key Stage 2 will be using pen for most of the time, with the exception for maths and diagrams.

Handwriting is kept to a high profile throughout the school. This is achieved through regular, valued handwriting sessions. Children are taught handwriting in class and group situations. It is to be stressed that handwriting will be actively demonstrated by the teacher. In addition to modelling and practise through writing in lessons, the children will have short, regular handwriting sessions.

Guidelines for good practice

1. Prior to the beginning of the session the room needs to be organised accordingly. It is suggested that all children face the whiteboard/SMART boards.
2. Correct posture with the child sitting comfortably with feet flat on the floor with body upright.
3. The paper should be positioned to a comfortable angle and moved up as the page is filled.
4. Adequate space is needed so that the children are able to write without their elbows touching.
5. Correct light in order to see without eye-strain.
6. Pencil grip should be firm but relaxed. The children need to be aware that they should not grip so that their hand aches but need to be able to apply some pressure.
7. Handwriting sessions should be short and regular.

Left handed Provision

To ensure that left-handed children are not disadvantaged when writing a range of strategies will be employed. Letter formation and skywriting will also be completed with left hand to provide these children with a model. Left-handed children will sit on the left of right-handed children where possible to ensure that their arms do not clash, and they will also be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written. To avoid smudging their work, left-handed children will be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of their writing implement, and their wrist should be straight. As writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children they should be supported to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter them meeting the aim of developing a fast, fluent and legible handwriting style.



Handwriting letter groups

These are the 4 letter groups (this is not handwriting font):

1. Long Ladders (down and off in another direction) – l, i, j, t, u, y
2. One armed robots (down and retrace upwards) – b, h, k, m, n, p, r
3. Curly Caterpillars (anti-clockwise round)– c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s
4. Zig Zag letters – v, w, x, z

There are four different joins taught in this order:

1. *Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g.*
ai ar un in am ear aw ir hu ti ki du up ag
2. *Horizontal join to letters without ascenders*
ou vi wi op ow ov ri ru ve we re fe fu ob ol wh
rk rt ot of fl ft
3. *Diagonal join to letters with ascenders*
ab ul it ib if ub th ck ch it
4. *Horizontal join to letters with ascenders*
ol wh ot ft fl of rt rk wh ol ob

Progression in handwriting – this is a guide and will be influenced by your class’s ability.

Foundation-Nursery

Children will practise the skills required for handwriting in a variety of contexts, including gross and fine motor movements. The children will practise letter formation/movement by air writing, writing in sand, writing on walls with water and paintbrushes and making letter shapes out of modelling media.

They will also begin to work on the formation of letters they are being taught in phonics.

Foundation-Reception

Children will continue to develop the fine and gross motor skills needed for handwriting as part of the Early Years curriculum. In phonics we teach letter formation using our formation phrases, which make a link between the mnemonic and the letter. As per the Department for Education guidance we do not teach cursive.

We will also take time to teach handwriting outside the phonics lesson. Use in class resources for handwriting and all aspects of the phonics lessons.

In addition to practising letter formation in a range of contexts they will begin to work in group and individual sessions on handwriting. Children will be taught the movement of each of the four letter families. They will visit each letter group as they are taught the corresponding phonics.

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

Year 1

- 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' and to practise these.

Year 2

- 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 not joined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Year 3 and 4

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters
- understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant)

Special Educational Needs

In addition to this progression, provision will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. This will include individual/small group sessions at the appropriate level, use of pencil grips and opportunities to practise using a range of media.