

Merton Bank Primary School



Handwriting and Presentation Policy

Approved by Full Governing Body on _____

To be reviewed on or before _____

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Signed _____ Headteacher

January 2024



Merton Bank Primary School

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

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Handwriting and Presentation Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At Merton Bank Primary School our high expectations and explicit teaching of handwriting supports children in achieving their full potential. Leaders have created this policy to show a logical cross-phase understanding that reflects the complex skills needed to develop children's handwriting and development of presentation. The underpinning ideology behind this policy is to allow children to take pride and ownership in their handwriting and presentation and feeling the mental and emotional benefits that this pride brings intrinsically. Our handwriting expectations are in line DFE and EEF Guidance that states; *'Accurate letter formation is an essential early skill that forms the basis of a fluent handwriting style. There is no quick way to develop these essential skills other than through regular and substantial practice'*.

1.2 At Merton Bank, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to produce work that they are proud of. The guidance outlined in this document focuses on the presentation of written work. However, within Merton Bank Primary School, we believe that presentation goes well beyond the written page. It is an approach which includes the tidiness of our classrooms, shared areas and even ourselves. We express a care and pride in all we do. Presentation of work is an important aspect of learning. The quality of our presentation reflects the skills and the pride taken in our work.

2.0 Handwriting

2.1 Handwriting is a complex skill that requires consistent practice. Handwriting has been shown to not only have cognitive benefits such as improving memory, but also helps children to retain new ideas by creating schemas through tactile experiences. Handwriting practice allows a greater development of fine motor skills throughout the fingers and arms, alongside a greater development in hand-eye coordination when compared to typing.

2.2 Fluid handwriting is an asset to learning that reinforces reading and language processing skills. Writing, rather than typing, allows children to slow their thought process and become more adept etymologically. Handwriting is less restrictive, more personal, and creative than typing, and allows children to leave their unique fingerprint on a piece of work.

2.3 Our handwriting policy reflects the positive influence that Read Write Inc. has in creating a culture of reading and writing in school and follows its handwriting principles across EYFS and KS1. As the children move into KS2 and begin to master joining, the focus should be on producing consistently neat pieces of writing at a reasonable speed.

3.0 Our approach to best practice

Modelling

3.1 At Merton Bank we value the importance of modelling as part of the process in achieving the highest standard of handwriting and presentations. We strive to ensure that all modelled writing is of a high standard. In working towards this, all staff will

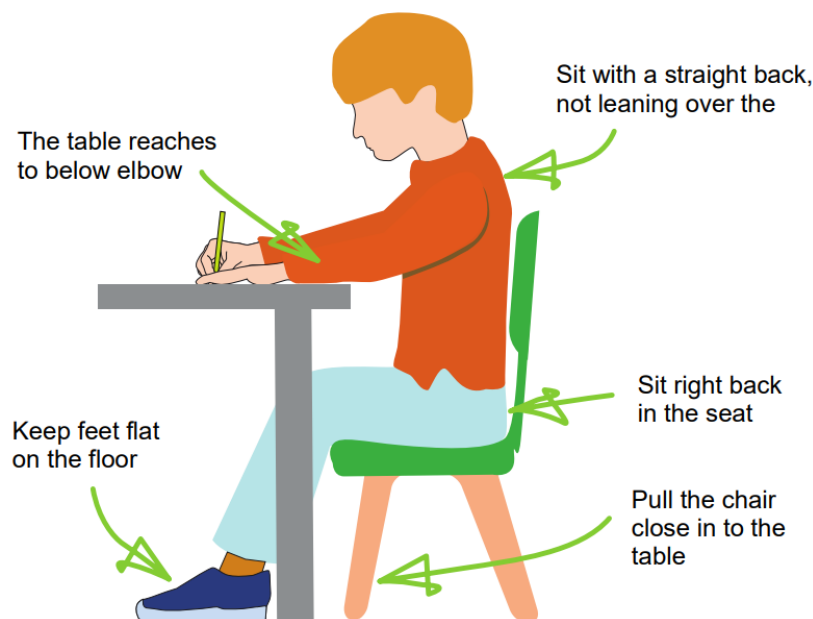
- Use a consistent style of handwriting from Nursery to Year 6, appropriate for the key stage adhering to guidelines in this policy.
- Ensure that all writing is modelled on lines. (Thin black tape can be used on whiteboards to create lines, lines can be created on IWB and the use of a visualiser in classes may also be used).

- Ensure ascenders and descenders are clearly distinguished. In EYFS and KS1, when modelling on teaching boards, red whiteboard pen will be used to show the 'tall letters', other letters will be written in black. In KS2, this visual approach may be used for children who need additional support only. Class teachers will use their professional judgement if this is required.
- When writing in children's books, all staff will use the handwriting style adopted in this policy, to ensure high standards and consistency. Again, adults will write on lines with clearly distinguished ascenders and descenders.

3.2 Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.

Pupils will be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. Our RWInc. programme supports the delivery of correct sitting. All staff will use the 'handwriting pose' signal to model clear expectations.

Sitting position



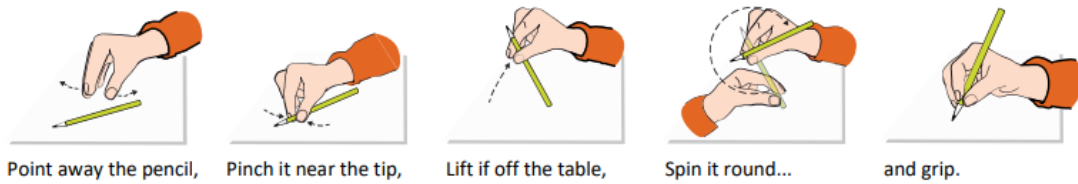
3.3 The Tripod pencil grip

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.

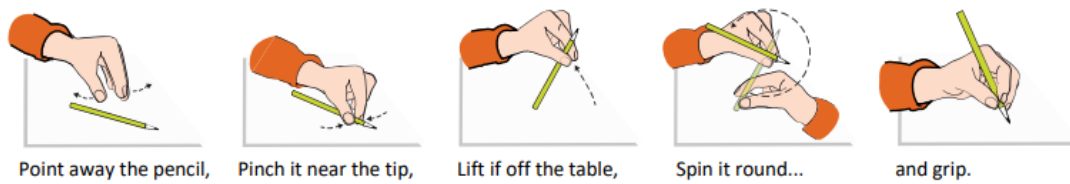
- 1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
- 2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
- 3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

In EFYS, children's grips will be reviewed and assessed regularly as part of their early learning journey. However, we understand this is not always possible and adjustments will always be made to ensure a child is supported on their writing journey. We will audit and review as needed to ensure writing is accessible for all children.

Right-handed pencil grip



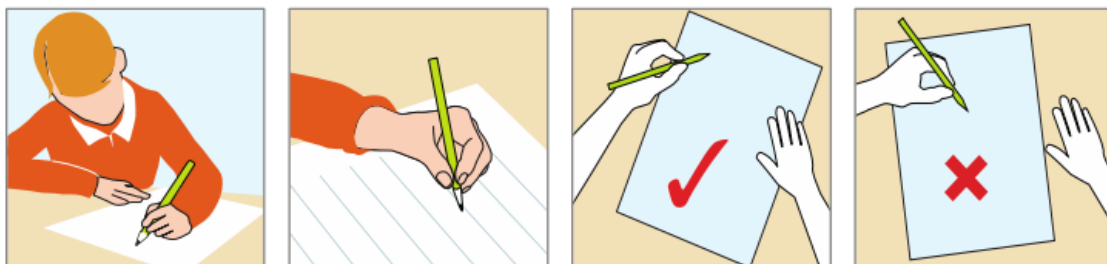
Left-handed pencil grip



3.4 Left-handed Writers

Left-handed children should hold their pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger. The hand should be kept below the writing line the paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20- 30 degrees. Encourage children to use their right hand to steady the paper.

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they follow letter formation (and vice versa). Staff should model to left-handed children on an individual or group basis as needed. It is very important that a right-handed child is not seated on the left-hand side of a left-handed child so they are not completing 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.

3.5 Tools

EYFS will initially be provided with a wide range of chunky pencils, crayons, paintbrushes to support diverse range of gross/fine motor control activities. Grips will also be used as appropriate.

During Key Stage 1, chunky pencils are replaced with conventional pencils when children demonstrate improved pencil control. If needed, children who require additional support will be referred to the SENDCO for further interventions such as the INSYNC programme.

In EYFS and KS1 children will have access to 'how to form letters' prompts on their tables. Staff will encourage children to use these prompts across all lessons. KS2 staff will provide table prompts as needed.

During handwriting lessons, children will use either a HB pencil or blue BIC biro to ensure continuity throughout their books.

4.0 Handwriting in the Early Years

4.1 Nursery

We understand that handwriting is a lifelong process and at Merton Bank we aim to teach the process holistically. Starting in Nursery, our insightful staff understand the needs and abilities of the children who are welcomed into our setting. Staff focus on showing children that writing is a form of communication and that marks have meaning. Staff are consistent in their approach to modelling handwriting throughout the day and provide lots of activities to develop finger strength and hand-eye coordination. Activities are also carefully planned and monitored to help children develop their fine motor skills, core strength and muscle isolation. Sensory activities such as drawing in sand, retelling stories and events through 'Scribble Club', and making distinctive separate marks are all planned for to ensure that children develop their capability and motivation to write.

4.2 Reception

Moving into Reception, our children are actively encouraged to participate in whole-class or small-group talk as preparation for writing. We do this through 'Drawing Club'. When staff feel children are developmentally ready, and have the necessary skills, they are guided towards composing and writing more independently. This involves rehearsing out loud what they are going to write and composing words and sentences orally to form short written narratives. Our robust phonics scheme, Read Write Inc. is used as the main vehicle for developing children's spelling and handwriting and becomes more formalised during children's time in Reception. Staff are rigorous in ensuring that correct letter formation and pencil grip are being used as incorrect habits are hard to change by the time children enter Year 1. Staff use dough disco to support and develop the fine motor skills needed for writing. Our holistic and informed approach ensures that Merton Bank children are not rushed to use cursive writing before they are consistently able to form all letters correctly. By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage all children should be able to recognise and form correctly, all printed uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet from the correct starting point, so they are Year 1 ready.

Please see **Appendix 1** for the Read, Write Inc letter formation phrases.

5.0 Handwriting in Key Stage 1

5.1 As children move through Year 1 and Year 2, we pay close attention to ensuring correct pencil grip and letter formation are consistent. All opportunities, across the curriculum, are given to model and remind children of correct letter formation. Once children are consistent in this approach, children will begin to use '*lead in lines*', following this, they will then learn the 'joins' suggested by Read Write Inc. (appendix 2).

The order of this is as follows:

- Correct formation of all letters (appendix 1) taught in families (appendix 2)
- Lead in lines introduced for all letters (Appendix 3)
- Begin to teach simple joins. (appendix 4)

Handwriting lessons are taught a minimum of twice each week for 15 minutes. Lessons will include:

- continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
 - learning cursive through letter families
 - revisiting numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use the lead in, learning and practice
 - knowing high frequency words
 - developing diagonal and horizontal joins which will support the spelling of Year 1 and 2 Statutory spellings and tricky words.
 - dictation exercises
 - strengthening cursive handwriting, learning and practice
 - KS1 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar exercises
- . Children are reminded of high standards and expectations in every lesson across the curriculum and given opportunities to apply learning. Children will learn letter formation in families, to maximise progress. (appendix 2)

5.2 Children will practice in a separate handwriting book which promotes correct letter formation, especially around ascenders and descenders of letters. Children can practice in this book with either their pen or pencil, depending on their usual writing equipment.

In Key Stage 1 all children should receive a daily handwriting session for 10-15mins. (This may be as part of a RWI session). In Year 1, children who are ready, will begin to use 'lead in lines'. This supports the transition to cursive handwriting. Children will be introduced the 'leading lines' approach, beginning each letter from the line and going up individually before then moving on to joining them together to form words. (appendix 4)

Handwriting can also be linked to phonic development with the introduction of new sounds written in a cursive style during RWI lessons. Our aim is that by the end of year one children will be forming all letters correctly and using some appropriate joins. In Year 2 adults will model cursive writing from the beginning of the year. The children will be encouraged to continue the development of basic joins which they should transfer into all their independent writing. They will also continue to link their handwriting to their phonic development as they learn to write new sounds using a cursive writing style.

6.0 Handwriting in Key Stage 2

6.1 Children will develop further stamina for joined writing by practising words and sentences using all letters and joins. There will be an emphasis on consistency in size, proportion and spacing, and children will be expected to develop speed, fluency, and legibility.

6.2 Handwriting will be explicitly taught in KS2 twice weekly, teachers and teaching assistants should provide feedback at source to support good progress over time.

In Lower Key Stage 2 all children should receive an explicit handwriting session at least twice a week. In Upper Key Stage 2, staff will deliver handwriting sessions as needed. Lessons may include:

- exercises linked to spelling, grammar and punctuation for year group expectations
- reinforcement and practice of cursive handwriting joins
- dictation exercises promoting quick note-taking and speedy handwriting writing skills
- redrafting of writing.

In Year 3 children will continue to develop their use of cursive handwriting building upon the skills they have developed in Key stage 1. In Years 4, 5 and 6 children will be expected to use cursive handwriting in all areas of the curriculum. Those children whose writing is neat and legible may be encouraged to use handwriting pens. Children will receive 'feedback at source', to encourage good presentation skills across the curriculum. If any child is not on track to reach these expectations, they will receive additional support through small group interventions or possible targeted programmes such as INSYNC.

7.0 Inclusion

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, will be given additional support. Additional resources may also be used (i.e. a writing slant, grips, further interventions).

8.0 Standards and Impact

8.1 At Merton Bank, we aim for all children's handwriting to be legible and that letters are formed correctly. We understand that this is a complex process and that children develop their handwriting style at their own pace. We aim to ensure that by the time our children leave in Year 6, their handwriting is of the highest possible standard.

8.2 Pen Licences - When handwriting meets a high standard, with letters correctly formed and presented, and with a cursive style, children may be given a pen licence. This means children can now write in pen. Assessments will determine when a child should be awarded a pen licence. This will begin in Key Stage 2, from Year 3. Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils who have issues with fine motor skills. We will track their progress and recognise personal effort.

8.3 During book scrutiny, the English leader will focus on looking for correct letter formation, correct joins, appropriate size of letters, correctly aligned writing and appropriate spacing between letters, words, and lines. High standards of handwriting should be evident across all subjects, which will be monitored by all subject leaders.

8.4 Our aim is that children are able to write with ease, speed and legibility. By year 6, children will use cursive handwriting using flowing movements and patterns. This handwriting should be demonstrated in all writing across the curriculum. Writing should be fluid in style to allow children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves.

9.0 Presentation

9.1 At Merton Bank, we aim for all our children to feel a sense of pride when producing work. Children should be proud of all their work and receive genuine, enthusiastic responses that help to raise their aspirations. By taking pride in their work, children at Merton Bank feel the mental and emotional benefits that it brings and as a result, boosts their mood and positive behaviour. Children become more confident and capable by taking pride in their work and are more likely to praise their peer's work with genuine comments. Children cultivate their intrinsic approval through taking pride in their work and begin to develop motivation towards completing future work they undertake.

9.2 The following guidelines should be adhered to throughout school. Exceptions and adaptations to the guidelines should be made by the class teacher for individual children. These will be supported by the SLT.

10.0 Presentation expectations

- How work is presented will depend on the age of the children, the learning purpose, and the audience.
- Children will be given clear guidance for each piece of work so that high expectations are known.
- Children will have the appropriate materials necessary for producing the highest standard of work.
- Children will be expected to look after their work and keep books clean.

11.0 Inclusion

Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made when planning and teaching to promote equality of opportunity, enabling all children to access the work. Additional support such as different books, lines, pencil grips, seating, visual aids, photographs, coloured pages, or scaffolding aids will be made available. Our staff are understanding of children's needs and will use this to consider the best support for each child to succeed.

12.0 Layout

- A new piece of work to begin on a new page each day – *“New day, new start, new page.”*
- All work should be dated and have the challenge statement.
- Date and challenge should be underlined.
- The full date, including the year and learning challenge should begin by the margin or the left side of the page. The top line of the book should not be used due to the larger space.
- The mathematics date should be written in numerals, followed by Roman numerals.
- Children must be encouraged to set out their work correctly (date, underline, miss a line, title/challenge, underline, miss a line, start) DUMTUMS.
- EYFS and Year 1 Autumn Term to stick in dates and challenges, however if children are ready prior to this in Year 1 then children should begin to write out independently, to support high expectations.
- Years 2 – 6, underline the date and challenge using pencil/pen and a ruler. Children will be shown how to hold the ruler. Those who require additional support will receive it.
- Where work is to be numbered, staff should firstly model how to correctly use the margin before allowing children to do so.

Maths

- In maths, one digit per square should be adhered to.
- Pencil should always be used.
- Use a ruler for all straight lines accurately drawn with a pencil.

Additional non-negotiables

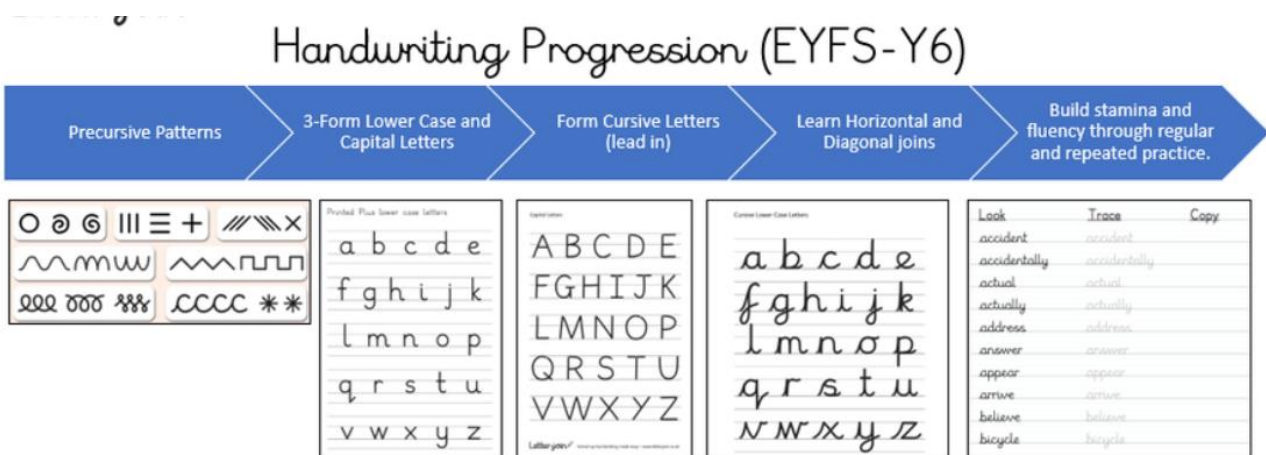
- Crossing out and use of erasers should be discouraged. A single horizontal line should be drawn through a mistake, using a ruler. Children must understand that mistakes happen and are a key part of the editing process.
- Where scaffolds are required, they should be neatly trimmed and stuck on the margin line. Scaffolds should not be visible when the book is closed.
- Avoid the over-use of worksheets in books.
- Avoid sticking in folded sheets where possible.
- Avoid colouring and shading unless it is appropriate to the task.

Front cover of books

- Child's first name and initialled surname
- Year group
- Subject area

Appendix 1

Overall Progression Outline



Handwriting stage 1a: letter formation

Rhymes for letter formation - taken from Read Write Inc.

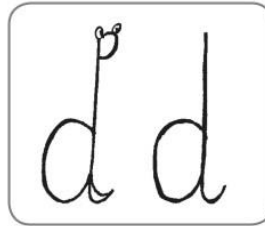
<p>a</p>  <p>Around the apple and down the leaf.</p>	<p>b</p>  <p>Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.</p>	<p>c</p>  <p>Curl around the caterpillar.</p>	<p>d</p>  <p>Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.</p>	<p>e</p>  <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.</p>	<p>f</p>  <p>Down the stem and draw the leaves.</p>
<p>g</p>  <p>Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.</p>	<p>h</p>  <p>Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.</p>	<p>i</p>  <p>Down the body and dot for the head.</p>	<p>j</p>  <p>Down his body, curl, dot for his head.</p>	<p>k</p>  <p>Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.</p>	<p>l</p>  <p>Down the long leg.</p>
<p>m</p>  <p>Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.</p>	<p>n</p>  <p>Down Nobby and over his net.</p>	<p>o</p>  <p>All around the orange.</p>	<p>p</p>  <p>Down the pirates plait and around his face.</p>	<p>qu</p>  <p>Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.</p>	<p>r</p>  <p>Down the robots back and curl over his arm.</p>
<p>s</p>  <p>Slither down the snake.</p>	<p>t</p>  <p>Down the tower, across the tower.</p>	<p>u</p>  <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.</p>	<p>v</p>  <p>Down a wing, up a wing.</p>	<p>w</p>  <p>Down, up, down, up.</p>	<p>x</p>  <p>Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.</p>
<p>y</p>  <p>Down a horn, up a horn and under head.</p>	<p>z</p>  <p>Zig-zag-zig.</p>				

- 'Around letters' – c a o d g q



Checklist: caterpillar

- ✓ start at the caterpillar's head
- ✓ curl around the body



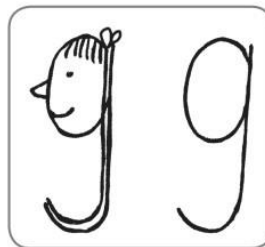
Checklist: dinosaur

- ✓ draw a big round bottom
- ✓ up the tall neck
- ✓ down the straight line to the feet
- ✓ draw a curl for the feet



Checklist: apple

- ✓ start at the stalk
- ✓ draw a nice round apple
- ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down
- ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom



Checklist: girl

- ✓ start at her hair bobble on top of her head
- ✓ draw a nice round face
- ✓ go back up to her bobble
- ✓ down her very straight hair
- ✓ draw a round curl to finish



Checklist: orange

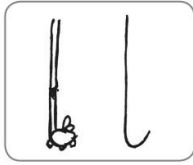
- ✓ start at the stalk
- ✓ draw a nice round orange



Checklist: queen

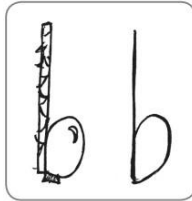
- ✓ start at her hair bobble on top of her head
- ✓ draw a nice round face
- ✓ go back up to her bobble
- ✓ down her very straight hair
- ✓ add a sharp flick to finish

- 'Down letters' – l t b p k h i j m n r u y



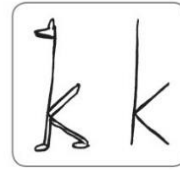
Checklist: Liam's leg

- ✓ start at the top of his leg
- ✓ go down his long leg
- ✓ add a curl for the shoe to kick the ball



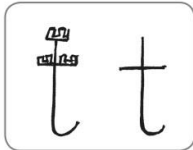
Checklist: boot

- ✓ start at the top of the boot
- ✓ draw a straight line down the boot
- ✓ go round over the toe
- ✓ go back to the heel



Checklist: kangaroo

- ✓ start at the kangaroo's head
- ✓ draw down the long straight body – then lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ draw a straight tail to the body – two-thirds of the way down
- ✓ draw a straight back leg from the body



Checklist: tower

- ✓ start at the top of the tower
- ✓ draw a straight line down the tower
- ✓ add a curl at the bottom – then lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ draw a straight line across the tower



Checklist: Polly Pirate

- ✓ start at the top of her plait
- ✓ draw down her long straight plait
- ✓ go round over her face
- ✓ finish under her chin



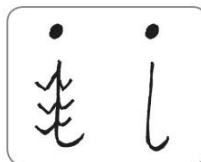
Checklist: horse

- ✓ start at the horse's head
- ✓ draw down her long straight neck
- ✓ continue down to her feet
- ✓ go round her back
- ✓ draw a straight back leg
- ✓ add a little curl of dust as the horse runs away



Checklist: Maisie and the mountains

- ✓ start at Maisie's head
- ✓ draw a straight body for Maisie
- ✓ go over the mountains – from Maisie's waist
- ✓ check the mountains are the same height as Maisie
- ✓ add a small curl for the grass



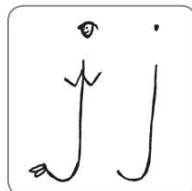
Checklist: insect

- ✓ start at the top of the insect's neck
- ✓ draw down the short straight body
- ✓ draw a curl for a small round tail
- ✓ add a little dot for the head



Checklist: Nobby and his net

- ✓ start at Nobby's head
- ✓ go straight down Nobby
- ✓ go over the net – from Nobby's waist
- ✓ check the net is the same height as Nobby
- ✓ add a small curl for the grass



Checklist: jack-in-a-box

- ✓ start at the top of the jack-in-a-box's neck
- ✓ draw down the long straight body
- ✓ draw a smooth curl for the legs
- ✓ add a dot for the head



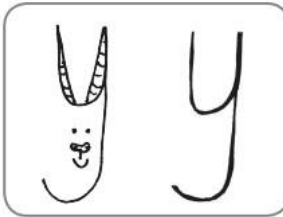
Checklist: robot

- ✓ start at the robot's head
- ✓ go straight down its body
- ✓ go over the robot's arm – from its waist



Checklist: umbrella

- ✓ start at the top of the handle
- ✓ draw down the straight line for the handle
- ✓ go round underneath the umbrella and back up the other side
- ✓ go down the umbrella
- ✓ add a little curl for the puddle



Checklist: yak

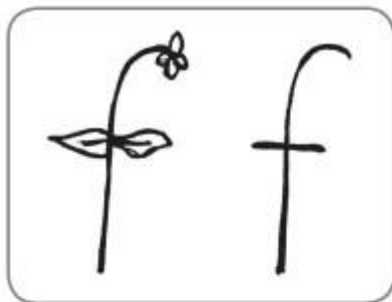
- ✓ start at the top of the first horn
- ✓ draw down the straight line for the first horn
- ✓ go round underneath the horns
- ✓ draw a straight line up for the second horn
- ✓ go down and curl under its head

- 'Curly letters' – e f s



Checklist: egg

- ✓ draw up around the shell that needs to be cut off the boiled egg
- ✓ go round underneath the egg



Checklist: flower

- ✓ start at the top of the flower
- ✓ draw around and down the flower stem – then lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ draw a straight line across the leaves



Checklist: snake

- ✓ start at the snake's head
- ✓ curl one way
- ✓ curl the other

- 'Zig-zag letters' – v w z x



Checklist: vulture

- ✓ draw two straight lines for the wings – down, up



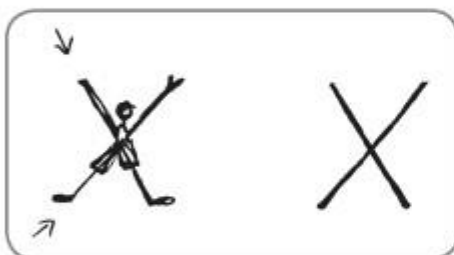
Checklist: worm

- ✓ draw four straight lines, all the same length – down, up, down, up



Checklist: zigzag

- ✓ draw three straight lines – across, diagonally back, across

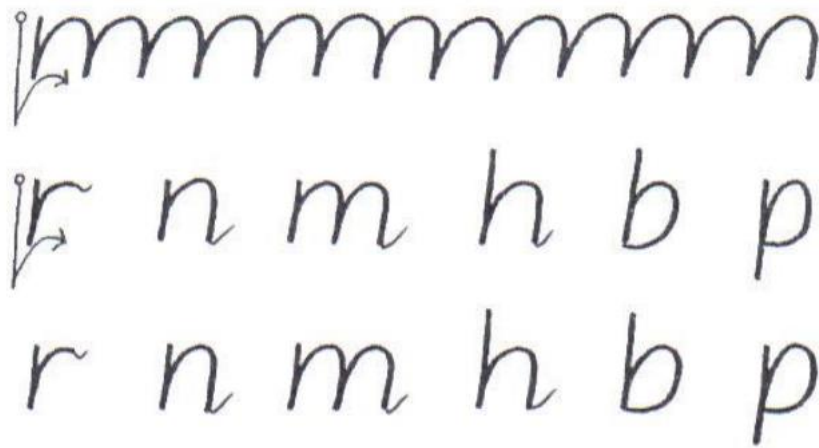


Checklist: exercise

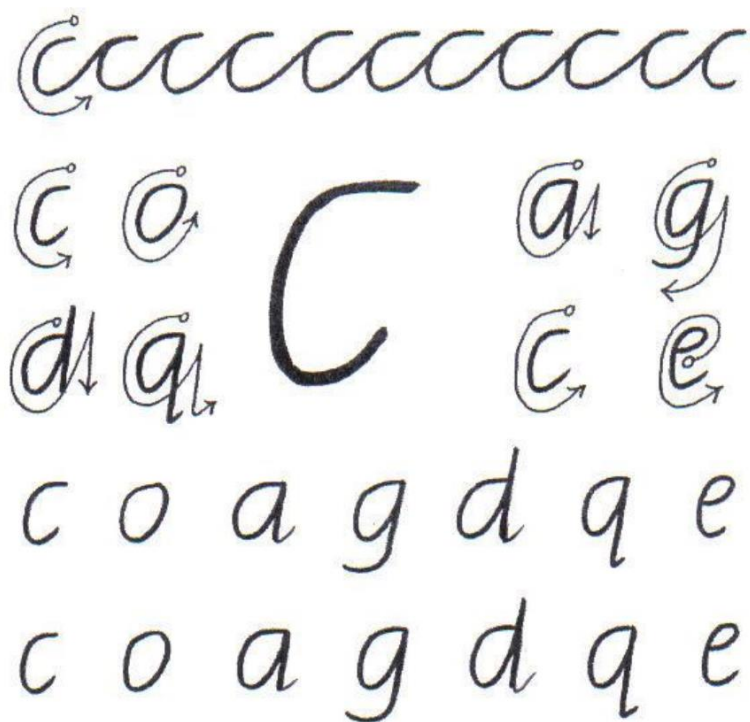
- ✓ start at the top left
- ✓ draw one straight line diagonally down – lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ start at the bottom left
- ✓ go diagonally up

Appendix 2 – Families of letters

This family of letters is formed from the first pattern. For maximum progress practise letters the same size and shape as the line of the pattern.



This family of letters is formed from the first pattern. For maximum progress practise letters the same size and shape as the line of the pattern



This family of letters is formed from the first pattern. For maximum progress practise letters the same size and shape as the line of the pattern.



i u y l t u

i u y l t u

i u y l t u

This family of letters is formed from the first pattern. For maximum progress practise letters the same size and shape as the line of the pattern



v w x v w x

v w x v w x

v w x v w x




Appendix 3 – lead in lines

All of the letter families will be taught starting on the line. We call this 'lead in lines'. Staff will model the phrase 'from the line, to where we start' to encourage correct starting positions.

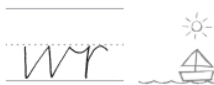




Appendix 4

The arm join has three variations:

- **a. arm to boat** 
- **b. arm to sun** 
- **c. arm to sister.** 

The washing line join has three variations:

- **d. washing line to boat** 
- **e. washing line to sun** 
- **f. washing line to sister.** 

Appendix 5

Resources to support the implementation of this policy

