

Charlestown Community Primary School



Handwriting Policy

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Aim:

Our overall aim is for children to develop legible, fluent and efficient handwriting.

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates for that reason, it is important to remember that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills and how to remedy errors. It is not enough to encourage children to improve their handwriting; the different elements need to be taught and practised. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are difficult to correct.

At Charlestown Community Primary School, cursive (joined up) handwriting is taught with sequential and progressive approach.

Children are introduced to this style from Early Years as it is considered to be the most natural development of children's earliest attempts at writing.

Teachers and teaching assistants are expected to model the handwriting style.

Handwriting is a taught skill and it is important that teachers put a high value on teaching and sustaining good handwriting. We believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by good quality presentation.

Our aim through this policy is to teach children the correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly and by the end of Key Stage 2 to begin to develop a distinctive style.

Each aim is considered equally important:

- To teach children to write with a flowing hand which is legible, swift and pleasant to look at.
- To enable children to develop their own style of handwriting as they progress through Key Stage 2.
- To support the development of correct spelling and to aid in the elimination of letter reversals by learning of word patterns and the correct joining of letters.
- To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals.
- To assist children in taking pride with the presentation of their work.
- To teach correct letter formation.

- To appreciate handwriting as an art form.
- To display excellent examples of handwriting in every classroom and around school.

Teaching and Organisation:

Handwriting should be planned for each week and should take place a minimum of two 15 minute sessions each week. Those children who need to develop their writing more should be provided with additional opportunities to do so.

It should be used wherever possible to link to spelling patterns.

During a handwriting lesson teachers should ensure that children sit, position their paper / book and hold their pen / pencil correctly using their other hand to hold their work firmly.

It is important that children in the Early years and Key Stage 1 are observed closely when writing to ensure that letter formation is correct.

In addition to specific handwriting sessions children are expected to apply their learning in all their books and to show care for the presentation of their work. Opportunities for children to produce presentation work should also be planned, for example for display.

It is important for teachers and other adults to set a good example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, interactive white board or when marking children's books. Teachers should always strive to model the schools preferred handwriting scheme.

Children are expected to show care for their work books, present their work with care, date work and underline where necessary and not make any marks on the covers.

Teachers will move children on in their handwriting when they feel the children are ready to do so. Those children who are forming letters clearly with the correct flicks will be then taught how to join the letters.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

During their Nursery and Reception years the children will be given a wide range of opportunities to develop an understanding that writing conveys meaning through books, storytelling, signs labels etc. Children will be encouraged to mark make as much as possible in all areas of learning.

Children will experience a wide range of handwriting related skills e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher modeled writing, word building using magnetic or wooden letters and pattern making.

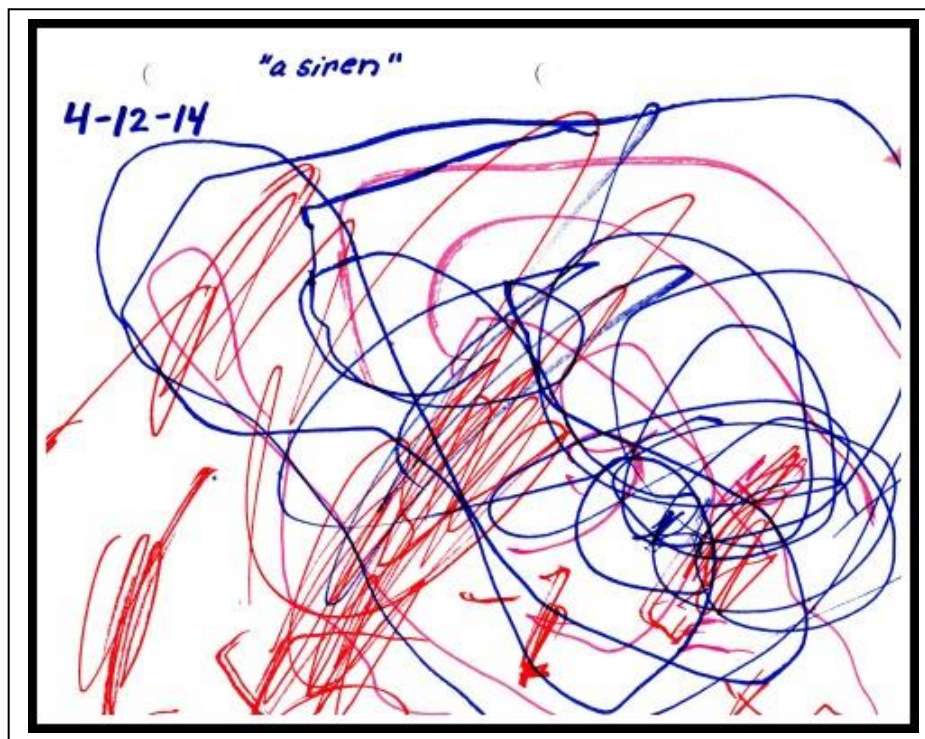
For those children that ready pencils can be used with unlined or lined paper. Pencil grips are available for those children who need support to hold the pencil correctly.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the children are encouraged to develop their gross motor skills before their fine motor skills. This helps the children to develop appropriate muscles which will help when they start mark making. Mark making should take place both indoor and outdoor and should be carried out on large scale to develop gross motor skills and small scale to develop fine motor skills such as pincher grip.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children will take part in Write Dance activities which will help to develop their gross motor skills which in turn will help to develop writing skills. (See Appendix A for ideas to develop gross motor and fine motor skills.)

Early Mark making: Preliterate mark making:

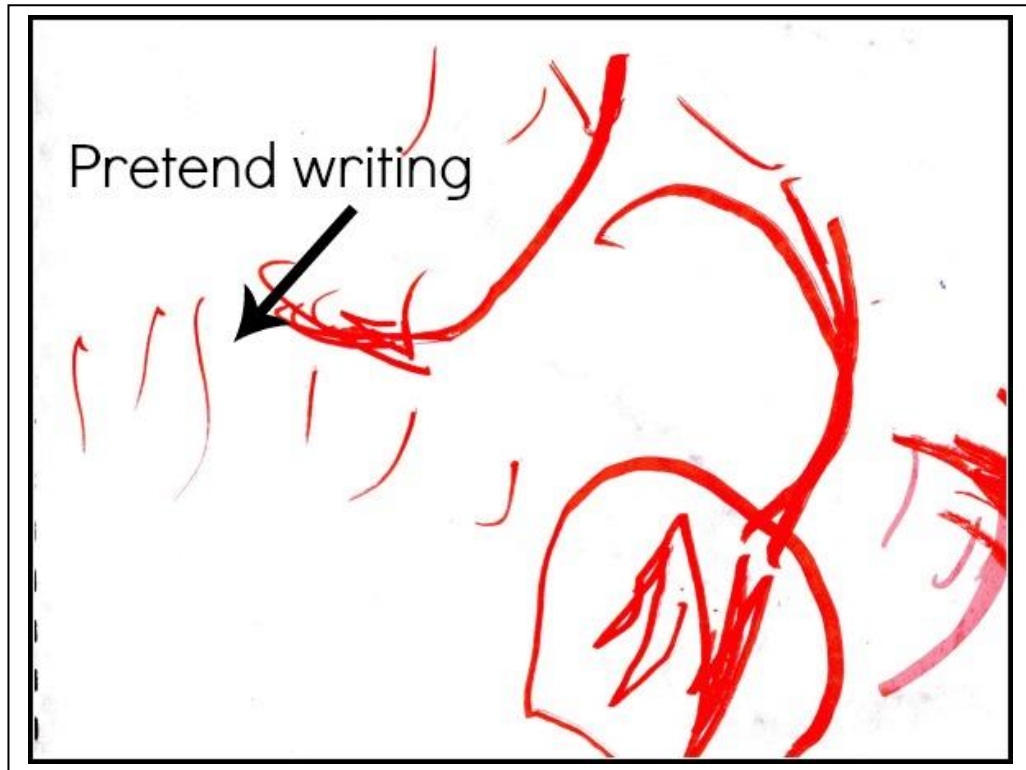
When children first start mark making they make marks because they realise that they can. It often forms part of their appreciation of cause and effect. "I can hold this chalk in my hand and when it touches another surface then it leaves a mark." The very early marks a child makes don't usually carry meaning. Early mark making tends to look like this:



Mark making for meaning:

Once the children's muscle groups, balance and sense of proprioception and awareness of the world around them becomes more developed, their mark making moves on to the next stage where the shapes in their mark making become more varied and diverse and we begin to see very simplistic drawings emerge.

Mark making for meaning tends to look like this:

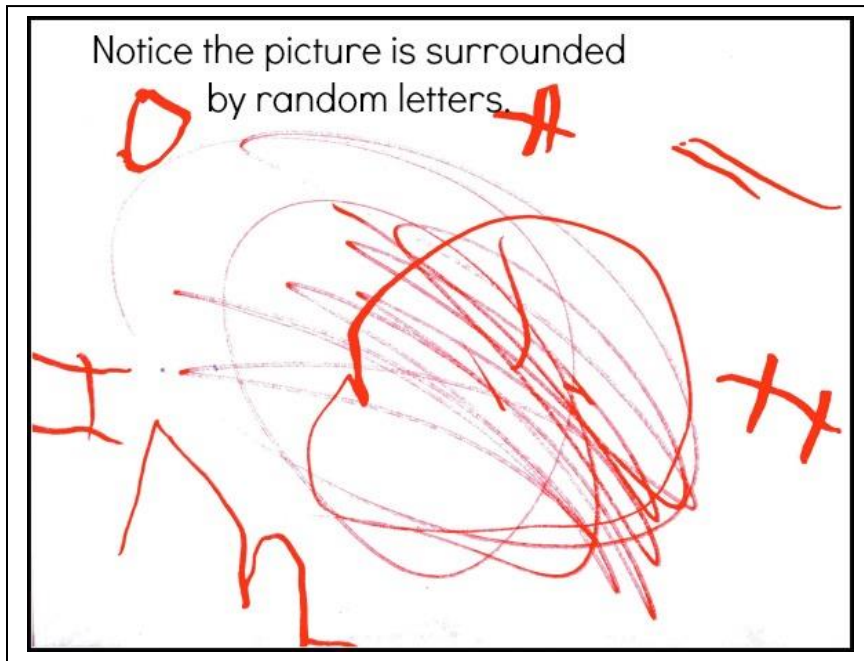


Directional Mark Making:

The more familiar children are with print from an early age, the more sense they can make of the complex issue of marks carrying meanings. Children who are very familiar with print and being read to often display this next stage of development. Children who are less familiar with print often find this stage difficult or miss it out altogether.

At this stage a child's marks may bear no resemblance to recognisable letter shapes, some children may make marks in the direction that print has been read to them or written in front of them. They may arrange marks in horizontal lines that go vertically down whatever they are mark making on.

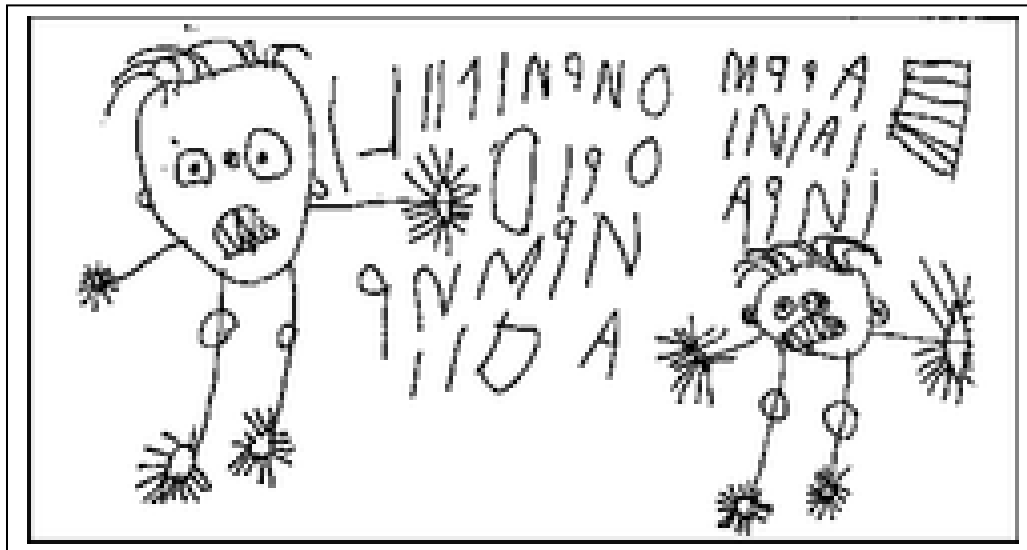
Directional mark making may look like this:



Symbolic Mark Making Stage:

At this stage children may try to produce some symbols that look like the ones they see in print around them.

It may look like this:

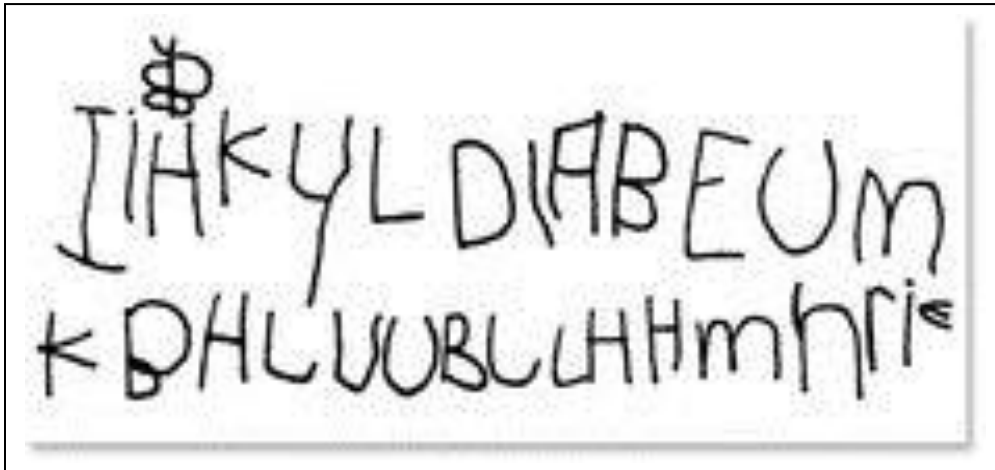


At this stage they may not be linking letters to sounds but may be attempting to record what they see. Correct orientation and formation may not be in place at this stage. Children will only be restricted by their own stage of physical development both in pivot and grip. This is the best time to teach / coach children on shape formation in preparation for writing letters.

At this stage the children's mark making is symbolic and opportunities need to be provided for the children to experiment with their symbolic script in a wider environment so teachers and other adults need to ensure that they provide familiar and recognisable frames for them to write in such as letters, posters, postcards, lists, menus, and books etc.

Emergent Writers:

Emergent writers often produce strings of letters. An example of this is below:



At this stage the children may not understand the sounds of all the letters, but they may understand some, often the ones related to their own name. The others they will record because they know that they are print and carry meaning but not what that meaning may be.

Some children may be able to write their name. They may recognise it as their name and that it is writing but they may not know any of the individual sounds that are attached to letter shapes, if they show an awareness of print they are **copy writers** as opposed to emergent writers. **This is a crucial stage of handwriting development for children and should involve targeted teaching and intervention as well as lots of opportunities to practise.**

Some children may go through a phase in their writing development where they copy from print in the environment. This is because they know it is 'writing' and they want to be

'writers'. They may copy a word from a label next to an object i.e. window but they may not be able to recognise this word in isolation from the object as they may not be able to recognise the individual letters and sounds. This means that they are an **Environmental Writer**.

Children need to develop their phonic knowledge to be able to record a number of initial sounds. Children may present a string of letters that may appear to make no sense but the child may have in fact done is write a story in their head and record the first sounds of each word.

As a child's knowledge of phonics builds and they develop their ability to hear sounds within words they may demonstrate in their attempts at writing not just initial sounds but clusters of letters that record the initial and end sound. It is much harder for children to hear media sounds so they may be omitted initially. This is when the robust teaching of phonics will help the children with their writing.

By the time the children are starting to record beginning, middle and end sounds they are now on their way to becoming established writers. The next steps involve lots of practise and engagement in writing. It involves the teacher ensuring that children are provided with exciting and meaningful writing opportunities.

Year 1:

Children will work on handwriting skills on a daily basis in a variety of ways i.e. writing books, multi-sensory approaches for those that still need this approach, through phonic work and writing in other areas of the curriculum. They should have a minimum of two handwriting sessions per week. They will be working on the school's preferred formation of letters, cursive style, all start at the bottom, some children may be ready to use joins. Handwriting will be taught linked to spelling and phonics and will be taught in 'families' of letters i.e. those that are formed in the same way and are similar in spelling; i.e. *cat / mat*

The National Curriculum expectation for the end of year 1 is:

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.***

Year 2:

Children will be encouraged to use joined-up handwriting in their daily work if they are ready to do so. Handwriting practise will take place weekly a minimum of two sessions and the correction of mistakes will be dealt with on an individual basis. Children will be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Handwriting will continue to be linked to spelling and phonics. The children will continue to write in pencil.

The National Curriculum expectation for the end of Year 2 is:

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 unjoined***
- ***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

When the children are in Year three the class teachers will decide when it is appropriate , according to the stage of development of each child's handwriting , make a decision about moving the child from pencil to pen. Children must use a blue pen provided by the school. They should not use pens from home or gel pens. When a child is ready to move onto using pen they will be presented with a 'Pen Licence' and a certificate will be sent home to inform parents / carers. Handwriting must take place weekly and be taught for a minimum of two sessions. Those children who are still experiencing difficulties with their writing ay receive additional support and guidance from the class teacher. Children will continue to encouraged to take pride in their presentation and their work.

When a child is given pen to write in they will still be required to use pencils for some learning activities such as mathematics, drawing and some science work when drawing diagrams / tables.

This should then be continued in Year 4.

The National Curriculum Expectations for Year 3 and Year 4:

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 downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of***

writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

In Year 5 and 6 it is expected that the children's handwriting should already be developed. For those children still experiencing difficulties then additional support from the teacher will need to be put in place. They may need specifically targeted extra practise.

Across the whole of Key Stage 2 the children should only write in blue pen and purple pen when completing 'fix-its'.

Handwriting should take place weekly with a minimum of two sessions per week from year 1 to year 4 and directed sessions for those children in year 5 and 6 who still need support with handwriting.

After each handwriting lesson the children's work should be marked and any misconceptions about letter formation should be corrected through good modeling by the teacher.

Presentation in books:

Teachers must ensure that children always have high expectations and that all work is presented neatly. They should ensure that the children are familiar with and use DUMLUMS (Date / Underline / Miss a line / Learning outcome / Underline / Miss a line / Start).

Any mistakes should be neatly crossed out using one line.

The National Curriculum expectations for Year 5 and Year 6 are:

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.***

Expectations and Progression:

Across the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Children will have:

- Opportunities to watch adults writing and for children to attempt writing for themselves
- Attempt writing for various purposes using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions

- Write their own name 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 recognizable letters and numbers, most of which are correctly formed

By the end of Foundation Stage (Reception):

By the end of the 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
- Pattern-making and letter / number formation in various media

Year 1:

Term 1:

- Develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- To form lower case letters correctly

Term 2:

- To practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion

Term 3:

- To practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion

Year 2:

Term 1:

- To practise handwriting patterns from Year 1
- To **begin** using and practising the four basic handwriting joins:
 - Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g. ai / ar / un
 - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ou / vi / wi
 - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ab / ul / it
 - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ol / wh / ot

Term 2:

- To practise handwriting patterns from Year 1
- To practise handwriting in conjunction with phonic and spelling patterns
- To **use** and practise the four basic handwriting joins:
 - Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g. ai / ar / un
 - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ou / vi / wi
 - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ab / ul / it
 - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ol / wh / ot

Term 3:

- To **use** the four basic handwriting joins **with confidence** and use these in independent writing:
 - Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g. ai / ar / un
 - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ou / vi / wi
 - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ab / ul / it
 - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ol / wh / ot

Year 3:

Term 1:

- To practise correct formation of basic joins from year 2
 - Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g. ai / ar / un
 - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ou / vi / wi
 - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ab / ul / it
 - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ol / wh / ot

Term 2:

- To practise correct formation of basic joins from the use of the four basic handwriting joins from year 2:
 - Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g. ai / ar / un
 - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ou / vi / wi
 - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ab / ul / it
 - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ol / wh / ot
- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and the spacing between letters and words
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice.

Term 3:

- To practise correct formation of basic joins from the use of the four basic handwriting joins from year 2 and use these in independent writing:
 - Diagonal join to letters without ascenders e.g. ai / ar / un
 - Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. ou / vi / wi
 - Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ab / ul / it
 - Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. ol / wh / ot
- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and the spacing between letters and words
- To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice

Year 4:

Term 1:

- To use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required
- To know when to use:
 - A clear neat hand for finished, presented work
 - Informal writing for rough drafting etc

- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words

Term 2:

- To use joined handwriting for all writing where other special forms are required
- To build up speed, particularly for notes, drafts, lists etc
- To know when to use:
 - A clear neat handwriting for finished, presented work
 - Informal writing for rough drafting etc
- To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words

Term 3:

- To build up speed and ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words
- To use a range of presentational skills:
 - Print script for captions, sub-headings and labels
 - Capital letters for posters, title plates, headings

Year 5:

- To use fluent joined up handwriting for all writing except those where other special forms are required

Year 6:

- To use fluent joined up handwriting for all writing except those where other special forms are required

This policy will be monitored by the Head teacher and Literacy Leader annually and updated if required.

Agreed by Governing Body: March 2015

Signed:

Chair of Governors.

Appendix A:

Activities and exercises to develop Gross Motor Control:

Gross Motor Control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Cycling
- Gripping climbing frames
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as, *going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements*
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music

Any activities described in the **Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage** under Physical Development

Fine Motor Control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes).

Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:

- Folding paper
- Cutting out shapes from paper and card
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
- Drawing in sand and sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving / threading beads
- Chopping and peeling when cooking
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens and paints on small, large boards and easels and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
- Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of line