



Handwriting Policy September 2020

Review Date: September 2021

## Aims and Expectations.

At Medlock Primary School we believe that all children have the right to receive high quality teaching and learning and we will strive to provide this at all times. Quality first teaching is essential for children making progress (physically, socially and emotionally as well as academically) and where appropriate interventions will be put in place to support children's individual needs. Communicating with each other, the children and their parents is crucial to ensuring the same strategies are used and continued in all areas where learning takes place. Well planned lessons and high quality resources coupled with the before mentioned teaching and communication methods are imperative to ensuring children's next steps are built upon and therefore make as much progress as possible.

In all areas of the curriculum promoting oracy is at the heart of our teaching and learning. During all lessons and activities planned, there will be opportunities for children to verbally share their ideas with each other and the whole class / group, ask and answer questions and be encouraged to extend their responses.

We aim for all children to leave Medlock Primary School with neat, legible and joined handwriting.

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it is something which usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through school, the requirement to write legibly and fluently, at speed, increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases.

At secondary school, children are obliged to write almost constantly, taking notes, dictation, writing essays, and copying down the homework required for the next day. For the child who has learned to form letters without apparent deliberation or effort, such tasks are straightforward. In contrast, for the child who is still struggling with the basic elements of the skill then even copying down homework may present a problem. It is vital that we provide every opportunity to best prepare the children at Medlock for their time at secondary school and beyond.

The difficulty with writing stems from the complexity of the task which involves a combination of different skills, including the physical coordination required for handwriting. There is a need for automaticity and how the component skills, such as joining up letters and spelling, need to begin to be in place from the end of Year 2. Creativity will suffer if the child has to focus on the mechanics of writing. As a group, reluctant writers lacking practice will trail behind their more able classmates whose skills improve rapidly just because they write more.

### Motor Skills.

Before children can begin to take part in formal handwriting sessions their gross and fine motor skills need to be worked on. In Nursery, this will be the sole focus (as part of their continuous provision) regarding the handwriting input which the children receive. Motor skills will continue to be a focus in Reception alongside discreet handwriting sessions being introduced, in the form of working on letter formation.

By Year 1 we would hope that children's fine and gross motor skills are fully developed and that children are ready for the sole focus to be on formal handwriting sessions. However, as with all areas of the curriculum, children progress at varied rates in different areas so some children may need interventions put in place to continue to work on their motor skills.

Please read the "Progression of fine motor and handwriting skills" saved in the Handwriting Policy folder.

### Discrete Handwriting Sessions.

Children in Reception should receive discrete handwriting sessions at least twice a week from the mid-point of the year. From the very beginning, and particularly during phonics sessions, there is an expectation that letter formation is correctly modelled and that children are supported with correctly forming the letters themselves. This could be delivered in the form of a 5 minute starting or closing activity to each phonics session. The sessions can be done on whiteboards but when children are ready (usually spring 2), wide lined paper should be introduced to support children with the size of letters and the letters sitting on the line, as well as the formation.

Children in Years 1 to 6 should receive daily sessions at the start of each year lasting for at least 15 minutes long and should be done in their handwriting books. This is to refocus children and assert expectations. Each session could also begin with a starter where other written methods are used such as writing in the air, on their partners back with their finger, on sandpaper etc. After modelling, the teacher should tour the class giving extra support and modelling where necessary and showcasing good examples of handwriting. When teachers feel that their classes are progressing well with their handwriting and in general, working at the ARE, sessions can be reduced to 3x a week (or less in 4-6 if the majority are following the handwriting policy consistently. However, this should be done in consultation with either the English team or SLT and after each school holiday, daily sessions should be put back in place to re-establish expectations.

The standard of handwriting shown during these sessions should be the same standard across all areas of the curriculum. During modelled writing sessions, as you would with phonics and spelling, handwriting should be mentioned by the teacher.

### Handwriting Style.

We follow the letter formation and style designed by Cusworth Education Services. Please read the "Handwriting Booklet" saved in the Handwriting Policy folder. All adult handwritten signs and displays around school as well as adult's handwriting in books and modelled writing on boards, needs to adhere to this style.

### Joining.

As soon as children have mastered forming the majority of their letters properly, they should start to join their letters. This is so focusing on the mechanics of writing doesn't hamper the child's flow and creativity. When children first start joining letters, the neatness of their writing may suffer at first but with the "little and often" approach of discreet sessions coupled with it being mentioned during all modelled writing sessions, their original neatness will return in addition to them being able to join, which is a curriculum expectation from Year 2.

### End of Year Group Expectations.

Year Group	Expectations
Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Begin to meet the Reception criteria.</li></ul> <p>Please read the Birth to 11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months and 40-60+ months sections from the Physical Development: Moving and Handling section from the Development Matters document found at <a href="https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf">https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf</a> for more details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sometimes gives meanings to marks they make.</li></ul>
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Have good fine and gross motor skill control.</li><li>● Have a recognition of pattern.</li><li>● Be able to talk about shape and movement.</li><li>● Be able to move a writing tool to form the shapes of letters l, c, r and therefore all other letters.</li><li>● Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</li></ul> <p>Please read the 40-60+ months section from the Physical Development: Moving and Handling section from the Development Matters document found at <a href="https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf">https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf</a> for more details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Writes own name correctly.</li><li>● Attempts to write short, meaningful sentences.</li></ul>
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sit correctly at a table.</li><li>● Holds a pencil comfortably and correctly.</li><li>● Begin to form lower case letters correctly, starting and finishing at the correct places.</li><li>● Form capital letters.</li><li>● Form digits 0-9.</li><li>● Understand which letters belong to which "handwriting family" -letters which are formed in similar ways.</li></ul>
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Form lower case letters which are the correct size relative to one another.</li><li>● Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to each other are left unjoined.</li><li>● Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and</li></ul>

	<p>relationship to one another and to lower case letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</li> </ul>
Year 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).</li> </ul>
Year 5 and 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.</li> <li>● Choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters.</li> <li>● Choose the writing implement which is best suited to the task.</li> </ul>

### Interventions and Individual Needs.

In addition to their daily fine and gross motor activities EYFS should look at whether it's appropriate to put in place extra sessions such as "Funky Fingers" and "Dough Disco". Please read the "Progression in Motor Skills Document" saved in the Handwriting Policy folder to help support where your children are up to in relation to ARE and their handwriting journey.

Handwriting interventions should be in place from Year 1 and may need to be done right up until Year 6. The nature of the interventions will depend on the child's needs; they may need to go back to the beginning of the handwriting journey and start with motor skill work, or work on basic letter formation, the size of letters, joins or work on specific letters etc. It is the class teacher's responsibility to ascertain the needs of their class and then put appropriate interventions in place. Support and advice can be obtained from the SENDCO, English leads and the child's previous teacher.

In Upper Key Stage 2 we would hope that children are forming letters correctly and producing neat and joined writing. Therefore, class teachers have the freedom to come away from the 3 times a week sessions and put in place something else which their class needs, as long as they can justify and show evidence as to why they've made this decision. If this choice is made, interventions will still need to be put in place for children working below the ARE for their year group.

Just as in each year group there will most likely be children who need additional support to reach ARE, there will be children exceeding these expectations. If teachers feel they have a child(ren) who is working above the ARE for handwriting, they can move them on to the next year group's criteria. It may sometimes even be appropriate for children to be taken out of their class' handwriting sessions and receive support for a different area of the curriculum. Teachers will need to be able to justify why this is happening.

### Communication With Parents.

During the autumn term's parents evening teachers should share with the parents the handwriting expectations of their child's year group and the school's adopted style. This

is to ensure consistency for the child, so that any handwriting done at home, mirrors what's done in school.

### Writing Tools.

In Foundation Stage a range of materials to write with should be available to children. This is partly in line with catering for children's fine and gross motor development and also to ensure that children are engaged and excited about writing.

In Reception, children should be encouraged to write in pencil (whilst other writing tools are available in the continuous provision areas) so they become used to writing with this tool for the purposes of neatness and legibility for when they move into KS1. Thicker pencils and pencil grips should be used to begin with, moving children on to the thinner pencils used in KS1 when they're ready.

From Years 1-6 children should write in pencil when writing in their exercise books at all times (apart from when using a purple pen to edit their work). When a child is producing mostly neat, legible writing which is partly joined and where all letters are correctly formed, they should be sent to the Headteacher for the decision to be made of whether to move them on to a "pre-pen" or not. Once they're comfortable using a pre pen and their writing is neat, legible, fully joined and the correct size at all times they should be sent back to the Headteacher for the decision to be made of whether they can be moved on to receiving a "pen license". When a child receives a pen license they should use a black biro to write in their exercise books at all times. As with all areas of the curriculum, children progress at different rates and thicker pencils and pencil grips should be made available to all children from Years 1-6.

All pencils used should always be sharp. Pencil sharpeners should be available for all children to use from Nursery to Years 6.

### Sitting Position.

During handwriting sessions, children should be sitting comfortably with their 2 feet and their chair's 4 legs on the floor. They should have enough room at the table for their book and them to be able to move their arm when writing. Children's preferred writing hand should be taken into consideration when the seating plan is designed, so children with opposite writing hands don't have to endure clashing elbows and discomfort. Teachers should also take into consideration the position of left-handed children to ensure that they have appropriate space.

### Handwriting Displays.

Nursery and Reception should have an alphabet displayed which shows the children how to form each letter and where to start and end each letter.

Each class from Year 1 to Year 4 should have a handwriting display present in their classrooms which shows children the size of letters in relation to each other, where to start and finish each letter and how to join families of letters.

Years 5 and 6 do not need to have a handwriting display present in their classes, unless their children need one, although there is an expectation that improvements in or great examples of ARE handwriting are displayed and celebrated for others.

On class curriculum boards (from Reception to Year 6) there should be an example of the handwriting each class is working on during that half term.