



Mabe Community
Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Importance and Nature of Handwriting

Handwriting is a means of recording language on paper, using a generally understood system of symbols. It is an important life skill as a functional tool for expressing language and as part of self-image and expression of personality. Despite the increased use of computers for writing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life.

At Mabe, we recognise that children's ability to write well for the rest of their lives, depends on firm foundations of taught skills in their primary years.

A simple view of handwriting

As previously stated, handwriting is a vital life skill. Even though there are ever increasing mediums for written communication e.g. text and email, it is still necessary for children to be able to write in a fluent and legible style.

The Curriculum 2014 divides writing skills into two dimensions:

- ✓ Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- ✓ Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

It requires that teaching develops children's competence in both dimensions. 'Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.'

Role of the Teacher

At Mabe, we believe that effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly.

Teachers' encourage children to:

- ✓ Learn and practise appropriate and effective handwriting skills at each stage of development, continually working towards mature handwriting which is:
 - Legible
 - Presentable
 - Comfortable

- Fluent
 - Flexible
 - Fast
 - Automatic
 - Sustainable
- ✓ For children to have opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum.
 - ✓ For all staff to use and model the agreed handwriting conventions outlined in this document, thus providing consistency and continuity throughout the school.
 - ✓ Make provision for left handed children and for children who experience difficulties
 - ✓ Encourage personal satisfaction and pride in well- presented writing.

Children are taught handwriting in the following ways:

EYFS

- ✓ Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination.
- ✓ Use one-handed tools and equipment.
- ✓ Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement.
- ✓ Manipulate objects with increasing control.
- ✓ Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines.
- ✓ Begin to form recognisable letters.
- ✓ Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Throughout the Foundation Stage, children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- ✓ Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play.
- ✓ Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- ✓ Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- ✓ Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder.

In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinaesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and pencils.

KS1

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 correctly.
- ✓ Form digits 0-9 correctly.
- ✓ Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.
- ✓ Make links with phonics and spelling.

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.

KS2

Year 3 & 4

- ✓ Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and 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; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Year 5 & 6

Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:

- ✓ Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters.

- ✓ Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters).

Letter Breaks

It should be noted that breaks between adjacent letters which are left not joined are part of cursive handwriting and this is indicated in the requirements for Years 2-6. The rule for children is that when a letter is made which finishes with the pen facing “the wrong way” then the pen is lifted and writing begun again. Letters not joined (e.g. ‘y’ followed by ‘a’) are placed as close to each other as possible.

It is sensible to leave the following letters not joined:

b g j q y s

Joined Handwriting Style

At Mabe we introduce joined up handwriting at an early stage of a child’s development: towards the end of Year 1 upwards.

Learning a series of early rhythmical movements can help children with specific learning difficulties improve their fine motor coordination. The advantages of this are:

- ✓ The motor memory of the child’s hand and fingers helps them to spell as each word becomes one movement and not many.
- ✓ Children are able to write at a faster pace.
- ✓ Lessens the chance of reversing letters.
- ✓ Spaces between words become more obvious.
- ✓ Upper and lower case letters are clearer.

Each letter pattern links to a family of letters:

Pattern	Value of Pattern
<i>mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm</i>	<i>r n m h p b k</i>
<i>cccccccccccccccc</i>	<i>c o a d g q e</i>
<i>uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu</i>	<i>i u y l t</i>
<i>vvvvvvvvvvvvvvvv</i>	<i>v w x</i>
<i>llllllllllllllllll</i>	<i>i u y l t a d</i>
<i>rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr</i>	<i>r n p m h</i>
<i>oooooooosoooooooo</i>	<i>co oo oa og od</i>
<i>llllllllllllllllll</i>	<i>i l u m h</i>
<i>No special pattern</i>	<i>f j s z</i>

Appendix

The skeleton handwriting alphabet which should underlie the joined hand.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z

The skeleton handwriting alphabet with hooks.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z

The joined handwriting alphabet.

abcdefghijklmnop
opqrstuvwxyz

The capital letters.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z