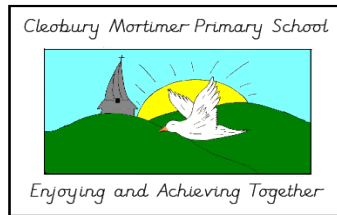


# Cleobury Mortimer Primary School



## Handwriting Policy

Updated September 2022

To be reviewed September 2023

### **Intent:**

At CMPS, our aim is that pupils will be supported to develop a cursive handwriting style which is clear, joined and fluid. Inevitably some will be neater than others, but each child can acquire a consistent and fluent style. This process begins in early years where the children master print letter formation first and this continues into Year 1 where the children are introduced to the pre cursive style later in the year when the teachers feel they are ready. We believe this raises standards in writing in the early years which will impact throughout the whole school, developing confidence, accuracy and fluency and improved presentation.

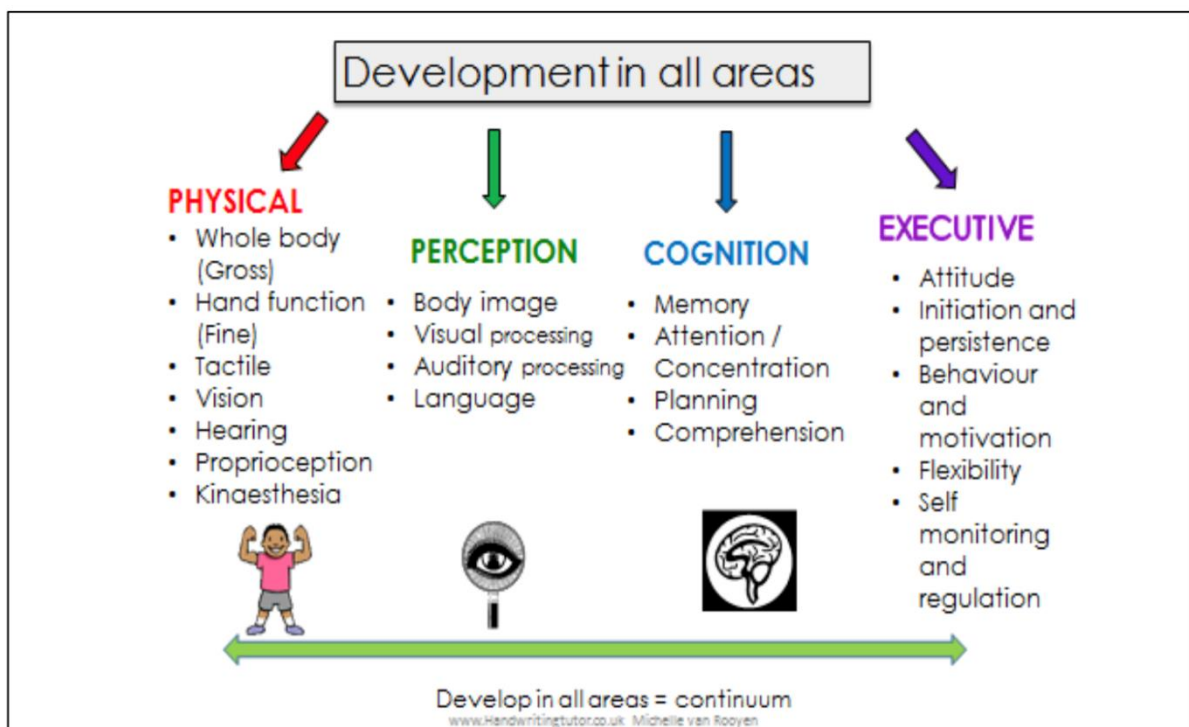
The cursive handwriting style helps:

- to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke;
- as letters naturally flow into each other, this helps children to join their handwriting;
- form spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness;
- to develop a child's visual memory;
- all children's writing skills regardless of academic ability;
- to develop skills of punctuation and grammar.

## Implementation

In formulating the handwriting policy and deciding how and when to introduce letter formations, a number of considerations were taken into account based on research. The research is included (in blue) to outline our rationale.

*'Handwriting is a complex perceptual-motor skill that is dependent upon the maturation and integration of a number of cognitive, perceptual and motor skills (see diagram below). Achievement demands the orchestration of multiple skills involving the eyes, arms, hands, memory, posture and body control as well as managing pencil, paper and following instructions.'* (NHA- National Handwriting Association)

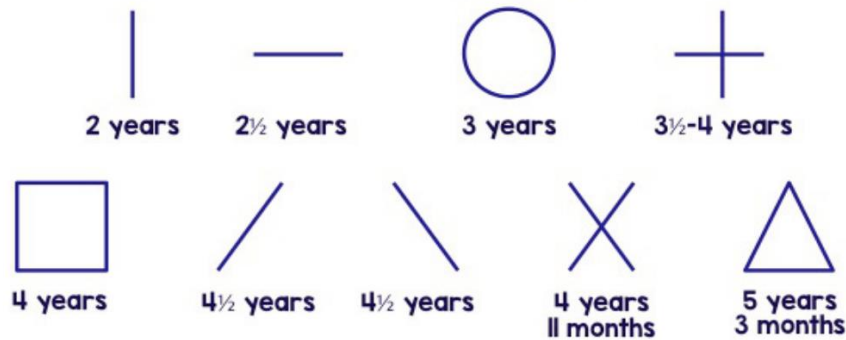


*'Practitioners need to be fully aware that the premature rush to get children 'joining their writing' when prerequisite skills are immature, may leave a legacy of handwriting problems that will be difficult to reverse at a later stage. The development of the right oblique stroke necessary for entry strokes is emerging between the ages of 4 and 5. Children with delayed development are likely to struggle to achieve this movement and experience frustration.'* (NHA)

The model below helps us to assess whether some children are ready for pre cursive letter formations and joining.

## The Beery – Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual- Motor Integration

Writing readiness can be guided by the child's ability to write these first 8 to 9 shapes as these form the foundations of all letters and numbers.



We chose cursive because:

*'Cursive handwriting has a number of advantages. It's often assumed that it's faster than printing, but actually, the research is inconclusive,' says Angela. 'However, it generally has a nicer style, and does seem to help children speed up their writing. Children who write quickly generally get more words on the paper and produce better quality content. Cursive writing also helps with spelling as you develop a muscle memory of the movements of each word.'* (NHA)

In choosing at what stage to introduce the building blocks to enable the children to use cursive handwriting, we took the following research into consideration:

















*'Some schools teach fully cursive handwriting right from the start. This is not beneficial as continuous cursive letter shapes are much more complicated and arduous to form and KS1 children are unlikely to have developed the necessary visual-motor integration skills, sufficient pencil control and the ability to change direction several times within one letter shape.*

*Best practice is rather to start with the simplest form of print letter shapes (within letter families), then to teach children how to join up these letters using diagonal or horizontal joining lines, using patterning activities in preparation.*

*Other schools teach children to print letters first (i.e. write them separately, without joins) and then move onto cursive. There's some research to show that teaching children to print helps them understand the concept of individual letters better.'* (NHA)

**Expectations in EYFS- Children should be taught to:**

We teach children to print letters first using the mnemonics from ELS:

 <p>around the head, down the body</p>	 <p>down the person and around the wheel</p>	 <p>curl around the camel's back</p>	 <p>over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet</p>
 <p>around the head and down the trunk</p>	 <p>over his ear, down to the tail and across the jaw</p>	 <p>start at his ear, around the face and down the beard</p>	 <p>from his head to his feet, up and over his back</p>
 <p>down her body, spot her idea</p>	 <p>swoop down the tentacles and dot the body</p>	 <p>down the body, up the arm, down the leg</p>	 <p>down the long ladder</p>
 <p>meerkat, mound, mound</p>	 <p>down the bird and over her nest</p>	 <p>around the ostrich's body</p>	 <p>down his body, around his face</p>



- Print and form letters without a lead-in using the mnemonics from ELS. Those letters that have a natural exit flick e.g. a and e should be taught with flicks where possible.
- Hold a pencil/ pen correctly.
- Group letters.
- Use 'left to right' orientation.
- Use exercises to warm and strengthen muscles ready for writing.
- Space letters and words.
- Introduction of capital letters.
- Begin to write on lines when ready.

*'The simplest letter forms that have no curls or flourishes are the best for children to learn. Letters that naturally have an exit flick, for example a & e should be taught with the exit flicks.'* (T4W)

### **Year 1 (Minimum 3 x 10 minutes sessions per week)**

Children should be taught 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, descenders and ascenders and to practise
- Leave finger spaces
- Start to form pre-cursive letters when ready.

*Should we teach continuous cursive (every letter in a word is joined) handwriting?*

*No. The perceived wisdom is that keeping each letter separate and simple when learning to handwrite is best. Once children have learned the individual letters, they can be taught to join them together. (T4W)*

### **Year 2 (Minimum 3 x 10 minute sessions per week)**

We will build upon the progress made in the previous year children should be taught to:

- Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- 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
- 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.
- Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently.
- They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can securely form letters with the correct orientation.

### **Year 3 (Minimum 3 x 15 minute sessions per week)**

Children should be taught to:

- Develop writing formation so that it sits on the line and begins next to the margin.
- Ensuring consistency of size of writing.
- Develop fluency in joined writing
- By the end of Year 3, most children will use joined handwriting at all times.

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and
- understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.

#### **Year 4 (2 x 15 minute sessions per week)**

Children should be taught to:

- Be aware that at times, other specific forms of writing are required e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the down strokes 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. They should be able to decide which letters are best left un-joined.

#### **Year 5 and Year 6 (Minimum 1 x 20 minute sessions per week)**

Children 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 right implement that is best suited for a task.

## **Impact**

Policy Success Criteria We know CMPS's Handwriting Policy is effective if:

- A scrutiny of work confirms the appropriate development in handwriting skills as outlined above
- Specific difficulties are addressed in the marking of handwriting tasks
- A scrutiny of work confirms that the presentation protocol is adhered to.

# Appendix

## Statutory requirements:

There are no requirements to teach fully cursive writing either in the EYFS or in the National Curriculum. Indeed, the National Curriculum for English places emphasis on the acquisition of letter shape, space and size before joins are taught and delivers clear messages that some letters are best left un-joined.

Assessment of handwriting is to be found in Goals 4 and 10, which include these requirements:

### **Early Learning Goal 4 Writing:**

#### ***Expected descriptors***

- They also write some irregular common words.
- They write sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

#### ***Exceeding descriptors***

- They use key features of narrative in their own writing.

### **Early Learning Goal 10 Physical: Moving and handling**

#### ***Expected descriptors***

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

#### ***Exceeding descriptors***

- They hold paper in position and use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct pencil grip.
- They are beginning to be able to write on lines and control letter size



## KS1

	<b>Statutory Requirements</b>	<b>Non-Statutory Notes and Guidance</b>
<b>Year 1, Age 5–6</b>	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly</li> <li>• begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</li> <li>• form capital letters</li> <li>• form digits 0–9</li> <li>• understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.</li> </ul>	<p>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.</p> <p>Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</p>
<b>Year 2, Age 6–7</b>	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• form lower-case letters of 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 one another, are best left un-joined</li> <li>• write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters</li> <li>• use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.</p>

## KS2

<b>Years 3–4, Age 7–9</b>	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <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 un-joined</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>
<b>Years 5–6, Age 10–11</b>	<p>Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters</li> <li>• choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra; and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.</p>