



BELMONT SCHOOL
 (Additionally Resourced Mainstream School)

Early Years Handwriting Policy
NOVEMBER 2025



<p>UNCRC Article 19 - Every child has the right to protection Global Goal 4 – Quality Education Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Global Goal 10 - Reduced Inequalities Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p>	
Head Teacher	
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Date Ratified	6 th January 2026
Review Date	3 Year

Rationale – taken from Writing Framework Guidance DFE 2025

- Specific instruction in handwriting is needed in order for children to develop **automatic, legible** handwriting.
- Legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows children to focus on the higher-level aspects of writing content and composition.
- The purpose of handwriting is communication, to be read by others and re-read by self.
- Self-esteem and performance across all subjects is negatively influenced if handwriting is illegible.

At Belmont School, we believe that early writing is a vital foundation for children’s communication, self-expression, and literacy development. Writing in the Early Years begins long before children form recognisable letters. It develops through a rich combination of physical, cognitive, and language experiences that build the skills, confidence, and motivation to become independent writers.

Our approach is informed by the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024), Development Matters (2021), and current research on child development and literacy. We recognise that effective early writing teaching starts with **pre-writing skills**, the building blocks that enable children to control mark-making tools and express meaning through writing.

Aims

Through a high-quality, play-based writing curriculum, we aim to ensure that children:

- Develop the fine and gross motor skills necessary for controlled, fluent writing.
- Experience joy and purpose in mark making and early writing.
- Understand that writing communicates meaning and has a range of purposes.
- Are immersed in a language-rich environment that supports vocabulary, oracy, and comprehension.
- Progress from early mark making to forming letters, words, and simple sentences by the end of Reception.

The Importance of Pre-Writing Skills

Before children can write letters and words, they must first develop:

a. Physical Readiness

- **Gross motor control:** Strength and coordination of core, shoulder, and arm muscles through climbing, throwing, sweeping, painting on large surfaces, etc.
- **Fine motor control:** Hand and finger strength developed through threading, dough disco, pegging, tweezers, and small construction play.
- **Hand–eye coordination:** Developed through activities such as pouring, cutting, drawing, and tracing.

b. Cognitive and Perceptual Readiness

- **Spatial awareness and pattern recognition**, supported through block play, shape sorting, and tracing patterns.
- **Visual memory and tracking**, important for letter recognition and formation.

- **Understanding of directionality** (left-to-right, top-to-bottom).



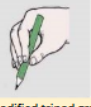


c. Linguistic and Conceptual Readiness



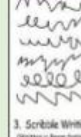

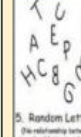

- **Vocabulary and sentence development** through storytelling, role play, and conversation.
- **Concepts of print** (e.g., words carry meaning, writing goes from left to right).
- **Motivation to communicate** through writing that has real purpose in the environment (e.g., signs, lists, labels, messages).

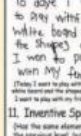
Stages of development:

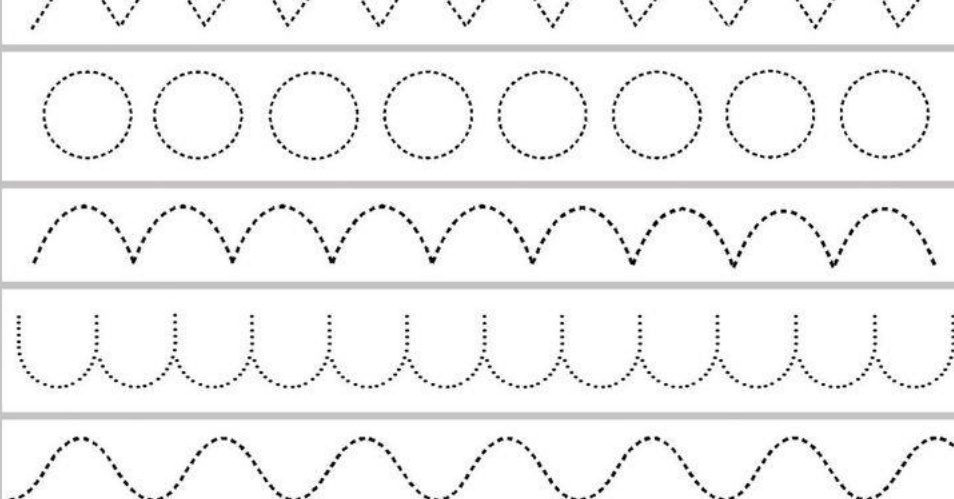
Stage	Description	Provision and Support
1. Scribbles and Marks	Early experimentation with movement and tools - marks may be large, circular, or linear but not yet controlled.	Large-scale mark making, paint rollers, water brushes, chinks, sand writing, adults commenting on meaning (“Tell me about your marks”).
2. Controlled Marks and Pre-Writing Shapes	Increased control over lines and curves - beginning to imitate patterns and closed shapes (lines, crosses, circles, zigzags).	Pre-writing pattern cards, tracing shapes in sand or foam, <i>Squiggle While You Wiggle</i> sessions.
3. Joining Patterns and Symbolic Marks	Combining patterns or marks to represent ideas or words - early attempts at name writing.	Modelled mark making, name tracing, creating patterns with tools, finger gym activities.
4. Letter-Like Forms and Early Letter Use	Using recognisable letters, often from their name- beginning to connect sounds and letters through phonics.	Daily phonics, sound mats, shared writing, writing areas with labels and prompts.
5. Phonetic Word Writing	Using taught phonics knowledge to write words (often phonetically plausible).	Adult-guided writing, sentence stems, labelling tasks, opportunities to write for real purposes.
6. Simple Sentences and Independent Writing	Writing simple sentences that can be read by themselves and others - developing stamina and confidence.	Story writing, captioning drawings, sentence challenges, writing across areas of learning.

See below for examples of progress:

N u r s e r y	 Palmar grasp	-dough disco -supervised tooth brushing -turns pages in books -begins to show control in using objects -choosing how to move body -feeds self independently -hand hygiene -scissor skills	 Digital grasp	-dough disco -use one handed tools with confidence -creates lines and circles in large and small movements -range of mark making tools -ball skills – throw, catch, kick, roll -using cutlery	 Modified tripod grasp	-dough disco -negotiate space and use resources safely -climb to height and balance on beams -create sequence of movement to music -begin to copy letters of name -Sports day			
	-dough disco -action rhymes/songs -imitating actions -begins to dress and undress with support -using toilet and washing hands -walk, run, climb on different levels -begin to balance	-dough disco -hand washing -avoids objects and obstacles when moving around a space -name parts of body -expresses preferences -sequence movements	-dough disco -trace over letters of name -coordination games -learn simple games e.g. duck duck goose -scissor skills	R e c e p t i o n	 Modified tripod grasp	- Negotiates space -ball skills: pushing, throwing catching, kicking - Understanding good practice with regards to basic self-care -write name -mirror/copy movements -use range of mark making tools -engages in malleable play with confidence -using scissors -dressing for forest school	-oral hygiene -form letters of reasonable size -confidently use a range of apparatus outdoors -learn simple games -explore different ways of moving -importance of personal space	 tripod grasp	-cooperating in small group team games/activities -travels under, over and through -thinks about safety and risk when experimenting with movement -uses tools to effect change
-dough disco -safely move around the setting -using toilet independently -hand hygiene -using cutlery at lunch -dressing self with minimal support	-using tools safely -creating own sequences of movement to music -drawing pictures and writing words	-using tools safely -creating own sequences of movement to music -drawing pictures and writing words							

 1. Pictures	 2. Random Scribbling	 3. Scribble Writing (Children in lower classes to write real writing)	 4. Symbols That Represent Letters	 5. Random Letters (The relationship between individual letters and what the child is trying to say.)	 6. Letter Strings (Progress from left to right and top to bottom when the child "reads" the writing.)
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 6. Letter Strings (Progress from left to right and top to bottom when the child "reads" the writing.)	 7. Letter Groups (The groups have spaces in between to reinforce words.)	 8. Environmental Print (Child copies print found in the home or the school setting, what the words are.)	 9. Beginning Sounds (Child begins to write simple environmental objects that start with just the beginning sounds of words.)	 10. Early Inventive Spelling (Includes the same elements as the previous level, but with more consistent sounds represented and spaces between words.)	 11. Inventive Spelling (Uses the same elements as the previous level, but with more detailed print and punctuation, including the vowels. Some conventional spelling patterns may appear.)
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EYFS writing expectations with examples of progress

1. Pre-writing Stage (30–50 months / Developing)

Skills:

- Makes marks and gives meaning to them.
- Begins to use some letter shapes (often from their name).

Examples:

- Child draws zig-zags and says, *“This says mummy is at work.”*
- Writes random letters like **MTB** and explains, *“It says my cat.”*
- Can trace or imitate simple lines like vertical strokes and circles.

2. Early Writing (40–60 months / Emerging)

Skills:

- Writes recognisable letters, especially from their name.
- Begins to hear and write initial sounds.
- Attempts CVC words using phonic knowledge.

Examples:

- Writes **d** next to a picture of a dog (initial sound).
- Writes **kat** for *cat*, **fut** for *foot*, **bt** for *boat*.
- Writes their name with mostly correct letter formation (e.g., **Luca** or **LUCA**).

3. Developing Independence (Reception Autumn–Spring)

Skills:

- Writes labels, captions, and simple sentences.
- Uses phonetic spelling with some known tricky words.
- Begins to leave spaces and use full stops (not always accurately).

Examples:

- **Label:** *pig, den, box.*
- **Caption:** *A big red bus.*
- **Sentence:**
 - *The cat is in the tree.*
 - *I went to the park.*
 - *My mum is hapi.*
- Tricky words beginning to appear: *I, the, to, go.*

4. ELG-Level Writing (End of Reception)

What children should demonstrate:

- Can write **simple, coherent sentences**.
- Uses **phonic knowledge** to spell words (phonetically plausible).
- Spells some **common exception words** correctly (e.g., *the, I, no, go*).
- Uses **capital letters, finger spaces, and full stops** with growing accuracy.
- Writes for different purposes (lists, stories, cards).

Examples of ELG-level writing:

- *I went to the farm and I saw a big cow.*
- *We made a den. It was dark and fun.*
- *I lik to play in the gardn wiv my frends.*
- *The prinses ran to the kastl.*
- **List:**
 - *milk*
 - *bred*
 - *apls*
- **Card:**
 - *To Dad, I hop you hav a good day. Love Ella.*

5. Greater Depth (Exceeding ELG) – Optional extension

Examples:

- Writes two or more linked sentences:

I lost my toy. I lookt evrewear but I cod not find it.
- Uses more advanced punctuation occasionally (e.g., exclamation marks).
- Attempts more complex spelling patterns (*rain, boat, night*).

[Eyfs Writing Models.docx](#)