

Handwriting Overview

We believe in setting high standards in the presentation of writing is key to enabling children to achieve in writing. Handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation. We aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting.

At Middleton-in-Teesdale Academy, we have consistently high expectations of handwriting and presentation across all areas of learning and show our value of children's work by displaying it around school. We encourage children to take pride in their work and recognise the need to write carefully and clearly so that it can be celebrated by everyone.

Children at Middleton-in-Teesdale Academy strive to show excellence in all pieces of work across the curriculum, starting with their presentation and handwriting. Our children follow the Presentation Promise in both KS1 and KS2 as a guide to presenting their work to a high standard. This included letter formation and joined writing.

Our school follows the Penpals Scheme, a complete handwriting scheme for 3–11 year olds that offers clear progression through five developmental stages: physical preparation for handwriting; securing correct letter formation; beginning to join along, securing the joins and practicing speed, fluency and developing a personal style. Penpals is focused on whole-class teaching using digital resources to enable modelling and interactive learning.

A key interactive teaching resource we use is 'Writing Repeater,' which enables teachers to model good handwriting and teach letter formation explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. Handwriting is taught weekly and recorded in pupil's core skills books in a handwriting section. Particularly in KS2, this should enable pupils to transfer their learning into all other subject books.

We aim to quickly identify those who are behind their age-related expectation for handwriting and work effectively to help those pupils progress rapidly through small group intervention.

Children are introduced to joined handwriting as soon as they have mastered the shape of individual letters in EYFS. A pen licence can be awarded from Year 2 for consistent fluidity and correct joins.

The Penpals progression is as follows:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS F1 and F2).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS F1/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).

- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).