



# Welcome to our Early Writing Parent Workshop



**Before children can hold a pencil or write, they must be physically ready.**



# Physical development



- Physical Development is one of the three prime areas of learning in the EYFS framework, the other two being Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language. These three areas are recognised as prime because they form the basis of all other aspects of young children's learning and development. The three prime areas are regarded as particularly important for inspiring young children's curiosity and enthusiasm, laying the foundations for future success in all aspects of life and education.
- Children learn to control their bodies from the centre outwards and from the top downwards.
- In other words, babies build up their neck muscles so they can hold up their heads, then the trunk muscles so they can sit, and finally the whole body control and balance required for walking.
- Arm and finger control follows the same pattern: at first a child will be able to manipulate the arm from the shoulder joint; gradually he understands how to control the hands; finally he learns how to make the fine finger movements needed to write.

# The importance of Physical Development

To help young children to develop their moving and handling skills, practitioners and parents should provide lots of opportunities for them to use large muscle movements to explore their immediate environment and develop fine motor control through manipulating materials and using tools and equipment.



# Definitions of gross and fine motor skills

- Gross motor (physical) skills are those which require whole body movement and which involve the large (core stabilising) muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing and walking, running and jumping, and sitting upright at the table. They also includes eye-hand coordination skills such as ball skills (throwing, catching, kicking) as well as riding a bike or a scooter and swimming.
- Fine motor skills involve small muscles working with the brain and nervous system to control movements in areas such as the hands, fingers, lips, tongue and eyes. Developing fine motor skills helps children do things like eating, writing, manipulating objects and getting dressed.
- Research shows that the development of fine motor skills depends on the development of gross motor skills and that a joined-up approach to physical development is important.



## Physical Development End of Year Expectations

- Physical Development is split into two separate areas. Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills. The end of year expectations are below.
- Gross Motor Skills:-
  - Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others; Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.
- Fine Motor Skills:-
  - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases; Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery; Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

# Physical development at Bridge School

There are many opportunities throughout the day where the children have to use their fine and gross motor skills.

- Morning activities provide a chance for the children to complete activities which support their fine motor skills.
- Weekly P.E sessions – so far this year, we have looked at general agility, exploring different ways of moving the body, jumping and static balances.
- Daily handwriting in phonics/maths and throughout the provision in exploring time.
- Daily opportunities in the provision for lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling etc. when the children are exploring, role playing and constructing with large and small equipment.
- Fortnightly Forest School sessions, where again, there are a variety of opportunities for developing fine and gross motor skills, e.g. threading small log slices, using equipment to cut back trees and plants, lifting, carrying and learning how to work together to support each other.



# Write Dance

Week 1

We are strengthening our gross motor skills to support us with our writing.

Week 2

We have been practising our gross motor skills by washing up, the classroom windows using up, down, left and right movements. We had buckets of soapy water and we were given squeegees and sponges to clean with.

Week 3

This week we got our inspiration from the sea and the movements that the waves make.

Week 4

We held 2 pieces of chalk in each hand and walked along the paper to make a long continuous wave.

Week 5

Week 6

We are making different sized circles with both hands!

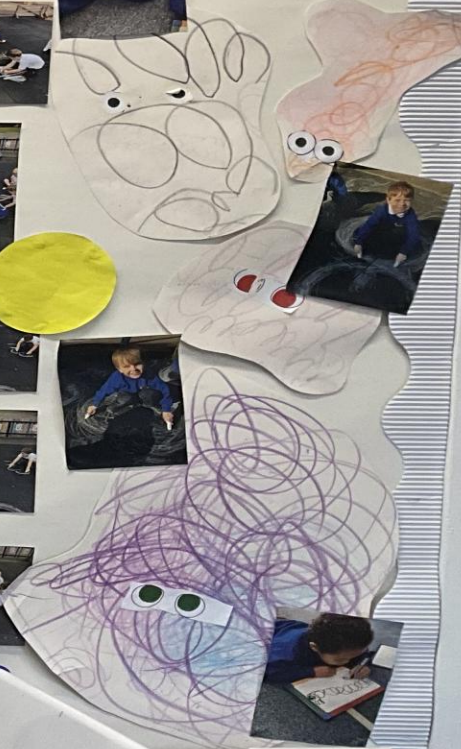
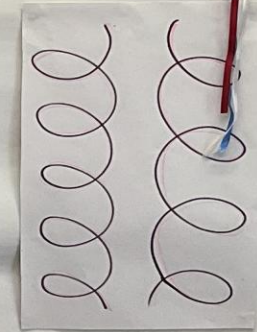
We are popping the bubbles using our pointing fingers.

Inside the classroom we made zig zag shapes with different resource's such as paint brushes and our fingers.

We used big storm actions and also calm water movements.

We tried to use both hands at the same time to make patterns. It was harder than you think!

We also made wave patterns in tuff trays using white paint and paint brushes.





# Gross Motor Skills



**Strengthening the upper body  
using wide circular movements  
from the shoulder.**



# Small physical movements – fine motor skills





## More ideas







# Promoting independence














As young children develop the muscles in their hands, they develop the strength they need for the fine motor skill needed for writing.

# Handwriting in the EYFS

## How do you hold yours?

<input type="checkbox"/>  Four Finger Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Static Quadropod Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Static Tripod Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Dynamic Tripod Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Thumb Wrap Grasp
<input type="checkbox"/>  Thumb Tuck Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Transpalmar Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Index Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Interdigital Brace Grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>  Other

Which one do you think is typical of a 3 or 4 year old?

# Typical Expectations

## 2 to 3 Years Old: Digital Pronate Grasp



- All fingers are holding the pencil but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page.
- Movement comes mostly from the elbow and the shoulder is now stabilized.
- Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied.

## 3 to 4 Years Old: Four-Finger Grasp



- Fingers are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb, beginning to form the arc between the thumb and index finger.
- Movement occurs from the wrist; the hand and fingers move as a whole unit.
- Zigzag lines, crossed lines and simple humans can be drawn with this grip.

## 4 to 6 Years Old: Static Tripod Grasp or Static Quadropod Grasp



- A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit.
- Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp.
- A static quadropod grip has a fourth finger involved.
- Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.



# Handwriting in the EYFS

Displayed here is an example of the four letter families and some messages for you as parents.

## Curly caterpillar letter family



c a d o s

g q e f

## Messages for Parents PENPALS for Handwriting

F1/2

At Foundation stage, your child will be focusing on developing the necessary fine and gross motor skills in readiness for handwriting. They will practise a range of patterns including dots, waves and zig zags to prepare them for letter formation.

Preparation for handwriting involves developing four key areas:

- 1. Gross motor control:**  
The control and co-ordination of the big movements the body can make.
- 2. Fine motor control:**  
Being able to fine-tune the movements of the arm, hand and fingers.
- 3. Visual control:**  
Making sure hand and eye movements are working well together.
- 4. Spatial control:**  
Helping children to be able to move themselves confidently in a space with an awareness of direction (left/right) and plane (horizontal/vertical) and eventually helping them to transfer that sense of space on to paper.

As part of developing confidence in these key areas children begin to explore patterns and basic letter shapes. We experiment with the following six basic patterns and their variations as they provide excellent preparation for more formal work on letter formation:

- Investigating dots.
- Investigating straight lines and crosses.
- Investigating circles.
- Investigating curves, loops and waves.
- Investigating joined straight lines and angled patterns.
- Investigating eights and spirals.

Here are some things you can do at home to develop these key areas:

- Play with a ball, e.g. kick, catch, throw and bounce.
- Play with hoops, frisbees and stilts (the upside-down flowerpot kind).
- Encourage play on climbing frames, slides and swings in the park.
- Play with large scale building kits.
- Enjoy finger rhymes.
- Encourage your child to make things and model things (e.g. cutting, sticking, moulding, cooking, sewing and threading) using a range of materials (e.g. dough, Plasticine®, wood).
- Encourage your child to experiment with a range of tools and equipment (e.g. pens, pencils, crayons, felt tips, scissors, hole punches and tweezers).
- Share jigsaw puzzles and board games.
- Provide opportunities for painting, colouring and 'making marks' on different sizes of paper.
- Enjoy household tasks together (e.g. mixing ingredients with implements or hands, using a dustpan and brush, scooping compost into plant pots and digging in the garden).















# Handwriting in the EYFS

Don't forget to use the formation phrase when you are writing with your child at home. It is displayed here in the end column. We sent these out in bookbags last term.

Phase 2 grapheme information sheet

Autumn 2

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 j	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say j j j	Down the jellyfish and dot its head.
 v	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing v v v v v	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 w	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say w w w	Down and up and down and up the waves.
 x	 box	Mouth open, then push the c/x sound through as you close your mouth c c c c c (x x x)	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again across the box to the bottom.
 y	 yo-yo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say y without opening your mouth y y y	Down, around the yo-yo and curl round the string.
 z	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the z sound z z z z z	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.



## Writing End of Year Expectations

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

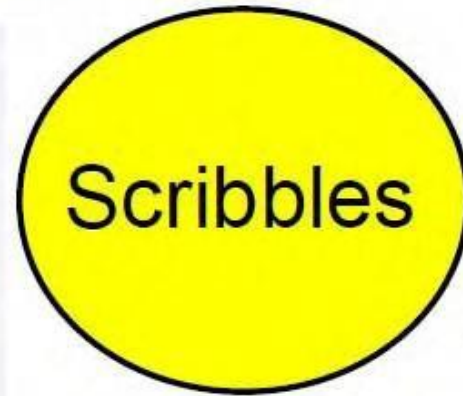
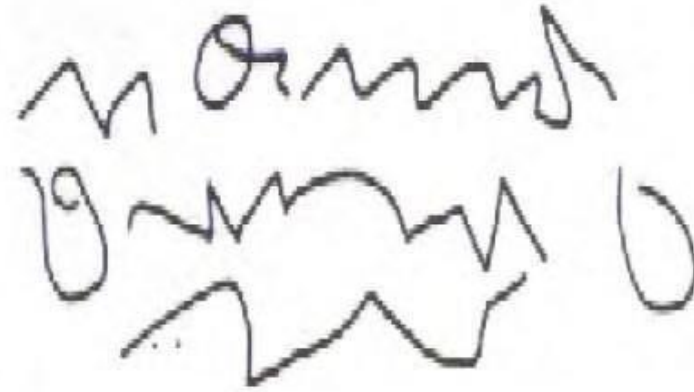


# Drawing Club

- A unique feature of our EYFS writing approach is **Drawing Club** (Greg Bottrill), which integrates story-sharing, speaking, listening, drawing, and writing.
- Each week, a focus story introduces new vocabulary. During Drawing Club, children create illustrations inspired by the story
- Gradually they progress from drawing, to labelling their work with initial sounds and simple words, eventually writing sentences about their illustrations as their skills develop.
- Try drawing alongside your child at home. Create your own pictures, while they are creating theirs. Using more colour on our own pictures encouraged the children to use more colour on their work.
- Writing more words and numbers on our work encouraged the children to write more on their work. It can be copied or their own work. This term is all about them reading their work back to you. Maybe you will be able to read it, maybe not. That's ok.

# Writing Progression

- Writing involves two elements, transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
- Children learn that you can communicate through writing, and that marks have meaning, by watching you write. Look at a picture of something your child is interested in. Talk first about the picture. What can they see? You could write labels in front of them, while you explain what you are writing, while you talk about the direction of print, or what the word is. Use these labels for everyday objects the children are interested in.
- If your child is showing an interest in writing letters, you can also support them to be ready for the next stage of their learning by encouraging them to hold a pencil correctly and form the letter starting in the right place and moving in the right direction. This will support them to develop good habits for the future.
- Support children's composition by reading stories, talking to children, re-phrasing what they have said and modelling correct sentence structure. This will support children to share their ideas and help them to develop an understanding of how sentences are formed.
- You can provide many opportunities for children to capture their thinking and structure it for a range of purposes and audiences (composition). For example, record names of characters in their favourite picture books; make invitations to members of their family for parties, shows or local events. Role play about everyday experiences provide opportunities to write, for example, an office using a keyboard, answering a phone and making notes for Mummy or Daddy.
- If you go to the shops they may 'write' shopping lists for what they need to buy. Why not encourage them to write what they would like, (make sure it's what you actually need for them).
- Provide your child with sentence starters or sentences with missing words in the middle or at the end, so that the children are do not have to write the whole sentence, e.g. last week, the children are creating their own giant's castles, so we gave them the sentence starter, "My castle has....", and encouraged them to copy this, then complete the sentence.
- In Maths, we have been learning about measuring. To encourage more writing and recording, we gave them the sentence, "It is \_\_\_\_\_ cubes long", to write alongside their work, filling in the gap.





This is an example of very early attempts at mark making. There are lots of random marks, often made over other marks. Adults may describe this mark making as scribbling.

A child at this stage usually cannot distinguish the difference between their 'writing' and a picture.



At this stage the marks go across the page from left to right. These are often zigzags and wavy lines. The child has a clear idea of the marks they want to make and give meaning to them.



b d c z o o t o b  
w c c ' o z m



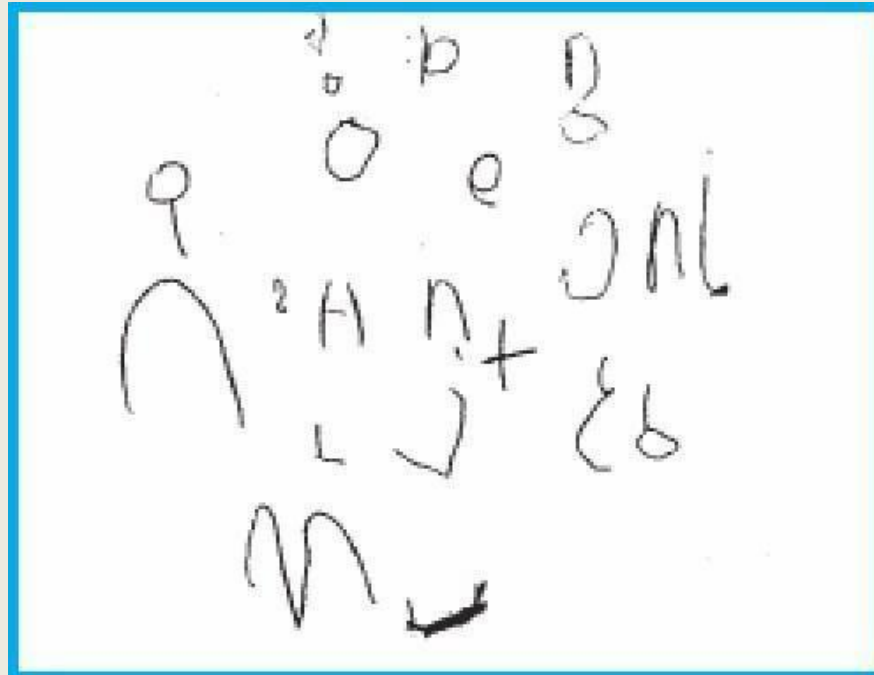
Letter-like  
forms





A child may move on to make individual marks and begin to use some recognisable letters, e.g. from their own name to communicate a message.

They are beginning to understand that drawing and writing are different.



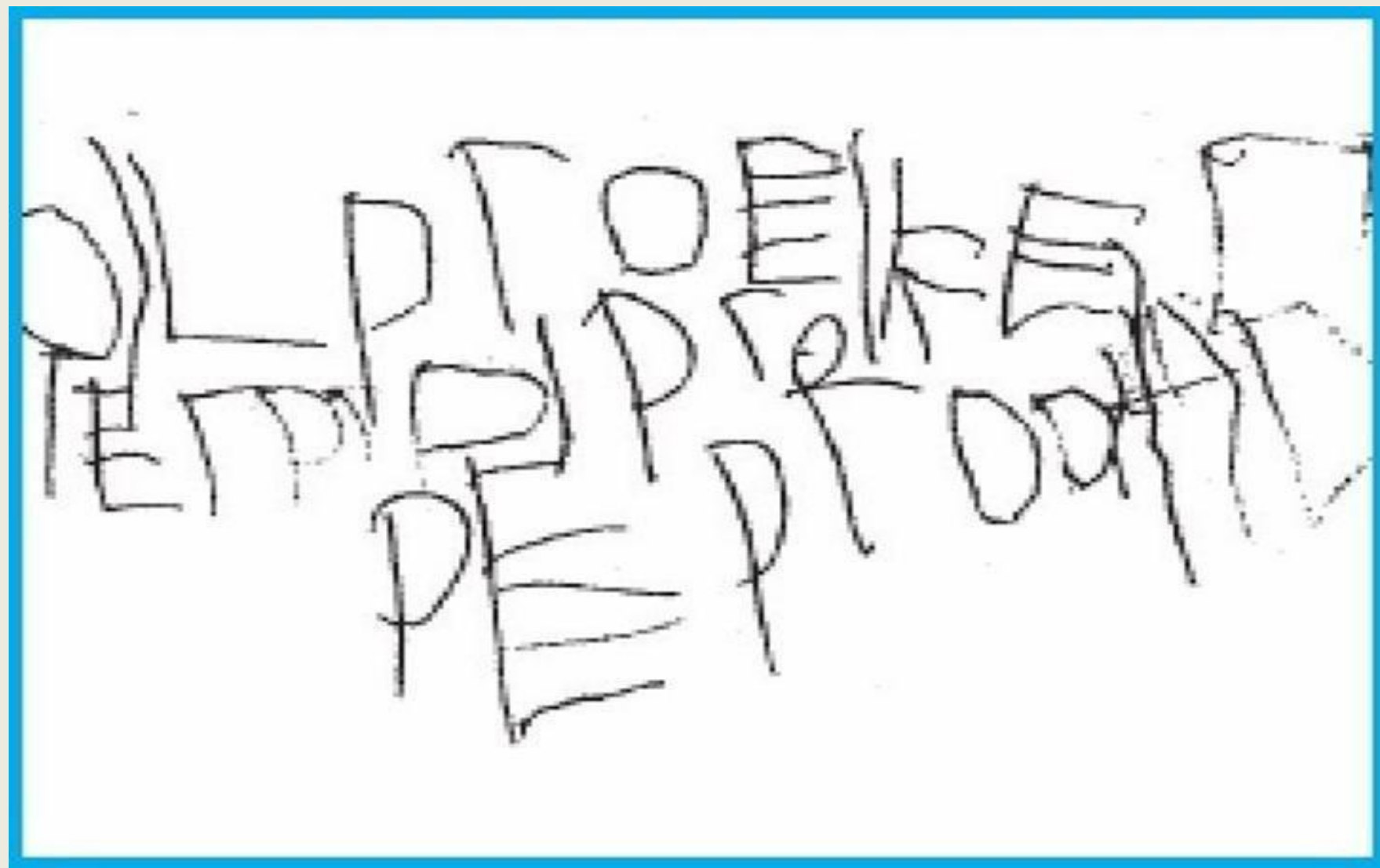
CHPFDPE3dP4  
NCrmS02+8/

7N60C2E1W6



Random  
letter  
strings





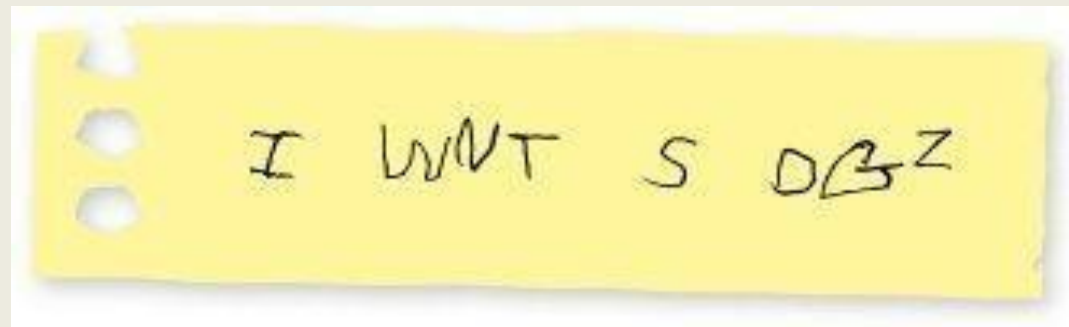


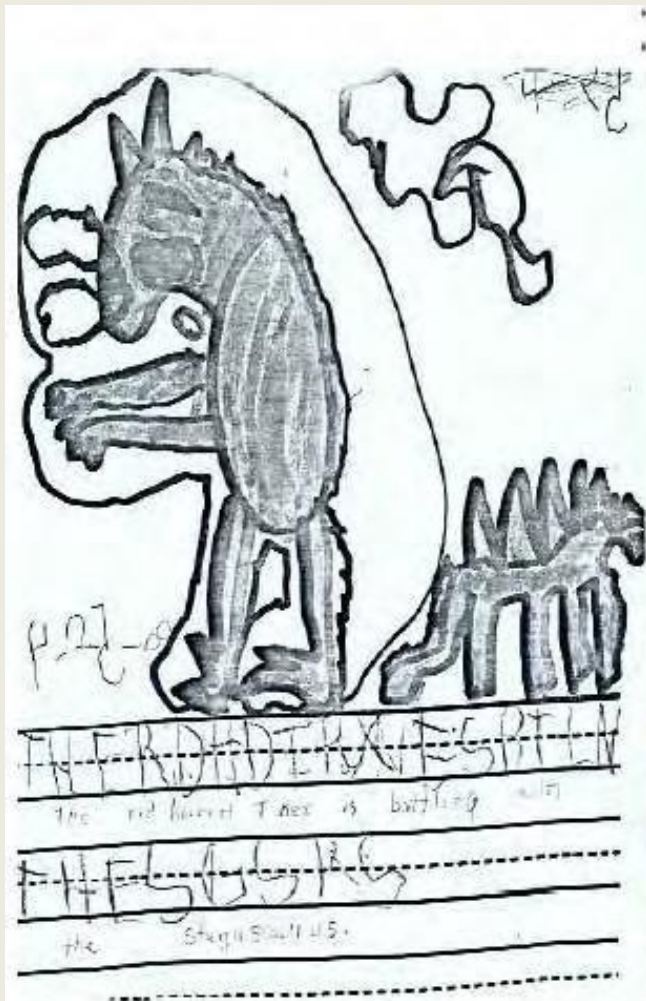


At this stage the child is using some letters to communicate meaning.

They may be able to represent some sounds correctly and in sequence.

They can hear and write the initial sounds in words.



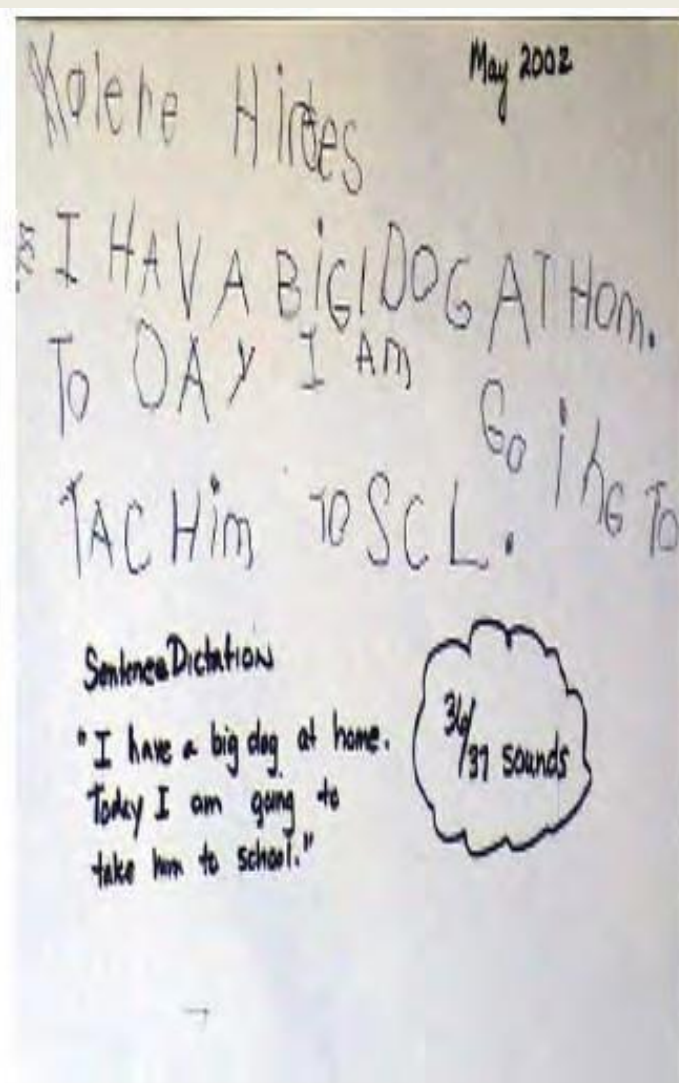


## Invented Spelling

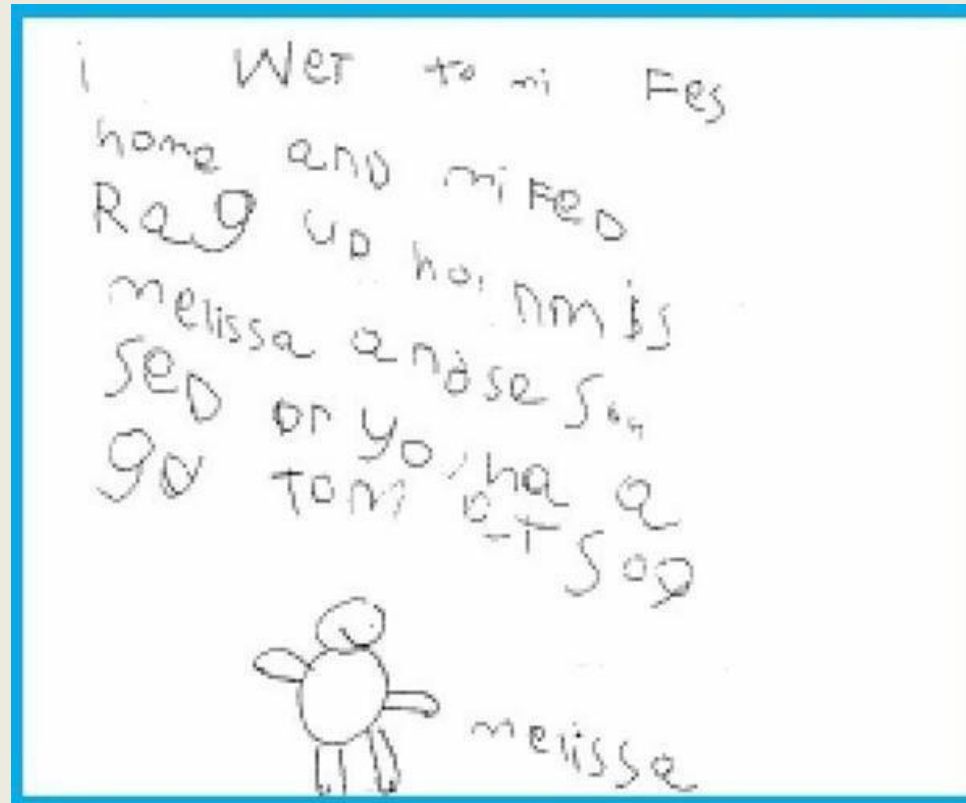




Conventional  
Spelling



This shows that they can hear and write words with initial, middle and final sounds.

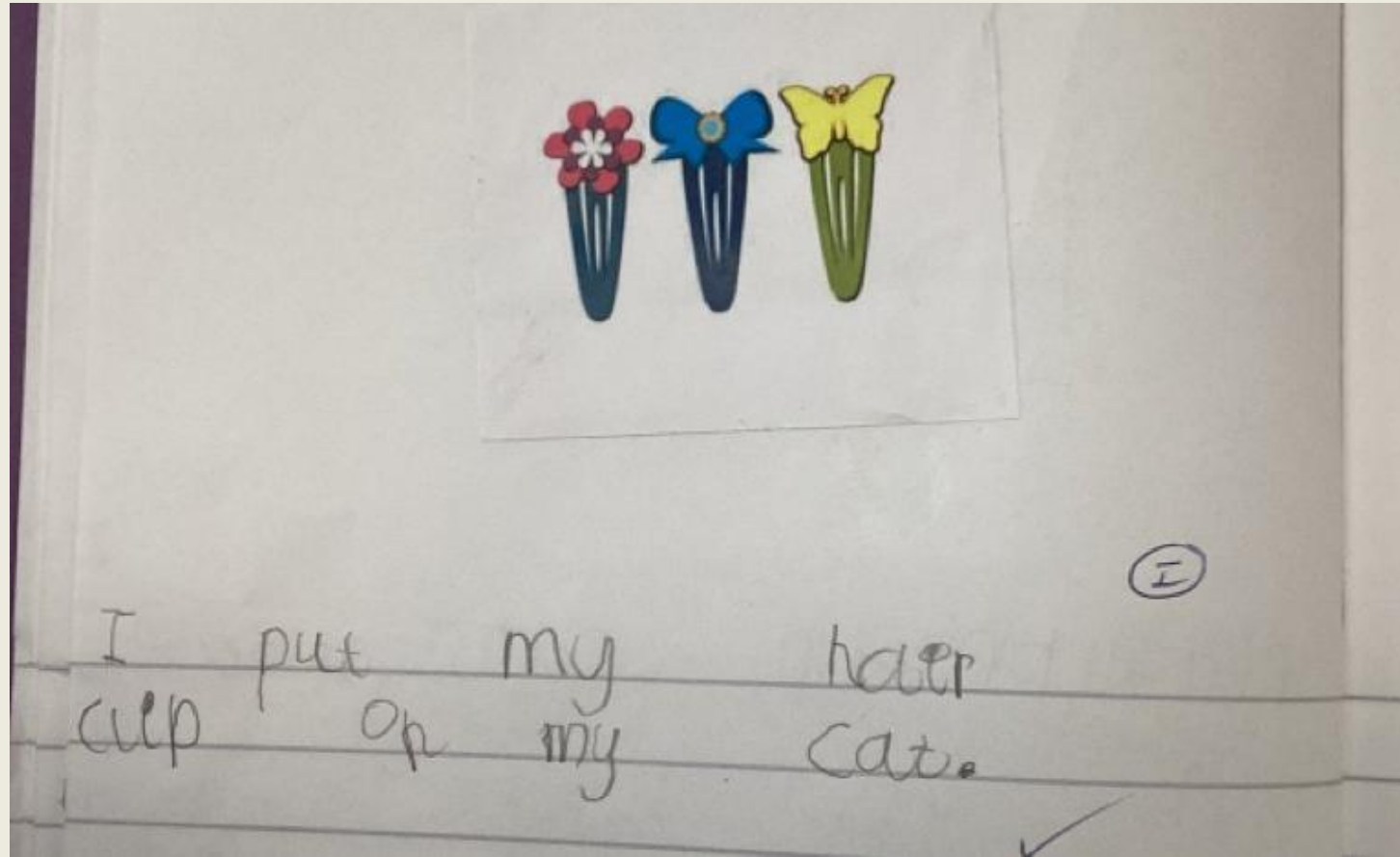




At this stage the child is using their phonics knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They can write sentences which can be read by others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.



They can also write some irregular common words. This writing meets the criteria for the Early Learning Goal in Writing which is the expected level for children at the end of Reception.





Thank you for coming to our EYFS  
Writing Parent Workshop. Any  
questions?

