



**Almondsbury**

Church of England Primary School

*Creating our Pathways*

# Drawing Club & Writing in Reception



# What are we going to cover?

- Mark making & emergent writing
- Secret symbols
- The Message Monster
- Drawing Club
- Pencil grips
- Letter formation
- Writing in the EYFS curriculum
- Supporting your child with writing at home





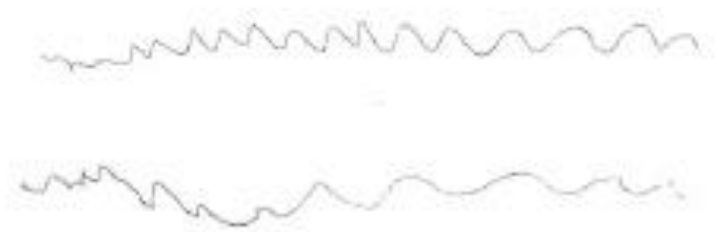
# What is Mark Making?

- Mark making in the Early Years is **when children start to intentionally create their own lines, patterns, or shapes using their bodies or tools**. It's the first step in a child's developmental journey towards writing and drawing, and is usually first seen in babies and toddlers.



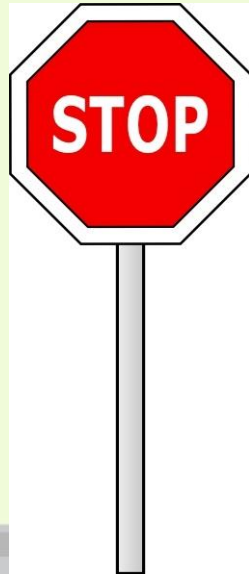
# What is Emergent Writing?

- Emergent writing is young children's first attempts at the writing process. Children as young as 2 years old begin to imitate the act of writing by creating drawings and symbolic markings that represent their thoughts and ideas.

<b>Drawing</b>	Drawings that represent writing	
<b>Scribbling</b>	Marks or scribbles the child intends to be writing	
<b>Wavy scribbles or mock handwriting</b>	Wavy scribbles that imitate cursive writing and have a left-to-right progression; child pretends to write words	

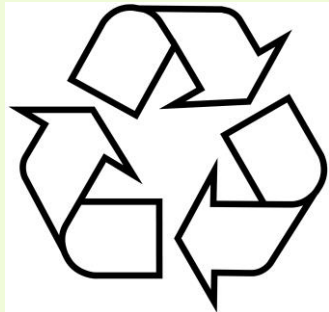


- Young children learn that writing has a purpose and that print is meaningful (i.e. it communicates ideas, stories, and facts).
- For example, young children become aware that the red street sign says *Stop* and the letters under the yellow arch spell *McDonald's*. They recognise that certain symbols, logos and markings have specific meanings.



# Symbols

- Symbols are all around us and are something we use as part of our everyday lives.
- Symbols communicate a message or an instruction. Do you recognise these?



# Secret Symbols

- To children, letters are symbols, until they learn what they are, they are just a series of lines, curves and dots.
- In Reception, we introduce ‘*Secret Symbols*’, these are any symbols which the children can draw/write, which can mean whatever their imaginations want them to be!
- *“Young children need to feel 3 things when they write and mark make: joy, purpose and magic.” Greg Bottrill*



# The Message Monster



- Earlier this week, the Message Monster came to visit Reception!
- The Message Monster communicates using '*Secret Symbols*'! The purpose of this is to encourage the children to mark-make and give meaning to what they have 'written'.
- Using '*Secret Symbols*' gives children the confidence to start mark making.
- Writing can and should be a positive experience. Children can so quickly become 'reluctant writers' so we need to make it fun, inviting and engaging.





# Secret Symbols & Messaging

- When you see a notification on your phone, it's hard to ignore it, you want to open it and see what it says.
- This is what we want children to feel when they are mark-making. We want them to be excited about making and receiving messages.
- A simple rebrand of 'writing' to 'messaging', offers both children and adults a delight in what might otherwise be a struggle.
- When 'messaging' takes off, the phrase 'reluctant writers' goes out the window! Children want to message – they love its simplicity and its warmth.



# The Message Centre

- In each of our Reception classrooms, we have '*The Message Centre*' which includes a variety of paper, notepads, envelopes, pencils, pens etc to encourage the children to draw and write.
- It is located in the centre of our classrooms so it can be linked into any area of the provision and is easily accessible.



# Drawing Club

- Each week in Reception we have a focus book.
- We introduce 8 key vocabulary words linked to the story. Each word has an action to help us remember the word.
- We complete Drawing Club 3 times a week:  
Day 1 – draw the character  
Day 2 – draw the setting  
Day 3 – I wonder ... question



# Drawing Club

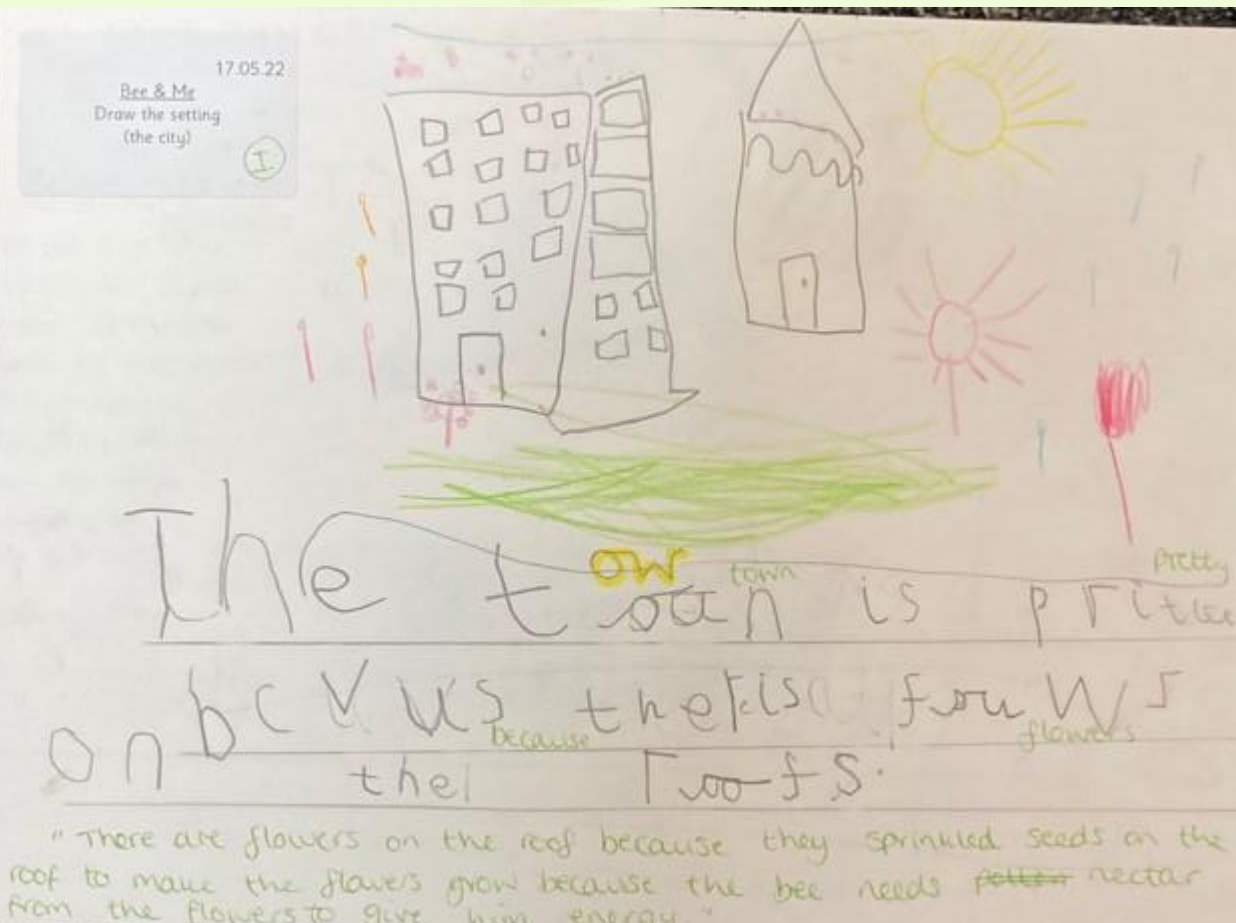
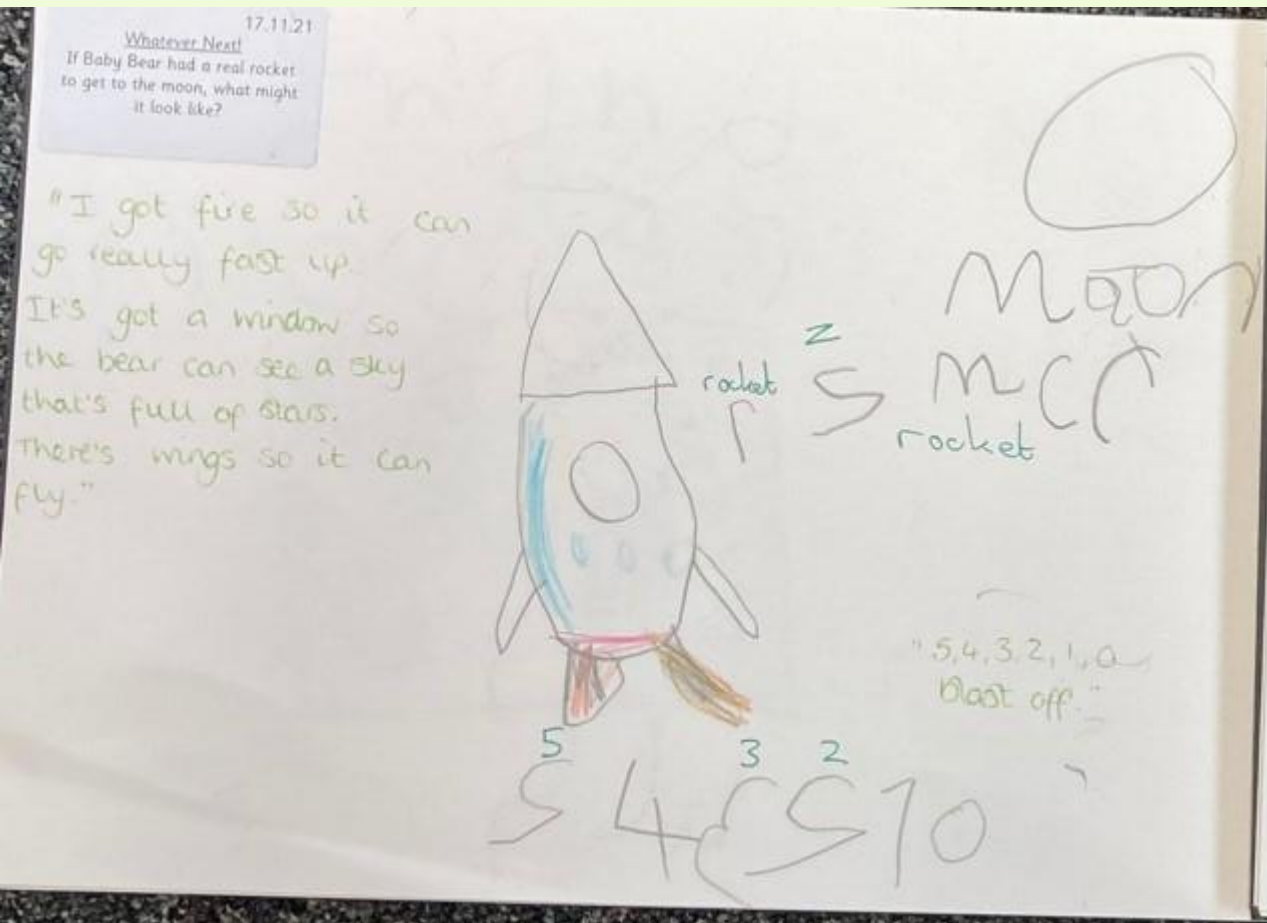
- The children are encouraged to add detail to their drawings and explain to the adults what they have drawn. The adult scribes this next to their pictures.
- We also encourage them to use '*Secret Symbols*' and introduce writing letters and words, when they are ready.
- By the end of the year, they will be drawing pictures and writing words and captions.

Words do not have to be spelt correctly, just phonetically plausible

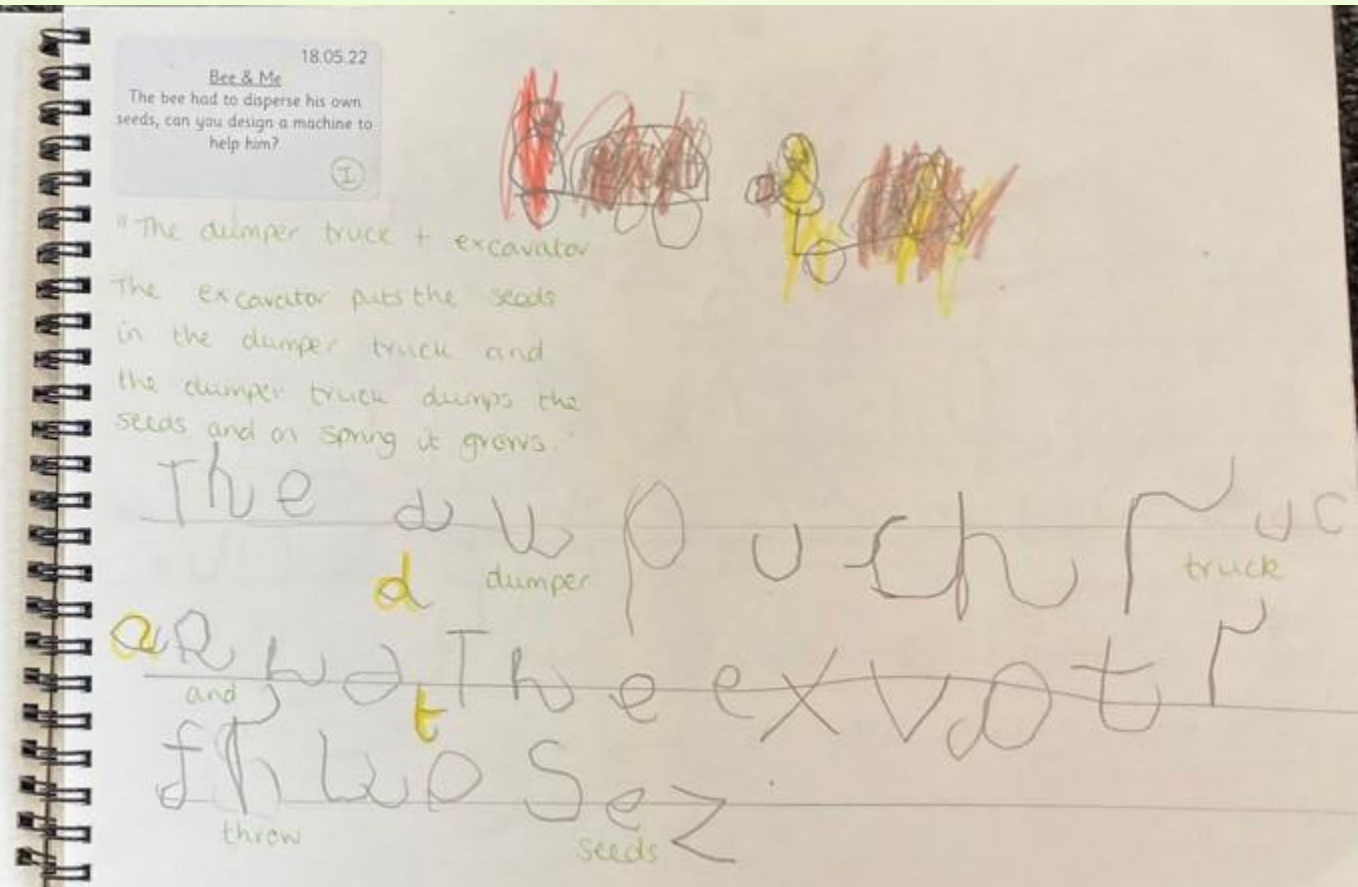
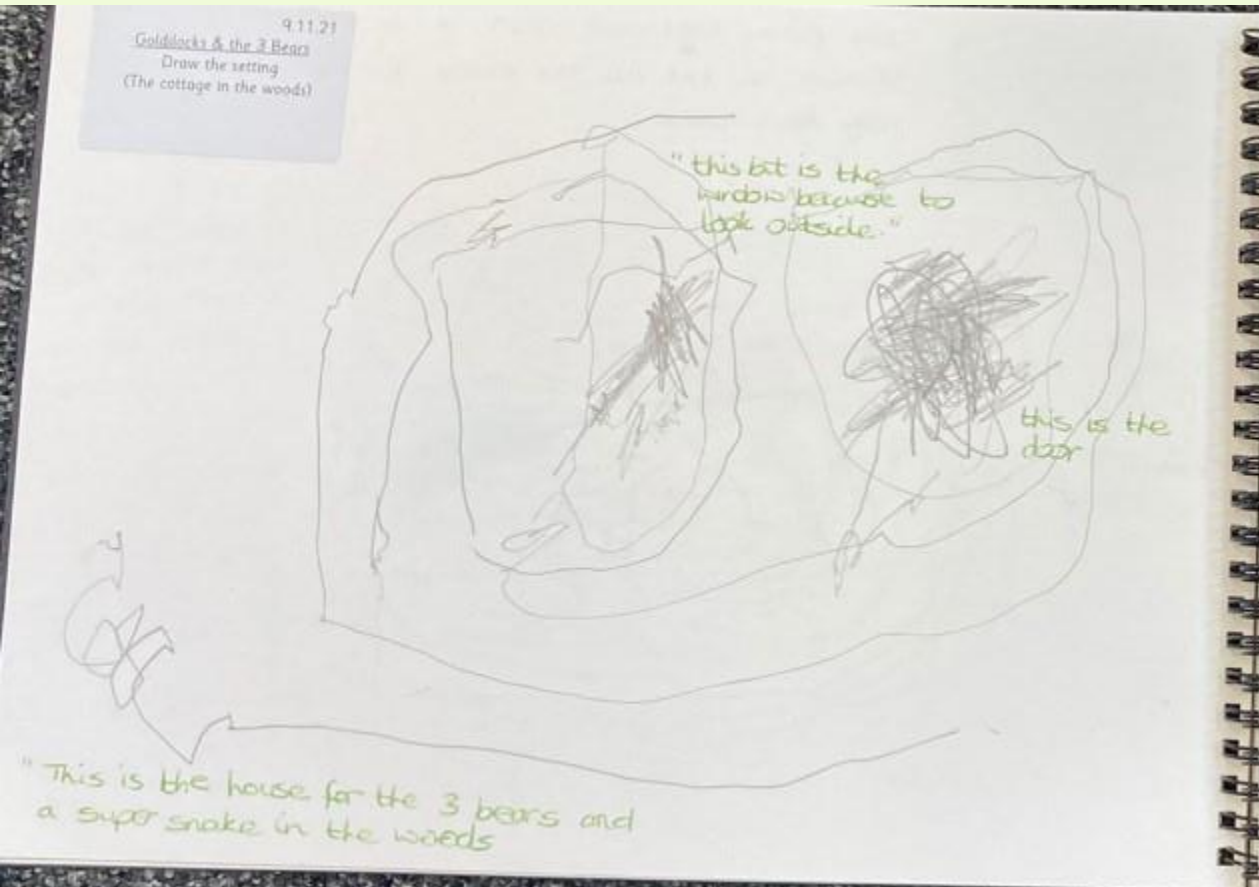




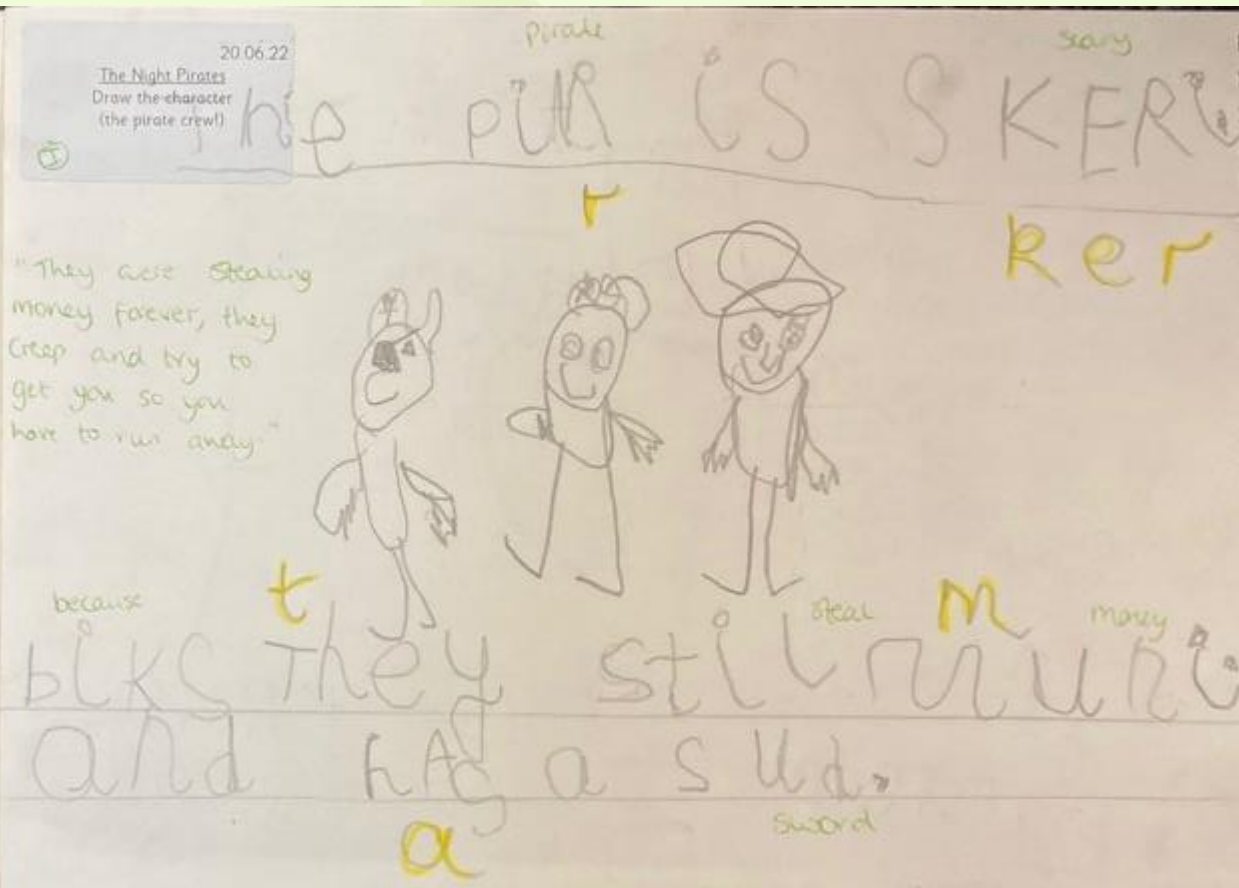
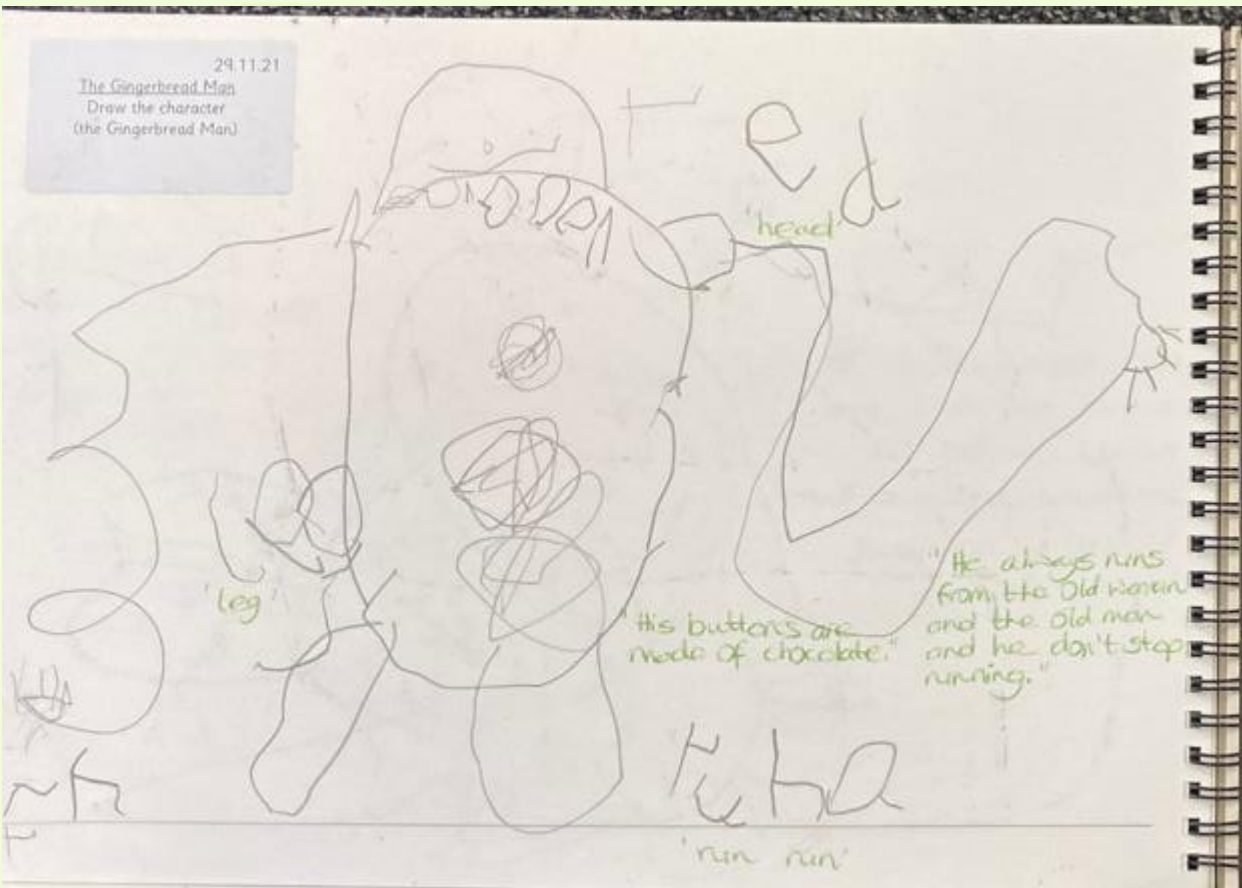
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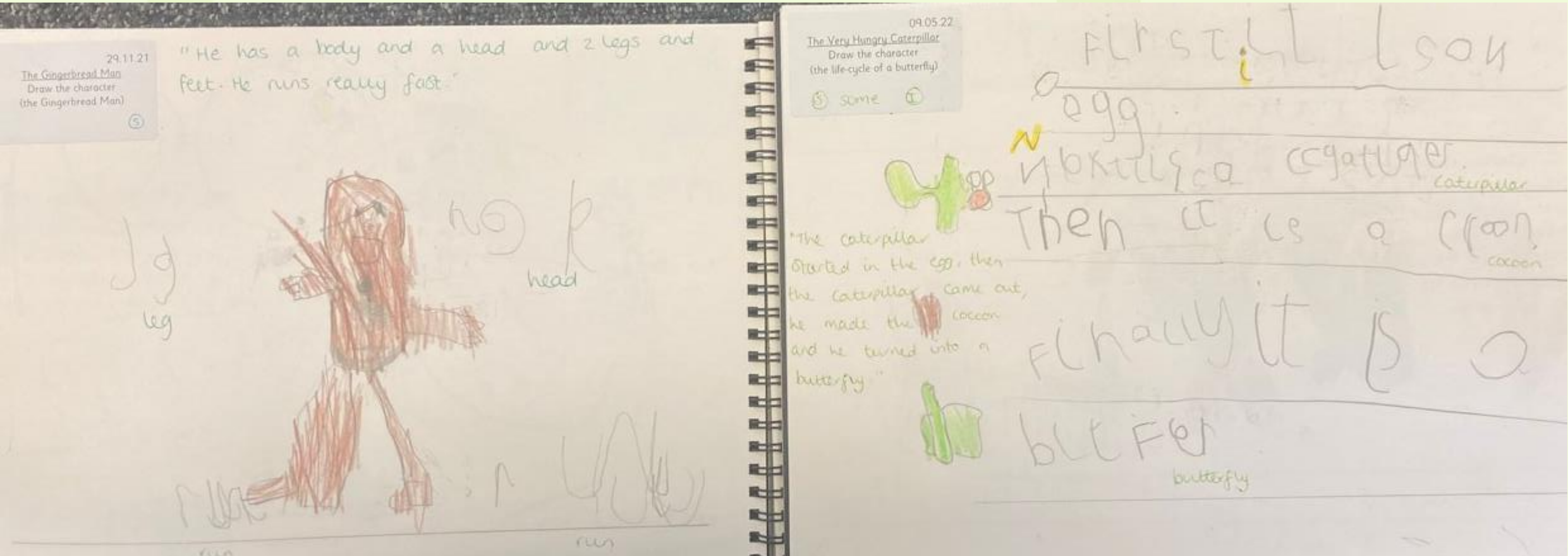


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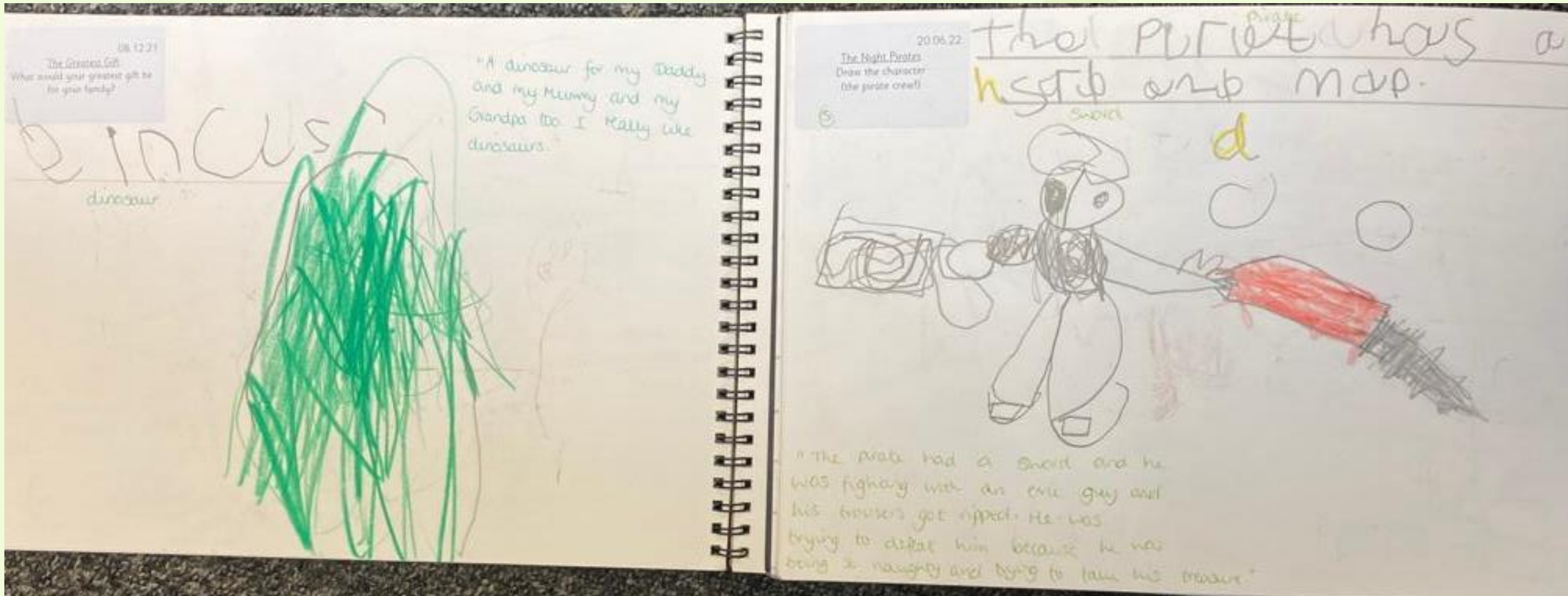


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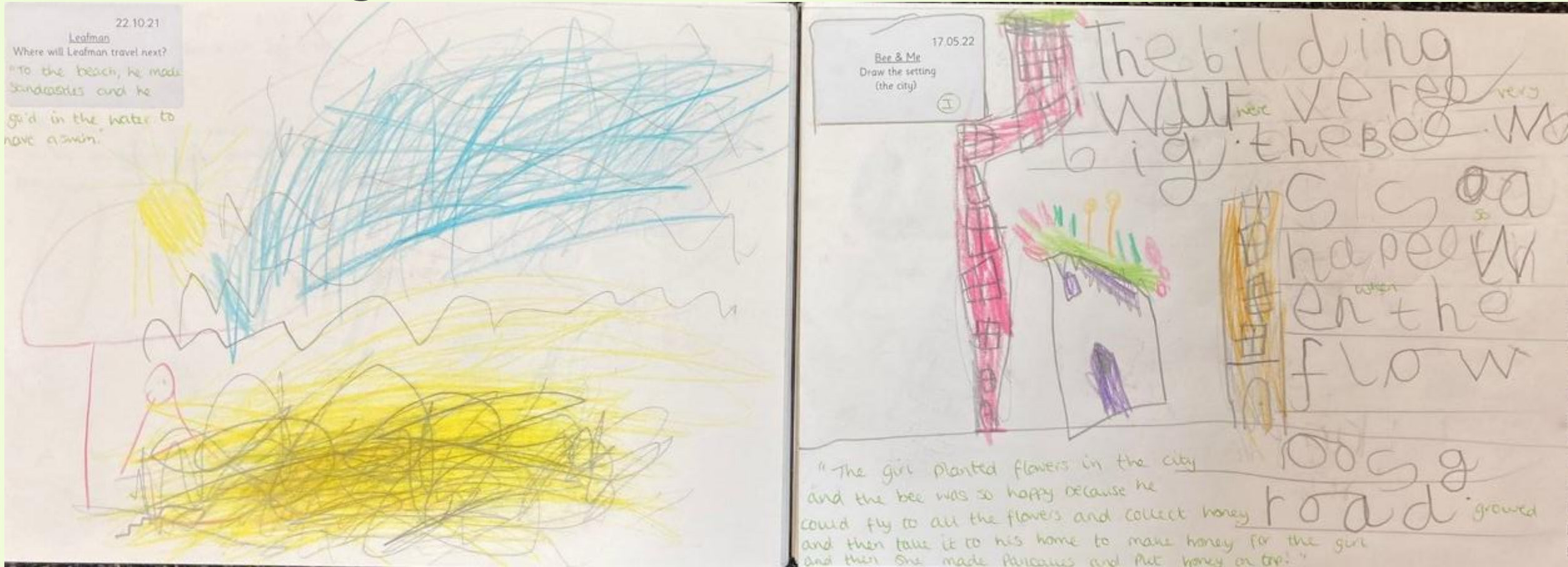




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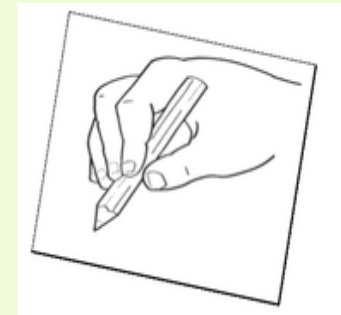




# Pencil Grips

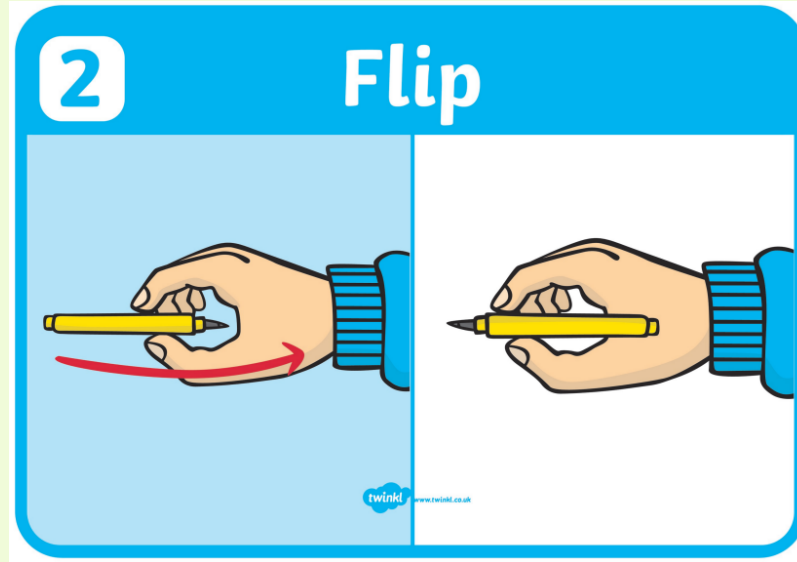
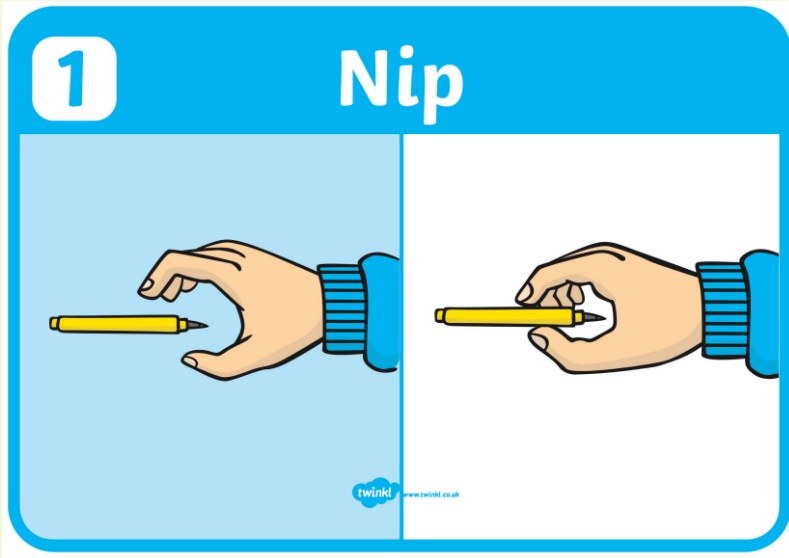
- According to their stage of development, children progress through stages of pencil grips. They will only be ready to grip a pencil in the most efficient grip (image 4) once they have developed the fine motor strength to do so.

By the end of Reception, most children will be using a tripod grip.



# How to hold a pencil

- Put the pen or pencil in front of your child with the nib facing them.
- Encourage them to pick up the pencil, in their preferred hand, with their fingers.
- Flip it back and grip it.





# Letter Formation

- It is important that your child is encouraged to hold a pencil correctly with the thumb and forefinger pinching the pencil and the third finger supporting underneath. Most children by now will automatically use their dominant hand but some may swap between right and left.
- Left handed children will find it helpful to sit slightly at an angle to the table and have their page also at an angle to see their writing.

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



# Early Learning Goals

Children at the expected level of development will:

## Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

## Writing

- 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.









# How to help at home

- Get messaging! Leave *Secret Symbols* around the house, in your child's bed, in their shoes, in their lunchbox! Send messages from their favourite toys e.g. a teddy, superhero etc. and encourage them to message back.
- Look for *Secret Symbols* whilst you are out and about, what do they mean?
- Get creative with mark making – use chalk, paint, mud, water, glitter, shaving foam, the possibilities are endless!
- When they are ready encourage them to form letters.
- Remember to write words phonetically, this will mean that some words are spelt incorrectly but that is ok! e.g. sinumu (cinema) sosij (sausage)



# Supporting your child with writing at home

You can use this spelling sequence with your children at home to support them with their writing.

- Say the word 
- Stretch the word 
- Segment the word 
- Blend the word 
- Count the sounds within the word 
- Say the whole word 

We also practise saying our sentences before we write them to make sure we write the sentence we have planned and to ensure it makes sense!





Thank you for coming, are there  
any questions?

