

Handwriting Progression Map



Letter-join 

EYES to Year 6 | Letter-join Scheme

School intent

At our school, we aim to develop confident, fluent and legible handwriting through a consistent, progressive approach based on the Letter-join handwriting scheme. Children will develop the physical skills, letter formation, joins, handwriting fluency and presentation skills needed to produce increasingly independent and well-presented written work.

Handwriting will be taught explicitly and practised regularly, with opportunities to apply skills across the curriculum.

Whole-school principles

- Follow the Letter-join teaching sequence and school-adopted letter style.
- Teach correct pencil grip, posture, letter formation and joins explicitly.
- Use appropriate Letter-join resources, including pre-writing patterns, letter formation activities, handwriting practice and digital resources where available.
- Reinforce correct formation and joining during English and wider curriculum writing.
- Provide appropriate adaptations and additional support for children who require them.
- Assess handwriting regularly and use observations to inform teaching and intervention.

Progression overview

Year group	Main handwriting focus
EYFS	Fine motor development, pre-writing patterns, pencil control and early letter formation
Year 1	Correct letter formation, lower-case and capital letters, numbers and introduction to joining
Year 2	Consistent letter formation, joining letters and developing fluent, legible handwriting
Year 3	Consolidating joins, increasing fluency and developing a consistent handwriting style
Year 4	Fluent, joined handwriting with accurate sizing, spacing and presentation
Year 5	Developing speed, stamina, personal style and appropriate presentation
Year 6	Consistently fluent, legible and adaptable handwriting for a range of purposes

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

Intent

To develop the physical control, coordination and confidence needed for handwriting, while introducing correct letter formation through purposeful and enjoyable activities.

Skills and knowledge

Physical development and pencil control

- Develop gross and fine motor control through a range of activities.
- Strengthen hand and finger muscles through dough, threading, tweezers, construction and other manipulative activities.

- Develop hand-eye coordination and controlled movements.
- Explore and use a range of writing tools and surfaces.
- Develop an appropriate pencil grip and comfortable writing posture.

Pre-writing patterns

- Make controlled marks, including vertical and horizontal lines.
- Draw circles, curves, zigzags, waves and spirals.
- Develop anti-clockwise and clockwise movements.
- Practise continuous patterns and controlled directional movements.

Letter formation

- Recognise and begin to form letters in their name.
- Develop awareness of lower-case and capital letters.
- Begin to form letters using the correct starting point and direction, following the school's Letter-join model.
- Develop consistency in the size and orientation of marks and letters.

Writing application

- Write or attempt to write their name.
- Give meaning to marks and drawings.
- Develop confidence in writing for different purposes, such as labels, lists, captions and messages.

Expected outcomes by the end of Reception

Children will increasingly demonstrate:

- Improved fine motor control and pencil manipulation.
- Greater control of writing tools and comfortable positioning.
- Ability to form many taught letters recognisably.
- Increasing consistency in letter formation and directionality.
- Ability to write their name and simple words, with support as appropriate.
- Positive attitudes towards writing and handwriting practice.

Assessment evidence

Observations, writing samples, name writing, letter formation activities, fine motor assessments and independent mark-making.

Year 1

Intent

To establish secure letter formation and develop the foundations of a consistent handwriting style, following Letter-join's teaching sequence.

Skills and knowledge

Letter formation

- Form lower-case letters correctly using the Letter-join model.
- Use the correct starting point and direction for each letter.
- Recognise and practise letter families with similar formation patterns.
- Form capital letters correctly.
- Form numerals 0-9 correctly.

Size and placement

- Develop awareness of letter height and relative size.
- Place letters on the line with increasing accuracy.
- Begin to distinguish between tall letters, short letters and letters with descenders.

Pencil control and posture

- Use a comfortable, effective pencil grip.
- Sit with an appropriate posture and position paper correctly.
- Develop control and accuracy when writing on lines and within spaces.

Joining

- Begin to understand the purpose of joining letters.

- Practise simple joining movements where introduced by the Letter-join sequence.
- Develop smooth movement between letters without compromising correct formation.

Application

- Write letters, words and simple sentences with increasing legibility.
- Apply correct formation when writing in English and other subjects.
- Develop confidence and independence in handwriting practice.

Expected outcomes by the end of Year 1

Children will increasingly be able to:

- Form lower-case letters and capital letters correctly.
- Form numerals accurately.
- Use appropriate starting points and letter direction.
- Place letters on the line and show increasing consistency in size.
- Write simple words and sentences legibly.
- Begin to join letters when taught and appropriate.

Assessment evidence

Letter formation sheets, dictated words, independent writing, handwriting books and teacher observations.

Year 2

Intent

To consolidate accurate letter formation and develop fluent, joined handwriting, enabling children to write legibly and confidently across the curriculum.

Skills and knowledge

Letter formation

- Maintain accurate formation of all lower-case and capital letters.
- Consolidate the correct formation of letters that are commonly reversed or incorrectly formed.
- Use consistent letter height, orientation and placement.

Joining

- Learn and practise the joins taught in the Letter-join sequence.
- Develop confidence with diagonal and horizontal joins.
- Understand which letters join and where joins are not appropriate.
- Ensure joins do not distort letter formation or reduce legibility.

Spacing and sizing

- Use consistent spacing between letters and words.
- Develop awareness of ascenders, x-height and descenders.
- Write letters of an appropriate relative size.
- Maintain writing on the line.

Fluency and application

- Develop a smooth, controlled writing movement.
- Increase writing speed gradually while maintaining legibility.
- Apply joined handwriting in sentences, longer pieces and cross-curricular work.
- Develop appropriate pencil pressure and stamina.

Expected outcomes by the end of Year 2

Children will increasingly be able to:

- Form letters accurately and consistently.
- Use taught joins appropriately and confidently.
- Produce legible, joined handwriting in most written tasks.
- Maintain consistent letter size, spacing and line placement.
- Write with increasing fluency and stamina.
- Recognise when a join is inappropriate or unnecessary.

Assessment evidence

Handwriting practice, dictated sentences, independent writing, curriculum books and periodic handwriting assessments.

Year 3

Intent

To consolidate the Letter-join handwriting style and develop increasing fluency, accuracy and consistency as children write for a range of purposes.

Skills and knowledge

Letter formation and joins

- Maintain accurate formation of all letters.
- Consolidate previously taught joins and address any gaps.
- Develop consistent entry and exit strokes.
- Use appropriate joins between letters and within words.
- Ensure joins remain smooth and do not affect legibility.

Letter size and placement

- Maintain consistent letter height and proportion.
- Use ascenders and descenders accurately.
- Keep writing appropriately positioned on the line.
- Develop consistent spacing between words and letters.

Fluency and speed

- Develop a more automatic handwriting movement.
- Increase writing speed without sacrificing legibility.
- Build stamina for longer writing tasks.
- Develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.

Application and presentation

- Apply handwriting skills across the curriculum.
- Present work clearly and neatly.
- Develop awareness of the audience and purpose of writing.
- Begin to recognise and correct errors independently.

Expected outcomes by the end of Year 3

Children will increasingly be able to:

- Write consistently in the school's adopted Letter-join style.
- Use taught joins accurately and fluently.
- Maintain consistent size, spacing and line placement.
- Produce legible handwriting at an appropriate pace.
- Apply handwriting skills independently in most curriculum writing.
- Identify and improve aspects of their own handwriting.

Assessment evidence

Handwriting books, extended writing, subject books, independent corrections and teacher assessment.

Year 4

Intent

To develop fluent, joined handwriting that is legible, well-proportioned and appropriately presented across a range of written tasks.

Skills and knowledge

Formation and joining

- Consistently form letters accurately.
- Use the full range of taught joins confidently.
- Maintain appropriate joins when writing at speed.
- Avoid unnecessary or awkward joins that affect clarity.

Consistency

- Maintain consistent letter height and proportions.
- Use accurate ascenders and descenders.
- Maintain clear word spacing and line placement.
- Develop consistent slant and overall handwriting appearance where appropriate to the school style.

Fluency and stamina

- Write with increasing automaticity and reduced hesitation.
- Maintain legibility during longer writing tasks.
- Develop efficient pencil movement and appropriate pressure.
- Sustain handwriting quality when recording ideas and completing extended work.

Presentation

- Produce well-presented work across the curriculum.
- Adapt handwriting size to fit different writing spaces.
- Use appropriate handwriting for titles, notes, labels and paragraphs.
- Develop independence in identifying and correcting presentation issues.

Expected outcomes by the end of Year 4

Children will increasingly be able to:

- Produce fluent and legible joined handwriting.
- Maintain consistent formation, joins, sizing and spacing.
- Write for sustained periods with appropriate stamina.
- Apply handwriting skills across all subjects.
- Present written work neatly and appropriately.
- Self-correct handwriting errors with increasing independence.

Assessment evidence

Extended writing, exercise books, handwriting practice, presentation across subjects and teacher moderation.

Year 5

Intent

To develop a fluent, efficient and increasingly individual handwriting style while maintaining the accuracy and legibility established through Letter-join.

Skills and knowledge

Fluency and efficiency

- Write fluently and confidently using joined handwriting.
- Increase speed appropriately for different writing demands.
- Maintain legibility when writing at pace.
- Develop stamina for extended writing and note-taking.

Consistency and personal style

- Maintain accurate letter formation and joins.
- Develop a consistent handwriting style that remains legible.
- Recognise and correct inconsistent sizing, spacing or formation.
- Make informed adjustments to handwriting when required.

Adaptability

- Adapt handwriting size and layout for different tasks.
- Use appropriate styles for formal work, notes, diagrams, labels and headings.
- Make sensible decisions about when joining is appropriate.
- Maintain clear presentation in different curriculum contexts.

Independence and presentation

- Take responsibility for the quality of handwriting.
- Review handwriting and improve presentation independently.
- Use handwriting skills consistently in all written work.
- Develop confidence in producing sustained, high-quality written outcomes.

Expected outcomes by the end of Year 5

Children will increasingly be able to:

- Write fluently, legibly and with increasing speed.
- Maintain a consistent joined handwriting style.
- Use appropriate spacing, sizing and line placement.
- Adapt handwriting to suit purpose, audience and available space.
- Sustain legibility during extended writing.
- Independently identify and improve handwriting presentation.

Assessment evidence

Independent writing, timed but purposeful handwriting tasks, curriculum books, note-taking and self-assessment.

Year 6

Intent

To ensure pupils leave primary school with fluent, legible, confident and adaptable handwriting, ready for the demands of secondary education.

Skills and knowledge

Fluency and legibility

- Consistently produce fluent, joined handwriting where appropriate.
- Maintain accurate letter formation and joins.
- Write efficiently and legibly at an appropriate pace.
- Sustain handwriting quality during extended tasks.

Presentation and adaptability

- Adapt handwriting size, spacing and layout for different purposes.
- Produce clear and well-presented work across the curriculum.
- Use handwriting appropriately for formal writing, notes, diagrams, labels and examinations.
- Maintain legibility when writing quickly or under time constraints.

Independence and personal responsibility

- Identify and correct errors in formation, joining, sizing and spacing.
- Take pride in the presentation of written work.
- Demonstrate a consistent and effective personal handwriting style.
- Understand that clarity and legibility are more important than decorative style.

Transition to secondary school

- Develop confidence in recording ideas independently and efficiently.
- Demonstrate the stamina required for longer written tasks.
- Apply handwriting skills without constant adult prompting.

- Be prepared to adapt to different writing expectations and formats in secondary school.

Expected outcomes by the end of Year 6

Children will increasingly be able to:

- Produce consistently fluent and legible handwriting.
- Use joined handwriting confidently and appropriately.
- Maintain accurate formation, sizing, spacing and line placement.
- Write at an appropriate pace while preserving legibility.
- Adapt presentation for different purposes and audiences.
- Independently review and improve handwriting quality.
- Demonstrate the handwriting skills and stamina required for secondary education.