

## Handwriting Progression Map 2025-2026

### Teaching sequence in handwriting

#### **Ready to write routines - applicable to all year groups**

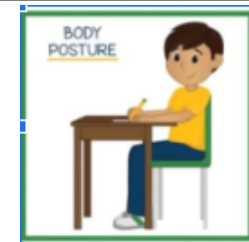
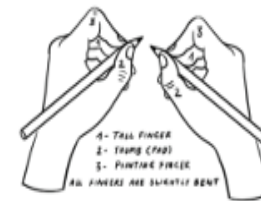
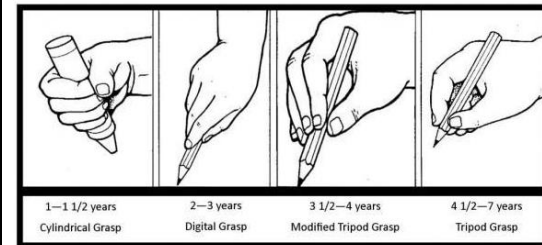
**Pencil grip:** The development of a tripod grasp. In all year groups we remind children to use the appropriate grasp when writing and support them to progress to the next developmental stage.

**Posture:** Children are taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet flat on the floor, their chair tucked in and their bottom at the back of the seat.

**Position of paper:** Pencil in one hand and the other hand on the paper. Left handed children are encouraged to tilt their paper slightly to the right to improve their view of what they are writing and to reduce smudging. Right handed children may find it helpful to tilt the paper slightly to the left. Paper is steadied with the 'free' hand.

#### **Sequence that is followed (not necessarily seen in all lessons for all children):**

Body posture  
Hand and finger strengthening exercises  
Pencil grip  
Patterns  
Over teacher's writing  
Under teacher's writing (line below)  
Independence



Paper positioning for right-handers:



Paper positioning for left-handers:



#### **The four letter families and order they are taught from year 1:**

**Curly Caterpillar Letters:** c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s

**Ladder Letters:** l, i, t, u

**One-Armed Robot Letters:** r, b, n, h, m, k, p

**Zigzag Monster Letters:** v, w, x, z

#### **These are the four main joins and order that are taught and examples of the joins:**

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders (baseline to x-height line) e.g. ai, ar, un, am, ear, aw, ir, hu, ti, ki, du, up, ag, fe, fu

**More complex letters from the 4 families:** f, j, y

**Digits** 0-9

**Capital Letters** A-Z

Capital letters do not join to lower-case letters, they are the same height and sit on the line.

2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders (baseline up to ascender) e.g. ab, ul, it, ib, if, ub, th, ck, ch, it, ft, fl
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders (x-height line to the x-height) e.g. ou, vi, wi, op, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders (x-height line up to ascender) e.g. ob, ol, wh, it, of, rt, rk

Joined handwriting is not taught until pupils have mastered print handwriting.

Curly Caterpillar Letters

c a o d g q e s

Ladder Letters

l i t u

One-Armed Robot Letters

r b n h m k p

Zigzag Monster Letters

v w x z

More complex letters from  
the four families  
f j y

Curly Caterpillar Letters

c a o d g q e s

Ladder Letters

l i t u

One-Armed Robot Letters

r b n h m k p

Zigzag Monster Letters

v w x z

More complex letters  
from the four families  
f j y

**Links to phonic knowledge and development**

As children begin learning phonemes through ELS the corresponding grapheme card will be shown to introduce the mnemonic. Say the mnemonic while modelling how to draw the grapheme on the grapheme card. For example, for 'k for kid': Down the body, up the arm, down the leg. Learning the mnemonic helps remind them of the pictures and symbols that demarcate the sounds. Children learn to write letters using their fingers in the air, on their arm and on the carpet in front of them whilst saying the mnemonic. The mnemonics and rhymes are used to assist children with correct letter formation. They write it on their white board before sitting at a table and writing the letter in their workbooks.



### EYFS Handwriting

*Handwriting instruction should start at the beginning of reception, alongside phonics, and continue throughout the reception year and beyond. Handwriting teaching and practice should be in addition to phonics teaching and should begin at the start of the reception year.*

*Teaching should then progress to specific handwriting lessons and practice. This might initially include systematic teaching of and practice in moving the pencil to master the horizontal, diagonal, vertical and circular strokes needed for writing. It should progress to teaching letter formation, focusing on where to start each letter, the direction of formation, its shape, position and, later on, its spacing relative to other letters.*

*Activities, such as threading, playing with water, using tweezers, and cutting with scissors, can also be beneficial for handwriting. (The Writing Framework 2025).*

Pupils are taught to (Reception year. **ELG**):

- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- **Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;**
- **Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.**

Number formation and writing the numerals in order is also covered over the year, as learned about within and matched to the maths planning.

From the first week of Reception, children are taught how to write graphemes correctly. During the Teach section of ELS lessons, the teacher models how to form the grapheme for the new sound and children practise writing it. Children learn to write letters using their fingers in the air, on their arm and on the carpet in front of them whilst saying the mnemonic. The mnemonics and rhymes are used to assist children with correct letter formation. They write it on their white board before sitting at a table and writing the letter in their workbooks. Throughout the day, teachers should give children the opportunity to practise letter formation.

Autumn 1						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Home visits	s,a,t,p,	i,n,m,d,	g,o,c,k	ck,e,u,r	ss	h,b,f,ff,l,ll
Children start	A	I, the, no	put, of, is	to, go, into,	Review	as, his, pull
	Baseline	Baseline				
Focus on mark making and developing fine motor skills through a range of activities (such as: in sand, glitter, cornflour, shaving foam) Teach the correct seating position Pencil grip Tracing patterns CC Letters: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s Learn to write name (copy)						
Autumn 2						
j,v,w,x	y,zz,qu,ch	sh,the,ng,kn	ai,ee,igh,oa	Review	Review	Review
he, she, buses	we, me, be	push, to, go, into, pull, drank, pushing	was, her			
Teaching the correct seating position Pencil grip Tracing patterns CC Letters: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s (recap as needed) L Letters: l, i, t, u Learn to write name Learn to write simple words Use the line on a page or whiteboard as a guide when forming letters						

Spring 1						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
oo Review my, you	ar,ur,oo,ar they, all, are, dresses	ow,oi,ear,air down, was, her, we, me, be, my, you	ure,er,ow Review ball, tall, brushes	Review when, what	Review	
L Letters: l, i, t, u (recap as needed) OR Letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p Digits 0-9 Write name using the correctly formed lower case letters with a capital at the beginning						
Spring 2						
Review said, so, have	Review were, out, like	Review some, come, there	Review little, one, do	Review children, love		
OR Letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p (recap as needed) ZM Letters: v, w, x, z Digits 0-9 Write name independently using the correctly formed lower-case letters with a capital at the beginning						

Summer 1						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Review	Review	Review	Review	Review	Review	
Capital letters Straight lines: L, F, E, I, T, H	Capital letters Straight lines and a curve: P, B, R, D, U, J	Capital letters Curved lines: C, O, Q, G, S	Capital letters Diagonal lines: V, W, X, Y, Z	Capital letters Diagonal lines: N, M, A, K		
ZM Letters: v, w, x, z (recap as needed) More complex letters: f, j, y Begin to use and apply in writing activities with some independence						
Summer 2						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
ay,ou,ie,ea oh, their, little	oy,ir,ue,aw people, Mr, Mrs	wh,ph,ew,oe your, ask, should	au,ey,a-e,e-e would, could, asked	Review house, mouse, water	i-e,o-e,u-e,c want, very	
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters CC Letters: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s L Letters: l, i, t, u OR Letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p ZM Letters: v, w, x, z More complex letters: f, j, y Use and apply in writing activities with independence						



## **Year 1**

Pupils are taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly;
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place;
- form capital letters;
- form digits 0-9;
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

To join letters easily and legibly, pupils first need to form the shape of each letter correctly, starting and finishing each one at the correct point and ensuring that its size is properly related to other letters in the same family.

	Autumn 1						
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
ELS			ay,ou,ie,ea	oy,ir,ue,aw		wh,ph,ew,oe	
School	Consolidation of letter formation of <b>lower-case</b> letters - to be covered through assessment, free writing and discrete sessions CC Letters: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s L Letters: l, i, t, u OR Letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p ZM Letters: v, w, x, z More complex letters: f, j, y Use and apply in writing activities						
	Autumn 2 - from this point integrate teaching of capital letters alongside lower case						
ELS	au,ey,a-e,e-e please, once	i-e,o-e,u-e,c any, many, again	y, al (walk) who, whole	where, two			
School	<b>Curly caterpillar letters</b>  Cc Aa once Amphill	<b>Curly caterpillar letters</b>  Oo Dd of do a	<b>Curly caterpillar letters</b>  Gg Qq go ask	<b>Curly caterpillar letters</b>  Ee Ss said says	<b>Digits 0-9</b> she school	<b>Consolidation</b> there by	<b>Consolidation</b> are

	Spring 1						
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	
ELS		a, ey, ea, eigh, e, i, y	o, a, u, ch, ea here, sugar, friend	or, ear, ou, oil, ie, ve, y because		are, ere, ear, tch	
School	Ladder Letters  Ll li  love I is	Ladder letters  Tt Uu  the to	One armed robot letters  Rr Bb here friend	One armed robot letters  Nn Hh his	One armed robot letters  Mm Kk me my	Digits 0-9  Consolidation  has no	
	Spring 2						
ELS	o	g, ge, dge, st	ce, se, gn, kn, wr, mb	se, ze, eer, ere, ti, tion		al, augh, ss, si, ti, ci, ous, ion, ian	
School	One armed robot letters (continued)  Pp put push pull	Zigzag Monster letters  Vv Ww was we	Zigzag Monster letters  Xx Zz where our	Digits 0-9  Learn to write surname independently  come, some	Consolidation  were house		



## Year 2

Pupils are taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another;
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined; (include teaching of lead ins and lead outs)
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters;
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

**CEW to added according to new spelling scheme:** door, floor, poor, because, find, kind, mind, behind, child, children\*, wild, climb, most, only, both, old, cold, gold, hold, told, every, everybody, even, great, break, steak, pretty, beautiful, after, fast, last, past, father, class, grass, pass, plant, path, bath, hour, move, prove, , sure, , eye, could, should, would, who, whole, any, many, clothes, busy, people, water, , half, money, Mr, Mrs, parents, Christmas

Autumn 1						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Handwriting baseline assessment for letter formation	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders ai, ar	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders un, am	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders ear, aw	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders ir, hu	Consolidation	Consolidation
Autumn 2						
Digits 0-9	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders ti, ki	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders du, up	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders ag, fe	Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders fu	Consolidation	Consolidation

Spring 1						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
<b>Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders</b>  ab, ul	<b>Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders</b>  it, ib	<b>Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders</b>  if, ub	<b>Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders</b>  th, ck	<b>Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders</b>  ch, it	<b>Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders</b>  ft, fl	
Spring 2						
<b>Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders</b>  ou, vi	<b>Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders</b>  wi, op	<b>Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders</b>  ow, ov	<b>Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders</b>  ri, ru	<b>Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders</b>  ve, we, re		

Summer 1						
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders ob, ol	Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders wh, it	Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders of, rt,	Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders rk	Consolidation	Consolidation	
Summer 2						
Consolidation Recap on the 4 basic joins Recap on specific joins to ensure children are writing in a fluent style						

## Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined;
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).

Teaching will focus on developing **speed and consistency**, especially in size and direction. Children should be expected to write cursively across the curriculum, and build up pace by being given targets to improve upon each time. Within key stage 2, children develop the use of joined handwriting throughout their independent writing.