

St. John's Church of England Infant and Nursery School



Handwriting Policy

Statement of Intent

As a church school everything we do is rooted in our Christian values. At St. John's we teach the children about these core values: Love, respect, honesty, forgiveness, friendship, courage, cooperation, peace, perseverance, trust, patience and understanding.

This is reflected in all our relationships between staff, children, parents, governors and the local community. It is reflected in how we teach, what and how our pupils learn within and beyond the classroom.

These values are fundamental in the implementation of this policy to ensure that we maintain our distinctive Christian character of which we are proud.

Handwriting Policy	
Written by:	James Forrester
Date:	05.02.2026
Approved by:	LGB
Date:	30.04.26
Review frequency:	Every three years
Target Audience:	All Stakeholders

The governing body shall conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. St John's CE Nursery and Infant School is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. These factors were considered in the formation and review of this policy and will be adhered to in its implementation and application across the whole school community. At St. John's CE Infant and Nursery School we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards as the pupils take pride in their learning and have a sense of ownership.

Handwriting is a skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. Children will be taught skills needed to develop the ability to produce fluent, legible and eventually speedy joined up handwriting. Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims:

- To raise standards in writing across the school.
- To have a consistent approach across both Foundation Stage and Key Stage One when teaching handwriting and the written presentation of learning throughout the school.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- To develop skills that will support children in developing neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using letters formed ready to join.
- To ensure all children, where appropriate, use the tri-pod pencil grip.

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Nursery

In Nursery, handwriting begins long before children hold a pencil correctly. It develops through a wide range of gross motor activities that strengthen shoulders, arms, and core muscles. Children will develop these skills through activities such as climbing, balancing, large-scale mark making, painting on easels and outdoor play. These movements build the stability and coordination needed for controlled hand movements. Alongside this, fine motor activities like threading beads, using tweezers, playdough modelling, cutting with scissors and using a range of mark making tools help strengthen the small muscles in the hands and fingers. Together, these experiences develop hand-eye coordination, grip strength and control, providing the essential foundations for confident and fluent handwriting.



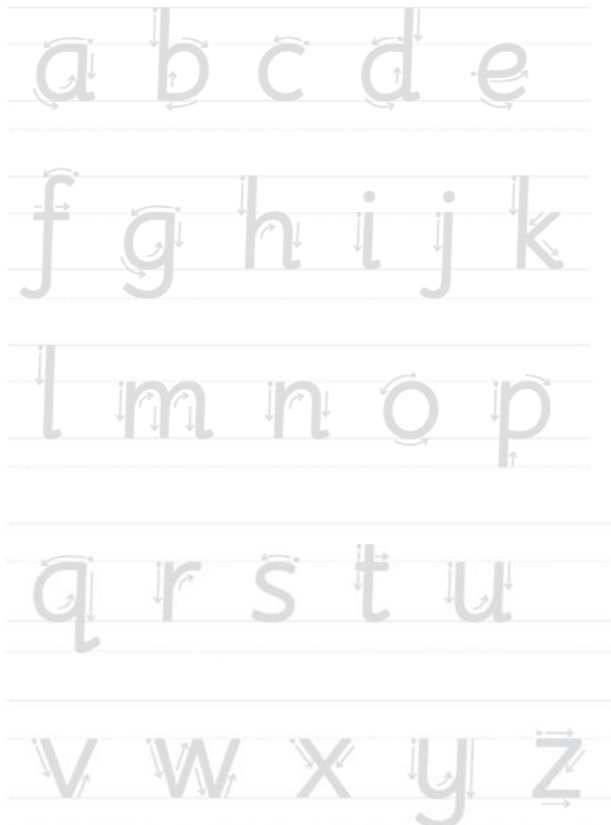


Sequence of a Handwriting Session in Reception and Year 1

In Reception, explicit adult group led handwriting sessions take place from the second week of the autumn term. They follow the lesson sequence of:

1. Warm Up (See Appendix 6 for strategies)
2. Introduce the letter and formation phrase.
3. Form the letter in the air.
4. Form the letter on the palm of the hand.
5. Trace the mnemonic with a finger.
6. Write the letter.

Formation of lowercase letters:



Formation of uppercase letters:

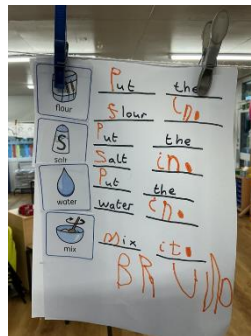
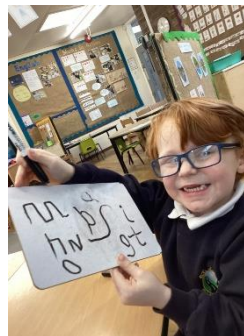


Reception

Teachers ensure that the child is ready to write focusing on the 4 P's (posture, pencil grip, paper position and pressure – see Appendix 2). Handwriting has a focus during adult led activities throughout the school day and on whiteboards during phonics. All children and teachers use the Little Wandle formation phrases in addition to the Little Wandle Sequence of writing a letter (as seen above).

During Active Learning, children practise correct letter formation through engaging activities that develop both gross and fine motor skills. Large-scale mark making and movement activities build core and shoulder strength, while dough, threading, cutting, and guided writing strengthen finger control and pencil grip—supporting accurate, confident handwriting.

During Active Learning, children take part in activities that allow practise of letter formations and gross and fine motor skills. Teachers also support in developing the tripod pencil grip. Teachers are vigilant to ensure that correct habits are being practised. The specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. Children have daily 'busy finger' activities to encourage fine motor skill development to support in the development of skills needed for handwriting.



Year 1

In Year 1, during the transitional phase, adult led groups focus on handwriting while the others complete a task through active learning based on fine motor skills every day. After the transitional phase, whole class handwriting will take place once a week for half an hour. All explicit handwriting lessons must be completed in a book with handwriting lines as seen below (Figure 2). The sessions will follow the sequence as mentioned above, also ensuring the 4 P's are established (see Appendix 2).

Teachers ensure that letter families are taught (see Appendix 3). English books at the beginning of the year are with wide lines acknowledging the needs to avoid for cognitive overload (Figure 1). Once a child is able to start and finish the lower-case letters in the correct place, then the child moves onto handwriting lines (Figure 2). Formation misconceptions are addressed during lessons when working with an adult, so the adult can model letter formation and ensure that practice correctly forms letters. Handwriting and letter formation is of high priority when writing in all subjects. Additional interventions take place for children who are displaying misconceptions with letter formations.

English books for Year 1

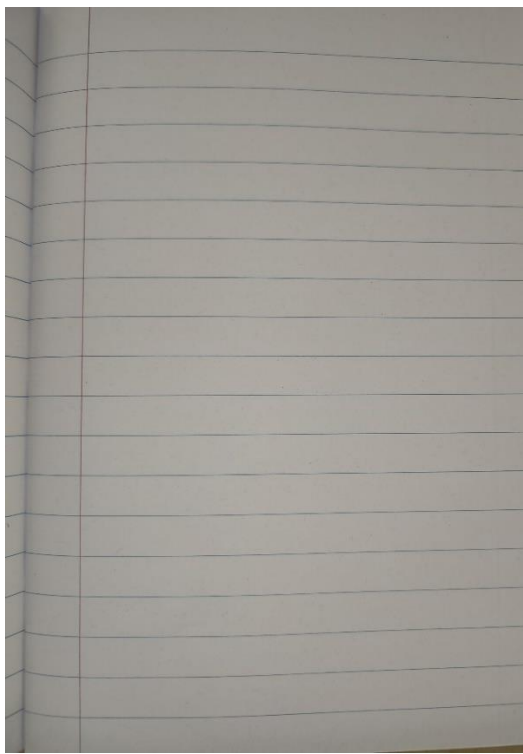


Figure 1



Figure 2

Year 2

In Year 2, whole class handwriting lessons take place once a week. Teachers ensure that the 4P's (see Appendix 2) are secure. Teachers also ensure that letter families are retaught (see Appendix 3). Formation misconceptions are addressed during lessons. English lessons are completed in books with handwriting lines as seen below (Figure 3). Once a child displays consistent accuracy with their letter formation, they are taught how to join from the two main joining points (see Appendix 1). Capital letters should never be joined. In addition, they start using English books with standard lines as seen below (Figure 4). Letter formation misconceptions are addressed during lessons and practised by the child. Interventions are put in place for any who still are not secure with letter formation.

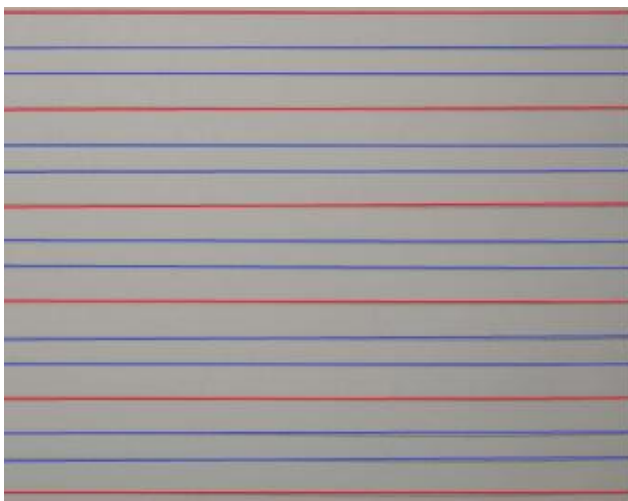


Figure 3

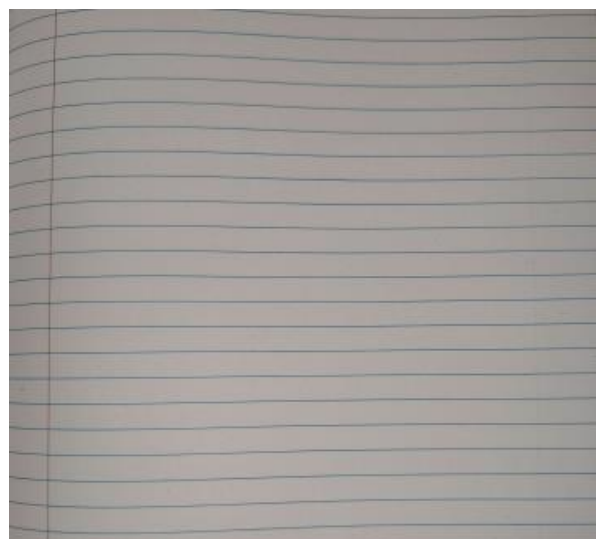


Figure 4

Continuity and Progression

Formal handwriting is taught in differentiated groups, organised by different needs, acknowledging that handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth. Progression in development skills in handwriting will be through:

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation.
2. Letter formation using Little Wandle rhymes and font to support modelling and teaching.
3. Beginning to join
4. Securing joins
5. Practising speed and fluency
6. Presentation skills

Left-Handed Children

Each left-handed child is identified and closely monitored by the class teacher to ensure success. The following guidelines are useful to help left-handed children.

- The writing surface and chair need to be suitable for the child's own height.
- The child needs to sit towards the left of their partner leaving plenty of space for writing on the left side of his/her – midline (this allows maximum space for arm movement)
- The writing paper needs to be to the left of the child's body midline.
- The paper needs to be tilted up to 32 degrees in a clockwise direction.
- A writing tool which moves smoothly across the paper needs to be used.
- The paper needs to be supported with the right hand.
- To avoid smudging, the writing forearm needs to be parallel with the paper edge as the child writes.
- The writing tool needs to be held sufficiently far from its point to ensure that the child can see what he/she is writing.

Equal Opportunities

Educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, background and attainment, including special needs or disability. We believe that every child is entitled to receive high quality handwriting experiences. We expect every child to be able to learn effectively in a safe, secure and respectful environment.

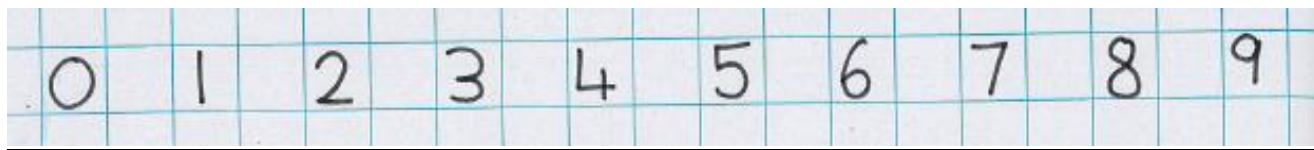
Handwriting will be inclusive of all children. It is taught at a level appropriate to the age, ability and experience of the pupils and is therefore accessible to all. Children with more complex needs in this area may need additional support as recommended by the school's SENCo and/or Inclusion Leader.

Useful links:

[Pencil grip for handwriting \(teachhandwriting.co.uk\)](http://teachhandwriting.co.uk)

[Writing difficulties \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](http://hertfordshire.gov.uk)

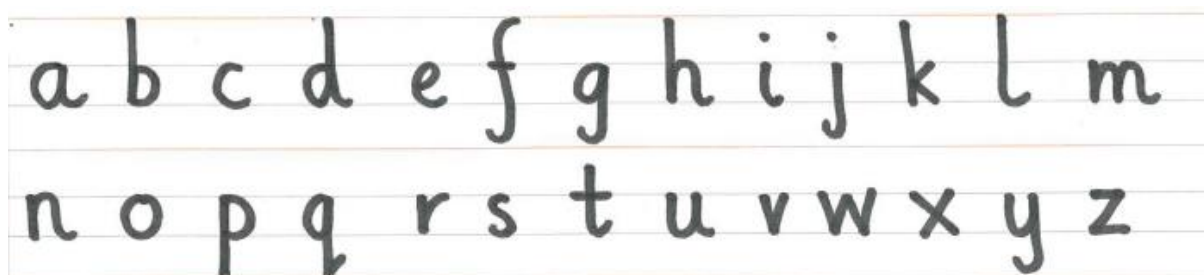
Appendix 1 Agreed Formation



Pre joining

Individual letters with no lead in or out (Little Wandle) until children are secure in formation.

Ss 	Aa 	Tt 	Pp 	Ii 	Nn 	Mm 
Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.	Down the stick, up and over the net.	Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.
Dd 	Gg 	Oo 	Cc 	Kk 	Ee 	Uu 
Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.	Round the goat's face, up to his ear; down and curl under his chin.	All around the octopus	Curl around the cat.	Down the kite, up and round, down to the corner.	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.
Rr 	Hh 	Bb 	Ff 	Ll 	Jj 	Vv 
From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.	Down, up and over the helicopter.	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.	All the way down the lollipop.	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
Ww 	Xx 	Yy 	Zz 	Qq 		
From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. Quick, it's the queen!		



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

Joined letter formation

(As seen in the Writing Framework 2025)

Diagonal and horizontal joins

Pupils should be taught two basic joins: diagonal joins and horizontal joins.

The diagonal join connects:

- letters from the line to small letters
- letters from the line to tall letters
- letters from the line to a, d, g, c, o, q (These letters need an extra stroke backwards across the top of a, d, g, c, o.)

The horizontal join connects:

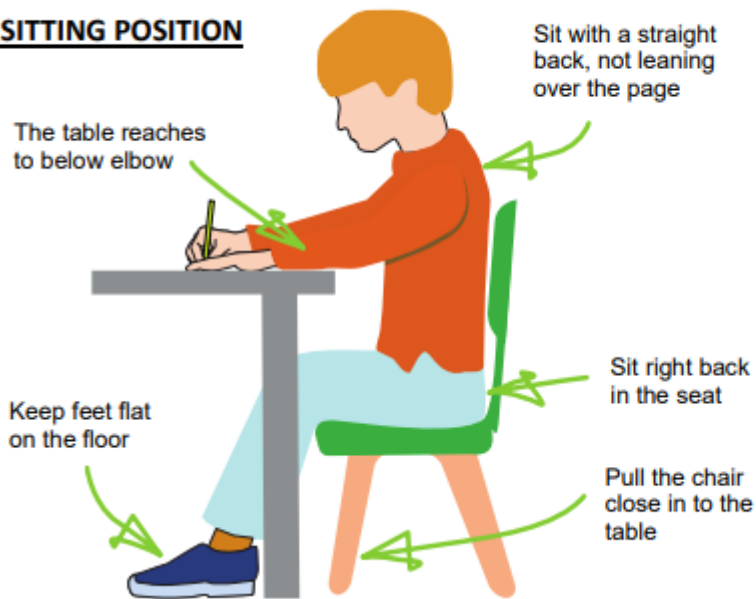
- v, w, x, f, r to small letters
- v, w, x, f, r to tall letters
- v, w, x, f, r to a, d, g, c, o, q

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

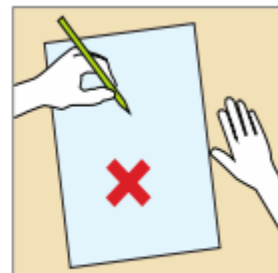
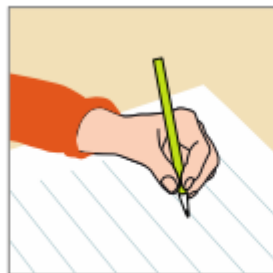
The quick, brown fox jumps over
the lazy dog while a brave wizard
quietly mixes six bright potions in
a village shop.

Appendix 2 – The 4 P's (Posture, Paper Position, Pressure and Pencil Grip)

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children.



Paper position for left-handed children.

Pencil Grip

Right-handed pencil grip



Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,



Spin it round...



and grip.

Left-handed pencil grip



Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,



Spin it round...



and grip.

Appendix 3 – Letter Families and Relative Sizes

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed. The ‘families’ are grouped according to where each letter starts.

The families are:

- **Curly** a, o, c, d, g, q, e, s, f
- **Long** i, l, t, j, u, y
- **Bouncy** m, n, r, p, b, h
- **Zig zag** v, w, x, z, k

Appendix 6 – Hand Exercises for teachers and lessons

Hand Exercises for Lessons

Choose four of these exercises for the start of each lesson – try to include a variety each week. Watch the ‘Hand exercises’ videos on the Little Wandle website to see how to do the exercises.

1. Rub hands together

Rub hands together until they feel warm. Move them up and down, or in circular motions to stimulate blood flow.

2. Push palms together

Push the palms firmly together and hold for five seconds. Repeat a few times.

3. Finger stretches

Open hands wide, stretching fingers as far apart as you can. Then make a tight fist, hiding fingers away inside the palm.

4. Drumming fingers

Drum fingers on the table, one finger at a time. This can be extended to tapping a rhythm.

5. Squeeze forearms and hands

Use the left hand to squeeze the right forearm and hand firmly, applying gentle pressure to stimulate the muscles and increase awareness. Swap hands.

6. Pulling fingers (like taking off a glove)

With one hand, grasp each finger of the other hand in turn and gently pull downward, as if taking off a glove. Repeat for the other hand.

7. Opposite thumb to each fingertip

Touch the thumb to each fingertip of the same hand in turn. For more challenge, this can be done with both hands at the same time, or with your eyes closed.

8. Finger circle tug

Form a circle with the thumb and index finger. Then form another circle with the other hand, within that circle, and try to pull them apart.

Appendix 7

	Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
Nursery	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<p>Reception</p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; - 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. 	<p>Unit 1: Practising Patterns</p> <p>Week 2: Horizontal lines, Vertical lines, Wavy lines, Circles,</p> <p>Week 3: Up curves, Down curves, Mixed-height curves, Letter C (Week 3)</p> <p>Week 4: Spirals, Crosses, Turrets, Diagonals</p> <p>Week 5: Zig-zags, Sideways V, Letter X, Triangles</p> <p>Unit 2: Curly letter family</p> <p>Week 7: c, a, d</p> <p>Week 8: g, o, q</p>	<p>Week 1: e, s, f</p> <p>Unit 3: Long letter family</p> <p>Week 2: l, i, t</p> <p>Week 3: j, u, y</p> <p>Unit 4: Bouncy letter family</p> <p>Week 4: m, n, r</p> <p>Week 5: b, p, h</p> <p>Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family</p> <p>Week 6: v, w, x</p> <p>Week 7: z, k</p> <p>Use the rest of the term to consolidate and identify misconceptions.</p>	<p>Assess and review lower-case and capital letters as needed</p> <p>Practise letter formation in digraphs and trigraphs</p> <p>Practise letter formation in words</p> <p>Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review</p> <p>Week 1: ff, ll, ss zz, ck, qu</p> <p>Week 2: ch, sh, th</p> <p>Week 3: ng, nk, ai</p> <p>Week 4: ee, igh, oa</p>	<p>Week 1: oo, ar, or</p> <p>Week 2: ur, ow, oi</p> <p>Week 3: ear, air, er plus</p> <p>Assess and review</p> <p>Consolidate for the rest of the year.</p>	<p>Teach capital letters</p> <p>Review lower-case letters alongside capitals within families</p> <p>Week 1: Cc, Aa, Dd</p> <p>Week 2: Gg, Oo, Qq</p> <p>Week 3: Ee, Ss, Ff</p> <p>Week 4: Ll, Ii, Tt</p> <p>Week 5: Jj, Uu, Yy</p> <p>Assess and review week</p>	<p>Week 1: Mm, Nn, Rr</p> <p>Week 2: Bb, Pp, Hh</p> <p>Week 3: Vv, Ww, Xx</p> <p>Week 4: Zz, Kk</p> <p>Use the rest of the term to consolidate learning.</p>

<p>Year 1</p> <p><i>Handwriting builds on the foundations laid in Reception and progresses to focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consolidation of letter formation • sizing and spacing of letters • formation of punctuation marks and digits 0–9 • practice linked to phonics. <p>National Curriculum statutory requirements for handwriting: Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • 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' and to practise these. 	<p>During the handwriting lesson, teachers to also focus on words involving the focus letters.</p> <p>Week 1: c a o, 1 Week 2: d q g, 5 Week 3: i l t, 7 Week 4 : k j, 3 Week 5: v w u, 8 Week 6: y f, 6</p>	<p>Week 7: r n m, 9 Week 8 : h b p, 2 Week 9: e s x z, 4 Week 10: t l h, 5 Week 11: k b d, 9 Remainder of the term: practise and review misconceptions</p>	<p>Week 15: q y p Week 16: f j g Week 17: a c e Week 18: l m n Week 19: o r s</p>	<p>Week 20: u v w Week 21 and for the rest of the term: Capital letters and numbers</p>	<p>Week 21: x z Week 22: ay ou ie Week 23: ea oy ir Consolidate for the rest of term</p>	<p>Week 36: Numbers Week 37: Dictated sentences Week 38 and 39: Common Exception words Week 40: Misconceptions identified</p>
<p>Year 2</p> <p><i>Handwriting builds upon the skills introduced in Year 1, moving on to focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sizing of letters • spacing of letters • joining letters using the two main joins • practice linked to spelling patterns. <p>National Curriculum statutory requirements for handwriting: Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another 	<p>During the handwriting lesson, teachers to also focus on words involving the focus letters.</p> <p>Number formation also needs to be taught. 2 numbers per week.</p> <p>Week 1: c a o d q g Week 2: i l t k j</p>	<p>Week 7: Ascenders Week 8 : Descenders Week 9: Primary letters</p> <p>Week 10,11: High Frequency words</p>	<p>Begin joining Week 1, 2 and 3: Joins from the bottom a b c d e h i k l m n r t u v x z</p> <p>Week 4 : Joins from the top: r o v w</p> <p>Week 5: Practice cvc words joining</p>	<p>Weeks 1 – 5: Practise high frequency words and topic words joined from the two main joins</p>	<p>Identify misconceptions and plug gaps. Dictated sentences Common exception words High frequency words Times tables</p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• 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.	Week 3: v w u y f Week 4: r n m h b p Week 5: e s x z Remainder of the term: practise and review misconceptions				
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