

Westlands Primary School



Handwriting Approach 2026-2027

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Handwriting at Westlands Primary School

At Westlands Primary School we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our handwriting style. We use Letter-join's on-line handwriting resource as the basis of our handwriting approach as it covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Objective

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims:

- Develop pre writing skills which will enable the children to become fluent writers including;
 - Hand and finger strength
 - Hand Eye co-ordination
 - Bilateral integration - ability to co-ordinate left and right hands
 - Upper body strength
 - Pivot
 - Hand dominance
 - Hand division - ability to use hands separately
- Develop effective and efficient pen hold
- Develop the habit of concentration, which is crucial to good handwriting
- Develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Expectations

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Opportunities for developmentally appropriate 'handwriting' should take place daily in EYFS as part of their continuous provision. This will include Gross Motor Control and Fine Motor Control development opportunities.

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met. This is daily in all classes.

EYFS and Year 1 - daily 10 - 15

Year 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 - daily 15 minutes

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used.

Progression Overview

This overview shows the progression in skills from emergent writing, to legible printed writing and finally onto legible cursive script. The relevant age related expectations have been highlighted - this is the age at which the majority of pupils are likely to be able to demonstrate these skills fluently.

Stage of Writing	Examples
Pre Writing ★ Gross motor control ★ Fine motor control ★ Vocabulary to support Writing	• Movement of hand, wrist and shoulders, bilateral integration, core strength and posture • Hand eye co-ordination, finger muscles and strength, dexterity • Directional vocab - up, down, round, back, circle, diagonal • Air writing
Emergent Writing ★ Initial mark making ★ Pre-Writing Patterns ★ Pencil grip ★ Ready to write routines	• Drawing/Scribbling - random and then directional • Horizontal, diagonal, vertical and circular strokes to make patterns • Mock letters • Large pens and pencils, chalk, paintbrushes etc • Fine and Gross Motor Exercises (see appendix 1) • Seating and paper position (see appendix 2) • Tripod grip (see appendix 3)
Letter Formation - Printing ★ Pencil grip ★ Correct seating and paper position ★ Lower case letter formation ★ Capital letter formation ★ Numerals	Ready to Write Routines • Fine and Gross Motor Exercises (see appendix 1) • Seating and paper position (see appendix 2) • Tripod grip (see appendix 3) Letter Families - Letter Join • Easy letters and words - i, l, t, u, w, e, c, o, a, d, n, m, h • Harder letters and words - j, y, g, q, b, p, k, v, s, r, f, x, z • Capital letter groups (see appendix 4)
Letter Formation - Cursive ★ Pencil grip ★ Correct seating and paper position ★ Pre-cursive patterns ★ Cursive letters ★ Letter joins	• Pre-writing patterns (circles, spirals, lines, diagonals, jellies, zigzags, loopies and waves) revision • Cursive letter formation - lead ins and outs • Diagonal joins (eg an) • Horizontal joins (eg oc) • Joining other letters (f, k, b, d, w, s and z)
Fluency and Accuracy ★ Pencil grip ★ Correct seating and paper position ★ Cursive style ★ Improved legibility ★ Fluency and consistency	• Accurate letter formation • All letters joined • Consistent size • Legible • Fluent without losing legibility • Personalised style

Age Related Expectations (from Dev Matters, NC, Writing Framework and KS2 TAF)

Age 3-4	End of Year R	End of Year 1	End of Year 2
	• Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing (Gross Motor ELG) • Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing (Gross Motor ELG) • Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery (Fine Motor ELG) • Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing (Fine Motor ELG) • Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases (Fine Motor ELG) • Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed (Writing ELG)	• 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. • Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.	• 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 not joined. • 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.

Years 3 and 4	Years 5 and 6	End of Year 6
• 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	Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: • Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters • Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.	• Demonstrate fluent, legible and neatly joined handwriting • Maintain legibility when writing at speed

Year group overviews

Year Group	Approach
<u>EYFS</u> Letterjoin Module 1	For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a regular basis, which will include the following: • enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities • exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc. • becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary • correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting By the end of reception children will be able to; • Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing (gross motor control ELG) • Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing (Gross Motor Control ELG) • Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery (Fine Motor Control ELG) • Begin to show accuracy when drawing (Fine Motor Control ELG) • Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed (Writing ELG) • Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters (Writing ELG) • Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others (Writing ELG) Learning Environment; The EYFS learning environment will support independent writing by; • Providing rich high quality mark making and writing tools • Writing areas that give children the choice of writing tools • Range of opportunities and resources for planned and independent writing • Celebrate children's writing by displaying in the environment See Appendix 1
<u>Year 1</u> Letterjoin Module 2	By the end of Year 1 children will be able to; • Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil correctly and comfortably • 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' and to practise them • Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip

	Module 2 Print to Cursive teaches how to correctly write capital letters, uses of printed letters, numbers, punctuation, maths symbols and other symbols. Pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters are then introduced in preparation for Module 3 when children are required to start joining their handwriting. It is divided into three sections covering: • warm-ups, letter families and capital letters • uses of printed letters • numbers and symbols • introducing pre-cursive patterns and cursive letters
<u>Year 2</u> Letterjoin Module 3	By the end of year 2 children will be able to; • Form lowercase letters of the correct size • 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 not joined • Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lowercase letters • Using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters Module 3 – Starting Cursive introduces children to cursive letters and how to join them. They will have regular practice in letter formation and joining their handwriting. The sections in this module cover: •cursive letters and words •letter families •high frequency words •joining techniques •sequencing sentences •dictation exercises •times table facts • SPaG practice for KS1 SATs With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing. Module 3 Cursive: Year 2 includes lessons to improve letter formation and orientation of letters through regular practice and to support spelling, grammar and punctuation in readiness for KS1 SATs. The sections in this module cover: •letter families •high frequency words •joining techniques •sequencing sentences •dictation exercises •times table facts •SPaG practice for KS1 SATs

	With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing.
<u>Year 3</u> Letterjoin Module 4	<u>Module 4 for Year 3</u> is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French and Spanish), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings. Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.
<u>Year 4</u> Letterjoin Module 5	<u>Module 5 for Year 4</u> focuses on using handwriting practice to support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, French and Spanish. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum. Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module's lessons. On concluding this module, children will have practised applying size-appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum whilst maintaining fluency and legibility.
<u>Year 5</u> Letterjoin Module 6	<u>Module 6 for Year 5</u> continues to build on combining fluent handwriting with other subjects across the curriculum. In this module, learners will have plenty of opportunity to develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. With Letter-join's wide range of resources they will be able to work towards producing consistently neat and well-presented handwriting in all curriculum subjects. On completing this module, children should be producing cursive writing automatically, enabling them to focus on the content of their work rather than the process of writing.
<u>Year 6</u> Letterjoin Module 7	<u>Module 7 Year 6</u> presents learners with a range of tasks where they have to decide on an appropriate style of handwriting. Promoting speedy, fluent writing continues to be a strong feature. Challenging dictation exercises will refine pupils' revising and checking skills as well as boosting their handwriting speed, stamina and fluency. A range of curriculum-based worksheets will give pupils the opportunity to practise writing at length. Module 7 also contains a series of worksheets to aid KS2 SATs SPaG revision. They are designed

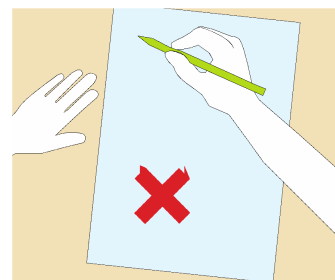
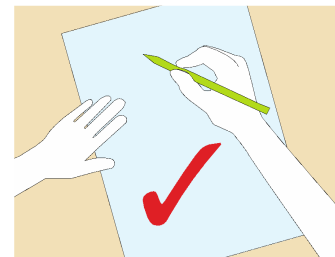
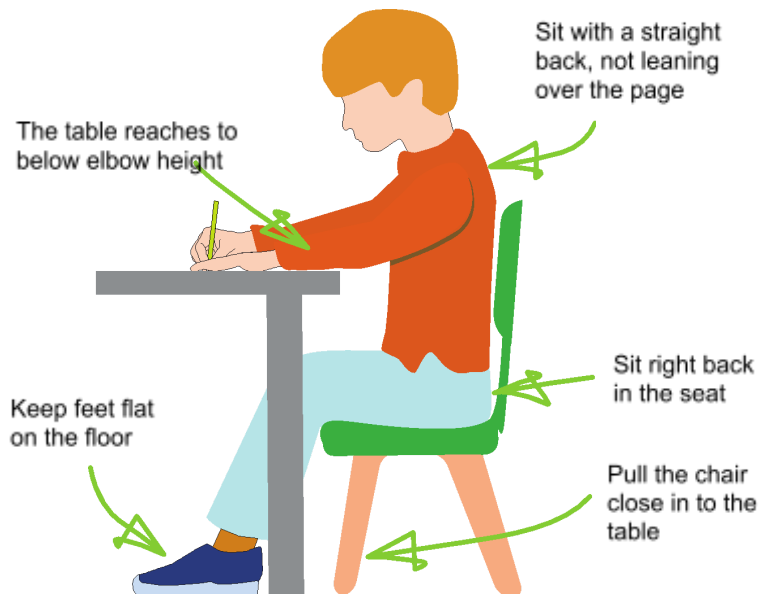
to support year 6 pupils in meeting expected standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar, with lots of SPaG preparation and plenty of handwriting practice.

By the end of this module, children should be able to adapt their handwriting for a range of tasks and purposes and to create different effects. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes, a final handwritten version, an un-joined style or capital letters. All of these writing styles are covered in this module.

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children.

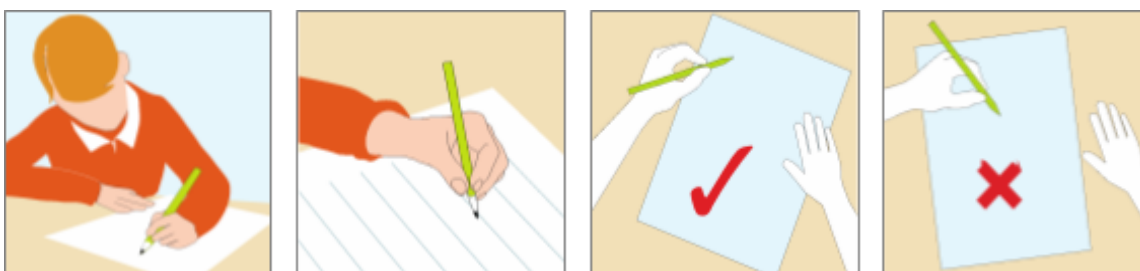
Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place. Letter-join's Lesson Planners all include differentiation activities for extra practice/challenge.

LEFT-HANDED WRITERS

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children.

GLASSES

Identify children who wear glasses and ensure they wear them for handwriting at all times.

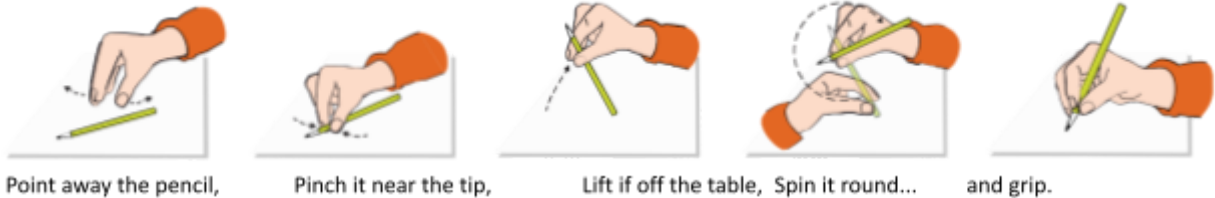
DYSLEXIA

Some children may reverse letters despite regular training in handwriting sessions. They may be falling behind their expected standards. In this case, we will carry out a Dyslexia screen on Literacy Gold.

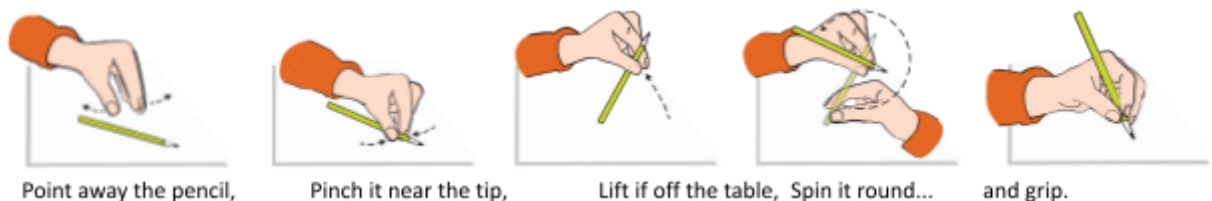
The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib. We use the Tripod Grip Rhyme:

Right-handed pencil grip



Left-handed pencil grip



Handwriting at Home

Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home by using the Pupil log-in for Letter-join. Teachers can set Home Learning Tasks which may include:

- Magic Patterns
- Magic Words
- SoundMatch
- PhonicsMatch
- LetterMatch
- LetterLotto
- Letter Families activity
- Word Search
- Word Bank
- Spelling lists
- Write it Right!

Children can also watch the word and letter animations and practice and explore other handwriting resources on Letter-join.

Cursive lowercase letters

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

Letter-join 

Appendix 1: Handwriting progression EYFS

	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4	TERM 5	TERM 6
	Physical Readiness & Early Mark Making	Pre-Writing Shapes & Early Letter Formation	Learning letter formation families	Embedding letter formation families	Consistency, Fluency & Stamina	Year 1 Readiness: Accurate, Fluent Letter Formation
Gross Motor Skills	Core strength, balance, whole-body coordination. Large movements such as climbing, rolling, pushing and pulling. Directionality understanding.	Shoulder and elbow stability are improving. Crossing midline.	Stable posture, improved shoulder/wrist control.	Stable posture for longer writing tasks.	Sustained stamina and refined wrist control.	Fully stable posture; smooth coordinated movement.
Fine Motor Skills	Hand and finger strength, emerging pincer movements, bilateral coordination. <i>Example activities:</i> -Dough play -Pegging and squeezing tools -Large threading beads - Whole-hand mark making	Stronger pincer grip, hand-eye coordination and increased control with fine tools. <i>Example activities:</i> -Tweezers -threading smaller beads -Small object pickup (tweezers) -Simple scissor snips -Early tracing activities	tripod grip, and in-hand manipulation <i>Example activities:</i> -Rotating small objects (coin flips, rolling items between fingers) -Pencil control patterns -Nuts & bolts -Scissor skills	dynamic tripod grip; precise movement (bilateral control) <i>Example activities:</i> - Cutting shapes - Drawing details - Finger gym activities - Stabilising paper while writing	Dynamic tripod grip, increasing control and stamina. <i>Example activities:</i> -More complex scissor work - Detailed colouring - Fine construction kits - Increasing pencil stamina	Developing precision and control. <i>Example activities:</i> -Independent tripod grip -Quick grip adjustments -Efficient tool use
Handwriting Skills	Large marks, pre-writing patterns (OOOO, , ~~~~, / \, basic shapes (○ □ △). Developing functional grip. (on different scales, using a range of media) Write some/all letters from name	Forms pre-writing shapes (— ○ + / \). Begins letter formation from phonics sets. Shows a dominant hand Write name	Correct formation of taught letter families	Correct formation of taught letter families (review learning)	Letter formation consistency, spacing between words	Form most upper and lower-case letters correctly, starting and finishing in the right place, going the right way round and correctly orientated.

1. Early stage pre letter formation

Gross Motor skill Checklist	Fine Motor skills checklist
• Sits upright and maintains body stillness • Uses whole arm when writing • Makes large random strokes on paper/ in the air • Able to cross mid line • Able to start and stop walking/ jumping along a straight line • Balances on alternative leg for 10 seconds • Balances on alternative legs with eyes closed • Able to follow sequence of 3 moves e.g hop skip and jump • Catches object with one hand Physical development/ PE is an essential element of this process particularly for those children experiencing difficulties.	• Can use 1 hand alone when asked • Uses 2 hands together fluently when needed • Able to rotate wrists, open and close hands one at a time • Able to isolate individual fingers • Has established dominant hand • May use dagger grip or may hold pencil correctly • Develops a refined pincer grip • Copies basic lines, patterns shales • Able to draw basic figures • Uses scissors to cut curved lines • Able to dress/ undress independently • Able to manipulate buttons, velcro etc • Threads objects with small holes
Activities to develop Gross Motor Skills	Activities to develop Fine Motor Skills
• Walk/ Jump along straight lines and able to start/stop when asked • Walk around circles on the floor - could use number tiles in a circle/ line to follow • Balance on one leg and count to 10 • Make circular movements in the air with arms and hands including figure of 8 • Dance to music making large body movements • Push toys along straight and curved lines changing direction • Ride a bike or scooter • Create a models using large scale construction • Throw and catch a bean bag/ball • Play 'simon says' copying three basic moves • Cross the mid line e.g march on the spot hand touching opposite sides of the knee • Brain gym activities • Skipping and jumping over skipping ropes • Obstacle courses	• Create models/ towers using small scale construction • Screw/ unscrew jars, nuts. Bolts, toys etc • Threading laces, threading beads etc • Manipulate buttons, zips, buckles on own clothes or toy clothes • Place pegs on a peg board • Folding paper in half an quarters • Tearing paper into strips • Pick up objects with tweezers • Cut along straight and curved lines progressing to circles • Develop finger isolation using finger puppets, finger rhymes/ games • Use brushes for mark making with paint, water, sand, flour, shaving foam etc • Model with playdough, rolling and impressing • Mark making with a range of scented materials • Dot to dot activities • Draw people using a range of meadow e.g pens, pencils, pastels, chalk • Make rubbings/ marks using fur, sandpaper, tin foil etc.

2. Secure stage; letter formation

Letter formation checklist

- Holds pencils/pen/paintbrush correctly
- Make marks consistent in direction and pressure
- Controls pencils, pens, crayons, paint brushes etc to produce recognisable pictures
- Reproduces vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines
- Able to touch each finger with thumb of the same hand in sequence
- Places arms and wrists in the correct position when writing
- Hand movement is independent from arm movement
- Appropriate tension in hand when writing
- Traces over lines and dots and draws between lines
- Uses left to right orientation in continuous writing patterns
- Uses non dominant hand to steady paper
- Body posture is correct when writing - feet are flat on the ground and child is sat upright in chair

Teaching modelled by adult

- Learn letter formation using the letter shape families as per letter join
- Form lower case letters in the correct direction starting and finishing in the right place (this could be different for left and right handed children)
- Forming capital letters
- Form digits
- Provide consistent model of correct letter formation in any context
- Children sit comfortably at a table. Holding pencil comfortably and correctly
- Teach correct posture and paper position for right and left handed pupils
- Teach letters with ascender and descender distinguished
- Teach consistency of letter size, position on line and spacing

Activities to develop letter formation

- Encourage multi sensory approach (adapting pre writing activities from previous stage) to develop letter awareness. Use sensory channels, tactile, visual, smell and kinaesthetic
- Tracking letter families in the air/ on a friends back
- Use a range of media to write
- Use a range of media to write on large vertical surfaces eg paper on wall/ vertical whiteboards
- Use a range of media to write on horizontal surfaces eg tables, pavement
- Use a range of media to write on coloured paper, textured papers
- Use a range of resources for formation of letters using gross motor skills

3. Secure stage plus; joining letters

Joining letters checklist

- Correct orientation and formation of individual letters, including capital letters
- Letters are consistent in size
- Letters are correctly positioned in relation to the writing line
- Upper and lower case letters are not mixed
- Paper position is correct depending on whether the child is left or right handed
- Maintains correct posture when writing, feet are flat on the floor and sat upright in a chair
- Maintains left to right direction when writing
- Use diagonal strokes and horizontal strokes needed to join letters
- Uses correct spacing between words that reflect the size of the letters
-

Activities to develop joining formation

- Consolidate correct letter formation of letter families learnt so far
- Choose known VC and CVC and HFW or simple words with similar spelling patterns to write
- Practise writing families of letters with the same join using a variety of approaches learnt from previous stages eg writing in the air, tracing, paintbrushes with water etc
- Throughout this phase children should be exposed to a range of opportunities to apply and use the skills in meaningful contexts eg writing a story letter etc.