

Lanner Handwriting Progression

May 2026

At Lanner Primary School, we have developed a progressive approach to teaching handwriting incorporating Morrell's handwriting approach. For the early stages of taught handwriting, the letter families are taught separately to those that are encountered through the RWI phonics programme. We aim to make the physical process of writing – handwriting – enjoyable from the very start, so that children want to write, and to be writers.

Key Principles:

- Our approach relies on ability rather than age, moving children through the progression of skills, at a pace suitable for their stage of development.
- We place emphasis on being 'writing ready' through the provision of a range of gross and fine motor activities to ensure that children develop the core strength and dexterity required to write.
- Children are taught and encouraged to adopt an appropriate writing posture.
- Children write with pencils (and later pens) on paper, sitting at correctly sized desks wherever possible.
- Handwriting is taught through focussed teaching, it is modelled and supervised, because practice makes permanent.
- We ensure that children practise handwriting under the guidance of a teacher so they do not develop habits that will be difficult to undo later.
- Letters are taught through letter families, initially separately from phonics lessons until children have learnt all the letter formations.
- Handwriting joins are not taught until the foundations of letter formation, spacing and placement are secure.
- Within phonics, we use the RWI rhymes to help children visualise the letter before they write it down.

We expect writing to take place with:

- Chairs tucked in, feet flat on the floor, bottom at the back of the chair.
- Body one fist from the table shoulders down and relaxed back leaning forward slightly left/right hand.
- Holding the page with their free hand, with left/right hand ready in a tripod grip.

In order to support our children in learning to write, we ensure that the classroom environment allows for them to stay focused and attentive to their task. In addition to practising writing, we recognise and value the importance of developing children's fine and gross motor skills to enable them to have the strength required for pencil grip accuracy and posture.

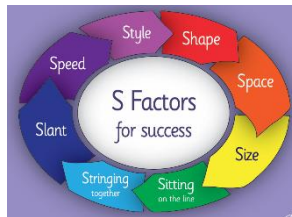
We use the Morrells pupil handwriting books in Year R (summer term) through to Y4 to support practice.

To support children's gross motor development, we have a variety of active opportunities for core and arm muscle strengthening in the indoor and outdoor learning environment.

We provide opportunities for children to target their fine motor skills with purposeful tasks in the learning environment, as well as engaging in whole class activities.

Teaching Sequence (at each stage)

- Gross and fine motor skills (supporting the 'P checks')
- Accurate letter formation (shape, spacing, sitting on the line, letter size, string)
- Fluency and stamina (slant, speed and style)



Letters are taught in 5 letter families:

c o a g q d
i l t k j
v w u y f
r n m h p b
e s x z

Capital Letters A - Z
Digits 0-9

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

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders (eg ai, ar, un, am, ear, aw, ir, hu, ti, ki, du, up, ag, fe, fu).
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders (eg ab, ul, it, ib, if, ub, th, ck, ch, it, ft, fl).
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders (eg ou, vi, wi, op, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re).
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders (eg ob, ol, wh, it, of, rt, rk).

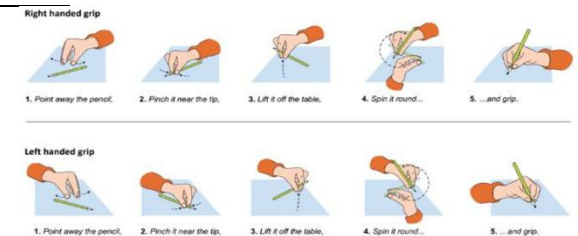
As children begin learning the pure sounds in EYFS (Set one sounds), reference is made to the pictures and the formation phrase from Read Write Inc to act as an aid, helping the children to write the grapheme.

E.g. Around the apple and down the leaf.

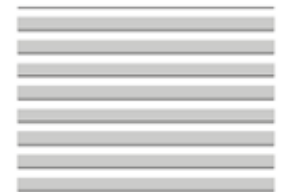


The development of a tripod grasp

There are developmental stages that a child may go through when learning to hold a pencil. In all year groups, we remind children to use the appropriate grasp when writing. (If children are finding this difficult, triangular pencils or pencil grippers can be used to support this.)



Once children can form the letters correctly, they learn how to place the letters on the line and write letters of relative size to each other. Initially, children may be encouraged to continue using the picture rhymes to help them to visualise the size and placement. Where needed, we use Morrell's shaded handwriting paper as a guide for children to learn to form their letters with the correct size and placement.



Our handwriting style

EYFS & Year and 2 – printed letter formation. (Note the curly k – this might be one of the last letters addressed – some children might not achieve this but should progress to the next level, nevertheless.)

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

3 & 4 - When letter formation and positioning are both secure, joining is taught. Some break letters are left un-joined. If ready, some children may begin to join from the summer term of Y2.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Years 5 & 6 – Fully cursive. (Note most letters can now be joined. F now has an ascender loop, g, j and y have descender loops.)

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

National Handwriting Association S-factors

- **Sitting:** Proper upright sitting posture and body stability while writing.
- **Shape:** Accurate formation of individual letters and letter families.
- **Space:** Consistent and appropriate gaps between individual letters and separate words.
- **Size:** Relative sizing and correct alignment of letters on single or double lines.
- **Speed:** Achieving an efficient, automated writing pace appropriate for the writer's age.
- **Stringing:** Smooth diagonal or horizontal joins between letters in a cursive style.
- **Slant:** Uniform forward angle and parallel downstrokes across words.
- **Style:** The clear, readable, and adaptable application of a chosen handwriting script.

National Handwriting Association Quick P-Checks

- **Posture:** chair in, bottom back, feet flat, forearms on the table.
- **Pencil / pen:** suitable pencil or pen; tripod grip
- **Paper:** slightly angled to suit right or left hand where required with the non-writing hand stabilising the paper.
- **Pressure:** moderate and balanced pressure. Too much pressure results in hand fatigue.

What a handwriting lesson / sequence may look like:

- Handwriting warm-up exercises: Shoulder stability and strength; Crossing the mid-line;
 - Wrist strength and flexibility; Thumb and finger strength and dexterity;
 - Whole hand strength and dexterity.
- The 'P' checks: Posture, Pencil, Paper, Pressure.
 - Teacher modelling of letter formation and joins, with reference to relevant S factors for success.
 - Opportunities to practise and apply, with direct, in the moment, intervention / support / explicit feedback for individual children based on AFL.
 - Assessment of skill through dictation of single words / phrases / sentences.

EYFS Handwriting (2 - 4 years)

EYFS Requirements (Development Matters)

24–36 months

- Gradually gain control of the whole body through continual practice of large movements.
- Use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks.
- Start eating independently and begin to dress/undress – developing coordination.
- Begin to show preference for a dominant hand (emerging later).
- Use simple tools such as spoons and paintbrushes.

36–42 months

- Use one-handed tools and equipment, e.g., making snips in paper with scissors.
- Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.
- Show increasing control when drawing and painting.
- Develop more precise hand movements (threading, small construction).

In EYFS children will access a range of activities and games to develop gross and fine motor skills;

Posture base play: For good posture the large muscle groups that support the pelvis, trunk, shoulders and arms need to work in a coordinated way (gross motor skills).

Strong gross motor skills give the body a stable base (core strength) required for balance and stability, supporting coordination skills and helping the child's sitting position and making handwriting more comfortable.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: learning to climb, moving your own swing, climbing trees, running and chase games.

Bilateral Coordination play: Good bilateral coordination allows the body to move in an easy and well-coordinated way, as both the left and right-hand sides of the body are working in unison. It is important for a child to develop their body awareness, knowing their left side from their right side and being aware of how they move and relate to each other. These gross motor skills let a child handwrite freely across the width of the paper.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: learning to ride a scooter or bike, games such as 'Twister' or 'Simon Says' and marching/crawling.

Sensory Perception play: Sensory perception is the ability to send accurate messages to the brain when holding and touching objects (sensory perception) and is an important developmental stage. It enables children to identify objects and textures through touch as well as being able to judge the appropriate pressure required to hold and release them safely. These fine motor skills enable them to hold a pencil correctly and to use the correct pressure when handwriting and therefore help to improve their handwriting.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: model making with play dough type materials and messy play in and with materials of different textures and size.

Hand & Finger play: Good hand strength and agility is a combination of three skills; 1. Dexterity of the hands and fingers - allowing the fingers to grip the pencil freely, 2. In-hand manipulation - allowing the pencil to be held in the hand freely and, 3. Strong arches of the hand - allowing the pencil to be rested and moved on the hand.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: model making with playdough type materials and finger rhymes that encourage a child to move their fingers individually such as 'Tommy Thumb'.

Eye Tracking play: Eye tracking to ensure development of binocular vision is the ability to control and coordinate the fine eye movements needed:

- For left to right eye movements, without moving the head, needed to follow a line of writing as the letters are formed or for reading a line of print.
- To focus and move the eyes to follow an object without moving the head, in all directions.
- To track/follow objects near and far.
- To focus on one object without moving the eyes.

Poor eye tracking skills can make handwriting very difficult, causing letter formation, spacing and positioning problems, leading to poor presentation. Often words are missed out or repeated, causing composition and legibility issues.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: target games and catching games.

Spatial Awareness play: Spatial awareness is the ability to be aware of:

- The space around you and your position in that space.
- The position and relationship of other objects in relation to one another and yourself.

Poor spatial awareness skills make handwriting difficult as it affects the ability to understand and produce the directional pushes and pulls required to form letters; as well as difficulties with spacing and positioning. Combined, these difficulties can cause poor presentation and possible legibility issues.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: games such as 'Twister' or 'Simon Says' and jigsaws and pattern making.

Motor Memory play: Motor memory is the ability to store and recall the muscle movements for performing different tasks and sets of movements.

Poor motor memory skills can make handwriting difficult as shapes and letter formation movements are often forgotten, causing letter reversals and incorrectly formed letter shapes, which can make joining a very slow process to learn. A poor and often slow handwriting style can develop as font styles are mixed and capital letters are used inappropriately. Combined, these difficulties can cause poor presentation, spelling and legibility issues. Often motor memory skills are affected by poor visual memory abilities.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: Directional games such as 'Hot or Cold', treasure hunts and pattern making (many activities and games that develop motor memory also support visual memory skills).

Visual Memory play: Visual memory is the ability to recall information that has been visually presented before.

Poor visual memory skills make handwriting difficult as the ability to recall how letters look and reproduce them with appropriate spacing and positioning is partially or completely lost. This leads to poor letter formation skills, letter reversal along with spelling and presentation difficulties. Due to the nature of our visual memory, and how we store that information, difficulties in this area also impact on motor memory skills.

Activities that help to build these strengths and skills are: Pattern making and memory recall games and activities such as Kim's Games (many activities and games that develop visual memory also support motor memory skills).

EYFS Handwriting (reception year)

EYFS Requirements (Development Matters)

- Develop their fine motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons. (PD)
- Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor. (PD)
- Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient. (PD)
- Form lower case and capital letters correctly. (LIT)

ELGs:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases. (PD)
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. (LIT)

Daily mark making activities alongside direct teaching. Daily opportunities to improve fine motor skills.

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Autumn 1 Continue to focus on building fine and gross motor skills ready to write. Use challenges that encourage children to use the pincer grip (picking up lego, pompoms using three fingers). Autumn 2 Begin to teach letter formation once children have started to develop phonic knowledge using RWI letter rhymes – taught separately from RWI phonics lessons. Letters taught in letter families c a o d g q i l t k j Use pencils and paper to teach letter formation. Once letter formation has been taught children will practise and apply this knowledge in phonics lessons. Focus on 4 P's Learn to write first name (trace and copy).	Letters taught in letter families v w u y f r m n h p b e s x z Daily handwriting lessons to practice letter formation (beginning to build words linked to phonetic knowledge). Writing in RWI lessons and other writing opportunities is closely monitored and any inaccuracies are remodelled. When appropriate, teach the formation of capital letters and corresponding lower-case letters. <u>Teach the formation of digits 0 – 9.</u> Straight Line / Ladder strokes: 1, 4, 7 (reliant on vertical and diagonal straight lines). Curved / Circular strokes: 0, 6, 8, 9 (utilizing continuous pulling and pushing curves). Mixed Combination strokes: 2, 3, 5 (combining starting curves with horizontal bases or "hats"). Write first name independently in print with capital letter for first letter of name. Continue to focus on 4 Ps and introduce 'shape' (S factors for success).	

Year One

National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

- 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 to 9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

In Year 1, handwriting lessons will continue to focus on securing the accurate formation of letters (shape).

Teaching will then develop space (spaces between words), sitting (positioning on lines).

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters and all capital letters. Consolidation of number formation. Spaces between words consistent.	Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters and all capital letters and numbers. Spaces between words consistent. Letters increasingly correctly positioned on lines, including ascenders and descenders.	Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters and all capital letters and numbers. Spaces between words consistent. All letters correctly positioned on lines, including ascenders and descenders.

Year Two

National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

- 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 un-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.

In Year 2 we continue to focus on securing accurate shape, space and sitting with an increased focus on size (including relative size). The S-factor of stringing together (joining) may be introduced in the summer term for those children who are developmentally ready.

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters and all capital letters and numbers. Spaces between words consistent. All letters correctly positioned on lines, including ascenders and descenders. Letters (including capitals) are increasingly appropriately sized. Small/halfway letters/x-height letters e.g. a, e, o, s Tall letters/letters with ascenders e.g. h, l, b, k (plus all capitals) Tailed letters/letters with descenders e.g. p, g, y, j	Consolidation of letter formation of lower-case letters and all capital letters and numbers. Spaces between words consistent. All letters correctly positioned on lines, including ascenders and descenders. Letters (including capitals) are consistently appropriately sized.	Further consolidation of printed handwriting to ensure shape, sizing, spacing and speed appropriate to the age. Initial teaching of joins may be introduced as below, showing how letters connect to create simple, continuous movements. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: e.g. ki, du, up, ag, fe, fu

Year Three

National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

- 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).

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Recap Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: e.g. ki, du, up, ag, fe, fu (if previously taught in Y2) Teach diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: e.g. ab, ul, it, ib, if, ub, th, ck, ch, ft, fl Apply known joins to spellings and dictated sentences.	Recap diagonal joins with and without ascenders. Teach horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: e.g. ou, vi, wi, op, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re Teach horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: e.g. ob, ol, wh, of, rt, rk Apply known joins to spellings and dictated sentences.	Recap all joins. Practise writing words with capital letters. Apply to spellings and dictated sentences. Practise combining all 4 joins when writing sentences.

Year Four

National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.
- 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).

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Recap of the four main joins as below. • Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders (eg) ai, ar, un, am, ear, aw, ir, hu, ti, ki, du, up, ag, fe, fu. • Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders (eg) ab, ul, it, ib, if, ub, th, ck, ch, it, ft, fl. • Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders (eg) ou, vi, wi, op, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re. • Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders (eg) ob, ol, wh, it, of, rt, rk. Apply to spellings and dictated sentences. Practise combining all 4 joins when writing sentences.	Practise combining all 4 joins when writing sentences. Expectation of the following S-factors: • Sitting: Proper upright sitting posture and body stability while writing. • Shape: Accurate formation of individual letters and letter families. • Space: Consistent and appropriate gaps between individual letters and separate words. • Size: Relative sizing and correct alignment of letters on single or double lines. • Speed: Achieving an efficient, automated writing pace appropriate for the writer's age. • Stringing: Smooth diagonal or horizontal joins between letters in a cursive style. • Slant: Uniform forward angle and parallel downstrokes across words.	

Year Five and Six

National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

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.

Crofty guidance

Yr5: Choose the writing implement that is best suited for the task. This could be pencil, handwriting pen, biro, fountain pen, etc

Choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters

Yr6: Be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version.

Use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

Expectation of the following S-factors:

1. **Sitting:** Proper upright sitting posture and body stability while writing.
2. **Shape:** Accurate formation of individual letters and letter families.
3. **Space:** Consistent and appropriate gaps between individual letters and separate words.
4. **Size:** Relative sizing and correct alignment of letters on single or double lines.
5. **Speed:** Achieving an efficient, automated writing pace appropriate for the writer's age.
6. **Stringing:** Smooth diagonal or horizontal joins between letters in a cursive style.
7. **Slant:** Uniform forward angle and parallel downstrokes across words.
8. **Style** (developing their own style to increase speed/ fluency), selecting the most appropriate style for occasion.

Morrells Handwriting Baseline Assessment Sheet

Name: _____ Year: _____

1. General Information

Hand dominance: ☐ Right ☐ Left (**Action:** if left-handed, angle the page to the right and ensure they are sat on the left side of the table)

Pencil grip: ☐ Tripod ☐ Other (**Action:** if other, issue a pencil grip)

Pencil position ☐ Normal ☐ Upright (**Action:** if upright, issue a Sportwriter)

Sitting posture: ☐ Upright ☐ Slouched ☐ Leaning ☐ Resting hand under chin

(**Action:** remind writer of good sitting posture, including feet flat on floor and both hands on the table. Use a tray under their feet if unable to touch the floor)

2. Letter and Number Formation

A a	E e	I i	M m	Q q	U u	Y y
B b	F f	J j	N n	R r	V v	Z z
C c	G g	K k	O o	S s	W w	
D d	H h	L l	P p	T t	X x	

(**Action:** 6 or more letters incorrect – writer needs to be on 'Letter Formation Book 1')

(**Action:** Fewer than 6 incorrect – use worksheets made from photocopiable Teacher's Book)

0	2	4	6	8
1	3	5	7	9

(**Action:** correct numbers using the Number Formation Instruction Wall Cards or Letter Formation Book 2 page 35 or Joining Letters Book 2 page 35)

3. Writing Full Name



Legible: ☐ Yes ☐ No (**Action:** if no, create a laminated name card for them to trace over)

Spelt correctly: ☐ Yes ☐ No (**Action:** if no, create a laminated name card for them to trace over)

4. Line Adherence and Letter Size

Placement on baseline (mostly): ☐ On line ☐ Above line ☐ Below line ☐ Writing away from margin

Letter spacing: ☐ Even ☐ Uneven

Letter size: ☐ Even ☐ Uneven

(**Action:** if line adherence and letter size is poor, do exercises for vision)

Notes: _____

Work across the page starting at number 1

