The Carlton & Faceby and Bilsdale CE Federation

Handwriting Progression and Implementation

Curriculum Intent

Children develop their handwriting skills through a carefully sequenced journey:

- Reception–Y2 (Rocket Phonics): secure letter formation, pencil control and early joins
- KS2: refinement and confidence in joining, fluency, automaticity and adaptation for purpose

The aim is that by the end of KS2, handwriting is automatic and efficient, allowing pupils to focus fully on composition.

Starting in Reception, children experience twice-weekly handwriting sessions.

Progression Overview

Reception *(to be read alongside the Physical Development Skills Progression)*

Half Term	Focus	Letters/patterns/skills
Autumn 1	Pre-writing patterns	Lines, circles, waves
Autumn 2	Curly letters	c, a, o, d, g, q
Spring 1	Downward letters	l, i, t, u, y, j
Spring 2	Remaining letter shapes	n, m, h, r, b, p, k
Summer 1	Name and simple words	CVC words
Summer 2	Secure formation	All letters

Year 1

Half Term	Focus	Letters/patterns/skills
Autumn 1	Lowercase letter formation (correct starting points)	c, a, o, d, g, q family
Autumn 2	Complete alphabet formation	All lowercase letters
Spring 1	Capital letters	A-Z formation
Spring 2	Size and orientation	Tall letters (b, d, h, l, t) and descenders (g, p, q, y)
Summer 1	Spacing and control	Finger spaces between words
Summer 2	Fluency of formation	Writing simple sentences accurately

Year 2

Half Term	Focus	Letters/patterns/skills
Autumn 1	Entry strokes to all letters	Lead-in strokes
Autumn 2	Diagonal joins (no ascenders)	a→n, a→m, i→n
Spring 1	Diagonal joins to ascenders	a→t, o→l, i→h
Spring 2	Horizontal joins	o→e, e→a
Summer 1	Joining to descenders	Correct joining to descenders and when to use breaks
Summer 2	Applying joins in words	Phonic patterns

Year 3 *(deliberately a repeat of Y2 to reinforce overlearning)*

Half Term	Focus	Letters/patterns/skills
Autumn 1	Entry strokes to all letters	Lead-in strokes
Autumn 2	Diagonal joins (no ascenders)	a→n, a→m, i→n
Spring 1	Diagonal joins to ascenders	a→t, o→l, i→h

Spring 2	Horizontal joins	o→e, e→a
Summer 1	Joining to descenders	Correct joining to descenders and when to use breaks
Summer 2	Applying joins in words	Phonic patterns

Year 4

Half Term	Focus	Letters/patterns/skills
Autumn 1	Continuous joined writing	Write sentences withour pausing to consider joins
Autumn 2	Reduced pencil lifts	Efficient sequencing of joins
Spring 1	Build speed gradually	Times short writing sessions
Spring 2	Maintain quality at speed	Focus on legibility under time pressure
Summer 1	Writing at length	Sustained fluency across a paragraph
Summer 2	Automaticity	Joined writing becomes less cognitively demanding

Year 5 and 6

Focus on automaticity, personal style and addressing individual areas for improvement.

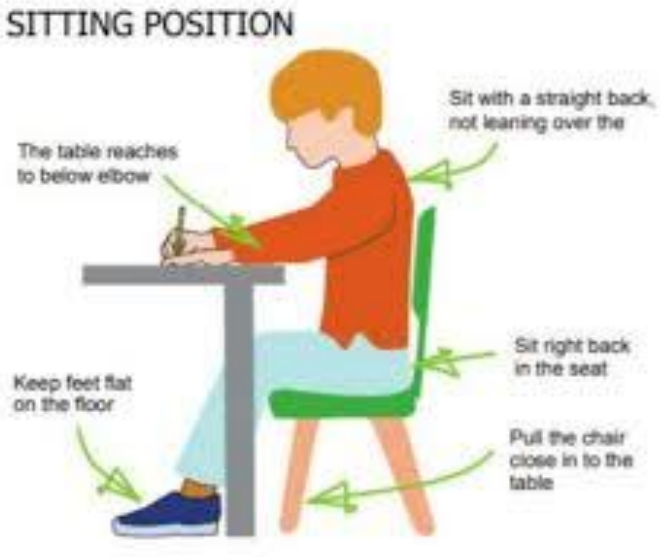
Implementation Across the School

- Daily reinforcement through all writing tasks at an age and stage appropriate level
- Focused handwriting sessions are taught twice per week as a minimum, with additional whole-class or group sessions as required
- Consistent modelling by all staff
- High expectations across all subjects

Pencil Grip and Posture

Children are taught the tripod pencil grip as they begin to write in Reception and this is reinforced throughout their journey through school until it becomes an automatic skill. Pupils may be supported through the use of specific pencil grips or individual equipment if required. Staff remind children of the correct posture for writing, where required, across all curriculum sessions.

Static Tripod Grip	Dynamic Tripod Grip
3- 5years	4- 6years
Pencil is held by three fingers and the movement comes from the wrist More intricate mark making can take place Several variations based on finger positioning	Pencil is stable in the traditional grip The thumb and fingers leave an open space Pencil moves efficiently and therefore mark making is more intricate
	
Smaller mark making Name writing Starting with letter formations (Reception) Playdough	Smaller mark making Letter formation Writing Pencil Grips Playdough



SEND Adaptations

- Adapted resources: pencil grips, wider lines, sloped boards
- Additional focus on letter formation before joins where required
- Multi-sensory approaches (tracing, air writing)
- Increased repetition and smaller steps
- Alternative recording methods where appropriate

Medium Term Overview

Session plans:

Session A = teach/model

Session B = practise/apply

Reception	
Autumn 1 – pre-writing patterns	
Week 1	A – practise straight lines (top-bottom) B – large scale chalk lines
Week 2	A – horizontal lines (left to right) B – pattern building with horizontal lines (road, tracks etc.)
Week 3	A – circles (clockwise and anti-clockwise) B – circular patterns
Week 4	A – zig-zags (top to bottom and bottom to top, left to right) B – zig-zag repeated patterns
Week 5	A – waves (soft zig-zag, top to bottom and bottom to top, left to right) B – wave pattern sequences
Week 6	A – mixed patterns B – independent mark making, applying taught patterns
Autumn 2 – 'curly' letters	
Week 1	A – model c (correct start point, anti-clockwise movement) B – large/small practise (sand, paint, foam, whiteboard, pencil), repeated c patterns
Week 2	A – revisit c, then model a (same start point, around, up and down) B – large/small practise, repeated c a pattern
Week 3	A – model o (complete anti-clockwise circle, starting and finishing at the top) B – large/small practise, circular pattern repetition, practise alongside c and a
Week 4	A – model d (building from a, around/up/tall/down), teach vocab ascender, focus on ascender height B – large/small practise, repeated d patterns, alternate a d pattern
Week 5	A – model g and q (focus on anti-clockwise action and descending below the line, teach vocab descender) B – large/small practise, simple combinations (g o, g a)
Week 6 (consolidation/application)	A – revision of all curly letters

	B – cvc picture labelling (cat, dog)
Spring 1 – 'downward' letters	
Week 1	A – model l (long ladder, start at top, move straight down) B – large/small practise, repeated l patterns, straight v wobbly lines
Week 2	A – model i (down and dot) and t (down and cross) – emphasise starting at top and differences between letters B – large/small practise, repeated i t pattern
Week 3	A – model u (down then up, correct starting point) B – large/small practise, pattern with i and l
Week 4	A – model y and j (descenders) – going below line, down then tail B – large/small practise, simple combination patterns (y u, j u)
Week 5 (practise)	A – revisit all 'downward' letters B – practise of downward letter strings
Week 6 (consolidation/application)	A – model writing simple words (lit, up) emphasizing formation B – write simple cvc/vc words, label pictures
Spring 2 – remaining letter families	
Week 1 – 'bridge' letters	A – model n and m (down/up/over) B – large/small practise, tracing, patterns (n n, m m, n m)
Week 2 – 'tall with arch' letter	A – model h (down/up/over) B – large/small practise, patterns (h h, h n)
Week 3 – short, controlled return	A – model r (down/up/small hook) and e (lift/loop) B – large/small practise, patterns (r r, r n, r e)
Week 4 - 'tall with curve' letter	A – model b (down/back up/around) and f (curve/tall/cross) B – large/small practise, patterns (b b, f f, b f)
Week 5 - 'descender with diagonal'	A – model p (down/up/around) and k (down/around/flick) B – large/small practise, p k pattern, point out ascender and descender
Week 6 – 'zig-zag and curves'	A1 – model diagonal letters (v, w, x, z) A2 – model s (curve) B – large/small practise, diagonal pattern, s pattern
Summer 1 – name writing	
Week 1	A – model tracing own name, introduce vocabulary capital letter B – trace name using full line, dotted pattern, finger tracing
Week 2	A – model copying name, letter order and spacing B – copying name from card provided
Week 3	A – model writing name from memory, counting number of letters B – attempt to write independently, refer to model if required, attempts self-corrections
Week 4	A – model name writing with letters staying on the line B – children write name from memory, comparing to make corrections where needed

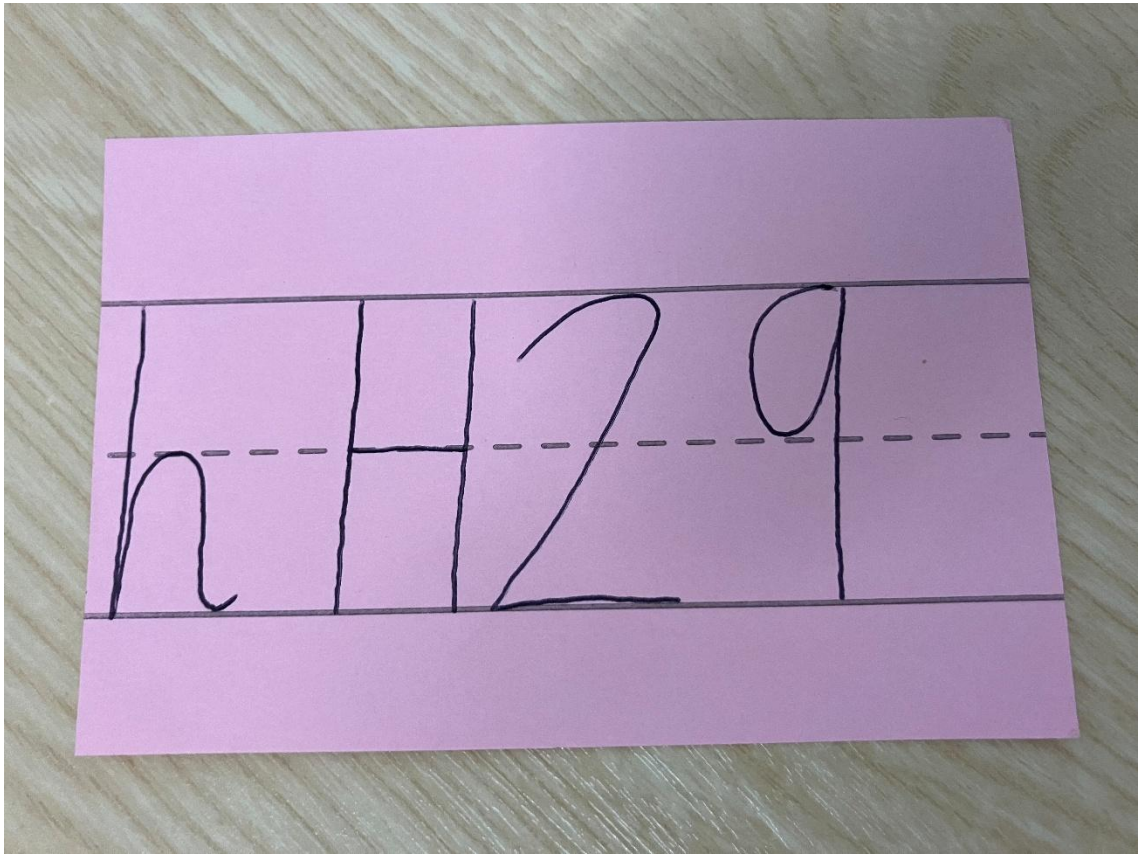
Week 5	A – model name writing in context (pictures, labels, cards) B – children write their name to add to a card or picture they have made
Week 6	A – model name writing with speed and fluency B – independent repetition, focus on consistency of sizing
Summer 2	
Week 1 (CVC words)	A – model writing simple CVC words (emphasize spacing and sizing) B – children independently write CVC words, trace/copy as required
Week 2 (CVC words, independence focus)	A – model segmenting to spell (emphasize sizing and spacing) B – write familiar CVC words or label pictures without tracing
Week 3 (simple phrases)	A – model short phrases (my cat, a big dog) B – children practise writing short phrases from picture prompts
Week 4 (labelling and simple sentences)	A – model a simple sentence (reinforce writing from left to right) B – children label simple drawings and attempt a short sentence with support
Week 5 (increasing independence)	A – review previous learning on sizing and spacing, model short writing task B – children complete independent write of words/phrase/sentence with lessening support
Week 6 (independent application)	A – model short independent task B - children complete a label/caption/short sentence independently

Year 1	
Autumn 1 – embedding letter families	
Week 1	A – model curly letters (c, a, o, b, d) B – trace, write, repeat, patterns
Week 2	A – model curly letters (g, q, p), focus on descenders B – trace, write, repeat, practise in words (dog, tag)
Week 3	A – model downward letters (l, i, t, u), focus on starting at the top and straight lines B – trace, write, repeat, patterns
Week 4	A – model arched letters (n, m, h, r) B – trace, write, repeat, letter strings
Week 5	A – model diagonal letters (v, w, x, z) B – trace, write, repeat, patterns
Week 6	A – model tricky letters (e, f, s) – correct start and end points B – children apply to simple words
Autumn 2 – full alphabet formation	
Week 1	A – model 'curly' family recap B – practise mixed patterns
Week 2	A – model l family (l, i, t, u, j, y) B – practise mixed patterns
Week 3	A – model n family (n, m, h, r) B – practise mixed patterns
Week 4	A – model remaining letters (b, p, f, g, k) B – practise mixed patterns
Week 5	A – model mixed full alphabet practise B – independently write groups of letters
Week 6 (consolidation/application)	A – model application in simple words B – independent word writing
Spring 1 – capital letters	
Week 1	A – model straight capitals (L, T, I, E, F, H), teach vocab upper and lower case B – practise, practise with upper and lower case
Week 2	A – model curved capitals (C, O, S, Q, U) with anti-clockwise shapes B – practise, practise with upper and lower case
Week 3	A – model diagonal capitals (A, V, W, X, Z, K, M, N), make diagonal strokes explicit B – practise, practise with upper and lower case
Week 4	A – model complex capitals (B, R, G, D, J, P, Y) B – practise, practise with upper and lower case
Week 5	A – model using capital letters in names

	B – practise writing own name
Week 6	A – model writing capital letters in sentences B – children write simple sentences using capital letters correctly
Spring 2 – size and orientation	
Week 1	A – model tall letters (b, d, h, l, t) B – practise height consistency
Week 2	A – model short letters (a, c, o, n, m) B – practise uniform size
Week 3	A – model descenders (g, p, q, y, j) B – practise below-line control
Week 4	A – model contrasting size letters (tall/short/descenders) B – practise word writing with mixed letters (dog etc.)
Week 5	A – model correcting errors in letter formation B – provide inaccuracies for children to re-write correctly
Week 6	A – model a simple sentence with correct sizing and use of capital letters B – dictation activity with feedback
Summer 1 – spacing	
Week 1	A – model finger spacing using prompt B – children practise spacing words
Week 2	A – model sentence writing with finger spacing B – dictation activity – finger space focus
Week 3	A – model re-writing a sentence which has finger space errors B – children re-write an incorrectly spaced sentence
Week 4	A – model sentence with correct finger spacing without prompt B – children write a sentence with less reliance on the prompt
Week 5	A – re-model effective spacing B – dictation without finger spacing prompt
Week 6	A – model full sentence B – children create their own sentence from a picture stimulus with finger-space focus without the prompt
Summer 2 – fluency and independence	
Week 1	A – model slow, accurate writing B – children copy simple sentences with accuracy focus
Week 2	A – model writing a simple sentence from memory B – children practise a simple sentence from memory
Week 3	A – model sentence building from provided word bank B – children practise writing short sentences using provided resources
Week 4	A – model listening skills required for dictation B – children write dictated sentences with improving accuracy in letter formation and spacing

Week 5	A – model smooth letter writing with a timed focus B – children complete independent timed, short task
Week 6	A – model full sentence writing B - children independently write a mainly-correctly formed sentence from memory

Beyond Y1, it is expected that staff will reinforce the correct use of capital letters as appropriate throughout the teaching of handwriting, such as when delivering sentence-based sessions. It is expected that capital letters will be the same size as ascenders. Numbers (written numerically) should also be the same size as capital letters.



Year 2	
Autumn 1 – entry strokes	
Week 1	A – model lead-in strokes, starting from the line B – practise entry strokes with c
Week 2	A – model applying entry strokes to c family letters (a, o, d) B – patterns (c d, c a), simple words (at, an) with entry lines but not joined
Week 3	A – model applying entry stokes to l family letters (l, i , t, u) B – practise letter strings with emphasis on correct start position
Week 4	A – model apply entry strokes to n family letters (n, m, h, r) B – practise letter strings and short words (man, ran)
Week 5	A – model applying entry strokes to other letters (b, p, k, s, e) B – practise random mixes of letters further focus on correct starting position
Week 6	A – model application in words with entry strokes but not joined B – children write simple words with entry strokes independently
Autumn 2 – diagonal joins (no ascenders)	
Week 1	A – model joining a to n (fluid movement) B – practise writing an words with these letters joined (and, sand)
Week 2	A – model joining a to m (fluid movement) B – practise writing am words with these letters joined (ham, camp)
Week 3	A – model joining a to other small letters (e, o, r) B – practise mixed joins
Week 4	A – model joining i to n and u to n B – practise mixed joins
Week 5	A – model joined words (arm, nun etc.) B – independently write words fully joined
Week 6 (consolidation/application)	A – model application of known joins in sentences B – independent sentence writing applying learnt joins (entry strokes for other letters/words)
Spring 1 – diagonal joins to ascenders	
Week 1	A – model joining a to t B – practise relevant words
Week 2	A – model joining o to l, explicitly showing height control B – practise relevant words
Week 3	A – model joining I to h, showing carefully to approach to the ascender B – practise relevant words
Week 4	A – model mixed ascender joins B – practise mixed words
Week 5	A – model writing whole words using joins

	B – practise copying from given words
Week 6	A – model fully joined simple sentence writing B – children complete dictated simple sentences using known joins
Spring 2 – horizontal joins	
Week 1	A – model joining o to e B – practise joined oe pattern string
Week 2	A – model joining e to a B – practise joined ea pattern string
Week 3	A – model joining r to e, emphasising short join B – practise re pattern string
Week 4	A – model mixed horizontal joins B – practise word writing with mixed joins (are, sea etc.)
Week 5	A – model applying learnt joins in short phrases B – phrase dictation including learnt joins
Week 6	A – model applying learnt joins to a sentence B – children re-write a printed sentence using their known joins
Summer 1 – joining to descenders	
Week 1	A – revise descenders, model correct formation (g, y, j, p, q), reinforcing that descenders go below the line B – practise repeated descender patterns
Week 2	A – model joining a short letter to a descender (a to g, i to p) B – children practise words (tag, tap, tip)
Week 3	A – model writing letters with descenders that do not join (g, j, y, p) – focus on not looping and model where to lift the pencil B – children practise writing words with correct breaks (jump, yes, pad)
Week 4	A – model mixed words including descenders and examples of where a break is needed B – children re-write printed words with correct joins and identify where joins are not needed
Week 5	A – model applying descender joins into short phrases B – children write short phrases with correct joins and breaks (big dog, red pen)
Week 6	A – model applying descender joins into sentences B – children create their own simple sentences focussing on descender joins and correct breaks
Summer 2 – applying joins in writing	
Week 1	A – model short joined words B – children re-write printed words in joined script
Week 2	A – model longer joined words B – children re-write printed words in joined script

Week 3	A – model writing short phrases in fully joined script B – children re-write printed phrases in joined script
Week 4	A – model a short sentence in fully joined script B – children complete sentence dictation using joined script
Week 5	A – model creating a caption for a picture using fully joined script B – children complete picture caption activity independently
Week 6	A – model smooth, fluent joins in a sentence B – children create their own sentences using joined script

Year 3 – deliberate over-learning of Y2 to reinforce key joining skills	
Autumn 1 – entry strokes	
Week 1	A – model lead-in strokes, starting from the line B – practise entry strokes with c
Week 2	A – model applying entry strokes to c family letters (a, o, d) B – patterns (c d, c a), simple words (at, an) with entry lines but not joined
Week 3	A – model applying entry stokes to l family letters (l, i , t, u) B – practise letter strings with emphasis on correct start position
Week 4	A – model apply entry strokes to n family letters (n, m, h, r) B – practise letter strings and short words (man, ran)
Week 5	A – model applying entry strokes to other letters (b, p, k, s, e) B – practise random mixes of letters further focus on correct starting position
Week 6	A – model application in words with entry strokes but not joined B – children write simple words with entry strokes independently
Autumn 2 – diagonal joins (no ascenders)	
Week 1	A – model joining a to n (fluid movement) B – practise writing an words with these letters joined (and, sand)
Week 2	A – model joining a to m (fluid movement) B – practise writing am words with these letters joined (ham, camp)
Week 3	A – model joining a to other small letters (e, o, r) B – practise mixed joins
Week 4	A – model joining i to n and u to n B – practise mixed joins
Week 5	A – model joined words (arm, nun etc.) B – independently write words fully joined
Week 6 (consolidation/application)	A – model application of known joins in sentences B – independent sentence writing applying learnt joins (entry strokes for other letters/words)
Spring 1 – diagonal joins to ascenders	
Week 1	A – model joining a to t B – practise relevant words
Week 2	A – model joining o to l, explicitly showing height control B – practise relevant words
Week 3	A – model joining l to h, showing carefully to approach to the ascender B – practise relevant words
Week 4	A – model mixed ascender joins B – practise mixed words
Week 5	A – model writing whole words using joins

	B – practise copying from given words
Week 6	A – model fully joined simple sentence writing B – children complete dictated simple sentences using known joins
Spring 2 – horizontal joins	
Week 1	A – model joining o to e B – practise joined oe pattern string
Week 2	A – model joining e to a B – practise joined ea pattern string
Week 3	A – model joining r to e, emphasising short join B – practise re pattern string
Week 4	A – model mixed horizontal joins B – practise word writing with mixed joins (are, sea etc.)
Week 5	A – model applying learnt joins in short phrases B – phrase dictation including learnt joins
Week 6	A – model applying learnt joins to a sentence B – children re-write a printed sentence using their known joins
Summer 1 – joining to descenders	
Week 1	A – revise descenders, model correct formation (g, y, j, p, q), reinforcing that descenders go below the line B – practise repeated descender patterns
Week 2	A – model joining a short letter to a descender (a to g, i to p) B – children practise words (tag, tap, tip)
Week 3	A – model writing letters with descenders that do not join (g, j, y, p) – focus on not looping and model where to lift the pencil B – children practise writing words with correct breaks (jump, yes, pad)
Week 4	A – model mixed words including descenders and examples of where a break is needed B – children re-write printed words with correct joins and identify where joins are not needed
Week 5	A – model applying descender joins into short phrases B – children write short phrases with correct joins and breaks (big dog, red pen)
Week 6	A – model applying descender joins into sentences B – children create their own simple sentences focussing on descender joins and correct breaks
Summer 2 – applying joins in writing	
Week 1	A – model short joined words B – children re-write printed words in joined script
Week 2	A – model longer joined words B – children re-write printed words in joined script

Week 3	A – model writing short phrases in fully joined script B – children re-write printed phrases in joined script
Week 4	A – model a short sentence in fully joined script B – children complete sentence dictation using joined script
Week 5	A – model creating a caption for a picture using fully joined script B – children complete picture caption activity independently
Week 6	A – model smooth, fluent joins in a sentence B – children create their own sentences using joined script

Year 4	
Autumn 1 – continuous joined script	
Week 1	A – model writing words without lifting the pencil unnecessarily B – practise flow word writing (running, jumping etc)
Week 2	A – model continuous sentence writing with joined script B – children copy sentences focussing on continuous joins
Week 3	A – identify where children are stopping unnecessarily and model this B – provide sentences with identified weaknesses for children to practise
Week 4	A – model apply joined script to longer phrases B – provide a picture for children to write a full caption for using joined script
Week 5	A – model short paragraph writing using joined script B – provide a short paragraph for children to copy, focussing on joined script
Week 6	A – model independent joined writing B – children write a short paragraph independently using joined script
Autumn 2 – reducing pencil lifts	
Week 1	A – model efficient (less lifting) and inefficient (more lifting) writing B – provide children with examples of errors, they correct and re-write
Week 2	A – re-model efficient strategies for joining B – children apply this to dictated words/short sentences
Week 3	A – model improving messy handwriting B – children re-write a given example to show improved joins
Week 4	A – model applying this greater efficiency to sentence writing B – children copy sentences focussing on efficient writing flow
Week 5	A – model applying this into a short paragraph B – children re-write a given paragraph with a focus on efficient joins
Week 6 (consolidation/application)	A – model and reinforce efficient joining expectations B – independent paragraph writing applying learnt efficient skills
Spring 1 – building writing speed	
Week 1	A – model and introduce a 1-minute writing task B – children attempt a timed task
Week 2	A – model neat v rushed writing, discussing maintaining quality at speed B – repeat timed task to identify improvements
Week 3	A – extended timed writing (2 mins) B – practise to maintain legibility over a longer time
Week 4	A – model writing a longer sentence quickly but neatly, reinforcing the balance between speed and presentation B – children time themselves copying a sentence in neat script
Week 5	A – discuss pieces from previous week, strengths and challenges

	B – re-attempt last week's task, can children improve time, joining mistakes or both?
Week 6	A – model expectations for a timed independent write from a given stimulus B – children complete 10-minute timed writing task with speed and presentation focus. Paired feedback.
Spring 2 – writing at length	
Week 1	A – model creating linked sentences with handwriting focus B – provide an initial sentence for children to continue
Week 2	A – model structured paragraph with handwriting focus B – provide paragraph example with handwriting errors for children to identify and discuss
Week 3	A – model focussing on sizing and spacing when writing at length B – children identify a piece from their book with errors in sizing or spacing and re-write to show improvement
Week 4	A – model editing a piece of work with a focus on handwriting B – provide children with an example of a piece of writing with poor handwriting. Ask them to re-write with a greater handwriting focus
Week 5	A – model applying efficient, neat handwriting across a longer piece of writing B – children apply their knowledge into an extended paragraph
Week 6	Continue from Week 5
Summer 1 – automaticity	
Week 1	A – model writing using joined script when focussing on idea generation – thinking about handwriting is not the main focus B – children practise free writing with a handwriting focus
Week 2	A – model neat handwriting in context of a real-life task (e.g. a shopping list) B – children dictate a shopping list to each other
Week 3	A – model sustained automatic writing across a paragraph from prompt provided B – children create a free-writing paragraph from given prompt
Week 4	Continued from Week 3.
Week 5	A – model editing handwriting mistakes from a free write paragraph B – children edit their paragraphs with a handwriting focus (paired discussion and prompt may help identify errors)
Week 6	A – model reviewing work from the previous half term to identify areas to continue practising B – children work in pairs to feedback to each other on areas for continued improvement

Summer 2 – applying across the curriculum	
Week 1	Children will begin to apply their learnt handwriting skills to their extended work across the curriculum. Handwriting sessions will focus on review and editing of curriculum work with a handwriting lens.
Week 2	
Week 3	
Week 4	
Week 5	
Week 6	

Upper Key Stage Two

In Upper Key Stage 2, handwriting is taught through a combination of ongoing application across the curriculum, development of individual style, and targeted intervention where needed.

Pupils are expected to use fluent, joined handwriting automatically in all written work, with clear attention to consistency in size, spacing and alignment. Teaching focuses on ensuring that handwriting is efficient and legible, enabling pupils to concentrate fully on the content and quality of their writing rather than the mechanics of transcription.

Opportunities for handwriting practice are embedded within daily writing across all subjects, ensuring that high expectations are consistently applied. Pupils are supported to develop a personal, consistent handwriting style that maintains fluency while meeting presentation expectations.

Where pupils require additional support, targeted provision is implemented to address individual areas for improvement, such as letter formation, joins, spacing or speed. This may include short focused sessions, adapted resources or additional modelling to ensure all pupils achieve fluency.

By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to write quickly, confidently and legibly in a range of contexts, adapting their handwriting appropriately for different purposes, including note-taking and formal presentation.