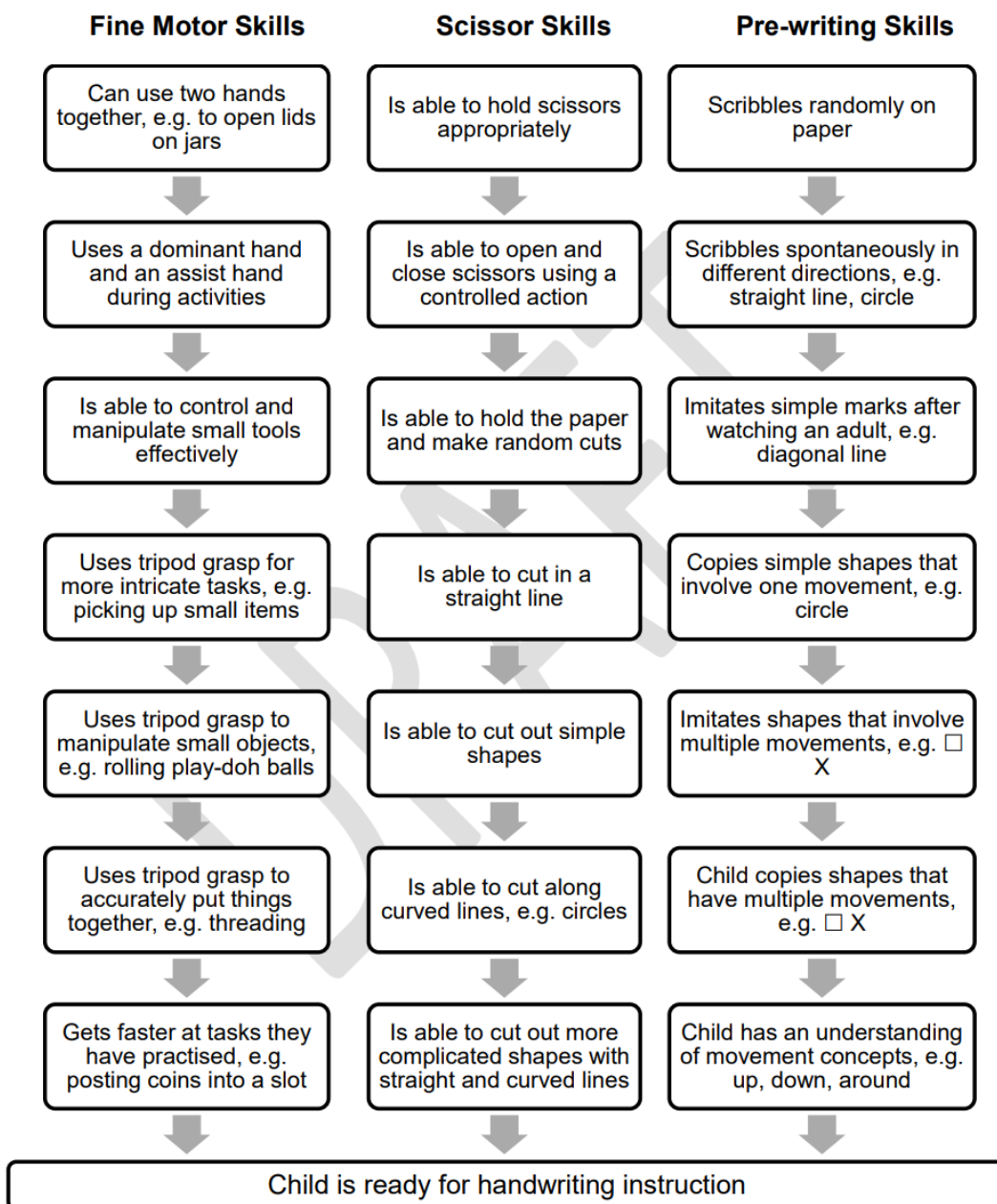


Prior to and working alongside the development of letter formation, children in the EYFS will have access to both fine and gross motor skill activities, that are both child initiated and adult supported. To support the development of fine motor skills, and to assess the children's pre-writing skills, teachers and support staff may choose to use: 'The Highland council: Pre-handwriting – Developmental Continuum'. Please find a copy of the continuum below:



Pre-Handwriting – Developmental Continuum



- Occupational Therapy advice sheets available on skill development for each of these areas
- A child's posture and seating during pre-writing activities can impact on their performance
- It is important that a child has lots of opportunity to develop their gross motor & co-ordination skills

Pencil control - directionality

Teachers and support staff may find it useful to consider the concept of 'directionality' when promoting positive handwriting habitats. The Highland Council have produced a definition which staff might find useful. Please find this definition below:

What is it? Directionality is the ability to control and change the direction of the pencil on the page. This includes; changes in direction during one pencil movement, forming the same shape but in different directions and following prepositions in relation to positioning and direction.

Why is it important? Handwriting is a very dynamic process and directionality plays a large part in correct and efficient letter formation that allows one letter to lead on to the next. This leads to efficient and fluid handwriting. Language relating to direction and positioning is relied upon heavily in handwriting instruction.

Teachers and support staff may find the following activities produced by The Highland Council useful to support and promote the concept of 'directionality':

Describe Me: Obstacle Course

- ❖ Using different pieces of equipment the children can demonstrate a movement or preposition of their choice. Their job is then to share with others what they are doing.

“I am on top of the bench”

“I am walking across the rope”

“I am between the cones”.

- ❖ Children could then give instructions to each other or describe what other children are doing.



Disco: Following instructions with lights or ribbons –

For this activity children will need LED finger lights or a piece of crepe paper cut into a strip

- ❖ Using materials:
 - when given an instruction, e.g. “Make a line up the wall, from down on the floor, all the way up to the ceiling”, children to copy.

Follow the Leader:

- ❖ One child, as the leader, gives an instruction e.g. “Put your hands up in the air.”
- ❖ The other children follow the leader's instructions.
- ❖ Adult to ensure that directions include circular and diagonal movements, e.g. “walk around the cone...now the other way”.

Follow the Leader – With Objects:

Using objects such as bean bags, cones, hoops etc.

- ❖ One child, as the leader, gives an instruction e.g. put the bean bag on top of your head.
- ❖ The other children follow the leader's instructions.
- ❖ Adult to ensure that directions include circular and diagonal movements, e.g. “move the beanbag across the hoop”.

Junk Modelling:

- ❖ Using a number of junk pieces, children can be given instructions to follow, e.g. "Place the bottle on top of the cardboard box."

Mazes:

Could be on a piece of paper or made on the ground, using sticks, rope, etc.

- ❖ Step 1: Children can complete a maze by following instructions
- ❖ Step 2: Children can complete a maze, describing the steps that they've taken.

On the Line:

For this task you will need to have vertical or horizontal line either drawn on the wall or on the ground. Childrne will also need an object to be placed/ stuck in relation to the line.

- ❖ For the horizontal line – children can place the object above the line, below the line, on the line etc.
- ❖ For the vertical line – children can place the object at the top of the line, at the bottom of the line, somewhere in the middle of the line.

Preposition Action Figures:

With language for directions and position

- ❖ With a selection of action figures or toys and plastic cups the adult can place the figures in relation to other figures and the cup(s).
- ❖ Adult to model, 'The pig is beside the duck'. The adult can then set up another scenario, e.g. the fox is inside the cup 'Where is the fox?'
- ❖ Following this the children can then create their own scenario and describe what they have created:
e.g. 'The duck is in-between the pig and the fox'.



Pencil control - pressure control

Teachers and support staff may find it useful to consider pressure control when they are supporting the development of handwriting skills. The Highland Council have produced the following definition which staff might find useful. Please find this definition below:

What is it? In order for writing implements to make marks on the page, a certain amount of force has to be applied. The muscles in the hand and fingers have to learn the right amount of pressure to use in order for mark making to occur but without using too much effort.

Why is it important? If children struggle with pressure control, it will be difficult for them to develop fluidity of movement. Without an understanding of pressure control, children are likely to have difficulties with legibility and are likely to have a slower handwriting speed, in part because they will have to carry out frequent corrections. Too heavy pressure can also lead to fatigue, hand pain and ripping of the paper.

Teachers and support staff may find the following activities produced by The Highland Council useful to support and promote pressure control:

Bubble Wrap Pop:

- ❖ Children to use their pincer grip (thumb and forefinger) of their “doing hand” to pop as many bubbles in the time given as the “helping hand” holds the bubble wrap.
- ❖ Get children to reflect on how hard they are pushing.
- ❖ Encourage them to try popping with more force and less force. What happens?

Bulldog Line:

- ❖ With a number of bulldog clips and a piece of washing line, children to clip as many bull dogs as they can using their pincer grip (thumb and forefinger) and tripod grasp (thumb, forefinger and middle finger) as they can in a given amount of time.
- ❖ Try with different clips and/or pegs.
- ❖ Ask children to think about what the difference between them are, e.g. do some need squeezing harder than others?

Bumpy Surfaces:

- ❖ Using different bumpy surfaces, e.g. chalk on the pavement or crayon on top of sandpaper, children to have the opportunity to make marks to experience the different resistance and pressure needed when using the implement on the surface.
- ❖ Encourage children to think about the different pressure they are using, “what are you doing differently?”

Clicky Pen Orchestra:

Children will need a retractable pen.

- ❖ Holding the “clicky pen” in their “helping hand”, the adult should use the fingers of their “doing hand” to click to a piece of music. The children should copy the adult’s movements using ‘Tommy Thumb’ (thumb), ‘Peter Pointer’ (forefinger), ‘Toby Tall’ (middle finger), ‘Ruby Ring’ (ring finger) and ‘Baby Small’ (little finger). This should give the opportunity for children to use all of their fingers at different times and different speeds.
- ❖ Ask the children “Did it feel different for different fingers?”, “How?”, “Why?”



Coin and Leaf Rubbings:

- ❖ Using a piece of paper on top of gathered coins/ leaves, children to use the side of a crayon to rub the paper on top of the coin or leaf.
- ❖ Adult to guide children to look at the difference when they rub lightly and when they apply more pressure.

Teachers and support staff may find it useful to consider shape manipulation when they are supporting the development of handwriting skills. The Highland Council have produced the following definition which staff might find useful. Please find this definition below:

What is it? Shape manipulation is the ability to change the way a shape is formed. This includes making it bigger or smaller, only forming part of it or changing its position and/or angle.

Why is it important? Letter formation involves taking bits of shapes and being able to create them in different ways. The more understanding and control children have over changing aspects of the shape, the easier it will be for them to apply this to letter formation.

Teachers and support staff may find the following activities produced by The Highland Council useful to support shape manipulation:

Body Shapes:

- ❖ **Step 1:** Working together, children use their bodies to create different shapes – e.g. three children could make a triangle, each being one of the edges.
- ❖ **Step 2:** Reflecting on the shape made before, think about and create a different shape – e.g. “You have made a triangle. How would you make a square?”

Construction:

- ❖ When shown a photograph/picture of a construction made from bricks, cubes or LEGO®, children to recreate the construction putting individual pieces together.

Dot to Dot Shapes: *Children will need dotted paper*

- ❖ Children to draw a large shape, e.g. square, using the dots.
- ❖ Inside the first shape, children to use the dots to draw a series of smaller shapes, similar to the first, getting smaller and smaller each time.

Guess the shape:

- ❖ Cover up a shape, drawn on a piece of paper or an object.
- ❖ Slowly reveal a bit of the shape and see how quickly children can guess the shape.
- ❖ Do this from different angles to reveal different bits of the shape.

Jigsaws:

- ❖ Use jigsaws to support children to put different pieces together. Use jigsaws of varying complexity through the number of pieces.

Make a change:

- ❖ Children to make/draw a shape. Adult or children to come up with ideas about how they can change it, e.g. make it bigger, draw only half of it.

Pencil grip development

Children in reception will be provided with a range of mark making and writing opportunities that are both adult supported and child initiated. The children will be encouraged to explore a variety of pencil grips through mark making opportunities using a variety of different media. The children will be supported to achieving an appropriate pencil grip for their level of development, leading to improved and accurate letter formation. Throughout the year, Teachers and support staff will assess the children through observation and they will identify children who may need intervention for fine motor support. Below you will find a progression grid for pencil grip development.

Holding a Pencil– Ages and Stages

Written by Emma Butler BECS

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Palmar Grasp 1-2 Years



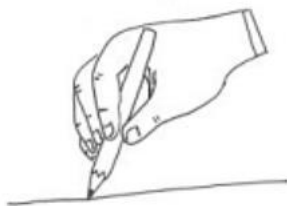
This is where the child wraps their fingers around the writing tool and moves their whole arm to make marks. This grasp is often used by infants and toddlers who are just learning to scribble rather than trying to make more accurate marks on paper. An infant usually switches the writing tool from hand to hand. Some older children may prefer this grasp if their fine motor skills aren't well developed or if they haven't had much experience with drawing tools.

Digital Pronate Grasp 2-3

This is where the writing tool is held with the fingers and the palm of the hand is facing down. The writing tool is usually placed in a diagonal position within the hand. The movement comes from the arm. This shift from the palmer to digital pronate grasp indicates muscular progress in the areas of coordination and strength. It is common around this age for the writing tool to be switched from hand to hand.



Static Tripod Grasp 3-4



This is where the writing tool is placed between the thumb, index finger and middle finger (three fingers touching the writing tool). The hand and fingers move as a unit. This grasp is more efficient than the previous two grasps. Sometimes the ring finger will also touch the writing tool, this is called a Static Quadrupod Grasp (four fingers touching the writing tool). At this stage hand dominance is emerging however, it is still common for the writing tool to switch from hand to hand.

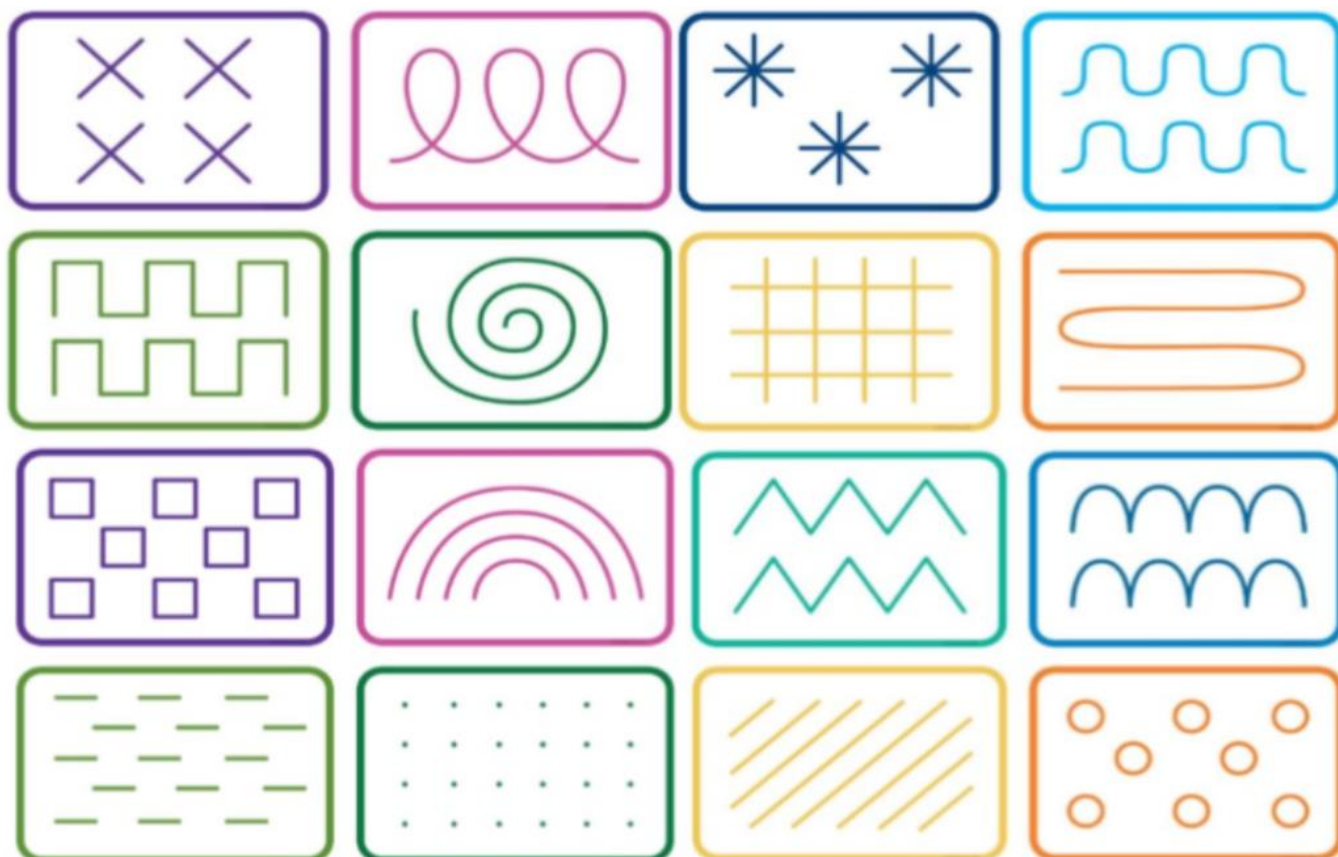
Dynamic Tripod Grasp 4-5

This is where the writing tool is placed between the thumb and index finger. The side of the middle finger gently supports the writing tool. The ring and little fingers are lightly curled under. Small finger movements guide the writing tool to make marks while the wrist and arm support the motion. This is considered the most efficient grasp, as intricate and detailed marks can be made. At this stage, hand dominance has usually been achieved.



Mark making skills - handwriting patterns

Children in reception will be encouraged to access both child initiated and adult directed mark making activities that are cross-curricular. The children will have access to multi-sensory activities, including dough disco and outdoor writing opportunities, to also develop a positive attitude towards mark making and the development of early handwriting skills. As part of this provision, children will be encouraged to make the following patterns to support the development of letter formation skills. These patterns lead into the Nelson handwriting program that is being used from year one to year six. Please find the handwriting patterns below:



Children will be encouraged to make marks and form letters on different writing formats for example, lines, plain paper and whiteboards. This is to consolidate and apply early writing skills. Most children will be forming letters correctly by the end of reception using different writing formats, for example on plain paper, whiteboards and lined paper. Regardless of which format they are writing on, positive handwriting habits will be recognised and celebrated.

Letter formation

Alongside the aforementioned skills, children in reception will be taught how to correctly form and orientate letters. This will be delivered through shared writing opportunities, phonics sessions and adult directed tasks. The children will also have access to the handwriting patterns (as mentioned above in mark making skills) and letter formation resources in their classroom provision. Class teachers and support staff will use a variety of creative teaching strategies to engage children in letter formation learning opportunities.

Through the development of gross/fine motor skills, the development of mark making skills and the direct teaching of letter formation, by the end of reception, most children will be able to form and orientate letters correctly with 'lead outs'. Some children may find achieving this end of year expectation challenging. Those children will be supported with targeted and appropriate intervention, based on their needs. Please find the end of reception year expectation for letter formation:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq
Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy
Zz

'Letter families'

To support the teaching of letter formation, Teachers and support staff might find it useful to group letters according to how they are formed. We will refer to these as letter families. However, Teachers might decide to teach letter formation in a different order to the letter families. This is up to teacher discretion. Please find the 'letter families' below:

The flick letter family – Letters based on a single vertical line.

i l t j

The curly c letter family - letters based on a 'c' shape.

c o a d g q

Letter 'e' – related to the coat hanger letter family, begins differently but still based on the 'c' shape.

e

The bouncy ball letter family - letters that have a vertical down stroke followed by a diagonal movement to the right.

n m r h b k p

The zig zag letter family – Both letters start on the top line, have a diagonal stroke and have a 'lead out' that sits on the top line.

v w x z

The loop letter family - Both letters start on the top line, begin with a downward stroke, curve back up to the top and then down to the bottom solid line.

u y

The letter 's' and the letter 'f' - Letter that are unique and individual and do not fit with any other letter groups.

s f

Key stage one - Years one and two

As children enter year one from reception, Class teachers and support staff will assess the children's handwriting needs through their usual writing and classroom assessments. Children identified as needing handwriting/fine motor support will have targeted intervention and/or in class provision to support the development of these skills. Once initial assessments have been complete, the children will be introduced to the 'Nelson handwriting scheme'. Class teachers and/or support staff will be delivering handwriting sessions between two/three times a week, and they may find it useful to refer to the reception section of the handwriting progression document to support their delivery of handwriting sessions.

'Break letters':

As part of the 'Nelson handwriting scheme', children will be introduced to 'break letters' i.e. letters that are not joined after being formed. Children will explore how to join these letters (where appropriate) at a later date within the scheme. The break letters are follows:

j p q b g y x z

Year one (Book 1)

When children enter year one, they will begin with unit one of the 'Nelson handwriting scheme' and finish the year by completing unit six. As a part of the unit one section of work, Class teachers and support staff might find it useful to revise and review 'marking making skills – handwriting patterns'; and refer to the 'letter formation families' (please see the reception section for the models) when they are delivering handwriting sessions and during other writing opportunities. Furthermore, as part of unit one work, Class teachers might find it useful to emphasise how letters are formed and 'how they sit in relation to a line'. These will be referred to as letters with 'ascenders' (tall letters) and letters with 'descenders' (letters with tails). Please find examples below:

Letters with ascenders: (tall letters)

b d h k l t

g j f p q y

Please find below a breakdown of the units covered in year one:

1. Unit One - Handwriting patterns
2. Unit Two – revision of un-joined script
3. Unit Three - Practicing the first join
4. Unit Four – Practicing the second join
5. Unit Five - Practicing the third join
6. Unit Six – Practicing the fourth join

Year two (Book 1)

When children enter year two, they will begin with consolidating the handwriting skills they began to develop in year one. Class teachers and support staff will refer to the reception and year one sections of the handwriting document where appropriate to support the delivery of handwriting sessions. Please find a breakdown of the units of work covered:

1. Unit seven – tricky letters: joining s to s and joining f to f.
2. Unit eight/nine - Grammar in handwriting and number words
3. Unit ten - 'ee' and 'ea'
4. Unit eleven - Practice with opposites
5. Unit twelve – Practice with lists
6. Unit thirteen – Practice with sequencing
7. Unit fourteen/fifteen - Grammar
8. Unit Sixteen/Seventeen/Eighteen - Practice within genres/stamina for writing

Year three (Book 2)

The start of Year 3 will focus on the revision of unjoined scripts and the previously taught joins. Class teachers and support staff will refer to the reception and year one and two sections of the handwriting document where appropriate to support the delivery of handwriting sessions. Where children require additional support with handwriting and fine motor skills, teachers should use the earlier skills outlined in this document. Please find a breakdown of the units of work covered:

1. Unit 1 - revision of unjoined scripty and the joins
2. Unit 2 - Revision of e,s and f
3. Unit 3 - Practise with poems and prose
4. Unit 4 - Joining consonants ff, ll, ss
5. Unit 5 - vowel digraphs
6. Unit 6 - Practise with all the joins - silent letters
7. Unit 7 - Practise with verbs and adverbs
8. Unit 8 - Practise with conjunctions - and
9. Unit 9 - Questions and answers
10. Unit 10 - inverted commas
11. Unit 11 - writing with a slope

12. Unit 12 - Vocabulary practise - synonyms and antonyms
13. Unit 13 - Dictionary skills - alphabetical order, definitions
14. Unit 14 - Speed writing
15. Unit 15 - Drafting and editing
16. Unit 16 - Print
17. Unit 17 - writing in ink
18. Unit 18 - writing letters
19. Unit 19 - Check your handwriting

Year Four (Book 3)

By the end of Year 3, children should have had experience of writing in pen. By the end of Year 4, most pupils should be writing in pen. Some pupils with a specific need may prefer, or need, to write in pencil.

1. Unit 1 - Revision of the unjoined script and joins
2. Unit 2 - Revision of sloped writing
3. Unit 3 - Practice with gh spellings
4. Unit 4 - Practice with the -le word endings
5. Unit 5 - Practice with verbs
6. Unit 6 - Practice with conjunctions
7. Unit 7 - practice with pronouns
8. Unit 8 - Practice with paragraphs
9. Unit 9 - Punctuation - apostrophes, exclamation marks
10. Unit 10 - Speed writing
11. Unit 11 - Writing a topic report
12. Unit 12 - Writing letters
13. Unit 13 - Speed writing in ink
14. Unit 14 - Print
15. Unit 15 - Practice with synonyms and definitions
16. Unit 16 - Practice with collective nouns
17. Unit 17 - Practice with proverbs
18. Unit 18 - Penmanship
19. Unit 19 - Presentation
20. Unit 20 - Check your writing

Year Five (Book 4)

By the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils will be able to write with a joined script, in pen. Year 5 will consolidate the joins and develop an individual style of handwriting.

1. Unit 1 - Revision of un-joined script and the joins
2. Unit 2 - Presenting a project
3. Unit 3 - Practice with prefixes
4. Unit 4 - Practise with word origins
5. Unit 5 - Practice with tricky spellings
6. Unit 6 - Practice with parts of speech
7. Unit 7 - Practice with punctuation marks
8. Unit 8 - Practice with paragraphs
9. Unit 9 - Practice with print
10. Unit 10 - Penmanship

11. Unit 11 - Developing an individual style
12. Unit 12 - Practice with similes
13. Unit 13 - Practice with figures of speech
14. Unit 14 - Drafting and editing
15. Unit 15 - Practice with playscripts
16. Unit 16 - Presentation
17. Unit 17 - Check your writing

Year Six

This handwriting scheme should be completed by the end of Year 5. We would expect the majority of pupils at the start of year 6 to be writing in a joined script that is clear and legible. However, some pupils may need additional support. Teachers should refer to the earlier sections and provide intervention and/or support at the level the child is at.