

EYFS – Penpals Handwriting Progression of Skills

Skill	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Gross motor control	Develop whole-body movements and shoulder stability.	Develop control through large-scale movements.	Refine arm and shoulder movements.	Develop controlled movements using different equipment.	Coordinate movements with increasing precision.	Demonstrate good control and coordination.
Fine motor control	Develop finger, hand and wrist strength through practical activities.	Develop pincer grip and manipulation skills.	Improve control and precision when using tools.	Develop increasing dexterity and hand strength.	Use tools with increasing accuracy.	Demonstrate increasing control and independence.
Pencil grip	Explore a range of writing tools and develop an effective grip.	Develop a comfortable and controlled pencil grip.	Refine grip and pencil control.	Maintain an appropriate grip for longer periods.	Use a controlled and efficient grip.	Independently select and use an appropriate grip.
Posture and position	Develop awareness of how to sit and position paper for writing.	Begin to adopt an appropriate writing position.	Maintain an appropriate posture with increasing consistency.	Develop independence in positioning paper and equipment.	Maintain good posture during writing.	Demonstrate an effective and comfortable writing position independently.
Pre-writing patterns	Explore lines, circles, curves and large-scale movements.	Develop controlled patterns including vertical, horizontal and curved lines.	Practise patterns involving repeated movements and direction changes.	Develop patterns that support letter formation.	Refine pattern control and directionality.	Apply controlled movements confidently.
Letter formation	Begin to explore correct formation of letters through multisensory activities.	Form some lower-case letters using the correct starting point and direction.	Form an increasing number of letters correctly.	Develop consistency in letter formation.	Form most lower-case letters correctly and consistently.	Form lower-case letters accurately and independently.
Capital letters	Begin to recognise and explore capital letters.	Practise forming familiar capital letters.	Form an increasing number of capital letters correctly.	Develop consistency in capital letter formation.	Use capital letters appropriately when writing names and sentences.	Form capital letters correctly and independently.
Letter orientation	Begin to understand that letters have a particular orientation.	Recognise and correct some reversed letters with support.	Develop consistent letter orientation.	Self-correct some reversals.	Form letters with increasing accuracy and orientation.	Independently check and correct letter formation where appropriate.

Skill	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Letter size	Explore large and small letter movements.	Begin to understand that letters are formed at a similar size.	Develop more consistent letter size.	Begin to recognise relative letter height.	Use increasingly consistent letter size.	Form letters with appropriate and consistent sizing.
Writing name	Recognise and attempt to write own name.	Write own name with increasing accuracy.	Form letters in own name correctly.	Write own name independently.	Write own name confidently and consistently.	Write own name accurately and independently.
Writing words	Make marks and write letters to represent meaning.	Write some recognisable letters and sounds.	Segment and write simple words using phonics.	Write words with increasing accuracy.	Apply phonics knowledge when spelling words.	Independently write words using known phoneme-grapheme correspondences.
Writing sentences	Begin to understand that spoken words can be recorded.	Write labels and captions with adult support.	Write simple phrases and captions.	Write simple sentences using known phonics.	Write sentences with increasing independence.	Write short sentences independently using appropriate letter formation.
Spacing	Explore writing groups of letters and words.	Begin to notice spaces between words.	Use spaces between words with support.	Develop consistent word spacing.	Use spaces independently in sentences.	Apply appropriate spacing consistently.
Pencil control	Develop control through drawing and mark making.	Follow lines and patterns with increasing accuracy.	Develop controlled directional movements.	Improve accuracy when forming letters.	Demonstrate increasing precision.	Write with confidence, control and fluency.

Penpals – Key Reception handwriting progression

Autumn 1 – Developing Foundations

- Develop gross and fine motor control.
- Develop hand and finger strength.
- Explore a range of mark-making tools.
- Develop an effective pencil grip.
- Develop controlled large-scale movements.
- Explore pre-writing patterns.
- Begin to recognise and write own name.

Autumn 2 – Developing Control

- Develop pencil control and an appropriate writing position.
- Refine pre-writing patterns.

- Begin to form lower-case letters using correct formation.
- Develop recognition and formation of familiar letters.
- Write own name with increasing accuracy.
- Begin to represent sounds through writing.

Spring 1 – Developing Letter Formation

- Form an increasing number of lower-case letters correctly.
- Develop consistency in starting points and directionality.
- Develop control of letter size.
- Apply phonics when writing simple words.
- Write labels, captions and simple phrases.
- Develop increasing independence.

Spring 2 – Applying Handwriting Skills

- Form lower-case letters with increasing accuracy and consistency.
- Develop correct letter orientation.
- Form capital letters correctly.
- Apply handwriting skills when writing words and sentences.
- Develop appropriate spacing between words.
- Maintain an effective pencil grip and posture.

Summer 1 – Increasing Fluency

- Form letters accurately and consistently.
- Apply correct formation when writing independently.
- Use phonics knowledge to spell words.
- Write simple sentences with increasing fluency.
- Use capital letters and full stops.
- Develop consistent letter size and spacing.

Summer 2 – Readiness for Year 1

- Form lower-case and capital letters correctly and independently.
- Demonstrate good pencil control and posture.
- Write words using known phoneme-grapheme correspondences.
- Write short sentences with increasing fluency.

- Use appropriate spacing between words.
- Re-read writing and make corrections where appropriate.
- Develop confidence, independence and enjoyment in writing.

Links to Development Matters

Physical Development → Fine Motor

- Develop small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.

Literacy → Writing

- Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.
- Spell words by identifying the sounds and then writing the sound with letter/s.
- Write short sentences with words with known sound-letter correspondences using a capital letter and full stop.
- Re-read what they have written to check that it makes sense.

“control → formation → consistency → application → fluency → independence.”