

Handwriting

Curriculum Overview

Masefield Primary School

Intent for Handwriting at Masefield

All children should be encouraged to develop pride in their work and the ability to present work appropriately through adopting a fluent, legible and consistent style, which enables children to express their pride and communicate effectively through their best presentation.

At our school, it is our intent that every child should be enabled to develop a fluent legible style of handwriting. Capital and lower-case letters should be used appropriately and the letter size should be consistent. We will provide opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect skills and provide targeted support to any child experiencing difficulty.

Our Handwriting Curriculum is used as a framework. Formation comes first and the letter formation is the priority before children begin to practise joining their letters.

Importance of Handwriting – the why

The ability to write legibly and appropriately is a skill which children will need to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers. Handwriting is a basic tool used in many subjects — taking notes, taking tests, and doing classroom work and homework for almost every content area as well as in language arts classes — poor handwriting can have a pervasive effect on school performance.

Moreover, when handwriting is perceived as demanding and time-consuming, motivation to write may be greatly reduced, leading to a lack of practice that may further compound difficulties with writing.

Finally, handwriting in the earliest grades is linked to basic reading and spelling achievement; for example, when children learn how to form the letter *m*, they can also be learning its sound. Attention to the linkages among handwriting, reading, and spelling skills can help to reinforce early achievement across these areas.¹

¹ <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/importance-teaching-handwriting>

Evidence Base

Learning to form letters and spell words requires considerable effort and attention. Schools, therefore, should consider the advantages to children of delaying the teaching of joined handwriting. Nearly all the headteachers in the schools Ofsted visited for its 'Bold beginnings' survey did not teach a cursive or pre-cursive script in Reception. They told inspectors that they believed:

... it slowed down children's writing, at a point when they already found manual dexterity tricky and the muscles in their shoulders, arms and hands were still developing.





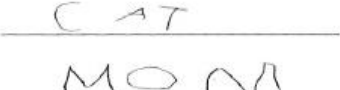
(The Reading Framework [p.49](#))

It's well known that early writers should focus their efforts on 'automaticity' and fluency of handwriting rather than on the adherence to any particular style (Graham et al. [2012](#); Santangelo & Graham [2016](#)). The main aim at this age is for children to write quickly, accurately and effortlessly. The fact is children who write with automaticity go on to perform very well in their later years and produce higher-quality pieces (Puranik & AlOtaiba [2012](#); Malpique et al. [2017](#), [2020](#)).

'The Reading Framework' highlights the importance of letter formation and handwriting instruction as being absolutely essential, that it needs to occur daily, and that it is best practised in connection with daily phonics instruction (Rowe [2018](#); Graham et al. [2018](#)). It is important that teachers invite children to use all that they've learnt about letter formation during a daily 'writing time' and/or through their daily play in the writing centre.

Children's letter formation develops through a recursive process of: drawings and scribbles; linear scribbles and mock handwriting and letter-like symbols. This then progresses to: random but real letter strings; letters that represent key sounds learnt; spaces that indicate separation between words; 'sound spellings' using phonics knowledge before finally spelling words conventionally.

Stages of Emergent Writing

Stages of Emergent Writing		
Stage	Description	Example
Drawing	Drawings that represent writing	
Scribbling	Marks or scribbles the child intends to be writing	
Wavy scribbles or mock handwriting	Wavy scribbles that imitate cursive writing and have a left-to-right progression; child pretends to write words	
Letter-like forms or mock letters	Letters and marks that resemble letter-like shapes	
Letter strings	Strings of letters that do not create words, written left to right, including uppercase and lowercase letters	
Transitional writing	Letters with spaces in between to resemble words; letters/words copied from environmental print; letters often reversed	
Invented or phonetic spelling	Different ways to represent the sounds in words; the first letter of the word or beginning and ending sounds represent the entire word	
Beginning word and phrase writing	Words with beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds; short phrases	
Conventional spelling and sentence writing	Correct spelling of words, generally the child's name and words such as <i>mom</i> and <i>dad</i> ; sentences with punctuation and correct use of uppercase and lowercase letters	

(Byington & Kim 2017)

Letter Formation & 'The 4 Joining Sets'

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

Capital 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

Numbers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Letter families

Lowercase letters are grouped into 'families' which require similar movements.

The ladder family

l i t j u y



The rubber ball family

r n m p h b k



The cog family

c o a d g q



The cog cousins

s e f



The zip wire family

z v w x



There are two main types of join – **diagonal joins** and **horizontal joins**. These basic joins are divided into three sub-groups to distinguish between joining to letters with different starting points and formations.

Diagonal joins

- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to short straight letters and letters with descenders (starting at the short letter height) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**
- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**
- **Diagonal joins** from the letters **a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**

Handwriting example showing diagonal joins for the letters 'an' and 'in' on a four-line grid. Red arrows indicate the diagonal stroke direction from the top line to the bottom line.

Handwriting example showing a diagonal join for the letters 'ch' on a four-line grid. A red arrow indicates the diagonal stroke direction from the top line to the middle line.

Handwriting example showing a diagonal join for the letters 'ic' on a four-line grid. A red arrow indicates the diagonal stroke direction from the middle line to the bottom line.

Handwriting example showing a horizontal join for the letters 'on' on a four-line grid. A red arrow indicates the horizontal stroke direction from the middle line to the bottom line.

Handwriting example showing a horizontal join for the letters 'ok' on a four-line grid. A red arrow indicates the horizontal stroke direction from the middle line to the bottom line.

Handwriting example showing a horizontal join for the letters 'oa' on a four-line grid. A red arrow indicates the horizontal stroke direction from the middle line to the bottom line.

Horizontal joins

- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to short straight letters (starting at the short letter line) **r, n, m, i, u, v, w, p, y** and **j**
- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to the top of ascenders **l, h, k, b** and **t**
- **Horizontal joins** from the letters **o, v, w** to round anticlockwise letters (letters starting at 2 o'clock position) **a, o, c, d, g** and **q**

Some letters (e.g. **e, s, r, f**) require a variation on these joins and are introduced separately.

Break letters (letters that do not join to the next letter) are letters that finish with a descender (**y, g, j, q**), letters that finish on the left (**s, x, b, p**) and the letter **z**.

Handwriting Curriculum Coverage

Children in EYFS to Year 2 should be taught to form letters as letter formation is crucial before any joins can be made. From Summer Term (or earlier if pupils are ready) in Year 2, children should begin to be taught joins using the 'joining sets'.

Handwriting Curriculum – Stage 1

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Objective	l L	r R	k K	q Q	w W	k K c C o O
Words	lip, lot, lap, little	rat, run, rail, rabbit	kit, kite, kick, kettle	quit, queen, quick, question	what, where, wish, winter	
Objective	i I	m M	c C	s S	x X	a A d D g G
Words	it, in, tip, into	mill, mat, mummy, market	cup, cut, clip, chick	sit, said, sand, Sunday	box, axe, fox, mixer	
Objective	t T	n N	o O	e E	l L i I t T	q Q s S e E
Words	tip, tin, till, little	not, nip, north, nettle	on, once, open, October	eat, eight, meet, enjoy		
Objective	j J	p P	a A	f F	j J u U y Y	f F z Z v V
Words	jet, jam, jail, July	pet, put, pin, pillow	am, all, any, apples	fall, farm, fruit, February		
Objective	u U	h H	d D	z Z	r R m M n N	w W x X
Words	up, hut, pull, brush	her, hut, hair, happy	do, doll, did, December	zip, zoo, pizza, zebra		
Objective	y Y	b B	g G	v V	p P h H b B	Revision
Words	yet, you, yell, yellow	bin, ball, belt, branch	go, girl, gym, golden	van, vet, verb, vest		
	Ladder Family	Rubber Ball Family	Cog Family	Cog Cousins	Zip Wire Family	

Handwriting Curriculum – Stage 2

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Objective	l L	r R	k K	q Q	The diagonal join to r, n m	Practising the join a, c, o
Words	lip, lot, lap, little	rat, run, rail, rabbit	kit, kite, kick, kettle	quit, queen, quick, question	Joining short letters (e.g in, am, im, ar, un, an)	Joining to round letters from a tall letter (e.g ho, to, do, ha, da, tch)
Objective	i I	m M	c C	s S	The diagonal join to l and u	Joining words with diagonal joins
Words	it, in, tip, into	mill, mat, mummy, market	cup, cut, clip, chick	sit, said, sand, Sunday	Joining to short letters from tall letters (e.g li, ti, hi, lu, tu, du)	Practising diagonal joins to join whole words
Objective	t T	n N	o O	e E	Practising the join r, n m, i, u	The horizontal join to r, n, m
Words	tip, tin, till, little	not, nip, north, nettle	on, once, open, October	eat, eight, meet, enjoy	Revising the diagonal join to short letters (e.g cr, em, kn, ki, mi, mu)	Joining to short letters (e.g on, om, or, wr, wn, vr)
Objective	j J	p P	a A	f F	The diagonal join to l, h, k	The horizontal join to i and u
Words	jet, jam, jail, July	pet, put, pin, pillow	am, all, any, apples	fall, farm, fruit, February	Joining to tall letters (e.g ch, ck, cl, th, il, nk)	Joining to more short letters (e.g oi, ou, wi, wu, vi, vu)
Objective	u U	h H	d D	z Z v V	Joining 3 letters	The horizontal join to l, h, k
Words	up, hut, pull, brush	her, hut, hair, happy	do, doll, did, December	zip, zoo, pizza, zebra van, vet, verb, vest	Joining to tall and short letters in letter strings (e.g alk, ilk, all, ell, air, ail)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ol, wl, oh, wh, ok, wk)
Objective	y Y	b B	g G	w W x X	The diagonal join to a, c, o	The horizontal join to a, c, o
Words	yet, you, yell, yellow	bin, ball, belt, branch	go, girl, gym, golden	what, where, wish, winter box, axe, fox, mixer	Joining to round letters from another short letter (e.g ic, co, ca, ea, ac, no)	Joining to round letters from another short letter (e.g oa, oo, oc, va, wa, wo)
	Ladder Family	Rubber Ball Family	Cog Family	Cog Cousins	Zip Wire Family	

Handwriting Curriculum – Stage 3

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Objective	The diagonal join to r, n m	Practising the join a, c, o	The diagonal join to v and w	The horizontal join to p and y	The diagonal join to r, n m	Practising the join a, c, o
Words	Joining short letters (e.g in, am, im, ar, un, an)	Joining to round letters from a tall letter (e.g ho, to, do, ha, da, tch)	Joining to short sloping letters (e.g av, aw, ev, ew, iv, tw)	Joining to letters with tails (e.g op, oy, vy, wy)	Joining short letters (e.g in, am, im, ar, un, an)	Joining to round letters from a tall letter (e.g ho, to, do, ha, da, tch)
Objective	The diagonal join to l and u	Joining words with diagonal joins	The diagonal join to p and y	The horizontal join to b and t	The diagonal join to l and u	Joining words with diagonal joins
Words	Joining to short letters from tall letters (e.g li, ti, hi, lu, tu, du)	Practising diagonal joins to join whole words	Joining to letters with tails (e.g ap, ip, up, ay, ly, ey)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ob, ot, oth, wt)	Joining to short letters from tall letters (e.g li, ti, hi, lu, tu, du)	Practising diagonal joins to join whole words
Objective	Practising the join r, n m, i, u	The horizontal join to r, n, m	The diagonal join to b and t	The horizontal join to d and g	Practising the join r, n m, i, u	The horizontal join to r, n, m
Words	Revising the diagonal join to short letters (e.g cr, em, kn, ki, mi, mu)	Joining to short letters (e.g on, om, or, wr, wn, vr)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ab, ub, at, it, nt, lt)	Joining to round letters (e.g od, og, ood, wd)	Revising the diagonal join to short letters (e.g cr, em, kn, ki, mi, mu)	Joining to short letters (e.g on, om, or, wr, wn, vr)
Objective	The diagonal join to l, h, k	The horizontal join to i and u	The diagonal join to d and g	The horizontal join to e	The diagonal join to l, h, k	The horizontal join to i and u
Words	Joining to tall letters (e.g ch, ck, cl, th, il, nk)	Joining to more short letters (e.g oi, ou, wi, wu, vi, vu)	Joining to round letters (e.g id, nd, ld, ig, ug, ng)	Modifying the join to join the e (e.g oe, ve, we, ove)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ch, ck, cl, th, il, nk)	Joining to more short letters (e.g oi, ou, wi, wu, vi, vu)
Objective	Joining 3 letters	The horizontal join to l, h, k	The diagonal join to e	Starting with break letters	Joining 3 letters	The horizontal join to l, h, k
Words	Joining to tall and short letters in letter strings (e.g alk, ilk, all, ell, air, ail)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ol, wl, oh, wh, ok, wk)	Modifying the join to join e (e.g ie, ue, le, he, me, ce)	Introducing the break letters b, g, p, j, y, q, s, x, z	Joining to tall and short letters in letter strings (e.g alk, ilk, all, ell, air, ail)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ol, wl, oh, wh, ok, wk)
Objective	The diagonal join to a, c, o	The horizontal join to a, c, o	The horizontal join to v and w	Break letters within words	The diagonal join to a, c, o	The horizontal join to a, c, o
Words	Joining to round letters from another short letter (e.g ic, co, ca, ea, ac, no)	Joining to round letters from another short letter (e.g oa, oo, oc, va, wa, wo)	Joining to short letters (e.g oi, ou, ov, ow)	Introducing the break letters x and z	Joining to round letters from another short letter (e.g ic, co, ca, ea, ac, no)	Joining to round letters from another short letter (e.g oa, oo, oc, va, wa, wo)
	6		7		6	

Handwriting Curriculum – Stage 4

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Objective	The diagonal join to v and w	The horizontal join to p and y	Joining from r to straight letters	Joining difficult double letters	The diagonal join to v and w	The horizontal join to p and y
Words	Joining to short sloping letters (e.g av, aw, ev, ew, iv, tw)	Joining to letters with tails (e.g op, oy, vy, wy)	Joining to short and tall straight letters (e.g ru, ri, rl, rk, rn, ry, rt)	(e.g ff, ee, rr)	Joining to short sloping letters (e.g av, aw, ev, ew, iv, tw)	Joining to letters with tails (e.g op, oy, vy, wy)
Objective	The diagonal join to p and y	The horizontal join to b and t	Joining from r to round letters	Joining letter strings with r	The diagonal join to p and y	The horizontal join to b and t
Words	Joining to letters with tails (e.g ap, ip, up, ay, ly, ey)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ob, ot, oth, wt)	Joining to short and tall round letters including e (e.g ro, ra, rd, rg, rc, re)	Practising difficult joins in letter strings (e.g ure, urf, ers, rve, are, ore, rie, res)	Joining to letters with tails (e.g ap, ip, up, ay, ly, ey)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ob, ot, oth, wt)
Objective	The diagonal join to b and t	The horizontal join to d and g	Joining to s	The break letters g, q, y, j, p, b, s	The diagonal join to b and t	The horizontal join to d and g
Words	Joining to tall letters (e.g ab, ub, at, it, nt, lt)	Joining to round letters (e.g od, og, ood, wd)	Joining to s using diagonal and horizontal joins (e.g as, is, ns, ws, os, ds, rs)	Looking at why we do not join from the letters g, q, y, j, p, b and s	Joining to tall letters (e.g ab, ub, at, it, nt, lt)	Joining to round letters (e.g od, og, ood, wd)
Objective	The diagonal join to d and g	The horizontal join to e	Joining to f	The break letters x and z	The diagonal join to d and g	The horizontal join to e
Words	Joining to round letters (e.g id, nd, ld, ig, ug, ng)	Modifying the join to join the e (e.g oe, ve, we, ove)	Joining to f using diagonal and horizontal joins (e.g if, af, of, ef, lf, wf)	Looking at the letters x and z, and spacing around break letters	Joining to round letters (e.g id, nd, ld, ig, ug, ng)	Modifying the join to join the e (e.g oe, ve, we, ove)
Objective	The diagonal join to e	Starting with break letters	Joining from f to straight letters	Joining words with prefixes	The diagonal join to e	Starting with break letters
Words	Modifying the join to join e (e.g ie, ue, le, he, me, ce)	Introducing the break letters b, g, p, j, y, q, s, x, z	Joining to short and tall straight letters (e.g fu, fi, fl, ft, fy, fr, fb)	(e.g un-, re-, dis-, mis-)	Modifying the join to join e (e.g ie, ue, le, he, me, ce)	Introducing the break letters b, g, p, j, y, q, s, x, z
Objective	The horizontal join to v and w	Break letters within words	Joining from f to round letters	Joining words with suffixes	The horizontal join to v and w	Break letters within words
Words	Joining to short letters (e.g oi, ou, ov, ow)	Introducing the break letters x and z	Joining to short round letters (e.g fa, fo, fs, fe)	(e.g -ful, -less, -ness, -ment)	Joining to short letters (e.g oi, ou, ov, ow)	Introducing the break letters x and z
	7		8		7	

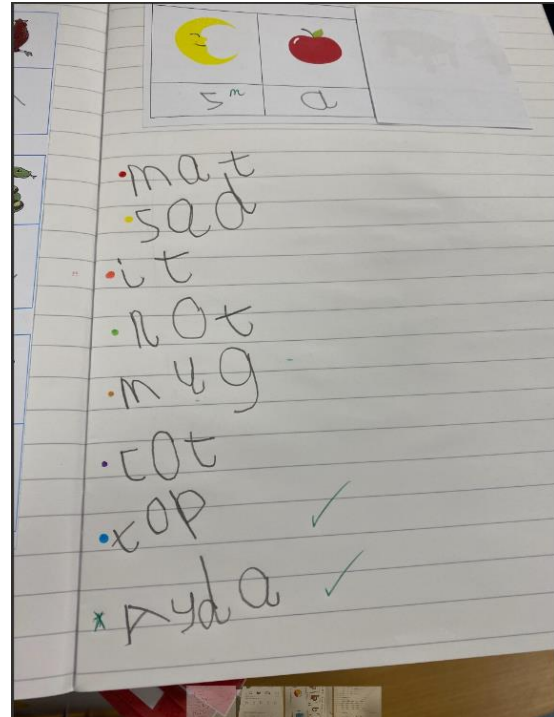
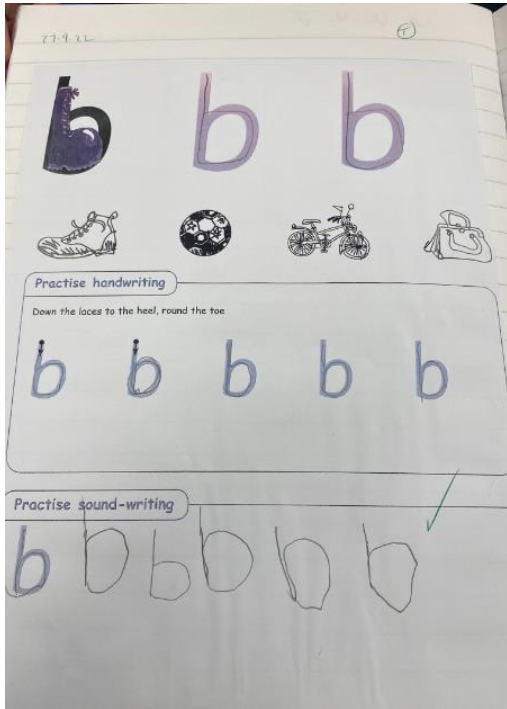
Handwriting Curriculum – Stage 5 & 6

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Objective	Joining from r to straight letters	Joining difficult double letters	The diagonal join to v and w	The horizontal join to p and y	Joining from r to straight letters	Joining difficult double letters
Words	Joining to short and tall straight letters (e.g ru, ri, rl, rk, rn, ry, rt)	(e.g ff, ee, rr)	Joining to short sloping letters (e.g av, aw, ev, ew, iv, tw)	Joining to letters with tails (e.g op, oy, vy, wy)	Joining to short and tall straight letters (e.g ru, ri, rl, rk, rn, ry, rt)	(e.g ff, ee, rr)
Objective	Joining from r to round letters	Joining letter strings with r	The diagonal join to p and y	The horizontal join to b and t	Joining from r to round letters	Joining letter strings with r
Words	Joining to short and tall round letters including e (e.g ro, ra, rd, rg, rc, re)	Practising difficult joins in letter strings (e.g ure, urf, ers, rve, are, ore, rie, res)	Joining to letters with tails (e.g ap, ip, up, ay, ly, ey)	Joining to tall letters (e.g ob, ot, oth, wt)	Joining to short and tall round letters including e (e.g ro, ra, rd, rg, rc, re)	Practising difficult joins in letter strings (e.g ure, urf, ers, rve, are, ore, rie, res)
Objective	Joining to s	The break letters g, q, y, j, p, b, s	The diagonal join to b and t	The horizontal join to d and g	Joining to s	The break letters g, q, y, j, p, b, s
Words	Joining to s using diagonal and horizontal joins (e.g as, is, ns, ws, os, ds, rs)	Looking at why we do not join from the letters g, q, y, j, p, b and s	Joining to tall letters (e.g ab, ub, at, it, nt, lt)	Joining to round letters (e.g od, og, ood, wd)	Joining to s using diagonal and horizontal joins (e.g as, is, ns, ws, os, ds, rs)	Looking at why we do not join from the letters g, q, y, j, p, b and s
Objective	Joining to f	The break letters x and z	The diagonal join to d and g	The horizontal join to e	Joining to f	The break letters x and z
Words	Joining to f using diagonal and horizontal joins (e.g if, af, of, ef, lf, wf)	Looking at the letters x and z, and spacing around break letters	Joining to round letters (e.g id, nd, ld, ig, ug, ng)	Modifying the join to join the e (e.g oe, ve, we, ove)	Joining to f using diagonal and horizontal joins (e.g if, af, of, ef, lf, wf)	Looking at the letters x and z, and spacing around break letters
Objective	Joining from f to straight letters	Joining words with prefixes	The diagonal join to e	Starting with break letters	Joining from f to straight letters	Joining words with prefixes
Words	Joining to short and tall straight letters (e.g fu, fi, fl, ft, fy, fr, fb)	(e.g un-, re-, dis-, mis-)	Modifying the join to join e (e.g ie, ue, le, he, me, ce)	Introducing the break letters b, g, p, j, y, q, s, x, z	Joining to short and tall straight letters (e.g fu, fi, fl, ft, fy, fr, fb)	(e.g un-, re-, dis-, mis-)
Objective	Joining from f to round letters	Joining words with suffixes	The horizontal join to v and w	Break letters within words	Joining from f to round letters	Joining words with suffixes
Words	Joining to short round letters (e.g fa, fo, fs, fe)	(e.g -ful, -less, -ness, -ment)	Joining to short letters (e.g oi, ou, ov, ow)	Introducing the break letters x and z	Joining to short round letters (e.g fa, fo, fs, fe)	(e.g -ful, -less, -ness, -ment)
	8		7		8	

Teaching Sequence

EYFS

Letter formation through Writing and Phonics lessons



KS2

Year 3 to begin writing with pencil and children will be provided with a 'Pen License' when ready to begin writing using pen – if children have already received their pen license in Year 2, they must start with a pen.

Year 3 children will begin working through the joining pairs. These will be revisited throughout the year and again in Year 4 to so children can complete these with automaticity.

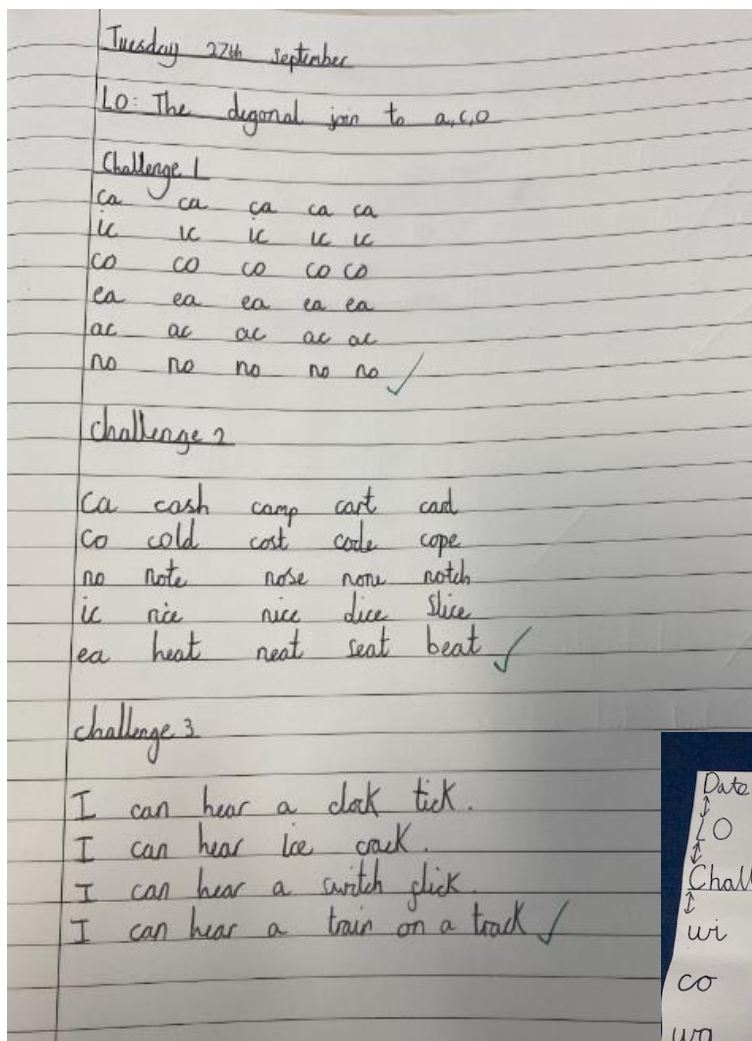
Year 5 and 6 will continue to build knowledge of the different joins.

All lessons will start with the full date and LO. Pupils will then move through 3 challenges as follows:

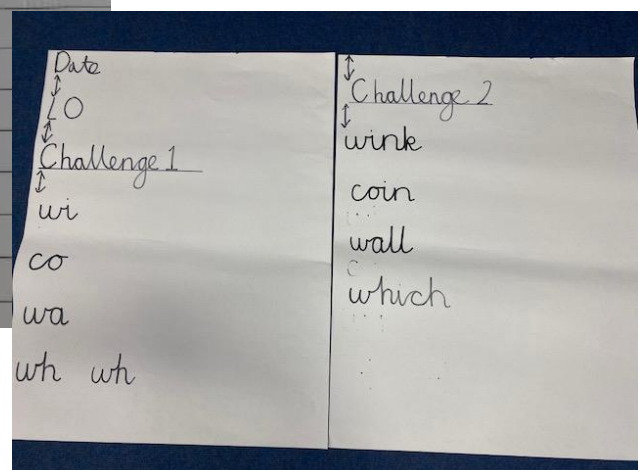
Challenge 1: practise the join

Challenge 2: practise the join in words

Challenge 3: practise the join in sentences



Teacher modelling is essential in teaching sequences, therefore teacher handwriting should mirror the formation of letters found in the scheme. Teachers should model each lesson on flipchart paper – photocopying of books is not needed unless for intervention purposes.



This is transported to the sea where layers build up and press together. Over time, this forms new rock.

Metamorphic Rock

An existing rock which changes with heat or pressure.

Man made Rock

Rocks that are made by people such as brick and concrete.

Natural Rock

Rocks that are formed when minerals fuse together.

Igneous Rock

These rocks form when magma cools underground or when a volcano erupts and the lava cools.

Sedimentary rocks

Small bits of rock end up in lakes and rivers as a result of weather.

Teacher modelling in foundation subject

Intervention

For pupils who are unable to achieve 'Task 1 & 2', intervention may be needed within the handwriting lesson and during additional intervention sessions.

Intervention within the session is likely to have the most impact as it addresses the learning at the point of misconception.

Join it

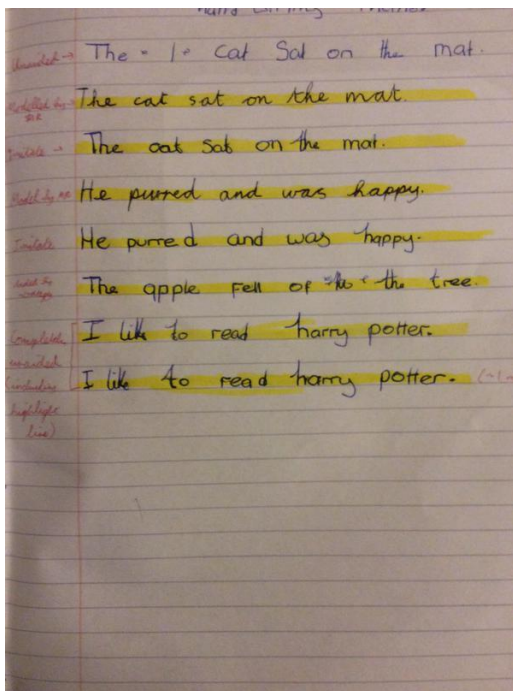
The brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

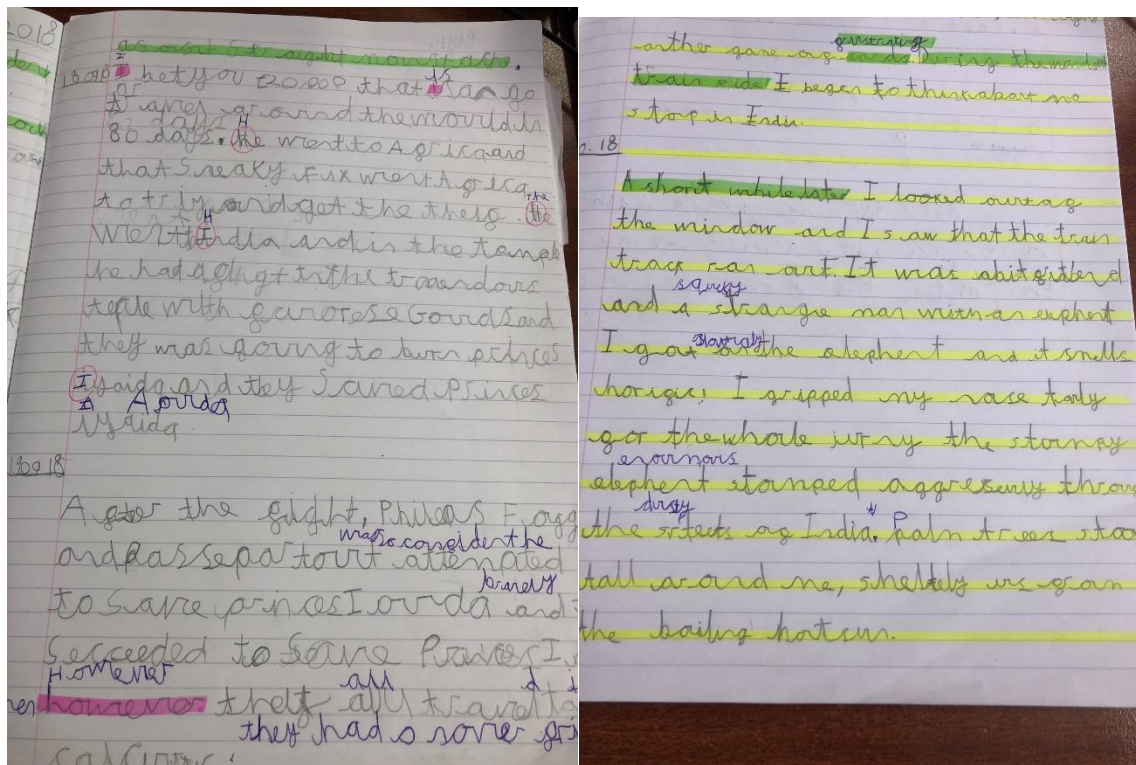
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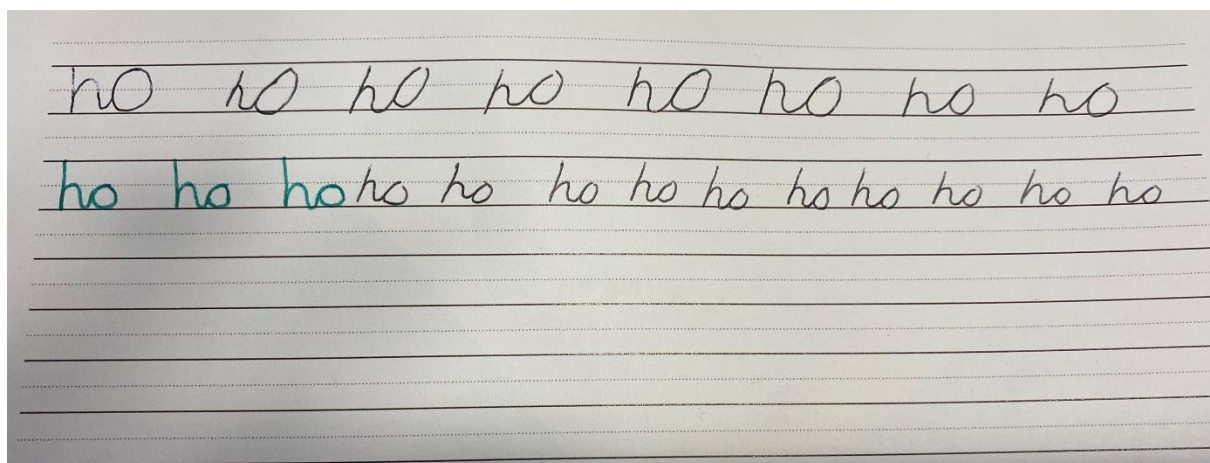
Highlight line:



Highlighted line example



Impact of highlighted line intervention. Both taken on the same day.



Handwriting Guidelines used to support with sizing of letters.