

Handwriting Ready to Progress Document

These are cumulative readiness criteria, not year-group targets or rigid age thresholds. Evidence should include both focused practice and independent application.

Criterion 1 – Physical and mark-making foundations

Participates in hand-gym/fine-motor activity; explores controlled lines, curves and patterns; adopts a functional grasp, supported posture and paper position.

Ready to progress evidence: Can reproduce purposeful movements with increasing control and comfort.

Criterion 2 – Accurate unjoined letter formation

Forms taught lower-case letters using the agreed sequence and direction, organised by the five letter families; positions letters on the line; recognises small, tall and descending letters; increasingly forms capitals and digits appropriately.

Ready to progress evidence: Most taught letters are independently recognisable and consistently formed in isolated practice and familiar words; remaining errors have an intervention plan.

Criterion 3 – Initial two-letter joins

With secure unjoined formation, explicitly practises appropriate bottom/diagonal joins between two lower-case letters, including different letter heights; preserves individual letter shapes.

Ready to progress evidence: Selected joins are legible and repeatable without loss of correct formation.

Criterion 4 – Additional joins and three-letter sequences

Practises suitable top/horizontal joins and combinations of three letters, maintaining proportion and recognising letters best left unjoined.

Ready to progress evidence: Joins are controlled in familiar short words and can be used without distorting letter shapes.

Criterion 5 – Fluent short phrases

Writes short multiword phrases with appropriate letter sequences, ascenders, descenders, spacing and baseline alignment; applies appropriate joins where secure.

Ready to progress evidence: Produces readable phrases with consistent spacing and without excessive effort.

Criterion 6 – Fluent sentences

Writes simple and increasingly complex sentences legibly, with consistent letter size, baseline alignment, word spaces, punctuation and appropriate joins; maintains focus on spelling and meaning.

Ready to progress evidence: Maintains handwriting quality in dictated and independently composed sentences.

Criterion 7 – Automatic, adaptable handwriting

Writes longer words and sustained text with legible, fluent, appropriately joined or unjoined script; selects writing tool and letter style for purpose; maintains quality as speed increases.

Ready to progress evidence: Shows reliable legibility and useful writing speed across subjects and writing purposes.

Assessment recording

Record date, criterion, observed strengths, formation/positioning/spacing/fluency errors, sample contexts, pupil voice, adaptation or intervention and next review. A child may be secure in one strand but require targeted support in another. Progression to joining must not weaken existing transcription fluency.

Letter family reference

Family	Letters
Curly caterpillar	c a d g o q
Long ladder	l i t y u j

One-armed robot	r n m h b k p
Sliding	v w z
Tricky	e f s x

Non-negotiables and readiness rules

Twinkl Print is the agreed model in EYFS and Year 1; Twinkl Looped is the model from Year 2 onwards. Neither the change of font nor entry into Year 2 demonstrates that a pupil is ready to join.

Before progression from Criterion 2 to joining, check independent formation, correct direction, baseline positioning, relative size and comfortable control across a representative sample of taught lower-case letters, capitals and digits. Use examples from isolated practice, dictated words and ordinary classroom writing. Any recurring errors lead to precise teaching and reassessment.

The seven criteria are cumulative developmental checkpoints. A pupil may practise aspects of a later criterion while still receiving targeted support for an earlier one, but insecure basic formation must not be hidden by joined writing. For all joining work, follow the Eastling joining examples and explicitly teach which letters are best left unjoined.

Teacher assessment and intervention record

Record pupil, date, criterion, sample source, letters secure, F = incorrect formation, P = incorrect positioning (record both when appropriate), size/spacing/fluency observations, targeted practice, independent transfer and reassessment date. Identify next steps by error pattern and letter family rather than a general “needs neater writing” judgement.

For the handwriting programme, use the September baseline and October review to select priority letters; teach through the letter families; review after two further weeks. Record both letter-level improvement and transfer into dictation and independent sentences. Apply the assess-teach-reassess process across all year groups as required by pupil context and individual identified needs.

Stage	Skills
Stage One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes part on hand gym exercise • Attempts to follow simple patterns e.g. wiggly lines using a range of larger equipment. • Holds a pencil and other equipment using the appropriate 'pinch' grip
Stage Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms each letter of the alphabet correctly using appropriate in and out strokes (these could be quite large) <p>This will be taught in the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curly 'caterpillar' family letters (c, a, d, g, o, q) ○ 'Long ladder' family letters (l, i, t, y, u, j) ○ 'One armed robot' family letters (r, n, m, h, b, k, p) ○ 'Sliding letters' family letter (v, w, z) ○ 'Tricky letters' (e, f, s, x) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses letters with in and out strokes in their everyday mark making and/or writing
Stage Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joins two letters with bottom join correctly using correct formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small letter to small letter (am, in) Tall letter to small letter (ta, ki) Hanging letter to small letter (yo, ga) • Joins two letter with top join correctly using correct formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small letter to small letter (on, we) Small letter to tall letter (ok, vt) Small letter to hanging letter (og, ry)

Stage Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joins three letters correctly using correct formation Small letters only (can, soc, air) Small and tall letters only (did, ban, ink) Small, tall and hanging letter (big, why, yet) Attempts to join letters in each word in their everyday writing
Stage Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write 3 word phrases (up to 4 letters in each word) with each word being formed correctly using the correct sequence of movements and appropriate ascenders and descenders (small, tall, hanging letters)
Stage Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes simple sentences with each word being formed correctly using the correct sequence of movements and appropriate ascenders and descenders Forms and joins all letters correctly within words of any length
Stage Seven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is a uniform size with clearly distinguishable ascenders and descenders.

Handwriting Crib Sheet

- For each introduce as tall, small or hanging and link to others previously taught
- Intro tall, small and hanging alongside breaking a line into three parts to form

Family	Initial letter and Key Teach Points		Remainder of Family, key Teach Points
<u>'c' family</u> c a d σ g q	c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • touch line to start instroke: lean into forming c • must sit on line • top and bottom should be exactly above and under one another – impt: ensures all other 'c' family letters are straight • ensure 'c' is wide enough or will affect all other 's' family letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a: 'c' with straight line to join, must come back down and touch line before small out stroke • d: as 'a' but straight line longer (intro tall and small being double height), must touch line before small out stroke • σ: 'c' start and continue round (diff to 'a' because curved), out line is a horizontal line at top of small letter height • g: 'c' straight line like a but longer like 'd' but hanging down (intro small, tall and hanging height), small curl at bottom. 'g' out stroke should cross on line • q: 'c' straight line down like 'g', outstroke straight and not too wide to touch line

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Family	Initial letter and Key Teach Points		Remainder of Family, key Teach Points
<u>Long Ladder</u> i j l t u y	i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intro as small letter like c, a, o • touch line to start instroke, straight line to height of small letter • straight down to touch line before small outstroke • emph diff between slight lean of instroke and straight of main letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • j: 'i' but low like 'g', straight line down, small curl at bottom, 'j' out stroke should cross on line like 'g' • l: (tall like 'd') touch line to start instroke, into straight line to height of 'd', like 'd' straight line down to touch line before small out stroke (impt as emphasises diff to 't' later) • t: as 'l' but instead of small outstroke as touches line at end, small curl to sit on the line (emph diff in width from outstroke of 'l' and bottom of 't'), cross with horizontal line on small height line • u: 'i' start but when touches line at end, small curl to sit on line like bottom of 't', straight up and down to touch line again before small out stroke • y: as 'u' but continue straight down like 'g', small curl at bottom, outstroke should cross on the line like 'g, j'

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Family	Initial letter and Key Teach Points		Remainder of Family, key Teach Points
<u>One-Armed Robots</u> r n m p	r	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intro as small letter • like 'i' but when touches line at end, go back up almost to top (this stops one-armed robot letters being taller than other small letters when complete) and then arc over • emph need to be arc and not straight line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n: as 'r' but at end, straight down to touch line and small outstroke • m: as 'r' and 'n' without outstroke, most of way back up and over before straight line down and small outstroke • p: as 'r', then round to sit on line with horizontal outstroke sitting on line
h b k		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intro as small letter • like 'l' and 'r' but when touches line at end, go back up almost half way to height of 'i' as small (this stops the 'small' section of one-armed robot letters being taller than other small letters when complete) and then arc over like 'n' • emph need to be arc and not straight line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • b: as 'h' but when get to arc over half way, round like a 'p' to sit on line with horizontal outstroke • k: as start of 'b' to arc over – intro split in half to do mini loop to touch tall ladder part of letter before diagonal line to sit on line

Handwriting Crib Sheet

- For each introduce as tall, small or hanging and link to others previously taught
- Intro tall, small and hanging alongside breaking a line into three parts to form

Family	Initial letter and Key Teach Points		Remainder of Family, key Teach Points
<u>Sliding Letters</u> v w z s	s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be clear about what a diagonal line is • intro as small letters • instroke to height of small letter • diagonal down (not too wide) to sit on line • diagonal back up to height of small letter • horizontal outstroke on top line for small letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • w: as 'v' before outstroke, repeat diagonal to sit on line and diagonal back to height of small letter, horizontal outstroke on top line for small letter • z: instroke to height of small line, horizontal line on top line for small (width of c), diagonal down to bottom line (should end directly below start of top line), horizontal line on bottom line (should end directly under end of top line, small outstroke
<u>Other</u> s (technically sliding) e f x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s: small – instroke and arc over like 'c', split gap in half again, curl round like 'c' and then back on self to touch line, horizontal outstroke when sat on bottom line • e: small – instroke, diagonal across and round (like final part of 'c'), end must be directly under end of top arc like 'c' • f: like tall and hanging, instroke, up and over like arc of 'c', back round and straight down to just below bottom line, small curl like 'g', outstroke should cross on bottom line, cross with horizontal line on small height line • x: instroke, back ward 'c', pencil off, main 'c' which touches backward 'c' in middle 	