



St. Lawrence Church of England
Primary School

HANDWRITING POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2026

Approved by: David Oludotun Fasanya (Chair of Governors)

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1. Introduction and Rationale

Handwriting is a fundamental component of literacy and underpins pupils' success as writers. We recognise that fluent, legible and automatic handwriting enables pupils to focus on composing, vocabulary and the communication of ideas, rather than the physical act of writing. At St Lawrence, handwriting is taught explicitly, cumulatively and engagingly from Reception to Year 6, following a clear progression of skills. Through consistent teaching, modelling and practice, we aim to ensure that all pupils develop the fluency, confidence and independence needed to become successful writers.

2. Aims and Objectives

Our aims are to:

- Develop fluent, automatic and legible handwriting.
- Establish correct letter formation from the earliest stages.
- Provide pupils with the physical foundations necessary for successful handwriting.
- Promote pride in presentation across the curriculum.
- Ensure a consistent approach to handwriting throughout the school.
- Support all pupils in meeting age-related expectations.
- Enable pupils to write efficiently so that they can focus on composition and the communication of ideas.

3. The Handwriting Approach at St. Lawrence

At St Lawrence, handwriting is taught through a structured progression that ensures skills are built cumulatively from Reception to Year 6. Learning is carefully sequenced and revisited regularly so that pupils develop increasing accuracy, fluency and stamina.

Teachers provide explicit instruction, effective modelling and opportunities for purposeful practice. Handwriting expectations are reinforced across the curriculum to ensure consistency and application.

4. Handwriting in the Curriculum

Handwriting is taught as a discrete skill and is practised across all curriculum areas. Expectations for presentation, letter formation and handwriting quality apply consistently in all subjects.

All staff model the agreed handwriting style and reinforce expectations during everyday teaching.

5. Early Physical Development

We recognise that successful handwriting begins with strong physical development. Throughout the EYFS and Key Stage 1, pupils are provided with opportunities to develop:

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Core strength and stability
- Hand and finger strength
- Coordination and spatial awareness

These foundational skills support pupils in developing efficient and comfortable handwriting habits.

6. Development of Handwriting in the EYFS

Children begin by developing mark-making skills through a range of engaging and purposeful activities. Handwriting instruction focuses on:

- Developing pencil control
- Correct pencil grip
- Establishing hand dominance
- Learning correct letter formation
- Building confidence and stamina

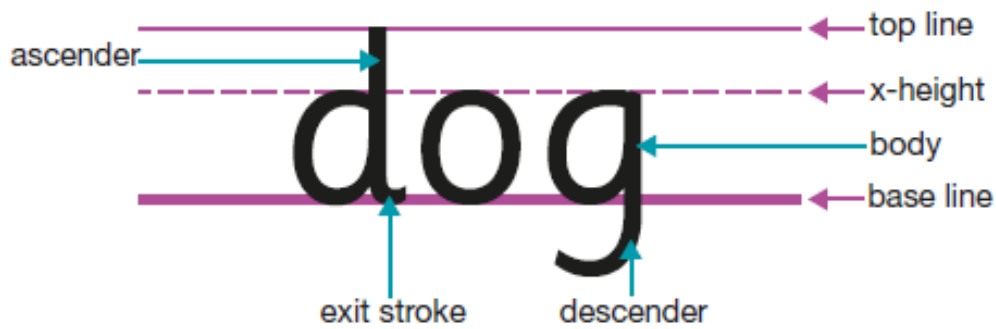
Children are provided with regular opportunities to practise and apply these skills as they become ready for more formal handwriting tasks.

7. Agreed Language

To ensure consistency across the school, staff and pupils use shared handwriting terminology. This includes:

- Upper case letters
- Lower case letters
- Ascenders
- Descenders
- Short letters
- Letter bodies
- Horizontal and diagonal joins

Consistent use of this language supports pupils in understanding handwriting expectations and enables teachers to give clear, precise feedback.

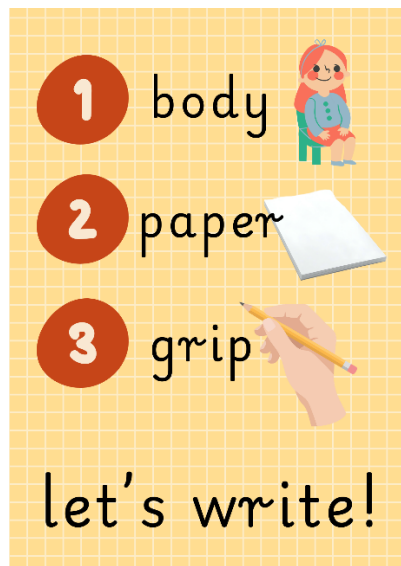


8. Ready to Write Expectations

Before handwriting activities, teachers ensure pupils are ready to write by reinforcing expectations for:

- Sitting position
- Foot placement
- Paper position
- Pencil grip
- Appropriate posture

These routines help pupils develop efficient and comfortable writing habits. All staff and children in KS1 and lower KS2 as needed use this check before writing:



9. Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is taught explicitly through modelling, guided practice and independent application.

Teachers:

- Model correct letter formation.
- Provide clear explanations and demonstrations.
- Give immediate feedback.
- Address misconceptions quickly.
- Provide regular opportunities for rehearsal and practice.

Learning is designed to be engaging and purposeful while ensuring sufficient repetition to develop automaticity.

10. Organisation of Teaching

Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the school. Teaching is adapted to meet the developmental stage and needs of pupils.

Where appropriate, pupils receive additional support to secure key skills before moving on to new learning.

11. Exercise Books and Line Progression

At St Lawrence, we generally follow a progressive approach to the use of paper and line guides, moving from blank paper to standard exercise book lines as pupils develop confidence and fluency in handwriting. However, we recognise that children develop at different rates and, where appropriate, adaptations will be made to ensure that each pupil is provided with the level of support that best meets their individual needs.

The progression typically follows:

1. Blank paper for early mark-making and letter formation.
2. A single baseline for letters to sit upon.
3. Faint lines with sufficient space for ascenders and capital letters.
4. Double lines to support understanding of letter size and alignment.
5. Standard exercise book lines as fluency develops.

12. Use of Pens

Children are encouraged to use a range of writing tools and, as their handwriting becomes increasingly fluent and well-presented, to write in pen. At St Lawrence, pupils in Year 4 may begin using a pen when they consistently meet year group expectations for handwriting, including accurate letter formation, sizing, spacing and presentation.

13. Provision for Left-Handed Pupils

Left-handed pupils are supported to develop an efficient writing position and grip. Staff provide appropriate guidance on paper position, pencil grip and posture to ensure comfort and promote fluent handwriting.

14. Provision for Pupils with SEND

We recognise that some pupils may require additional support to develop handwriting skills. Adaptations may include:

- Alternative resources
- Additional modelling and guided practice
- Modified line spacing
- Fine motor interventions
- Access to assistive technology where appropriate

Provision is tailored to individual needs.

15. Intervention and Support

Pupils who require additional support receive timely intervention to address identified areas of difficulty. Intervention focuses on securing foundational skills and developing confidence, accuracy and fluency.

Progress is monitored regularly and support is adapted in response to need. See Appendix for more information.

16. Assessment and Progression

Teachers assess handwriting through ongoing observation of pupils' work across the curriculum. Assessment focuses on:

- Letter formation
- Size and orientation
- Spacing
- Consistency
- Fluency
- Presentation

Assessment information is used to inform future teaching and intervention.

18. Appendices

Appendix A

EYFS

Taught daily x 5 - 10 minutes with provision for the development of fine and gross motor skills in the areas

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach. Practise will be either adult led or in the areas of provision

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:



Pencil control - directionality

Teachers consider the concept of 'directionality' when promoting positive handwriting habitats. This means the ability of the child to control the change in direction of the pencil on the page. They will plan in opportunities for this. Some of these are listed below.

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. Children will always be

encouraged to use a tripod grid when they are deemed developmentally ready. 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



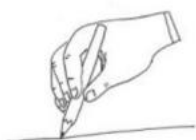
This is where the child wraps their fingers around the writing tool and moves their whole arm to make marks. This grasp is often used by infants and toddlers who are just learning to scribble rather than trying to make more accurate marks on paper. An infant usually switches the writing tool from hand 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 palmar 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

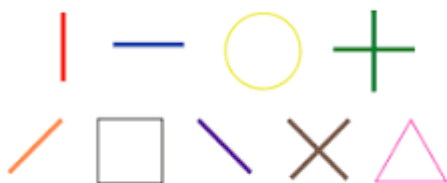
This is where the writing tool is placed between the thumb and index finger. The side of the middle finger gently supports the writing tool. The ring and little fingers are lightly curled under. Small finger movements guide the writing tool to make marks while the wrist and arm support the motion. This 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. Children may also be encouraged to work on an upright surface for shoulder and core strength. As part of this provision, children will be encouraged to make the following patterns to support the development of letter formation skills.

Pre-Writing Skills...



DevelopLearnGrow.com

Mark-making is skill that needs to be taught. We follow EEF guidance that states the most effective approaches for physical development in mark making are through the teacher:

1. preparing
2. modelling
3. narrating
4. demonstrating
5. using memory prompts
6. commenting
7. repeating for over-learning

Continuous Provision

Opportunities to develop the foundations for handwriting are embedded throughout the continuous provision. Resources and experiences are carefully planned and layered to match and extend children's developing skills, ensuring progression across the year. Children are provided with frequent opportunities to strengthen fine and gross motor control, develop pencil grip, build hand strength and engage in purposeful mark-making through a range of indoor and outdoor activities. These experiences support the development of the physical skills and confidence needed for successful handwriting.

Autumn 1

Physical Development

Gross motor activities

Hand and arm strengthening activities

These may include:

- Body shapes
- Dancing
- Shoulder strengthening through large scale air writing
- Travelling in different ways
- Balancing
- Crawling and commando crawling
- Climbing
- Colour on tummies on floor
- Drawing and writing on tummies on floor

- Dough disco
- Lego / K'nex
- Cutting and tearing
- Threading
- Zips and buttons
- Nuts and bolts
- Finger painting
- Stamping using stamps
- Bridget Riley (lines)

Autumn 2

As above plus:

Gross motor activities

Hand and arm strengthening activities plus

Fine motor activities which may include:

Discrimination left/ right

- Different coloured ribbon on each wrist.... 'if you're happy and you know it shake your left hand'
- Treasure hunt trays....'can you find the treasure with your right hand?'

Eye-Hand co-ordination

- Target games...balls in buckets, bean bags in hoops, balloons in basketball hoop, bowling at skittles, racquets
- Magnetic fishing...simple rods, string, pictures and magnetics/paper clips

Finger Isolation

- Popping bubbles
- Telephone
- Finger painting

Grasp

- Spherical grasp – playing with tennis sized balls – picking up /throwing, etc.
- Pincer grasp – popping bubble wrap
- Cylindrical grasp – cups, bottles, mugs, etc.
- Tripod grasp – chalks, hugger pencils, chunky crayons, other tools such as paint brushes, etc.

Release

- Connect four
- Marble runs
- Objects down guttering
- Building towers

Lancashire

Plus directionality activities

These may include:

- Direct me: obstacle course
- Follow me: lights and ribbons - phonics
- Junk modelling: 'put the tube behind the pot'
- Preposition action figures
- Art

Plus Pre-writing shape activities

These may include:

- Artwork inspired by Kandinsky (circles - triangles),
- Tracing lines and shapes (some use of Write Well scheme here)
- Tracing pictures
- Making shapes in surfaces such as sand, glitter, foam etc.

Spring 1

Above activities will continue for as long as children require. Children will start to learn formal handwriting when they are developmentally ready (see appendix).

'Long Ladder Letters'

l, j, i, t, u, y

Children will learn to form these letters correctly using Red Rose patter.

- Activities may include:
- Gross motor skills to make the pre-cursor shape
- Multi-sensory / gross motor to write the letter using Red Rose patter
- Writing letter in large format, e.g. chalk, pens, paint.
- Whiteboards (especially teacher whiteboard)
- In books

Spring 2

'Right Armed Robot Letters'

b, h, k, m, n, p, r

Summer 1

'Curly Caterpillar Letters'

c, a, d, e, g, q, o

Summer 2

'Zig-zag letters'

v, w, x, z

EYFS Progression - expectations

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Demonstrate pre-phonemic writing: - patterns - pictures - random scribbling - scribble writing - symbols that represent letters - random letters or numerals - letter strings (continuous string of letters, symbols or numerals) - letter groups (groups of letters, symbols or numerals including spaces)-environmental print. Use some recognisable letters and symbols. Use handwriting patter/phrase to support formation, if appropriate.	Form letters from their name correctly. Form some capital letters correctly, including the initial letter of their name. Form some lower-case letters correctly; starting and finishing in the right place, going the right way round, correctly orientated. Make marks, drawings and symbols with increasing control.	Begin to write on the lines with some control of letter size. Hold paper in position, and use preferred hand for writing, developing a comfortable pencil grip. Form lower-case letters with developing consistency. Begin to form clear ascenders ('tall letters') and descenders ('tails') to write recognisable letters. Write left to right and top to bottom. Hold writing tools and implements with a developing grip, using an appropriate amount of pressure.

Year 1

Taught daily x 20 minutes

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach, Practise, Apply (end of week)

Monday: Gross motor skills to make the pre-cursor shape

Tuesday: Multi-sensory gross motor to write letter using Red Rose patter

Wednesday: Writing letter in large format, e.g. chalk, pens, paint.

Thursday: Whiteboards and correct misconceptions

Friday: In books, using handwriting lines

Red Rose Patter for formation phrases

Supported by Write Well Book 5 – Letter size and position

Key vocabulary: ascenders, descenders, anti-clockwise, line

<u>Autumn 1</u>	'Curly Caterpillar Letters' c, a, d, e, g, q, o plus s and f Digits: 0, 6, 8 and 9
<u>Autumn 2</u>	'Bridging Letters' s, f 'Long Ladder Letters' l, j, i, t, u, y Digits: 1 and 4
<u>Spring 1</u>	'Right Armed Robot Letters' b, h, k, m, n, p, r Digits: 2, 3 and 5
<u>Spring 2</u>	'Zig-zag letters' v, w, x, z Digits: 7
<u>Summer 1</u>	Capital letters Letter size and position
<u>Summer 2</u>	Spacing within words Spacing between words

Year 2

Taught daily x 10 minutes

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach, Practise, Apply (end of week)

Monday: Gross motor skills to create the letter shape / join in large or multi-sensory format using Red Rose patter

Tuesday: Practising letters / joins on laminated handwriting sentence strips

Wednesday: In book, using handwriting lines – Try it

Thursday: In books, using handwriting lines – Practise it

Friday: In books, using handwriting lines – Apply it

Red Rose Patter for formation phrases

Supported by Write Well Book 6 – First Joining and Write Well Book 7 – More Joining

Key vocabulary: diagonal join, horizontal join, break letters, ascenders, descenders

<u>Autumn 1</u>	- Revising Letter Shapes This phase will continue until at least 80% of children are securely forming appropriately sized letters correctly, with clear ascenders and descenders and placing them on the line. Any of the 20% children who are not ready to move on will receive systematic intervention at this point. - Joining Patterns - The diagonal join to r, n, m - The diagonal join to i and u - Revisiting the diagonal join to r, n, m, i, u - The diagonal join to l, h, k
<u>Autumn 2</u>	- Joining three letters - The diagonal join to a, c, o - Practising the join to a, c, o - Joining words with diagonal joins
<u>Spring 1</u>	- The horizontal join to r, n, m - The horizontal join to i and u - The horizontal join to l, h, k - The horizontal join to a, c, o - Joining words
<u>Spring 2</u>	- The diagonal join to v and w - The diagonal join to p and y - The diagonal join to b and t - The diagonal join to d and g - The diagonal join to e
<u>Summer 1</u>	- Joining words with diagonal joins - The horizontal join to v and w - The horizontal join to p and y

	- The horizontal join to b and t - The horizontal join to d and g
<u>Summer 2</u>	- The horizontal join to e - Joining words - Starting with break letters - Break letters within words - Punctuation focus

Year 3

Taught x2 weekly
20 minutes

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach, Practise, Apply (end of week)

Lesson 1: Try it 1 and 2

Lesson 2: Practice and apply it

Red Rose Patter for formation phrases

Supported by Write Well Book 8 – Confident Joining

Key vocabulary: diagonal join, horizontal join, break letters, ascenders, descenders, straight letters, letter strings, double letters, prefix, suffix, compound words, direct speech

<u>Autumn 1</u>	- Joining words - Joining from r to straight letters - Joining from r to round letters
<u>Autumn 2</u>	- Joining to s - Joining to f
<u>Spring 1</u>	- Joining from f to straight letters - Joining from f to round letters - Joining difficult double letters
<u>Spring 2</u>	- Joining letter strings with r - The break letters g, q, y, j, p, b, s
<u>Summer 1</u>	- The break letters x and z - Joining compound words
<u>Summer 2</u>	- Joining words with prefixes - Joining words with suffixes - Joining in direct speech

Year 4

Children are encouraged to use a range of writing tools and, as their handwriting becomes increasingly fluent and well-presented, to write in pen. **At St Lawrence, pupils in Year 4 may begin using a pen** when they consistently meet year group expectations for handwriting, including accurate letter formation, sizing, spacing and presentation.

Taught x2 weekly

20 minutes

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach, Practise, Apply (end of week)

Lesson 1: Try it 1 and 2

Lesson 2: Practice and apply it

Red Rose Patter for formation phrases

Supported by Write Well Book 9 – Fluency

Key vocabulary: consistent, position, spacing, parallel, downstrokes, ascenders, descenders, fluent, prefix, suffix

<u>Autumn 1</u>	- Fluent handwriting - Fluent joining - Clear letter shapes
<u>Autumn 2</u>	- Consistent letter size - Consistent position
<u>Spring 1</u>	- Checking spacing within words - Parallel downstrokes - Parallel ascenders
<u>Spring 2</u>	- Parallel descenders - Pen lifts after break letters
<u>Summer 1</u>	- Fluent joining in longer words - Joining words with prefixes
<u>Summer 2</u>	- Joining words with suffixes - Word and line spacing - Writing fluently

Year 5

Taught x2 weekly
20 minutes

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach, Practise, Apply (end of week)

Lesson 1: Try it 1 and 2

Lesson 2: Practice and apply it

Red Rose Patter for formation phrases

Supported by Write Well Book 10 – Speed

Key vocabulary: legible, slant, speed, purpose, abbreviations, notes

<u>Autumn 1</u>	- Joining for speed - Fast and legible handwriting - Check your writing speed
<u>Autumn 2</u>	- Tools and tips for speed - Eradicating problems with writing at speed
<u>Spring 1</u>	- Practising for speed - Looping for speed - Speedy joining from b and p
<u>Spring 2</u>	- Speedy joining from s - Shortcut joins for speed
<u>Summer 1</u>	- Slanting for speed - Different speeds for different purposes
<u>Summer 2</u>	- Taking notes - Using abbreviations - Check your writing speed

Year 6

Taught x2 weekly
20 minutes

Teaching sequence: Revisit and review, Teach, Practise, Apply (end of week)

Lesson 1: Try it 1 and 2

Lesson 2: Practice and apply it

Red Rose Patter for formation phrases

Supported by Write Well Book 11 – Style

Key vocabulary: personal style, looping, printing, slanting, decorative, calligraphy, proofreading, punctuation, black capitals

<u>Autumn 1</u>	- Your own personal style - Looping for style - Joining break letters b, p, s
<u>Autumn 2</u>	- Joining break letters q, z, x - Rounded v and w - Slanting for style
<u>Spring 1</u>	- Printing - Block capitals - Choosing writing tools
<u>Spring 2</u>	- Decorative lettering - Calligraphy - Choosing your standard of handwriting
<u>Summer 1</u>	- Your best handwriting - Proofreading and punctuation
<u>Summer 2</u>	- Presentation and layout

Appendix B

Letter Formation Guidance

All teachers and children use these agreed formation phrases.

a	Lead in, round the anchor, down the rope and flick.
b	Lead in, up the bat, down the bat, round the ball and flick.
c	Lead in, curl round the cat.
d	Lead in, back round the dog's body, up to his ears, down to his tail and flick.
e	Lead in, across the shelf and over the elf.
f	Lead in, up the flamingo, follow down the flamingo, loop and fly. Lead in, round the flamingo, follow down the flamingo, loop and fly. Lead in, round the flamingo, follow down the flamingo, loop and fly.
g	Lead in, go round the gorilla, swing from the vine and loop.
h	Lead in, up the hill, down the hill, over the hedge and flick.
i	Lead in, up the insect, down the insect and flick. Don't forget his cap!
j	Lead in, up the jetty, jump off the jetty and loop. Don't forget your cap!
k	Lead in, up the koala, down the koala, arm, leg and flick. Lead in, up the koala, down the koala, round the arm, down the leg and flick.
l	Lead in, up the long ladder, down the long ladder and flick.
m	Lead in, up the mound, down the mound, over the moles and flick.
n	Lead in, up the nose, down the nose, over the nostril and flick.
o	Lead in, back around the octopus and flick.
p	Lead in, up the path, down the path, up the path, round the pond and flick.
q	Lead in, quick! Back round the pond, down and splash.
r	Lead in, up to the cloud, rain down to the ground and over the rainbow.
s	Lead in, slip down the slide and flick.
t	Lead in, up the tree, down the tree and across the branch.
u	Lead in, up for breath, down under the sea, up for breath, down again and flick.
v	Lead in, down the vase, up the vase and flick.
w	Lead in, down the wave and up the wave. Down the wave, up the wave and flick.
x	Lead in, cross the box, cross the box and flick. Lead in, curve round the box, curve round the box and flick.
y	Lead in, up the yo-yo, down the yo-yo, up the yo-yo, swing and loop.

z	Lead in, zip, zap, zoom!
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Appendix C

Intervention Programmes and Resources

Early Intervention

Children who do not reach age-appropriate handwriting milestones require early, well-targeted intervention so gaps do not widen and working memory is not overloaded as writing demands increase. Both *The Writing Framework (2025)* and Ofsted's *Strong Foundations in the First Years of School* emphasise that early identification and responsive action are critical, particularly where weaknesses in core strength, fine motor control, pencil grip, or letter formation are evident.

Effective early intervention begins with strengthening the **gross and fine motor foundations** essential for handwriting—developing core stability, shoulder strength, bilateral coordination and finger dexterity through structured activities such as climbing, crawling, dough disco, threading and tool use.

Alongside motor development, children need explicit, supervised teaching to correct and embed accurate **letter formation**, ensuring they do not practise incorrect movements. Programmes such as **Print Like a Pro**, recommended in your staff documents, provide a systematic and highly visual approach that supports children in forming letters with correct directionality, starting points and sequencing.