

Year 1: Handwriting Progression

Key Framework Delivery Principles

- **Frequency:** Short, dedicated daily sessions lasting **10–15 minutes** (separate from phonics).
- **Paper Style:** Use wider lines to support correct formation progressing to narrower lines to encourage letter sizing and alignment.
- **No Unsupervised Tracing:** The Framework advises against unguided dot-to-dot tracing, emphasizing instead that the teacher must explicitly model the physical movement pattern.
- **The "3 Ps":** Every session must begin by establishing correct **P**osture (feet flat, back straight), **P**aper position, and a dynamic **P**encil tripod grip.

Half Term	Focus Area		Half Term	Focus Area
Autumn 1	Readiness & Pre-Writing Patterns		Spring 2	Capital Letters & Numbers
Autumn 2	The 'Long Ladder' & 'One-Armed Robot' Families		Summer 1	Consistency, Size, and Line Presentation
Spring 1	The 'Curly Caterpillar' & 'Zig-Zag Monster' Families		Summer 2	Consolidation & Consistency

Autumn 1: Readiness & Pre-Writing Patterns

Focus: gross and fine motor strength, correct pencil grip (tripod grip), posture, and the fundamental pencil strokes required for letter formation.

Physical Skills: Finger gym activities, playdough, tweezers, and shoulder-strengthening movements.

Week 1/	Vertical lines (top to bottom)/ Horizontal lines (left to right)
Week 2	Dictation Focus: Listening to and drawing patterns on unlined paper, moving to wide lines: Draw three tall ladders/ draw a train track across the paper (Vertical/ horizontal straight lines)
Week 3/	Diagonal crosses and zig-zags
Week 4	Dictation Focus: Make the snake slither on the paper (Continuous wave patterns)
Week 5	Continuous waves and circles (clockwise and anti-clockwise)
Week 6	Dictation Focus: Draw a row of round bubbles (Anti-clockwise circles of consistent size)

Autumn 2: The 'Long Ladder' & 'One-Armed Robot' Families

Focus: Introduction to the first two lowercase letter families, focusing on consistent starting points at the top line

Week 1/	Long Ladder Letters (Down and off) - Letters: l, i, t, u, j, y
Week 2	Focus: Pulling straight down with a clean exit Dictation Focus: Single sounds, CVC words, and short 2–3 word phrases using <i>only</i> taught letters. Focus on baseline placement - i... t... l... (Single letter sounds)
Week 3/	One-Armed Robot Letters (Down, bounce up, and over) - Letters: r, b, n, h, m, k, p
Week 4	Focus: Bouncing back up the same line before curving over. Dictation Focus: Writing simple CVC words combining these families (e.g., bit, run, him, lip, tin, rut).
Week 5/	Practice of both letter families
Week 6	Focus: finger spacing, writing on the line Dictation Focus: The man ran. / The cat can run (Using standard finger spacing)

Spring 1: The 'Curly Caterpillar' & 'Zig-Zag Monster' Families

Focus: Introduction to anticlockwise round letters (which require strong spatial awareness) and straight diagonal letters.

Week 1/ Week 2	Curly Caterpillar Letters (Anticlockwise round) - Letters: c, a, d, o, g, q, e, s, f Focus: Starting at the "2 o'clock" position, curving back round, and handling ascenders/descenders cleanly. Dictation Focus: Focus shifts to tracking descenders (g, q) and avoiding the reversal of d and b - cat... dog... dad (Targeting curly caterpillar letters)
Week 3/ Week 4	Zig-Zag Monster Letters (Diagonal strokes) - Letters: v, w, x, z Focus: Keeping diagonal lines sharp without rounding the corners. Dictation Focus: A big wet van. (Mixing robot, ladder, and zig-zag families)
Week 5/ Week 6	Practice of both letter families Focus: Forming common exception words and short captions Dictation Focus: e.g., the cat, dog sat, big web/ The mad fox got a box. (Full short sentence check)
Spring 2: Capital Letters & Numbers Focus: Introduction to uppercase formation, ensuring children understand that capitals do not join and capital vowels are always taller than lowercase vowels.	
Week 1	Capital Letters: Grouped by formation style - Straight lines: I, L, T, H, F, E Dictation Focus: I like to play/ He is a boy (Clear and sharp exit strokes)
Week 2	Diagonals: A, V, W, X, Y, K, Z, M, N Dictation Focus: You are a boy. / We are happy. (Starting sentences with a clear, tall capital letter and ending with a full stop)
Week 3	Curves: C, O, G, Q, S Dictation Focus: Sam sat on the sofa/ Some dogs are brown (Focus on capital S vs lowercase s)
Week 4	Lines and curves: P, B, R, D, J, U Dictation Focus: It was hot on Monday./ Today is Wednesday (Capital letters for days of the week)
Week 5	Numbers: 0 – 9 Correct orientation to prevent reversals (especially 2, 3, 5, and 7) Dictation Focus: numbers
Week 6	Application: Writing personal names, days of the week, and matching lowercase letters to their capital pairs Dictation Focus: I see 5 red pens./ She has 2 cats. (Mixing capitals, lowercase, and numeric digits)

Summer 1: Consistency, Size & Line Presentation

Focus: Managing relative letter sizes and keeping writing sitting neatly on the baseline.

Week 1/ Week 2	Ascenders vs. Descenders - Ensuring b, d, h, k, l, t touch the top line, while g, j, p, q, y loop cleanly beneath the baseline. Dictation Focus: The tall lad had a bad leg. (Testing t, l, d, h, b ascenders) Sentences packed with ascending and descending targets.
Week 3	Vowel Size consistency: Keeping a, e, i, o, u exactly the same height. Dictation Focus: I eat apples./ I am at school.
Week 4	Finger Spacing: Using physical spacers or "imaginary fingers" to create clear, consistent gaps between words. Dictation Focus: Jump up and down in the play yard. / The jam is in the jar. (Testing j, p, p, d, p, g, y descenders)
Week 5/ Week 6	Application: Copying short sentences from a board Dictation Focus: The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. (The ultimate letter-size and spacing check)

Summer 2: Consolidation & Consistency

Focus: Ensuring clean, standard print to building writing stamina, speed, and precision to prepare for the increased writing demands of Year 2

Week 1	Forming Complex Print Strings/ Double letters: Practising tricky letter combinations where spacing frequently collapses - e.g., ff, ll, ss, oo, ee, ck Dictation Focus: The small green frog hopped off the wet log (<i>Check:</i> Are ll, ee, and ff uniform in size and correctly spaced?)
Week 2	Aesthetic Alignment: Ensuring all letters sit exactly on the baseline, and that letters do not float or bounce. Dictation Focus: On Saturday, Ben and Max went to London. (<i>Check:</i> Do the capital letters (O, S, B, M, L) stand distinctly taller than the lowercase letters without touching them?)
Week 3	Punctuation Precision: Positioning full stops, commas, and question marks accurately on the baseline, rather than floating in mid-air. Dictation Focus: Look at that! Can you see the big red ship? (<i>Check:</i> Are the exclamation and question marks properly proportioned against the print letters?)
Week 4	Speed and Stamina: Maintaining neat, consistent print formation while writing longer pieces of text Dictation Focus: The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog <i>Check:</i> A complete alphabet check. Are there clear, distinct finger spaces between every single word?)
Week 5/ Week 6	Application: Does the handwriting stay neat and consistent from the first word to the last word? Dictation Focus: The sun was hot. We put on hats and ran down to the sand. /The deep blue sea was cold, but we had fun splashing in the waves. (<i>Check:</i> End-of-year review. Is the print fluent, perfectly sized, and sitting accurately on the baseline?)