Southglade Primary & Nursery School

Handwriting policy and progression document

Nursery - Year 6

2026-2027

Our vision

At Southglade Primary School, we believe every child deserves to become a confident, fluent and independent writer. We recognise that handwriting is a vital life skill and an essential foundation for successful writing.

Our handwriting curriculum is built on one guiding principle: **Fluent Transcription Enables Successful Composition.** Through a carefully sequenced journey, beginning with physical development in the Early Years and progressing to fluent, automatic handwriting, children develop the skills needed to communicate confidently across the curriculum.

Our ambition is that every child leaves Southglade with handwriting that is legible, fluent and automatic, enabling them to focus on expressing their ideas with confidence, creativity and pride.

The Seven Commitments of Handwriting at Southglade

- We build strong foundations first.
- We teach through a carefully sequenced curriculum.
- We teach explicitly and model consistently.
- We practise every day to build automaticity.
- We have high expectations for every child.
- We use assessment to move learning forward.
- We develop fluent transcription to enable successful composition.

The foundational skills handwriting journey at Southglade

Children progress through thirteen carefully sequenced foundations. Each foundation builds upon the previous one, ensuring handwriting develops from physical readiness to fluent, automatic transcription.



Progression of foundational skills

Foundational skill	Typical Year group/ phase	Letter join focus	Children will be able to…	Evidence looks like…	Assessment Questions	Common Misconceptions & adaptive teaching
F1 Gross Motor Development Strong bodies provide the stability needed for handwriting. Whole-body strength underpins fine motor control.	Nursery	*Pre-writing readiness*	Cross the midline, develop shoulder stability, build core strength, demonstrate bilateral coordination and use large arm movements with control.	Child maintains upright posture, crosses the midline naturally and demonstrates good shoulder stability.	Is the child physically ready to write? Are gross motor skills limiting progress?	Misconceptions: Child tires quickly, slumps at the table, avoids mark making, swaps hands. Interventions: Increase climbing, crawling, balancing, wheelbarrow walks, yoga, Dough Disco and outdoor mark making before expecting improvements in handwriting.
F2 Fine Motor Development Strong fingers and hands allow precise control of writing tools.	Nursery- Reception	*Pre-writing readiness*	Manipulate small objects, use scissors, tweezers, pegs, thread beads, pinch, squeeze and develop wrist stability.	Child manipulates tools confidently and demonstrates increasing finger strength and dexterity.	Does the child have sufficient finger strength? Is fine motor development secure?	Misconceptions: Weak grip, difficulty using scissors, avoids fine motor activities. Interventions: Daily Finger Gym, playdough, peg activities, threading, tweezers, nuts and bolts, construction and cutting practice.
F3 Pencil Grip An efficient pencil grip supports fluent handwriting. The helper hand stabilises the paper.	Reception	*Pencil control*	Hold a pencil using an effective tripod grip, apply appropriate pressure and stabilise paper independently.	Grip is consistent across writing tasks and pressure is appropriate	Is the grip efficient? Does it support fluent writing?	Misconceptions: Fist grip, thumb wrap, excessive pressure, very light pressure. Interventions: Short pencils, triangular pencils, grip prompts, modelling, vertical writing surfaces and frequent reminders.
F4 Posture & Paper Position Good posture and positioning improve comfort and control.	Reception	*Writing readiness*	Sit correctly with feet supported, paper angled appropriately and writing arm moving freely.	Child independently adopts correct posture during writing.	Does posture support handwriting?	Misconceptions: Paper straight instead of angled, feet dangling, body twisted. Interventions: Adjust seating, foot support, table height, visual posture prompts and teacher modelling.

F5 Pre-writing Patterns Letters are made from repeated movement patterns.	Reception	*Letter-join Pattern Practice*	Form vertical lines, horizontal lines, circles, diagonals, zigzags, bridges and curves accurately.	Child confidently reproduces movement patterns with control.	Are movement patterns secure before formal letter formation?	Misconceptions: Inconsistent circles, shaky lines, difficulty changing direction. Interventions: Sand trays, paintbrushes, ribbon dancing, chalking outdoors, sensory writing and repeated movement practice.
F6 Letter Formation Every letter has a correct starting point and direction.	Reception – Year 1	*Letter-join Easy Letters*	Form all lower-case letters correctly with consistent starting points and directionality.	Correct formation is evident across handwriting and independent writing.	Does the child know where every letter starts?	Misconceptions: Bottom-up formation, reversals, multiple pencil lifts, inconsistent starts. Interventions: Revisit letter families, air writing, teacher modelling, Letter-join animations, individual practice of target letters.
F7 Letter Families & Consistency Letters with similar movements belong together.	Year 1	*Letter-join Letter Families*	Form letters consistently within families and maintain correct orientation and size.	Similar letters are formed consistently with correct orientation.	Are letter families secure?	Misconceptions: Similar letters formed differently, inconsistent heights, mixed styles. Interventions: Practise one letter family at a time, highlight similarities and provide visual prompts.
F8 Positioning on the Line Letters sit correctly on the baseline with appropriate ascenders and descenders.	Year 1 & 2	*Letter-join Formation on Lines*	Position letters correctly on the line and maintain consistent alignment.	Letters consistently sit on the baseline across all books.	Are letters positioned correctly on the line?	Misconceptions: Floating letters, oversized descenders, inconsistent baseline. Interventions: Wider lined paper, highlighted baselines, sky–grass–ground paper, guided writing practice.
F9 Spacing Appropriate spacing improves readability.	Year 1 & 2	*Letter-join Stage 1–3 Joins*	Leave consistent spaces between words while keeping letters within words close together.	Consistent spacing across all independent writing.	Does spacing improve readability?	Misconceptions: No spaces, spaces between letters, uneven spacing. Interventions: Finger spaces, lolly stick spacers, editing activities, sentence reconstruction.
F10 Joins	Year 2 & 3	*Letter-join Fluency Practice*	Apply lead-ins, diagonal joins and horizontal joins accurately and consistently.	Accurate joins are evident across independent writing.	Are joins secure and consistently applied?	Misconceptions: Joining capitals, incorrect join direction, unnecessary joins. Interventions: Revisit individual join families, slow modelling, practise joins in isolation before words and sentences.

Most letters join in predictable ways. Capitals do not join.						
F11 Fluency & Stamina Practice develops speed while maintaining quality	Year 3 & 4	*Letter-join* *Presentation Skills*	Write for increasing lengths of time while maintaining legibility.	Handwriting remains legible during extended writing across the curriculum.	Does speed affect quality?	Misconceptions: Writing becomes untidy over time, slow writing limits composition. Interventions: Short fluency bursts, timed copying, repeated sentence practice and handwriting warm-ups.
F12 Handwriting for Purpose Handwriting should change depending on audience and purpose.	Year 5		Adapt handwriting for presentation, drafting, note-taking and everyday writing.	Child independently adapts handwriting according to the task.	Can the child adapt handwriting appropriately?	Misconceptions: Uses presentation handwriting for all tasks or rushes presentation work. Interventions: Compare examples, discuss audience, model different expectations and provide purposeful writing opportunities.
F13 Automaticity Handwriting is automatic, freeing working memory for composition.	Year 6	*Independent Application*	Write fluently without consciously thinking about letter formation or joins.	Fluent, legible handwriting across all curriculum subjects. Handwriting no longer limits writing quality.	Is handwriting automatic? Does it ever become a barrier to composition?	Misconceptions: Child still thinks about handwriting while writing; handwriting deteriorates under cognitive demand. Interventions: Continue fluency practice, reduce unnecessary copying, provide authentic writing opportunities and prioritise composition while maintaining handwriting expectations.

End of Year Handwriting Expectations

These expectations outline what children will typically achieve by the end of each academic year through high-quality teaching and daily practice.

Nursery	• Develop gross and fine motor strength.	• Use a range of mark-making tools with increasing control.	• Copy simple lines, circles and patterns.	• Develop an emerging pencil grip.
Reception	• Hold a pencil using an effective tripod grip.	• Sit correctly for writing.	• Form all lowercase letters correctly.	• Write simple words and sentences with increasing control.
Year 1	• Form all letters and numbers correctly.	• Sit letters correctly on the line.	• Leave appropriate spaces between words.	• Begin simple Letter-join joins.
Year 2	• Use joined handwriting in most writing.	• Apply joins accurately and consistently.	• Maintain correct size and spacing.	• Write fluently with increasing confidence and take pride in presentation.
Year 3	• Use joined handwriting automatically.	• Maintain legibility in longer pieces of writing.	• Increase speed while remaining neat.	• Present work well across the curriculum.
Year 4	• Write fluently, legibly and confidently.	• Maintain consistent joins, spacing and size.	• Increase handwriting speed appropriately.	• Present work neatly in every subject.
Year 5	• Adapt handwriting for different purposes.	• Write quickly without losing legibility.	• Demonstrate independence and pride in presentation.	• Maintain high standards across all writing.
Year 6	• Produce fluent, automatic handwriting.	• Adapt handwriting for different audiences and purposes.	• Maintain legibility at speed.	• Be ready for the demands of secondary school.

Teaching expectations

Handwriting is taught every day from Reception to Year 6 using the Letter-join scheme. All adults model the agreed handwriting style consistently in lessons, on displays and in pupils' books. Children begin writing with a pencil before progressing to a handwriting pen and, when appropriate, a ballpoint pen.

Every lesson includes:

- *Warm up*
- *Teacher modelling*
- *Correct vocabulary*
- *Retrieval practice*
- *Guided practice*
- *Independent practice*
- *Feedback*

Every classroom will have

- *Letter formation prompts*
- *Vocabulary displayed*
- *Foundational skills poster displayed*
- *Correct handwriting modelled*
- *Appropriate writing equipment*

Inclusion

At Southglade Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every child can achieve success in handwriting. Where children experience difficulties with handwriting due to fine motor development, physical needs, being left-handed or having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), appropriate support and reasonable adaptations will be provided.

Teachers use ongoing assessment and the **Southglade Handwriting Foundations Progression** to identify barriers to learning and plan targeted support. Letter-join lesson planners provide differentiated activities to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported. Interventions focus on securing the underlying foundation before introducing the next stage of handwriting development.

Supporting Left-Handed Pupils

Left-handed children may find it more difficult to follow the movements of a right-handed adult during modelling. Where appropriate, teachers will provide additional demonstrations on an individual or small-group basis.

To support left-handed writers:

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the **left** of a right-handed pupil to avoid competing for writing space.
- Paper should be positioned slightly to the left and angled comfortably to support a natural writing position.
- Pupils should hold the pencil slightly further from the tip to ensure a clear line of vision while writing.
- Teachers should model appropriate paper position, pencil grip and writing posture.
- Additional practice with left-to-right movement patterns may be provided where required to develop fluent writing.

No child should be expected to progress to the next stage of handwriting until the necessary foundational skills have been securely established.

- *Handwriting at home posters are sent home to support parental engagement.*



Letter join at home:



- *Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home by using the Pupil log-in for Letter-join. Teachers can set Home Learning Tasks which may include:*
- *Magic Patterns*
- *Magic Words*
- *SoundMatch*
- *PhonicsMatch*
- *LetterMatch*
- *LetterLotto*
- *Letter Families activity*



- *Word Search*
- *Word Bank*
- *Spelling lists*
- *Write it Right!*
- *Children can also watch the word and letter animations and practice and explore other handwriting resources on Letter-join.*

Assessment

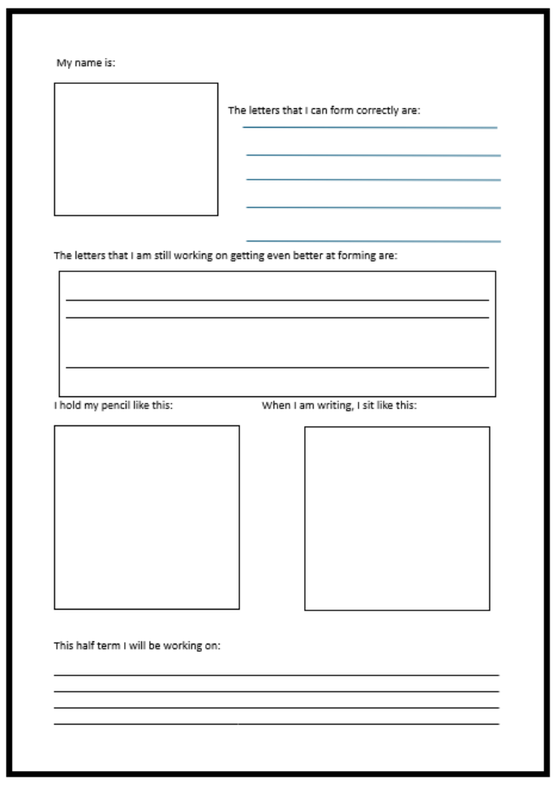
Each term teachers assess against Southglade foundational knowledge progression document. Teachers keep a running record for each half term which are used to inform teaching and interventions. Pupils also complete handwriting tracker sheets to assess letter formation.

Children are assessed as:

- *Developing*
- *Secure*

Child A

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
Autumn	√	√	√	√	x								
Spring	√	√	√	√	√	√	x						
Summer	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x			



My name is:

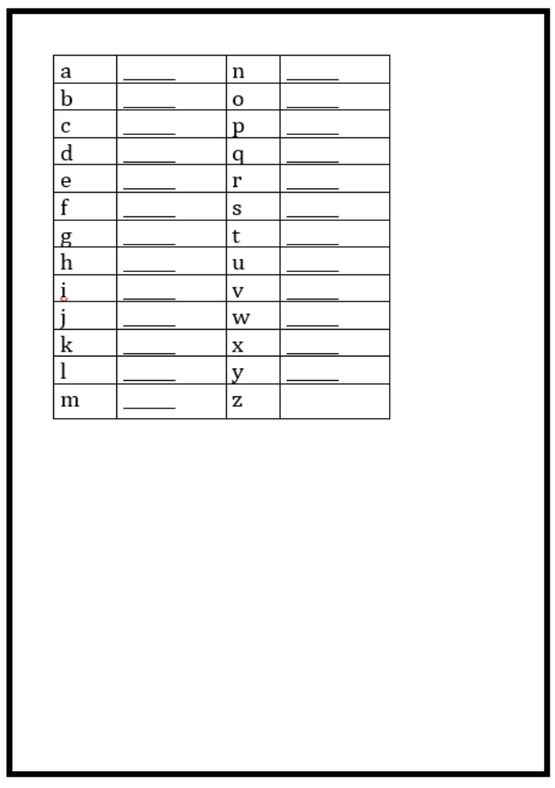
The letters that I can form correctly are:

The letters that I am still working on getting even better at forming are:

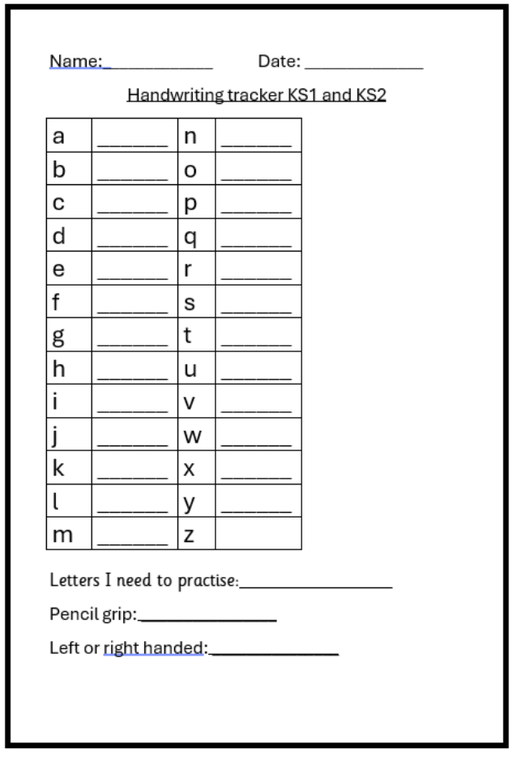
I hold my pencil like this:

When I am writing, I sit like this:

This half term I will be working on:



a	_____	n	_____
b	_____	o	_____
c	_____	p	_____
d	_____	q	_____
e	_____	r	_____
f	_____	s	_____
g	_____	t	_____
h	_____	u	_____
i	_____	v	_____
j	_____	w	_____
k	_____	x	_____
l	_____	y	_____
m	_____	z	



Name:_____ Date: _____

Handwriting tracker KS1 and KS2

a	_____	n	_____
b	_____	o	_____
c	_____	p	_____
d	_____	q	_____
e	_____	r	_____
f	_____	s	_____
g	_____	t	_____
h	_____	u	_____
i	_____	v	_____
j	_____	w	_____
k	_____	x	_____
l	_____	y	_____
m	_____	z	

Letters I need to practise:_____

Pencil grip:_____

Left or right handed:_____

Monitoring and Evaluation

The English Leads are responsible for monitoring the quality of handwriting teaching and learning across the school. Working alongside Curriculum Subject Leaders, they also monitor the application of handwriting and presentation across the curriculum. Findings from monitoring are used to celebrate strengths, identify areas for development and inform future staff training and school improvement.

Monitoring activities include:

- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Book looks
- Pupil voice
- Assessment analysis