

Crawshawbooth Reception Handwriting

Rationale

Handwriting is fundamentally a motor skill before it becomes an academic one (Feder & Majnemer, 2007). It requires explicit modelling, repeated rehearsal and secure physical foundations. When letter formation becomes automatic, children are freed to focus on composition, spelling and idea generation (Berninger et al., 2015).

In EYFS, handwriting is rooted firmly within the **Prime Area of Physical Development**.

Before children can control a pencil, they must first develop:

- Core stability
- Shoulder strength
- Controlled pivot points (shoulder → elbow → wrist → fingers)
- Ability to cross the midline
- Proprioception (body awareness)

Therefore, handwriting teaching in EYFS combines gross motor development, fine motor control and explicit modelling of letter formation.

Crawshawbooth Reception Handwriting Long Term Plan

Term	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Focus	Physical Foundations & Gross/Fine Motor Development	Letter Formation	Letter Size & Presentation
Aim	To develop the physical readiness required for handwriting.	To embed correct letter formation through explicit modelling and repetition.	To refine letter size and develop readiness for Year 1 expectations.
	Key Priorities • Core strength and stability • Shoulder and upper arm strength • Crossing the midline • Developing controlled pivot points • Secure pencil grip Provision & Activities • Dough Disco • Large-scale mark making (walls, floor, outdoor surfaces) • Climbing, crawling, pushing, pulling • Threading, peg boards, tweezers, squeezing activities • Sweeping movements using ribbons, paintbrushes and chalk Letter formation is introduced informally, but the primary focus is movement quality and physical readiness.	Approach • Daily modelling using Red Rose ditties. • Practice on whiteboards to allow immediate correction. • Staff circulate to address incorrect start points and direction. • Emphasis on: ○ Correct grip ○ Clear start point ○ Correct directional movement ○ Verbal rehearsal of ditties At this stage, letter size is flexible. Letters may be formed large or small. The priority is: • Embedding movement patterns • Developing automaticity • Reducing cognitive load Children practise discretely in handwriting sessions and apply skills in phonics and independent writing.	Approach • More formal handwriting sessions at tables. • Use of books rather than whiteboards. • Introduction of consistent letter size expectations. • Reinforcement of correct orientation and spacing. Children are taught: • Relative size of tall, small and descender letters • Orientation on lines • Spacing between words • Sitting posture and paper positioning The emphasis remains on fluency, not perfection. This term ensures a smooth transition into Year 1 by: • Embedding automatic letter formation • Introducing consistent presentation expectations • Maintaining daily modelling and rehearsal
Assessment	Assessment focuses on: • Stamina • Grip development • Body positioning • Ability to control larger movements	Assessment focuses on: • Consistency of formation • Ability to recall movement cues • Fluency without excessive effort	Assessment focuses on: • Size consistency • Line awareness • Writing stamina • Smooth, fluent movement

Crawshawbooth Reception Handwriting Medium Term Plan
Autumn Term

Week	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Focus	Posture & Core Stability	Shoulder Strength & Large Movements	Crossing the Midline	Pivot Points (Shoulder to Elbow)	Wrist & Hand Control	Pencil Grip Focus	Curly Caterpillar Movement (Informal)	Long Ladder Movements	Diagonal & Zig-Zag	Consolidation
Teaching Activities	Monday Warm-up: Wall push-ups x10, shoulder rolls. Model: Correct sitting posture (feet flat, bottom back, paper straight). Practice: Sky writing big circles using whole arm. Review: "Strong bodies help strong writing." Tuesday Warm-up: Cross crawl (opposite elbow to knee). Model: Large vertical strokes in air (top to bottom). Practice: Large vertical chalk marks outdoors. Review: "Start at the top, straight down." Wednesday Warm-up: Plank hold (10 seconds). Model: Large horizontal strokes (left to right). Practice: Paint water lines on fence. Review: "Across the page." Thursday Warm-up: Ribbon arm swings.	Monday Warm-up: Arm windmills. Model: Large anti-clockwise circles. Practice: Big paintbrush spirals. Review start point language. Tuesday Warm-up: Push heavy box/crate (role play). Model: Zig-zag lines on board. Practice: Large zig-zags on sugar paper. Review controlled stopping. Wednesday Warm-up: Throw and catch across body. Model: Figure-of-eight in air. Practice: Floor ribbon figure-eights. Review crossing midline. Thursday Warm-up: Bear crawl. Model: Tall ladder lines (top to bottom). Practice: Chalk "ladders" outdoors. Review: Top to bottom control. Friday	Monday Warm-up: Cross crawl slow and controlled. Model: Large circles reaching across body. Practice: Big whiteboard circles. Review hand dominance. Tuesday Warm-up: Opposite shoulder taps. Model: Horizontal lines across full board width. Practice: Long paint strokes. Review fluid movement. Wednesday Warm-up: Ball pass across body. Model: Figure-of-eight pattern. Practice: Sand tray tracing. Review smoothness. Thursday Warm-up: Ribbon sweep across body. Model: Curved lines starting at top. Practice: Air → board → paper. Review direction. Friday	Monday Warm-up: Shoulder shrugs + elbow bends. Model: Big movement → slightly smaller. Practice: Flipchart → whiteboard. Review size control. Tuesday Warm-up: Dough Disco (whole arm rolling). Model: Vertical lines using forearm more than shoulder. Practice: Whiteboards. Review movement getting smaller. Wednesday Warm-up: Wrist circles. Model: Small circles on board. Practice: Repeat pattern. Review stability. Thursday Warm-up: Wall press. Model: Horizontal strokes smaller scale. Practice: Board lines. Review controlled stopping. Friday	Monday Warm-up: Dough Disco finger focus. Model: Small anti-clockwise circles. Practice: Whiteboards. Review finger control. Tuesday Warm-up: Finger tapping patterns. Model: Short vertical strokes. Practice: Repeat in rows. Review start point. Wednesday Warm-up: Peg transfer race. Model: Small horizontal strokes. Practice: Pattern rows. Review stamina. Thursday Warm-up: Squeeze balls. Model: Curved "rainbow" shapes. Practice: Controlled repetition. Review wrist stability. Friday Warm-up: Dough Disco. Model: Recap circle + line patterns. Practice: Choice and repeat.	Monday Warm-up: Finger gym. Model: Correct tripod grip. Practice: Short pattern lines using pencils. Review gentle correction. Tuesday Warm-up: Dough pinching. Model: Top-to-bottom strokes with pencil. Practice: Whiteboards. Review paper position. Wednesday Warm-up: Wrist shake + stretch. Model: Small circles with pencil. Practice: Repeat anti-clockwise. Review pressure control. Thursday Warm-up: Tweezer transfer. Model: Zig-zag lines. Practice: Pencil control. Review grip consistency. Friday Warm-up: Dough Disco.	Monday Warm-up: Large anti-clockwise arm circles. Model: "Curly caterpillar" movement. Practice: Air → board. Review start at top. Tuesday Warm-up: Ribbon spirals. Model: Smaller caterpillar shapes. Practice: Whiteboards. Review direction only. Wednesday Warm-up: Dough rolling into curves. Model: Repeat movement. Practice: Controlled repetition. Review fluency. Thursday Warm-up: Cross crawl. Model: Add short finishing flick (informal). Practice: Repeat. Review consistency. Friday Warm-up: Child-led movement recap.	Monday Warm-up: Stretch tall. Model: Long straight down strokes. Practice: Repeat rows. Review top-to-bottom. Tuesday Warm-up: Wall press. Model: Combine down + flick (informal). Practice: Whiteboards. Review control. Wednesday Warm-up: Finger tapping. Model: Tall lines consistent length. Practice: Repeat. Review height awareness. Thursday Warm-up: Dough Disco. Model: Horizontal joins. Practice: Across page. Review left to right. Friday Warm-up: Cross crawl. Model: Recap ladder patterns. Practice: Repeat. Review stamina.	Monday Warm-up: Diagonal arm reaches. Model: Large diagonal strokes. Practice: Board repetition. Review direction. Tuesday Warm-up: Ribbon zig-zags. Model: Smaller zig-zags. Practice: Whiteboards. Review precision. Wednesday Warm-up: Wrist warm-ups. Model: Diagonal + vertical combination. Practice: Controlled repetition. Review stopping points. Thursday Warm-up: Dough squeezing. Model: Zig-zag reduced size. Practice: Pencil repetition. Review finger control. Friday Warm-up: Recap movements. Model: All pattern families.	Each day revisit: Anti-clockwise circles Vertical strokes Horizontal strokes Diagonals Gradually reduce size and increase control. Friday: Informal readiness check Posture Grip Crossing midline Stamina Movement fluency

	Model: Big clockwise circles on flipchart. Practice: Air circles → whiteboard circles. Review: Direction matters. Friday Warm-up: Obstacle crawl. Model: Combine vertical + horizontal (cross shapes). Practice: Large crosses on playground with chalk. Review posture and stamina.	Warm-up: Wall press hold. Model: Recap all large movements. Practice: Choose favourite pattern large-scale. Review endurance	Warm-up: Obstacle course crossing midline. Model: Recap pattern family. Practice: Independent large pattern choice. Review fatigue and posture.	Warm-up: Cross crawl. Model: Combine circle + line. Practice: Guided repetition. Review precision.	Review grip development.	Model: Recap patterns with pencil. Practice: Short repeated sets. Review fatigue.	Model: Recap caterpillar family. Practice: Independent repetition. Review stamina.		Practice: Independent repetition. Review progress.	
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Crawshawbooth Reception Handwriting Medium Term Plan
Spring Term

Week	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Focus	c, a, o	d, g, q	e, s + consolidation	l, i	t, u	r, n, m	b, h	k, p + consolidation	v, w	x, z + final consolidation
Teaching Activities	Monday – c Model ditti clearly. Emphasise: start at the top, anti-clockwise. Children practise large then smaller. Spot incorrect clockwise movement immediately. Tuesday – c (fluency) Quick recap model. Timed repetition (short bursts). Focus: smoothness, not speed. Wednesday – a Model full ditti. Emphasise: c shape first, then down. Practice in sets of 5. Thursday – a (fluency) Alternate: c, a, c, a. Reinforce verbal rehearsal. Friday – o Model continuous anti-clockwise. Practice consistent start and finish point.	Monday – d Model: c shape → up tall → down. Emphasise height difference. Correct over-rotating. Tuesday – d (fluency) Repeat in short bursts. Check tall stem is straight. Wednesday – g Model carefully: tail under. Emphasise controlled descender. Thursday – q Model tail direction clearly. Compare with g to avoid confusion. Friday – Mixed practice (c, a, d, g, q) Call and respond letter formation. Focus: automatic recall of ditti.	Monday – e Model starting at the middle. Reinforce anti-clockwise entry. Tuesday – s Model carefully (common reversal risk). Slow repetition. Wednesday – Curly recap Mixed dictation: teacher calls letter. Children form without visual prompt. Thursday – Fluency drills 30-second repetition bursts. Focus on flow. Friday – Assessment check Individual observation: Start point secure? Direction correct? Grip consistent?	Monday – l Tall straight down. Tuesday – i Down → dot added after. Teach dot placement clearly. Wednesday – l/i mix Reinforce height difference. Thursday – Fluency drills Short repetition sets. Friday – Posture & grip check Focus on fatigue.	Monday – t Down tall → cross after. Emphasise cross placement. Tuesday – u Down → up and over. Smooth bottom curve. Wednesday – Ladder recap l, i, t, u mixed. Thursday – Dictation practice Teacher says letter only. No visual cues. Friday – Assessment focus Start points automatic?	Monday – r Model: down → up and over. Emphasise straight down first. Tuesday – n Down → up and over. Compare with r. Wednesday – m Down → over, over. Count humps aloud. Thursday – r/n/m mix Dictation practice. Focus: clear start at top. Friday – Fluency practice Short repetition bursts. Correct hump size consistency.	Monday – b Down tall → back up → around. Compare with d to avoid reversal. Tuesday – b fluency Alternate b and d. Spot misconceptions quickly. Wednesday – h Down tall → up and over. Emphasise height. Thursday – b/h mix Dictation style practice. Reinforce tall letters. Friday – Assessment focus Observe for reversal. Check stamina.	Monday – k Down → lift → arm and leg. Slow modelling. Tuesday – p Down → back up → around. Emphasise descender. Wednesday – k/p mix Verbal rehearsal before writing. Thursday – One-armed recap r, n, m, b, h, k, p random order. Friday – Fluency & automaticity check Children write on call without model. Observe effort level.	Monday – v Down diagonal → up diagonal. Model slowly. Tuesday – w Down, up, down, up. Count movements. Wednesday – v/w mix Controlled angles. Thursday – Fluency drill Repetition in short bursts. Friday – Grip and fatigue check.	Monday – x Diagonal down → lift → cross. Emphasise lift. Tuesday – z Across → diagonal → across. Slow modelling. Wednesday – Zig-zag recap v, w, x, z mixed. Thursday – Whole alphabet random practice Teacher calls letters from all families. Friday – End of Spring Assessment

Crawshawbooth Reception Handwriting Medium Term Plan
Summer Term

Week	<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week 3</u>	<u>Week 4</u>	<u>Week 5</u>	<u>Week 6</u>	<u>Week 7</u>	<u>Week 8</u>	<u>Week 9</u>	<u>Week 10</u>	<u>Week 11</u>	<u>Week 12</u>
Focus	f, j (whiteboards)	y + consolidation (whiteboards)	c, a, o (introduce tables and books)	d, g	q, e, s + consolidation	l, i	t, u	r, n, m	b, h	k, p + consolidation	v, w (if extra weeks allow)	x, z (if extra weeks allow)
Teaching Activities	Monday – f Model tall stem to top line + descender below. Emphasise cross placement. Practice consistent height. Tuesday – f fluency Short repetition bursts. Check straight tall stem. Wednesday – j Model descender length clearly. Dot placed after. Thursday – j fluency Focus on dot position and consistent tail. Friday – f/j mixed Dictation practice. Check relative size and spacing.	Monday – y Diagonal start. Controlled descender below line. Tuesday – y fluency Focus on smooth join at bottom. Wednesday – f, j, y mixed Reinforce height differences. Thursday – Word practice Simple words (jam, fly, joy). Introduce finger spaces. Friday – Assessment focus Observe: Descenders consistent? Tall letters reach top line?	Monday – c Small body letter sitting on line. Anti-clockwise secure. Tuesday – a Round body small, short stem. Wednesday – o Even circle sitting on line. Thursday – c/a/o mixed Word building (cat, cap, mop). Friday – Fluency drill Focus on even sizing.	Monday – d Tall ascender to top line. Tuesday – g Small body + descender below line. Wednesday – d/g contrast Reinforce tall vs descender. Thursday – Word practice dog, dig, gap. Friday – Assessment focus Relative size secure?	Monday – q Small body + descender. Tuesday – e Small letter, no floating. Wednesday – s Small and balanced. Thursday – Mixed curly recap All letters random order. Friday – Sentence copy Focus: Capital letter Finger spaces Full stop	Monday – l Tall to top line. Tuesday – i Small body + neat dot. Wednesday – l/i contrast Alternate pattern. Thursday – Word practice lip, lit, ill. Friday – Fluency check.	Monday – t Tall stem + consistent cross. Tuesday – u Small body letter. Wednesday – Ladder recap l, i, t, u random. Thursday – Sentence writing Emphasise spacing. Friday – Assessment focus Tall letters consistent?	Monday – r Tuesday – n Wednesday – m Focus: Small body letters. Even humps. Thursday – Word building ran, man, ram. Friday – Fluency drill.	Monday – b Tall stem + small round body. Tuesday – h Tall stem + small hump. Wednesday – b/h contrast. Thursday – Word practice bat, hat, hob. Friday – Assessment focus.	Monday – k Tall stem + arm/leg placed mid-line. Tuesday – p Small body + descender. Wednesday – Mixed robot letters. Thursday – Short dictated sentence. Focus on: Spacing Line orientation Size consistency Friday – End of Reception writing sample Observe: Size consistency Line awareness Spacing Stamina Fluency	Even diagonals. Sitting on line. Controlled angles. No oversized zig-zags	Even diagonals. Sitting on line. Controlled angles. No oversized zig-zags