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