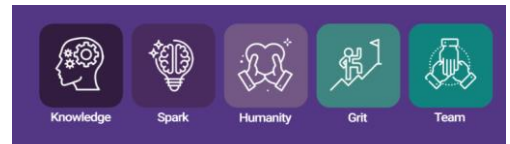


# Handwriting Policy

Written by Heather Taylor and Lousie Mason (writing leads) in consultation with the senior leadership team, SENDCO, phase leaders and governing body.

Date published: September 2023

Review due: September 2025



# Contents

1. Rationale.....	3
2. Aims .....	3
3. Teaching Strategies .....	3
4. EYFS .....	4
5. Year 1 .....	5
6. Year 2 .....	5
7. Years 3 & 4 .....	5
8. Years 5 & 6 .....	5
9. Writing Implements .....	6
10. Appendix .....	7

# Rationale

By the end of their time at primary school, it is important that children use a handwriting style which is correctly formed, legible, neat and joined when communicating ideas. They should be comfortable when writing at speed so they are able to focus on the content and meaning of their writing, rather than the formation of individual letters and words. Children's self-esteem is also heightened when they take pride in their handwriting, as this is a skill needed in everyday life.

At Clapgate, we understand that handwriting is a fine motor movement skill that is taught and learnt so regular opportunities to practise are important.

# Aims

- By the end of their time at Clapgate, children should have developed an efficient, joined, confident handwriting style that is clear, legible and fluent, freeing them to concentrate on the content of writing rather than letter formation.
- To instil a positive attitude towards handwriting from EYFS through to Y6.
- To raise standards in writing across the school by ensuring a clearly structured, taught progression in handwriting.
- To raise expectations of children's and adult's handwriting and presentation skills.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.

# Teaching Strategies

All handwriting lessons from Y1 – Y6 will be completed at a table and children must have good posture (feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair and chair tucked close to the table). Children will need to be shown how to tilt their book slightly (either to the left or right depending on their writing hand) to help them with their handwriting and should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper. Pupils should not fold books back on themselves. Consideration should be given to seating plans in order to ensure left-handed pupils have enough space to write comfortably.

Explicit handwriting sessions (lasting around 10 minutes) will be taught a minimum of once a week from Y1 – Y6. As handwriting is a skill that is practised in many other lessons, it will be at the teacher's discretion to determine whether further handwriting lessons are required. Teachers and TAs should model handwriting as set out in this policy at all times (unless using a typed font), including when marking books. Fine motor movement interventions will support pupils who need extra provision to achieve their age-related expectations in handwriting.

Each handwriting lesson will be structured in the following way:

- Warm up (1 minute)
- Posture check (30 seconds)
- Teacher modelling (3 minutes)

- Children practising letter or join independently without a pencil/pen (sky writing/writing on partners back/writing on palm) (30 seconds)
- Children practising letter or join in isolation in their book and then within a word (5 minutes)
- While children are practising their letters, joins or words, teachers should be circulating around the room, checking pupils' work and modelling in books for children demonstrating errors in formation or joins.

As letter formation is taught in KS1, letters will be identified as giraffe letters (ascenders), monkey letters (descenders) and tortoise letters (short letters). These will be displayed in classrooms for use in lessons (see appendix 4). Read, Write, Inc rhymes will continue to be used in KS1 following the teaching of them in Reception.

As pupils progress into KS2, the vocabulary of ascenders, descenders, loops, formation, spacing, size and join should be introduced to pupils and used during teaching.

In KS1 and KS2, letters will be taught using shape families (see appendix 6):

- Long ladder (down and off in another direction): i j l t u y
- One arm robot (down and retrace upwards): b h k m n p r 2 3 5 (numbers follow a clockwise direction)
- Curly caterpillar (anticlockwise round): c a d e g o q f s 0 6 8 9
- Zig zag letters: v w x z 1 4 7

## EYFS

EYFS forms the foundation for handwriting. Children develop their fine motor skills and writing ability, beginning in Nursery 1 with objectives such as 'to use a spoon accurately and feed themselves' and 'to produce side to side and to-and-fro scribble'. These objectives are built on throughout Nursery 1 (see appendix 2). This continues to be built on in Nursery 2, where children begin to copy simple horizontal and vertical letters by the end of the year. In Reception, the pincer grip is developed so children can use this independently, which builds so by the end of the year, this has progressed so children are confident at using a dynamic tripod grip (see appendix 1). Alongside the progression of fine motor skills, rigorous, synthetic phonics (Read, Write, Inc) begins in Reception. By the end of the year, pupils are writing sentences, correctly forming letters taught according to the rhymes and patterns learnt during phonics sessions (see appendix 3).

Children will:

- Practise gross, fine and manipulative skills daily through structured sessions as well as play
- Develop gross motor control through activities such as: climbing, throwing, chair push ups, ribbon dancing, action songs and rhymes, sky writing, large scale painting on walls or playground and upper-body weight-bearing activities like wheelbarrow or animal walking
- Develop fine motor control through various activities such as: threading beads or pasta on to string, threading pipe cleaners through a colander, play dough, sand and water play, finger rhymes, using glue spreaders and sewing
- Manipulate objects with increasing control such as scissors to cut along lines with greater accuracy, tools such as hammers and screwdrivers to manipulate items such as screws and golf tees, cooking utensils to stir and whisk and tweezers to move increasingly smaller items with good speed and accuracy
- Nursery will begin with focusing on up and down movements, then side-to-side, next circles and finally diagonal movements using a multisensory approach. If children struggle to form these basic shapes, they are likely to have difficulties forming letters and numbers.
- Trace horizontal lines, vertical lines, wavy lines, shapes and letters.

- Learn and use edited ‘Read, Write, Inc’ letter formation rhymes to support writing letters
- Practise writing the letter without a pencil first by sky writing letters, writing on their palm with their finger and writing with their finger on their partner’s back
- Use different mediums to form letters such as chalk, cornflour, foam, paint etc
- Write on lined paper, when appropriate, as this is important for the letter’s orientation on the line

## Year 1

By the end of Y1, pupils should:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

## Year 2

By the end of Y2, pupils should:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

## Years 3 & 4

By the end of LKS2, pupils should:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

## Years 5 & 6

By the end of KS2, pupils should:

- write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

## Writing Implements

Children will use a sharp pencil, of an appropriate length\*, during handwriting and writing lessons. In Nursery and/or Reception, pupils may use chunky pencils to begin their mark making before moving to regular sized pencils.






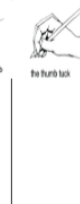



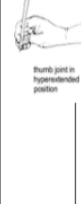


In KS1 and KS2 pupils continue to use pencil. Our pupils take pride in their presentation but when pen has been introduced, this has led to a decline in handwriting and pupils lose confidence in their work. Avoiding 'pen licences' also prevents children from identifying themselves as 'different' if they are not yet ready to move onto using a pen, thus reducing stresses and worries for pupils. In KS2, pupils can be nominated by their class teacher for the 'Presentation Award' once a week, which can be a piece of work from any subject where the child has shown great presentation skills. This acts as an opportunity to celebrate handwriting expectations and motivates pupils to constantly improve and develop their own style.

Handwriting lessons will be completed in a specific handwriting book in Years 1, 2 and 3. From Year 4 to 6, children will practise their handwriting on lined paper in their SPAG or jotting book, unless specific support is required for certain children. In Year 2, children will use books with line spacing of 12mm. In Y3, 8mm spacing is introduced and continues throughout KS2. If necessary, specific KS2 pupils may be given books with 12mm spacing to support them if they are still working on disjointed letter formation and require more space to write legibly.

\* When a pencil is held with an age appropriate grip, the length of the pencil should extend past the hand by a minimum of 3cm.

## Appendix 1

### PENCIL GRIP & CONTROL Progression Map

FISTED GRIP	DIGITAL PRONATE GRIP	4 FINGER GRIP HIGH INDEX	HOOKED WRIST OR EXTENDED WRIST	CROSS THUMB	THUMB TUCK	JOINT OF INDEX FINGER AND THUMB IN A FLEXED POSITION	INDEX FINGER JOINT IN HYPEREXTENDED POSITION	THUMB JOINT IN HYPEREXTENDED POSITION	STATIC TRIPOD GRIP 3 FINGER GRASP ALL FINGERS MOVE AS ONE	LATERAL TRIPOD	DYNAMIC TRIPOD GRIP
1-2 YEARS	2-3 YEARS	3-4 YEARS	4-6 YEARS						6-7 YEARS		
											
Pencil is held in the palm. All fingers and thumb are used. Movement is from the shoulder; the arm and the hand move as a unit. Light scribbles are produced with this pencil grip.	All fingers are holding the pencil but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page. Movement comes from the elbow and the shoulder is now stabilized. Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied.	Fingers are held on the pencil shaft. Movement occurs from the wrist; the hand and fingers move as a whole unit. Zigzag lines, crossed lines and simple humans can be drawn with this grip.	A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit. Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp. A static quadropod grip has a fourth finger involved. Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.								Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger. The ring and little fingers are bent and rest comfortably on the table. The index finger and thumb form an open space. Movement comes from the fingertips. This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.

## Appendix 2

Progression across writing (green) and fine motor control (purple) ELGs from Nursery 1 – Reception.

### Nursery 1

<b>Writing</b>	To know that marks are made with different movements. To experience mark making with a range of media. For example: marks in wet sand, shaving foam, paint, glitter etc. To use mark making tools to make spontaneous marks and scribbles using whole arm.	To make vertical marks and lines. To make circular scribbles using clockwise and anti-clockwise movements. To produce side to side and to-and-fro scribble.	To produce lines that intersect, beginning to make cross and grid-like patterns. To scribble write using V shapes, loops, and vertical lines. To create and experiments with symbols and marks.
<b>Fine Motor</b>	To open own packed lunch box with support. To hold a whole palm grip when using mark making tools. To use a spoon accurately to feed themselves. To make snips with scissors spring loaded scissors. To turn pages in a broad book one page at a time.	To begin to use <u>an</u> four fingered grip when using mark making tools. To begin to use construction equipment that needs putting together in a particular way e.g. Duplo. To cut through paper using spring loaded scissors support to hold the paper.	To use a fork accurately to feed themselves. To begin to hold paper and cut at the same time independently. To turn pages in a book one page at a time. To explore digging tools.
To use a range of small and large building equipment independently. To enjoy large muscle movement e.g. parachute games, lifting and build large construction, running and rolling up and down hills, scarves, ribbons and pom poms. To enjoy using large mark making resources such as rollers, sweeping brushes, paint brushes. See Writing for drawing skills and development.			

### Nursery 2

<b>Writing</b>	To draw simple and recognisable shapes. For example: sun, tree. To imitate drawing simple shapes. For example: circle, square. To imitate drawing a simple face. For example: circle for the head, nose, eyes, and mouth.	To distinguish between the different marks, they make. To copy own initial letter in their name. To draw spontaneous and recognisable forms. To draw a person with a head and one or two other features.	To begin to use a pincer grip independently. To use whole palm scissors to cut shapes roughly.
	To begin to use a three fingered grip with support. To <u>cut through</u> paper using whole palm scissors. To open own packed lunch box.	To begin to use a knife for cutting but may not use a fork at the same time. To begin to use whole palm scissors to cut for a purpose. To begin to show a dominate hand.	To begin to use a pincer grip independently. To use whole palm scissors to cut shapes roughly.


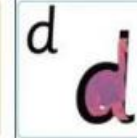


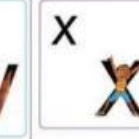
## Reception

<p>To begin to use a knife and fork together to cut food (some support needed). To begin to enjoy exploring small scale resources. To begin to open packets and cartons at mealtimes. To begin to peel their own fruit. Shows preference for dominant hand when using tools.</p> <p><b>Cutting skills</b> To be able to use scissors correctly to cut through a piece of paper.</p> <p><b>Pencil Grip</b> To be able to use a pincer grip independently.</p> <p><b>A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit. Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp.</b></p> <p>To begin to develop the use of a static tripod grip (beginning).</p> <p><b>Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger. This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.</b></p>	<p>To be able to use a knife and fork together to cut food. To be able to draw freely using a range of resources and movements. To be able to manipulate materials for a purpose and effect. To be able to hold and use a paintbrush effectively using the correct grip. To be able to open packets and cartons independently at mealtimes. To be able to peel a range of fruit independently.</p> <p><b>Cutting skills</b> To be able to use scissors correctly to cut out shapes.</p> <p><b>Pencil Grip</b> To become more confident when using a static tripod grip (developing)</p> <p><b>Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger. This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.</b></p>	<p>To have developed their own handwriting style which fast, accurate and efficient. To be able to fasten and unfasten buttons on clothing. To be able to show accuracy and care when drawing (see EAD strand).</p> <p><b>Cutting skills</b> To use scissors effectively for a purpose.</p> <p><b>Pencil grip</b> To be confident at using a dynamic tripod grip (secure).</p> <p><b>Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger. This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.</b></p>				
<p><b>Writing</b></p>	<p>To begin to copy letters from the alphabet, including letters from their name. To begin to copy print from the environment. To be able to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. To begin to hear and write the initial sounds in words. To be able to give meaning to marks as they draw and paint. To begin to write random letter strings to convey meaning, some of which are correctly formed. To begin to hear and write the initial and end sounds in words.</p>	<p>To begin to write CVC words (middle sounds). To begin to make plausible attempts at longer words, getting some letters in the correct order. To begin to write some of the red words taught in RWI. To write more than one word as part of a string.</p>	<p>To begin to use finger spaces. To write a few words with gaps between each word (understanding a word is a word). To be able to spell most of the red words taught in RWI.</p>	<p>To write a short phrase or sentence in meaningful contexts that can be read by others (with support). To begin to use finger spaces and full stops. To begin to understand how capital letters. To be able to spell most of the red words taught in RWI</p>	<p>To write a short sentence using finger spaces and full stops (independently). To be able to form capital letters correctly. To re-read work back to check for errors in writing. To be able to spell most of the red words taught in RWI</p>	<p>To write a sentence independently that can be read by others (including capital letters, finger spaces and full stops). To begin to write more than one sentence. To be able to use first 6 set 2 sounds in their writing. To be able to spell most of the red words taught in RWI</p>

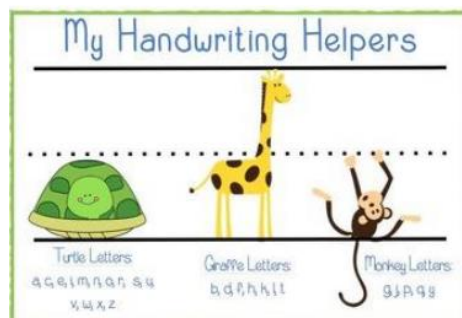


### Appendix 3

Read, Write, Inc letter formations with explanations to share with children.

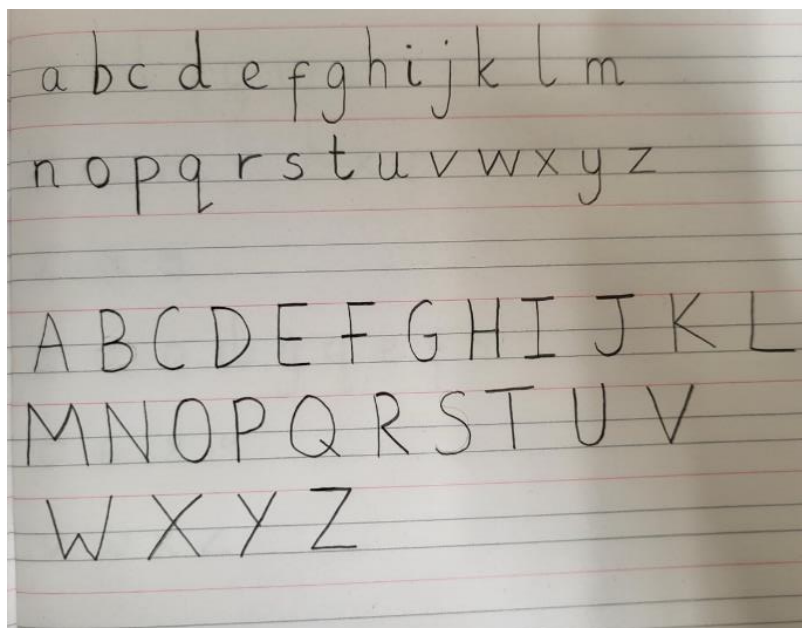
 <p>Around the apple and down the leaf.</p>	 <p>Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.</p>	 <p>Curl around the caterpillar.</p>	 <p>Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck &amp; down to his toes.</p>	 <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.</p>	 <p>Down the stem and draw the leaves.</p>
 <p>Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.</p>	 <p>Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.</p>	 <p>Down the body and dot for the head.</p>	 <p>Down his body, curl, dot for his head.</p>	 <p>Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.</p>	 <p>Down the long leg.</p>
 <p>Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.</p>	 <p>Down Nobby and over his net.</p>	 <p>All around the orange.</p>	 <p>Down the pirates plait and around his face.</p>	 <p>Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.</p>	 <p>Down the robots back and curl over his arm.</p>
 <p>Slither down the snake.</p>	 <p>Down the tower, across the tower.</p>	 <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.</p>	 <p>Down a wing, up a wing.</p>	 <p>Down, up, down, up.</p>	 <p>Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.</p>
 <p>Down a horn, up a horn and under head.</p>	 <p>Zig-zag-zig.</p>				

### Appendix 4



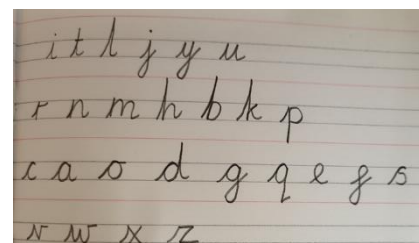
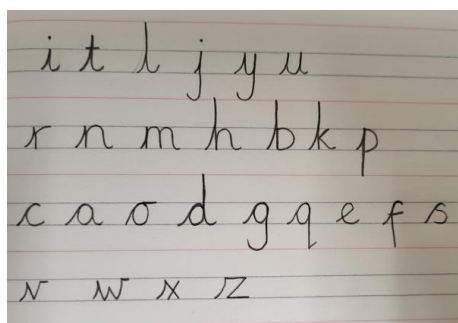
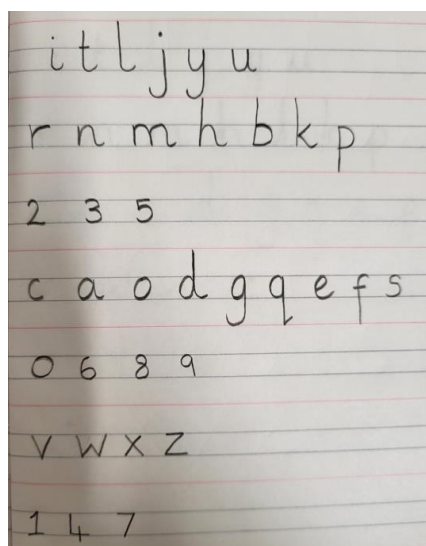
## Appendix 5

Letter formation for lower case and capital letters for EYFS – Y2.



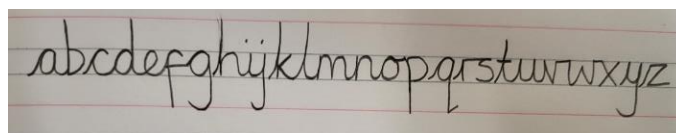
## Appendix 6

Letter (and number) families have been grouped for ease of learning. On the left are the unjoined examples (up to Y2) and on the right are the joined examples (introduced towards the end of Y2, lead in and out joins taught up to Y5 and loops for some descenders taught in Y5 and Y6).

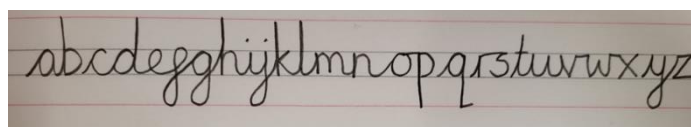


## Appendix 7

The alphabet joined according to Clapgate's handwriting policy for end of Y2 – end of Y4.



In UKS2, children can begin to loop descenders too. By the end of Y6, children should be joining using the joins seen here.

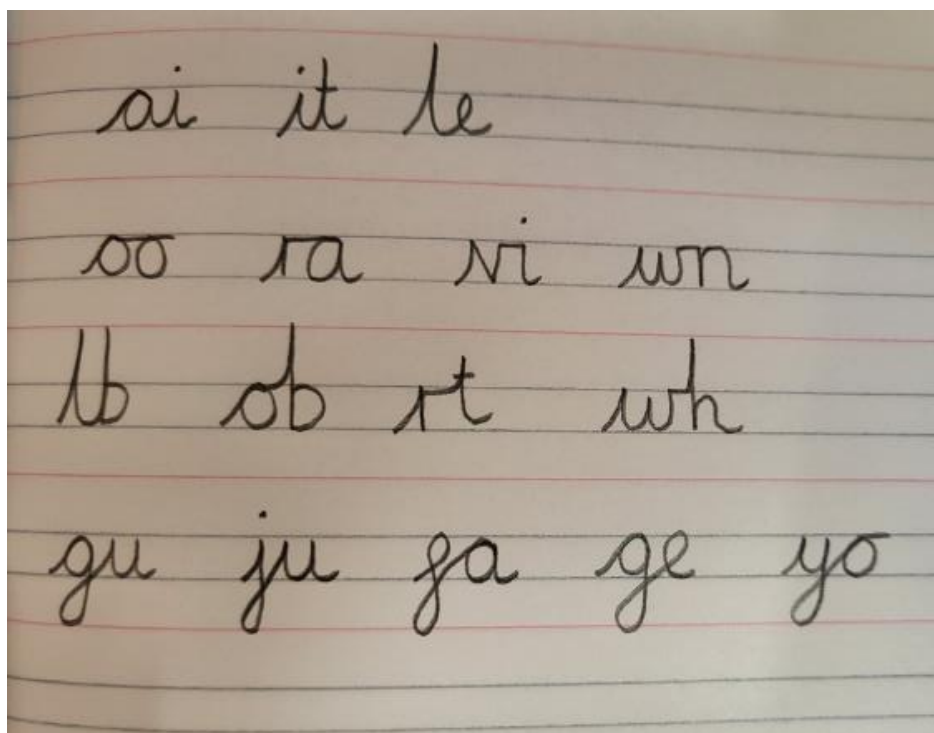


## Appendix 8

Below are the joins in the order they should be taught.

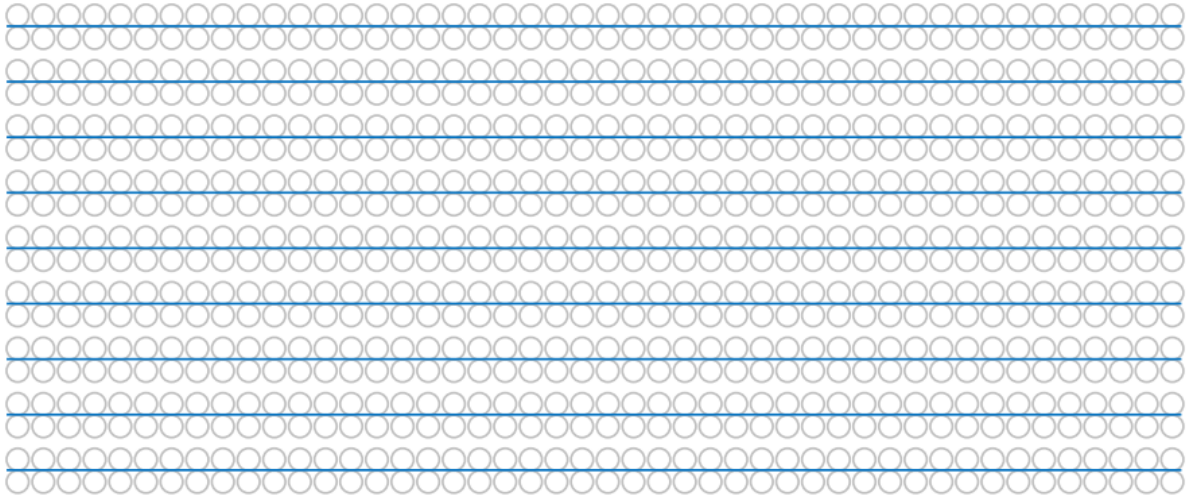
The first three types of join (the first three lines) can be practised any time from the end of Y2. The final line are joins that are taught in UKS2.

- **First join: Diagonal join.**
  - Diagonal join *from* and *to* letters without ascenders or descenders.
  - Diagonal join *to* letters with ascenders and descenders.
  - Diagonal join *from* letters with ascenders.
  - Diagonal join *from* letters with descenders.(e.g. ai, it, le, qu)
- **Second join: Horizontal join.**  
(e.g. oo, ra, vi, wn)
- **Third join: Ascenders/descenders to ascenders/descenders.**
  - Diagonal join *from* letters with ascenders/descenders *to* letters with ascenders/descenders.
  - Horizontal join *from* letters with ascenders/descenders *to* letters with ascenders/descenders.(e.g. lb, pl, ob, rt)
- **Fourth join: Join to letters with hooks, lines and loops.**  
(e.g. ju, fa, ge, wh, yo)



## Appendix 9

### Bubble writing




Name \_\_\_\_\_



**Bubble Writing**  
- Handwriting scaffold


The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

**Cc**




caught  
class  
clump  
clothes  
could

**Aa**



accident  
actual  
address  
actor  
again

**Dd**



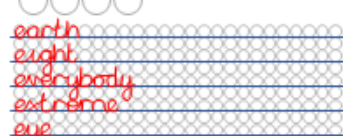
decide  
different  
difficult  
disappear  
door

**Bb**



bath  
beautiful  
because  
behind  
business

**Ee**



earth  
eight  
everybody  
extreme  
eye