

Handwriting policy and progression 2025



Newlands Junior School
We are Proud

Aims

By the end of Year 6, pupils will:

Form all lower-case letters correctly, consistently, and with appropriate orientation.

Use joined, fluent handwriting adapted for different purposes.

Take pride in their presentation, demonstrating speed and legibility.

Adaptive Teaching

The National Curriculum provides a broad and balanced education for all children. Throughout all teaching and learning at Newlands, we provide opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We do this by setting suitable challenges and responding to each child's individual needs, as well as choosing activities to suit each year group and lesson. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Appropriate support, whether adult support or the use of manipulatives or other extra learning resources, is given to any child that needs it to move their learning forwards.

Progression Overview

Year Group	Focus Areas	Key Outcomes
Year 3	Secure correct formation of all letters and orientation; spacing between words; handwriting 'families'; begin simple joins.	Children confidently write all lower-case letters with correct starting points (never from the bottom). Understand which letters belong to each handwriting family. Begin to use diagonal and horizontal strokes for joining.
Year 4	Consolidate joins between letters; understand letters best left un-joined; consistent sizing and shape; paper orientation and posture.	Children form all joins securely and consistently, spacing words proportionally to letter size. Adjust paper orientation and develop a comfortable, efficient writing style.
Year 5	Develop fluency and speed; adapt style slightly for longer writing; maintain legibility under speed.	Children write with a clear, fluent, legible joined style at increasing speed. Can adapt writing size and style for different tasks (notes vs. display work).
Year 6	Fluent, joined handwriting adaptable to context and purpose; establish personal style while retaining legibility.	Children use a mature, joined style, able to write fluently for extended periods. Adapt letter formation for different purposes (formal letters, annotations, bullet points).

Key Teaching Points by Year Group

Year 3

Letter Formation: Reinforce that every lower-case letter has one correct formation and orientation.

Practise handwriting 'families' in isolation and words (anti-clockwise, top-to-bottom, down-up, descenders, pointed, others).

No letter starts from the bottom.

Size & Consistency: Focus on letters sitting on the line with even height and shape.

Joining: Introduce diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters where appropriate. Teach which letters should remain unjoined.

Spacing: Words spaced to match the size of letters.

Paper Orientation: Introduce correct paper tilt and hand position.

Pride and Enjoyment: Celebrate neat handwriting with class displays and certificates.

Year 4

Consistency: Maintain correct formation under increasing writing demands.

Joining Mastery: Consolidate and extend diagonal/horizontal joins. Practise letters best left un-joined.

Fluency: Develop rhythm through short bursts of joined writing.

Presentation: Model and insist on paper orientation, posture, and neatness.

Confidence & Pride: Pupils self-assess and peer-assess their handwriting.

Year 5

Speed & Fluency: Timed writing exercises maintaining legibility.

Adaptation: Practise different sizes for different tasks (labels, notes, stories).

Personal Style: Pupils begin to refine style while maintaining school expectations.

Independence: Encourage self-correction of joins, sizing, and spacing.

Year 6

Fluent, Mature Style: Encourage pupils to sustain neat, joined writing for extended tasks.

Adaptation for Purpose: Headings, bullet points, annotations may use print or cursive depending on task.

Speed: Write efficiently under timed conditions.

Pride & Ownership: Pupils take responsibility for presentation and consistency.

Handwriting 'Families' Practice		
Family	Letters	Practice Focus
Anti-clockwise	c o a d g q	Start at the correct point, move anti-clockwise, maintain round shapes.
Top to bottom (ascenders)	i l t h k b	Downward then upward strokes, consistent ascender height.
Down-up / up-down-up (joins)	r n m	Smooth transition between strokes.
Descenders	g y q j f p	Long, even descenders below the line.
Pointed	v w	Sharp, even points with consistent angles.
Others	e s u x z	Special attention to starting points and shapes.

Progression in Joining Letters

Teach diagonal joins (letters ending on the line moving diagonally to next letter).

Teach horizontal joins (letters ending on the line moving horizontally to next letter).

Highlight letters that should not be joined to following letters (e.g., after 'b', 'g', 'j', 'p', 'q', 'y', 'z' depending on style).

Teaching Strategies used:

Modelling: Demonstrate on large flipcharts or whiteboards.

Guided Practice: Small groups focusing on formation and joins.

Targeted Interventions: Support for pupils needing extra practice.

Self and Peer Assessment: Use success criteria checklists.

Celebration: Display best work, reward improvement, encourage enjoyment.

Assessment:

Ongoing teacher observation during writing across the curriculum.

Termly handwriting samples to track progress in formation, joins, size, speed, and legibility.

End-of-year benchmark: fluent, legible, joined handwriting appropriate for age group.

Additional adaptations:

Paper Orientation: Teach and reinforce how to angle paper to suit left/right-handed pupils.

Grip and Posture: Encourage tripod grip and relaxed shoulders.

Adaptation for SEND: Provide alternative resources (pencil grips, wider lines, coloured paper) if needed.