

Handwriting Progression (Martin Harvey Method)

Reception (FS2) – Print to Pre-Cursive Foundations

Term	Focus	Content
Advent 1	Foundations of writing: Gross and fine motor development	Muscle development planned for. Gross and fine motor development; posture and paper position; comfortable grip; large-scale movements; language of movement (up, down, round, back, across).
Advent 2/ Lent 1	Correct letter formation groups	Introduce letters in formation families (print, not joined): The Straight Line Family (l, t, i, j) The Coathanger Family (c, a, o, d, g, q, e) The Bridge Family (r, n, m, h, b, k, p) The Zig-Zag Family (v, w) The Smile Family (u, y) The Misfits (s, f, x, z)
Lent 2	Secure correct formation; spacing	Reinforce formation; introduce tall, short, tail letters; finger spacing; baseline.
Pentecost	Control and consistency	Consistent size and orientation; spacing between letters and words; simple dictated sentences; increased stamina; reinforcement of grip and posture.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2)

Martin Harvey method = secure pre-cursive fully before joining.

Year 1 – Pre-Cursive + Intro to flicks

Term	Focus	Content
Advent	Control and consistency (cont'd)	Consistent size and orientation of all letters, adjusting to the new handwriting lines; spacing between letters and words; simple dictated sentences, working towards independence where possible; increased stamina; reinforcement of grip and posture.
Lent	Building fluency	Daily practice of all lower-case letters; re-teaching incorrect formations; introduction to capital letters (formation only); writing words and simple sentences fluently; baseline alignment.
Pentecost	Readiness for joining	Add simple exit flicks on: a,c,d,e,h,i,k,l,m,n,r,t,u,x,z in preparation for joining

Year 2 – Core Joins introduced

Term	Focus	Joins
Advent	Readiness for joining consolidated and fluency and automaticity built	Consolidating add simple exit flicks on: a,c,d,e,h,i,k,l,m,n,r,t,u,x,z in preparation for joining
Lent	Introduce first joins	Basic joins between commonly joined letters; emphasis on smooth movement; accuracy prioritised; children not ready continue with print. Diagonal joins: in, im, an, am, un, um Horizontal joins: ol, cl, al, el
Pentecost	Teach all standard joins	1. diagonal joins to tall letters: ch, sh, th, ph, wh 2. diagonal joins to tail letters (not joining after tail): vi, wi, xi

Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3–4)

Focus: Fluency, consistency, size control, speed, slant (consistent or purposeful).

Year 3 – Developing Fluent, Legible Joined Handwriting

Term	Focus	Content
Advent	Complex joins + fluency	tr, dr, fr, cr, pr, br, spr, str
Lent	Re-secure all joins	Re-teach diagonal & horizontal joins, tall and tail letters.
Pentecost	More complex clusters	Word-level practice: ght, tch, thr, squ, qu + vowel patterns (ea, ai, ou)

Year 4 – Consistency, Speed & Legibility

Term	Focus	Content
Advent	Writing stamina and independence Evaluate joins & refine	Paragraphs, personal style begins to emerge; spacing between words and lines. Handwriting largely automatic; minimal intervention; secure application across the curriculum. Ensure ascender/descender height; refine slope; remove bad habits. Maintaining fluency in extended writing

Term	Focus	Content
Lent	Stamina/ Assess for pen licence	Sustaining handwriting quality over longer tasks; writing at an appropriate speed for learning; resilience and comfort. Focus on even spacing, line discipline, proportions.
Pentecost	Introduce selective break letters	Teach when joins should be broken for clarity (letter "f", some capital usage).

Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5–6)

Emphasis: Personal handwriting style that remains legible, fast and consistent.

Year 5 – Fluency + Personal Style

Term	Focus	Content
Advent	Maintain full joined handwriting	Adapt joins where appropriate for speed.
Lent	Editing handwriting for effect	Neat presentation vs. fast drafting handwriting.
Pentecost	Advanced spacing and alignment	Work on layout: titles, diagrams, note-taking.

Year 6 – Mastery & Secondary-Ready Handwriting

Term	Focus	Content
Advent	Handwriting for extended writing	Consistency under timed conditions.
Lent	Exam/Stamina practice	Maintain quality across long pieces
Pentecost	Personalisation	Develop final consistent personal handwriting style.

Summary Table – What to Teach & When

Letter Formation (Pre-Cursive)

Group	Reception
The Straight Line Family (l, t, i, j)	Advent to Pentecost
The Coathanger Family (c, a, o, d, g, q, e)	Advent to Pentecost
The Bridge Family (r, n, m, h, b, k, p)	Advent to Pentecost
The Zig-Zag Family (v, w)	Advent to Pentecost
The Smile Family (u, y)	Advent to Pentecost
The Misfits (s, f, x, z)	Advent to Pentecost

Group	Reception
Secure correct formation; spacing	Lent to Pentecost
Control and consistency	Pentecost

Overview of progression

Year Group	Term	Focus/Skills
Reception	Advent	Gross and fine motor skills
Reception	Lent	Letter formation (families) Secure formation; spacing
Reception	Pentecost	Control and consistency
Year 1	Advent	Control and consistency (cont'd)
Year 1	Lent	Building fluency
Year 1	Pentecost	Readiness for joining
Year 2	Advent	Readiness for joining consolidated and fluency and automaticity built
Year 2	Lent	Introduce first joins
Year 2	Pentecost	Teach all standard joins
Year 3	Advent	Complex joins + fluency
Year 3	Lent	Re-secure all joins
Year 3	Pentecost	More complex clusters
Year 4	Advent	Writing stamina and independence
Year 4	Lent	Evaluate joins & refine
Year 4	Pentecost	Stamina/ Assess for pen licence
Year 5	Advent	Maintain full joined handwriting
Year 5	Lent	Editing handwriting for effect
Year 5	Pentecost	Advanced spacing and alignment
Year 6	Advent	Handwriting for extended writing
Year 6	Lent	Exam/Stamina practice
Year 6	Pentecost	Personalisation