Hollyfast Primary School: Progression in Learning Framework – Physical Development

EYFS Statutory Educational Programme

The curriculum needs to include:

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue **happy, healthy and active** lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's **strength, co-ordination and positional awareness** through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their **core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills** provide the foundation for developing **healthy bodies** and **social and emotional well-being**. **Fine motor control** and **precision** helps with **hand-eye co-ordination** which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the **practise of using small tools**, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop **proficiency, control a**nd **confidence**.

Knowledge	Skills
• ***Know how to use tools and implements safely*** • ***Know the effects of exercise and an active and healthy lifestyle on their bodies*** • ***Knowledge about how games and playing games works, including rules*** • ***Knows how to negotiate space***	• ***Ability to use large resources with proficiency, control and confidence.*** • ***Good fine motor skills evidenced by the ability to use a range of small tools and implements with proficiency, control and confidence.*** • ***Core strength, co-ordination, agility, positional and spatial awareness***

Characteristics of Effective Learning that are relevant

Playing & Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and Thinking Critically
• Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them • Reach for and accept objects. Make choices and explore different resources and materials	• Begin to correct their mistakes themselves • Keep on trying when things are difficult	• Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal • Check how well they are doing • Solve real problems

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- **Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others**
- **Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing**
- **Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing**

Progression in Learning small steps Nursery to KS1

	Pre-School			Reception			Interface with KS1 curriculum
Throwing & Catching	**Catches a large ball from close distance** **Throws a large ball with two hands**	**Catches a beanbag from a close distance** **Throws a small ball with one hand**	**Catches a small ball from a close distance** **Throws a beanbag overarm or underarm**	**Catches a small ball from a close distance with greater accuracy.** **Throws a beanbag overarm or underarm more accuratly**	**Catches smaller items form further away.** **Throws and catches different equipment frisbees, quoits and balls at a target**	**Catches a range of items from a distance** **Throws a ball at a target with accuracy.**	**Pupils should develop fundamental movement skills, become increasingly**

Moving the Body with increasing Control	**Is active and enjoys moving body** **Walks on a full foot** **Tries to complete movements with adult support - sit, stand, walk, run, climb, crawl, slide, spin, push, pull, rock, roll** **Shows increasing control in holding, using and manipulating a range of tools and objects such as tambourines, jugs, hammers, and mark making tools**	**Is developing the strength and skill to walk, run, crawl, climb, slide, spin, push, pull, rock, roll** **Is beginning to hop and skip** **Jumps with two feet** **Can 'go' and 'stop'** **Stands very still with a quoit on head** **Moves safely on different surfaces** **Uses a range of smaller implements with developing control**	**Completes some movements – walking, running, crawling, climbing sliding, spinning, pushing, pulling, rocking, rolling - safely and with confidence** **Uses stairs, steps or climbing equipment using alternate feet** **Balances on one foot at a time** **Walks along a painted line** **Balances bean bag on head** **Makes large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks** **Uses smaller objects and implements in play with increasing accuracy and control** **Manipulates a range of tools and equipment in one hand including paintbrushes, scissors, hairbrushes, toothbrush, scarves or ribbons**	**Walks, runs, slides, spins, crawls, climbs, pushes, pulls, rocks, rolls with competence and safety, and a sense of space** **Makes movements that cross midline of body** **Explores body movements using climbing and balancing apparatus** **Bunny hops** **Balances on a bench/ plank (wide enough for feet to be together)** **Walks with quoit balanced on head/hand** **Uses smaller objects and implements in play with increasing accuracy and for the intended purpose**	**Joins different body movements together e.g. a run and a jump** **Hops** **Explores different types of movement e.g. Big and Small, High and Low, Up to and Away from** **Is beginning to pull self-up when using climbing equipment. Climbs going up forwards and down backwards** **Negotiates obstacles whilst balancing quoit on head hand/** **Walks along a narrow plank/bench, one foot in front of the other** **Plays chasing games with friends** **Uses a range of small tools eg pens, pencils scissors, paint brushes and cutlery, with confidence** **Uses a tripod grip with greater frequency**	**Demonstrates overall body strength, co-ordination, balance and agility to move in a range of ways** **Moves arms in opposite direction to each other** **Jumps and lands safely from a height the same as self** **Teddy rolls** **Pulls self-up using arms** **Uses balancing and climbing apparatus to move under, over, through and around** **Skips confidently** **Joins different types of body movement: Big and Small, High and Low, Up to and away from, Wide and narrow** **Use core muscle strength to achieve good posture when sitting at a table/on the floor** **Uses a range of small tools, eg pens, pencils, scissors, paint brushes and cutlery with the correct grip** **Shows increased care when drawing.** **Shows a preference for a dominant hand** **Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control and intention**	**competent and confident and access a broad range of opportunities to extend their agility, balance and coordination, individually and with others** **They should be able to engage in competitive (both against self and against others) and co-operative physical activities, in a range of increasingly challenging situations** **Pupils should be taught to: master basic movements including running, jumping, throwing and catching, as well as developing balance, agility and co-ordination, and begin to apply these in a range of activities**

Understanding and using space	Shows familiarity with different spaces across the learning environment	Can find a space and move to a new space when asked Can make a statue and be very still Can place an item in a space	Can stop in a space and move safely in big spaces and small spaces Can put several things back in the space that they came from	Can move in and out of spaces safely during play by changing direction or speed	Can move in different directions, forwards and backwards Can move on and off and in and out of obstacles safely Experiments with different types of body movement: Big and Small High and Low, both inside and outside	Understands direction, distance and location Can move in different directions, forwards and backwards, up and down and from side to side Experiments with different ways of moving, testing out ideas and adapting movements to reduce risk Can move along and across planks, benches and beams Can spin and whirl Can throw or kick in a straight line at a target e.g. kick a ball into a net Can collaborate with others to manage large items, eg moving a long plank safely	Participate in team games, developing simple tactics for attacking and defending Perform dances using simple movement patterns
Expression in movement	Responds to many forms of music by moving the body in different ways, showing pleasure in movement	Can clap hands and stamp feet Joins in with ring games, songs and rhymes	Can move quickly or slowly depending on the type of music being played Can tap in time to simple a rhythm	Can tap or clap to simple repeated rhythms Can move strongly or lightly Attempts to join a range of different movements together	Has a sense of steady beat when moving own body Can play, clap, pat, and step to a steady beat in songs and nursery rhymes in fast and slow tempos Can create a short movement phrase which demonstrates own ideas	Can change the style of movement in response to what is heard Moves with ease and fluency Practices, revises and refines expression in movement Explores beat through using movement, body percussion and instruments. Is beginning to express feelings e.g. angry, excited in response to music	

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ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- **Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases**
- **Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery**
- **Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing**

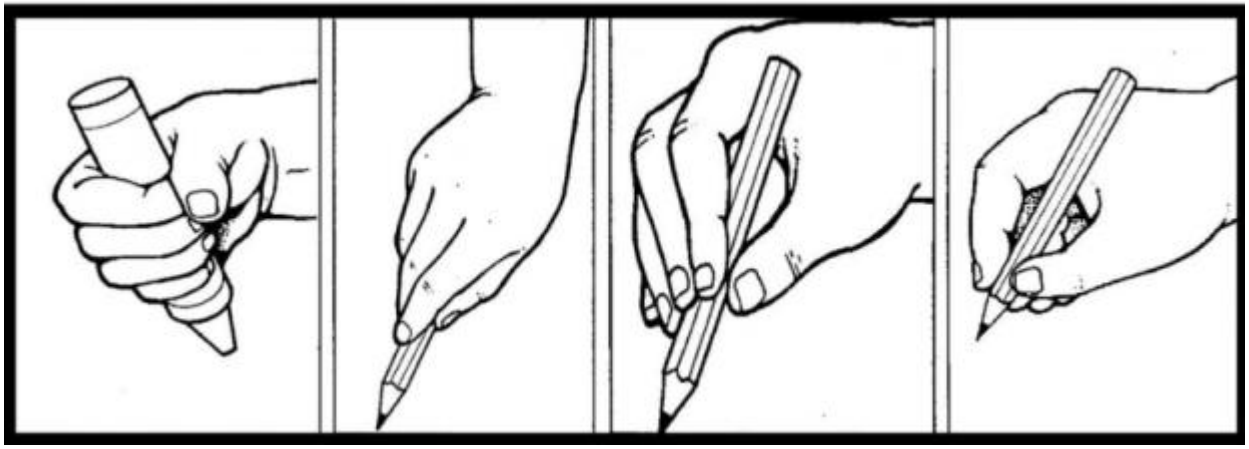
Physical Development - Progression in Learning small steps Nursery to KS1

	Nursery			Reception			Interface with KS1
Fine Motor Skills	Holds tools and objects with growing stability, such as tambourines, jugs, hammers, or mark-making tools. Uses tools with increasing purpose and coordination, for example tapping, pouring, hammering, or making marks. Manipulates objects with improving control, including turning, twisting, shaking, or positioning them during play. Shows awareness of how to adjust grip and movement to achieve a desired effect e.g. pouring carefully, tapping gently, pressing harder to make a mark.	Selects and holds smaller tools with improved precision, such as brushes, thick chalk, spring-loaded scissors Uses these implements with growing accuracy, for example making more deliberate marks, or snipping paper. Shows better hand-eye coordination when manipulating tools, adjusting movements to achieve a specific outcome. Demonstrates increasing control and stamina in fine motor tasks, sustaining grip and movement for longer periods.	Handles small objects with growing precision, such as beads and buttons, small blocks, or loose parts during play. Uses finer implements with more controlled movements, for example drawing with intention, threading, using small tools in role-play, cutting along a straight line. Coordinates both hands more effectively when manipulating objects, showing improved grip, stability, and dexterity. Places small items with deliberate control, showing care when positioning objects during play or tidy-up activities. Adjusts movements for a specific outcome eg	Selects and uses small tools or objects with clear purpose, choosing items that match what they want to achieve e.g. selecting tweezers for picking up small pieces, choosing the correct writing tool. Handles implements with improved accuracy, showing more controlled movements when drawing, cutting, threading, building, or manipulating small parts. Uses tools to achieve a specific outcome, such as cutting along simple lines or round large shapes, fastening components, or placing items precisely during construction or creative tasks. Demonstrates growing independence and problem-solving,	Selects appropriate tools independently, choosing the correct implement for writing, cutting, painting, or eating. Uses each tool with increasing control, showing smoother, more coordinated movements during tasks such as drawing, cutting smaller shapes, or painting. Handles tools safely and with growing efficiency, demonstrating awareness of how to hold and use them correctly eg soft-touch scissors (no spring) Shows confidence in switching between tools, adapting grip and movement depending on the task e.g. cutting outlines from paper,	Chooses and picks up tools independently, showing awareness of which tool is needed for the task. Uses each tool with smoother, more controlled movements, such as cutting around more detailed shapes, painting details, drawing with intention, or forming letters Handles tools safely and efficiently, demonstrating correct grip, direction, and pressure. May show a preference for a dominant hand	

			repositioning an item or refining a structure. Shows growing persistence and coordination when carrying out purposeful actions that require focus.	adjusting grip, pressure, or technique when a task requires more precision.	painting details, using cutlery during meals. Adopts a tripod grip more consistently, especially during focused writing or mark-making activities. Maintains the tripod grip for longer periods, showing improved stamina and adjusting hand position independently		

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Progression in pencil grip- following development of fine motor skills.



Support for Fine Motor Skills Curriculum Planning

NURSERY AUTUMN TERM

<u>Holds tools and objects with growing stability</u>

(tambourines, jugs, hammers, mark-making tools)

Activities & Resources

- Music baskets – tambourines, maracas, claves, hand bells. Encourage shaking, tapping, and holding with one or two hands.
- Water play with jugs – different sizes and weights so children naturally adjust grip.
- Large chalks & chunky crayons – easier to stabilise and perfect for early grip development.
- Soft-head hammers & tap-tap boards – children practise controlled tapping.
- Playdough tools – rollers, stampers, cutters, potato mashers.
- Treasure baskets – wooden spoons, small pans, scoops, whisks, sponges.
- Large paintbrushes with water – painting fences, walls, playground floor.
- Introduce basic snipping using spring-loaded scissors, such as snipping the edges of paper strips, cutting playdough "sausages".

Why these work

They strengthen the wrist and hand while giving children repeated opportunities to stabilise objects of different shapes and weights.

<u>Uses tools with increasing purpose and coordination</u>

(tapping, pouring, hammering, making marks)

Activities & Resources

- Nail-free hammering – golf tees hammered into pumpkins, melons, or playdough blocks.
- Posting & tapping stations – children tap pegs into holes or post sticks into tubes.

- Pouring stations – dry rice, lentils, pasta, water, glitter water; jugs, funnels, teapots.
- Mark-making invitations – clipboards outdoors, vertical chalkboards, paint rollers, finger painting.
- Loose-parts construction – cable reels, wooden blocks, tubes, crates.
- Sensory trays – children draw lines, circles and shapes in sand, foam, or cornflour gloop.

Why these work

They give children a clear purpose (pouring into a container, tapping into a hole, making a visible mark), which strengthens coordination and intentional movement.

Manipulates objects with improving control

(turning, twisting, shaking, positioning)

Activities & Resources

- Twist-top jars – filled with sensory items (pom-poms, beads, feathers).
- Screwdrivers & bolts – large nuts and bolts, construction sets.
- Posting boxes – children rotate shapes to fit them into the correct slot.
- Lid-matching baskets – pots and lids of different sizes to twist, push, and match.
- Wind-up toys – twisting keys to activate movement.
- Ribbon shakers & scarves – shaking, swirling, flicking.
- Construction toys – Duplo, Mobilo, wooden blocks, magnetic tiles.
- Practise opening and closing spring-loaded scissors safely, using them to snip soft materials (playdough, straws)

Why these work

They strengthen rotational control in the wrist and fingers, which is essential for later pencil grip and scissor use.

Shows awareness of how to adjust grip and movement

(pouring carefully, tapping gently, pressing harder)

Activities & Resources

- Watercolour painting – children learn to press lightly for pale marks and harder for darker ones.
- Pipettes & droppers – squeezing gently to release small drops.
- Balance-pouring challenges – pour water to a line, fill a cup halfway, or pour into narrow-neck containers.
- Soft vs hard tapping – exploring sounds on different surfaces (drums, tins, wood, carpet).
- Clay or firm dough – requires children to adjust pressure to shape, pinch, flatten, or roll.
- Squeezy bottles – paint, water, or glitter water; children learn to control pressure.
- Tweezers & tongs – picking up soft items (cotton balls) vs heavier items (pebbles).

Why these work

They help children understand cause and effect: "If I press harder, the mark changes," "If I pour too fast, it spills," "If I tap gently, it sounds different."

NURSERY SPRING TERM

Selects and holds smaller tools with improved precision

(brushes, thick chalk, spring-loaded scissors)

Progression from Autumn to Spring

- Autumn: large chunky tools, big movements, stabilising grip.
- Spring: slightly smaller tool, still chunky enough for success, but requiring more finger control.

Activities & Resources

- Medium-sized paintbrushes for simple detail work like dots and lines.
- Chunky chalk sticks (slightly slimmer than Autumn's jumbo chalk).

- Spring-loaded scissors designed for early years (with safety blades and assisted opening).
- Short, thick crayons (easier for tripod grip to emerge).
- Glue sticks (twist-up) to practise controlled application.
- Small rollers and dabbers for printing patterns.

Why these work

They require more precision than Autumn tools but are still large enough for children to manage confidently.

<u>Uses these implements with growing accuracy</u>

(deliberate marks, snipping paper)

Progression from Autumn to Spring

- Autumn: exploratory marks, simple tapping/pouring, basic snipping.
- Spring: more intentional marks, simple cutting tasks, early control.

Activities & Resources

- Snipping stations
    - Snip the ends of paper strips
    - Snip fringe on paper
    - Snip playdough “hair”
- Simple mark-making prompts
    - Draw around stencils (circles, stars, simple shapes)
    - Make repeating patterns (dot-dot-line)
    - Paint simple shapes using guided prompts
- Sticker paths
    - Place stickers along a straight or curved line

- Large tracing shapes
    - Trace around large templates using chunky crayons
- Cut along a thick, straight line using spring-loaded scissors, with adult support.
    - Lines should be short, wide, and high-contrast e.g. black marker on bright paper.

Why these work

The activities build confidence with using a range of implements and resources.

<u>Shows better hand–eye coordination when manipulating tools</u>

(adjusting movements to achieve a specific outcome)

Progression from Autumn to Spring

- Autumn: pouring into wide containers, simple twisting, basic posting.
- Spring: more targeted actions requiring visual tracking and controlled movement.

Activities & Resources

- Large-bead threading (progressing to medium beads).
- Peg boards with large pegs – copying simple patterns.
- Hammer-and-tap with soft shapes (large shapes, gentle tapping).
- Water play with targets
    - Pour into funnels
    - Pour into containers with wide necks
- Posting activities
    - Post shapes into matching holes
    - Post coins into a slot
- Simple construction

- Duplo towers
- Magnetic tiles
- Wooden blocks arranged to match a picture card

Why these work

Opportunities require coordination but remain accessible for stage of development.

<u>Demonstrates increasing control and stamina in fine-motor tasks</u>

(sustaining grip and movement for longer periods)

Progression from Autumn to Spring

- Autumn: short bursts of fine-motor activity.
- Spring: slightly longer tasks that build endurance without causing fatigue.

Activities & Resources

- Playdough challenges
  - Roll long snakes
  - Make small balls
  - Flatten dough evenly
- Clay alternatives
  - Use *soft* air-dry clay or model magic (not hard clay)
- Lacing cards with large holes
- Large tweezers/tongs sorting
  - Sort pom-poms, cotton balls, pasta shapes
- Sticker mosaics

    - Use medium-sized stickers (not tiny ones)
- Extended creative tasks
    - Large collaborative art
    - Pattern trails on long paper
- Construction challenges
    - Build a tower as tall as the bear
    - Build a bridge for a toy animal

Why these work

They build stamina gently, without expecting excessive endurance.

NURSERY SUMMER TERM

<u>Handles small objects with growing precision</u>

(beads, buttons, small blocks, loose parts)

Progression from Spring to Summer

- Spring: large beads, big pegs, chunky tools.
- Summer: slightly smaller objects, still safe and manageable.

Activities & Resources

- Medium-sized bead threading (not tiny beads).
- Button posting – posting large buttons into a slot or tube.
- Loose-parts play – placing small wooden discs, shells, pebbles, corks into patterns.
- Small block construction – building simple structures with small wooden blocks or Duplo.
- Sorting trays – sort small items into compartments.

Why this works

Children refine finger control in readiness for pincer precision expected in Reception.

<u>Uses finer implements with more controlled movements</u>

(intentional drawing, threading, small tools, cutting along straight lines)

Progression from Spring to Summer

- Spring: early cutting skills with spring-loaded scissors, simple threading, medium tools, working with basic accuracy
- Summer: building on skills with more control using spring-loaded scissors, and may begin to explore use of soft-touch (no spring) scissors

Activities & Resources

- Drawing with intention
    - Draw simple shapes (circle, line, cross)
    - Add features to a face template
    - Draw simple marks to represent ideas (e.g. “my family”)
- Threading challenges
    - Thread medium beads in a simple pattern (e.g. red – blue - red)
- Role-play tools
    - Small spoons, scoops, tongs, pipettes in the home corner or mud kitchen

Scissor Skills

- Simple cutting tasks - Children continue to use spring-loaded scissors and try soft-touch child-safe scissors (blunt-tip, early-years size). Adults still support positioning and safety, but children attempt more of the action themselves.

- Children:
    - Cut along a straight line - lines still thick and short. Children can also try cutting along slightly longer straight lines which remain thick, bold and high-contrast. Lines may be 10–15 cm long, depending on the child’s confidence.
    - Cut towards a sticker “target” at the end of a line – helping them to aim and stay motivated.

- Attempt cutting simple, thick “L-shaped” lines – this introduces a change of direction without curved cutting.
- Cut fringe on paper for craft
- Begin to hold the paper with one hand and cut with the other.
- Children continue snipping soft materials - Playdough snakes, straws, wool strands or ribbon pieces – building strength and reinforcing the open-close action.

Why this works

Provision strengthens accuracy and more controlled movement, in readiness for Reception.

<u>Coordinates both hands more effectively</u>

(improved grip, stability, dexterity)

Progression from Spring to Summer

- Spring: two-handed tasks like threading, pegging, pouring.
- Summer: more coordinated bilateral actions.

Activities & Resources

- Playdough tools requiring two hands
  - Rolling pins
  - Cutting with plastic knives
- Opening and closing containers
  - Twist lids on small jars
  - Snap-lock boxes
- Construction tasks
  - Hold a block with one hand while placing another
  - Screwing parts together, stabilising pieces with other hand

- Lacing cards
    - Large holes, simple shapes
- Pegging activities
    - Peg clothes onto a line
    - Peg pictures onto a display board

Why this works

Children practise stabilising with one hand while manipulating with the other.

<u>Places small items with deliberate control</u>

(careful positioning during play or tidy-up)

Progression from Spring to Summer

- Spring: placing items into containers or onto simple patterns.
- Summer: more deliberate, careful placement.

Activities & Resources

- Loose-parts mandalas
    - Place stones, shells, buttons into simple circular patterns
- Small world play
    - Position figures, furniture, vehicles carefully
- Tidy-up challenges
    - Sort items into labelled baskets
    - Match objects to silhouettes on a shelf
- Puzzle boards
    - 2–4-piece puzzles

- Shape sorters with more precise fitting
- Sticker placement
  - Place stickers inside a shape or along a path

Why this works

Children practise accuracy in a meaningful, play-based way.

<u>Adjusts movements for a specific outcome</u>

(repositioning, refining a structure)

Progression from Spring to Summer

- Spring: adjusting grip for pouring or tapping.
- Summer: adjusting movement to refine or correct.

Activities & Resources

- Block building
  - Adjust blocks to balance a tower
  - Reposition pieces to make a bridge
- Loose-parts pictures
  - Move items to improve symmetry or fill gaps
- Water play
  - Adjust pouring aim and speed to avoid spilling
- Mark-making
  - Press harder/softer to change the effect
- Playdough modelling
  - Adjust shape by pinching, smoothing, or adding pieces

Why this works

Children learn to evaluate and refine their actions - a key skill for Reception.

<u>Shows growing persistence and coordination in purposeful tasks</u>

(focus, stamina, determination)

Progression from Spring to Summer

- Spring: short bursts of concentration.
- Summer: slightly longer periods of concentration.

Activities & Resources

- Extended threading tasks
    - Thread 6–8 beads to make a bracelet
- Simple construction challenges
    - Build a house for a toy
    - Build a tower taller than their hand
- Sticker mosaics
    - Fill a simple shape with stickers
- Playdough models
    - Make a simple character or animal
- Collaborative art
    - Work with others on a large pattern or picture
- Fine-motor routines
    - Help set up snack (placing cups, spoons)
    - Help tidy up (sorting items carefully)

Why this works

Children practise staying with a task, problem-solving, and coordinating movements.

RECEPTION AUTUMN TERM

Selects and uses small tools or objects with clear purpose

(choosing tweezers for small pieces, selecting the correct writing tool)

Progression from Nursery Summer to Reception Autumn

- Nursery Summer: children handled medium-sized beads and loose parts, used small tools in role play, and began choosing between simple tools.
- Reception Autumn: children begin to select tools intentionally for a specific purpose, choosing the implement that best matches the task (e.g. tweezers for tiny items, pencil for drawing details).

Activities & Resources

- Tool-choice trays with tweezers, tongs, scoops and fingers for picking up small items.
- Writing tool selection: pencils, crayons, felt tips, chalks — children choose the most suitable for their task.
- Fine-motor sorting trays with beads, buttons, pom-poms, corks and shells.
- Mark-making invitations where children choose the tool that gives the effect they want (bold, fine, detailed).
- Small construction kits (Mobilo, Duplo, magnetic tiles) requiring children to select the right piece or connector**.**

Why these work

Children move from using tools provided to choosing tools with intention, strengthening independence and purposeful decision-making.

Handles implements with improved accuracy

(more controlled movements when drawing, cutting, threading, building, manipulating small parts)

Progression from Nursery Summer to Reception Autumn

- Nursery Summer: children placed small items carefully, threaded medium beads, and used scissors to cut along thick straight lines.
- Reception Autumn: children show greater accuracy, using smaller tools and making more controlled, deliberate movements.

Activities & Resources

- Drawing with control: adding details to pictures, drawing simple shapes, using standard pencils.
- **Begin early letter-formation patterns and simple letter shapes, using large movements first.**
- Threading smaller beads or pasta shapes to create simple patterns.
- Manipulating small loose parts to create pictures or patterns.
- Construction tasks requiring careful placement and balancing.
- Using tweezers to pick up and sort small items with accuracy.

Why these work

They refine finger control and hand–eye coordination, building the precision needed for early writing and more complex fine-motor tasks.

Uses tools to achieve a specific outcome

(cutting along simple lines or around large shapes, fastening components, placing items precisely)

Progression from Nursery Summer to Reception Autumn

- Nursery Summer: children cut along slightly longer thick straight lines and snipped soft materials.
- Reception Autumn: children begin to cut around large, simple shapes, fasten components, and use tools to complete purposeful tasks.

Activities & Resources

- Cutting progression – using soft-touch scissors (no spring)
    - Cut along thinner, longer straight lines.
    - Begin to cut around large, simple shapes (circle, square, triangle).
    - Use standard soft-touch scissors more confidently.
- Fastening and joining
    - Split pins for moving pictures.
    - Tape, glue sticks, treasury tags for joining paper.
    - Construction kits requiring fastening (e.g. nuts and bolts).
- Precise placement tasks

- Mosaic pictures using small squares.
- Placing small world items carefully in a scene.
- Building models that require accurate positioning.

Why these work

*Children learn to use tools with intention, completing tasks that require accuracy, planning and control**.***

<u>Demonstrates growing independence and problem-solving</u>

(adjusting grip, pressure or technique when a task requires more precision)

Progression from Nursery Summer to Reception Autumn

- Nursery Summer: children adjusted movements when building or pouring and persisted with simple tasks.
- Reception Autumn: children begin to self-correct, adapt their technique, and solve problems independently**.**

Activities & Resources

- Adjusting pencil pressure to make light or heavy lines.
- Refining scissor technique: turning the paper rather than the scissors, slowing down for curves.
- Construction problem-solving: adjusting blocks to balance, repositioning pieces to strengthen a structure.
- Fine-motor challenges: choosing a different tool when one doesn't work, changing grip to pick up slippery items.
- Threading smaller beads requiring careful adjustment and persistence.

Why these work

They encourage children to think, adapt and persist - key early learning behaviours that underpin independence and resilience.

RECEPTION – SPRING TERM

<u>Selects appropriate tools independently</u>

(choosing the correct implement for writing, cutting, painting, or eating)

Progression from Reception Autumn to Reception Spring

- Autumn: children selected tools with intention, eg choosing between tweezers, pencils, felt tips or scissors depending on the task.
- Spring: children select tools more confidently and independently, choosing the most effective implement for writing, cutting, painting or eating, with less adult prompting.

Activities & Resources

- Tool-choice stations with pencils, felt tips, crayons, chalks, paintbrushes and scissors.
- Fine-motor trays where children choose tweezers, tongs or fingers for small items.
- Creative area offering a range of brush sizes and mark-making tools.
- Snack and lunch routines encouraging independent use of cutlery.
- Construction and loose-parts areas where children choose the right tool or connector for the job.

Why these work

*Children practise making purposeful choices, strengthening independence and decision-making across different contexts**.***

<u>Uses each tool with increasing control</u>

(smoother, more coordinated movements when drawing, cutting a range of shapes, painting)

Progression from Reception Autumn to Reception Spring

- Autumn: children handled tools with improved accuracy, cutting around large shapes and drawing with more control.
- Spring: children show smoother, more coordinated movements, managing smaller shapes, finer details and more controlled strokes.

Activities & Resources

- Drawing tasks involving simple details.
- Forming recognisable letters with increasing control, following correct starting points and direction.
- Writing simple words or labels using taught letter shapes.
- Cutting smaller shapes such as circles, squares, simple outlines.

- Painting with finer brushes to add details to pictures.
- Threading smaller beads or pasta shapes to create simple patterns.
- Construction tasks requiring careful placement of small pieces.

Why these work

They refine coordination and precision, preparing children for more complex fine-motor tasks and early writing.

Handles tools safely and with growing efficiency

(awareness of how to hold and use tools correctly, e.g. soft-touch scissors)

Progression from Reception Autumn to Reception Spring

- Autumn: children used tools with purpose and began to understand correct handling.
- Spring: children show greater efficiency and safety, using tools correctly and confidently, including soft-touch scissors (no spring).

Activities & Resources

- Soft-touch scissors for cutting along simple outlines.
- Guided scissor practice focusing on safe grip and turning the paper.
- Correct pencil grip practice using triangular pencils or grips if needed.
- Safe tool handling routines in creative, construction and snack areas.
- Fine-motor challenges requiring safe, controlled use of tools (e.g. hole punchers, staplers with supervision).

Why these work

Children develop safe habits and efficient tool use, building confidence and readiness for more independent tasks.

Shows confidence in switching between tools

(adapting grip and movement depending on the task)

Progression from Reception Autumn to Reception Spring

- Autumn: children adapted grip and technique when prompted.
- Spring: children switch tools independently, adjusting grip and movement to suit the task.

Activities & Resources

- Cutting outlines from paper using soft-touch scissors.
- Painting details with fine brushes after using thicker brushes for backgrounds.
- Using cutlery confidently during meals and snack times.
- Mark-making opportunities requiring children to choose between pencils, crayons, chalks or felt tips.
- Construction tasks requiring different tools or connectors.

Why these work

Children learn to evaluate the demands of a task and choose the most effective tool and technique.

Adopts a tripod grip more consistently

(especially during focused writing or mark-making activities)

Progression from Reception Autumn to Reception Spring

- Autumn: children began to use a tripod grip during focused tasks.
- Spring: children adopt a tripod grip more consistently, especially during writing and detailed mark-making.

Activities & Resources

- Short pencils and crayons that naturally encourage tripod grip.
- Fine-motor warm-ups (finger aerobics, dough disco, finger gym).
- Tracing and pattern activities requiring controlled pencil movements.
- Writing opportunities (labels, lists, notes) during play.
- Vertical mark-making to strengthen wrist stability.

Why these work

They support the development of a stable, efficient grip that underpins early handwriting.

<u>Maintains the tripod grip for longer periods</u>

(showing improved stamina and adjusting hand position independently)

Progression from Reception Autumn to Reception Spring

- Autumn: children maintained tripod grip for short periods.
- Spring: children show greater stamina, holding the tripod grip for longer and adjusting hand position independently when needed.

Activities & Resources

- Extended drawing or writing tasks (story maps, simple phrases).
- Fine-motor strengthening (playdough, clay, tweezers, pegboards).
- Pattern and tracing sheets requiring sustained control.
- Small-world or construction tasks requiring precise placement over time.
- Independent writing opportunities in role play (menus, signs, tickets).

Why these work

They build stamina and control, helping children sustain an efficient grip during longer writing tasks.

RECEPTION – SUMMER TERM

<u>Chooses and picks up tools independently</u>

(showing awareness of which tool is needed for the task)

Progression from Reception Spring to Reception Summer

- Spring: children selected appropriate tools with growing confidence and switched between them depending on the task.

- Summer: children choose tools independently and efficiently, showing clear understanding of which implement will help them achieve the desired outcome.

Activities & Resources

- Tool-choice stations with pencils, gel pens, crayons, chalks, charcoal, paintbrushes and scissors.
- Fine-motor trays offering tweezers, tongs, scoops and cutlery for sorting and transferring.
- Creative area with a range of brush sizes and mark-making tools for different effects.
- Construction kits and design activities requiring children to choose the correct connector or fastening tool.
- Independent writing and drawing opportunities, where children select the tool that suits their purpose.

Why these work

Children refine independence and decision-making, choosing tools based on task demands rather than habit or adult prompting.

<u>Uses each tool with smoother, more controlled movements</u>

(cutting around more detailed shapes, painting details, drawing with intention, forming letters)

Progression from Reception Spring to Reception Summer

- Spring: children used tools with increasing control, managing simple outlines and adding basic details.
- Summer: children show smoother, more coordinated movements, enabling them to cut around more detailed shapes, paint finer details, and form letters with intention.

Activities & Resources

- Cutting tasks involving simple but more detailed shapes (e.g. animals, flowers, curved outlines).
- Forming letters with greater fluency and consistency, applying correct size, orientation and spacing.
- Writing short captions or simple sentences using some secure letter formation.
- Fine paintbrushes for adding details to artwork.
- Letter-formation activities using pencils, chalks or felt tips.
- Threading smaller beads or sequins for pattern work.
- Construction tasks requiring precise placement of small components**.**

Why these work

They strengthen coordination, accuracy and control, supporting early handwriting and more complex creative tasks.

Handles tools safely and efficiently

(demonstrating correct grip, direction and pressure)

Progression from Reception Spring to Reception Summer

- Spring: children handled tools safely and began to use correct grip and pressure.
- Summer: children show efficient, confident tool use, maintaining correct grip, direction and pressure with minimal reminders.

Activities & Resources

- Soft-touch scissors for cutting detailed outlines.
- Pencil-control activities focusing on pressure, direction and fluency.
- Painting tasks requiring controlled brushstrokes.
- Cutlery use during meals and snack times.
- Fine-motor challenges requiring safe, precise tool handling (e.g. hole punchers, staplers).

Why these work

Children consolidate safe, efficient tool use, preparing them for more independent learning in Year 1.

May show a preference for a dominant hand

(increasing consistency in hand choice)

Progression from Reception Spring to Reception Summer

- Spring: children adopted a tripod grip more consistently and began to show early hand preference.
- Summer: children show clearer, more consistent hand dominance, choosing the same hand for most fine-motor tasks.

Activities & Resources

- Hand-dominance tasks (drawing, threading, cutting, building).
- Vertical mark-making to support wrist stability and natural hand preference.
- Fine-motor strengthening (playdough, pegboards, tweezers) to support the chosen hand.
- Letter-formation practice using the dominant hand.
- Independent creative tasks where children naturally choose their preferred hand.

Why these work

They support the natural emergence of hand dominance, which is essential for fluent writing and tool use.

Scissors Progression - Nursery & Reception

Nursery Year

Scissor type: *Spring-loaded scissors*

Key Features

- **Spring-loaded mechanism that automatically reopens the blades.**
- **Chunky, wide handles for easier grip.**
- **Short blades with fully rounded tips.**
- **Very light resistance, ideal for early hand strength.**

Why they are used in Nursery

- **Support children who are still developing the open–close action.**
- **Reduce fatigue because the spring helps with reopening.**
- **Allow children to focus on basic snipping and cutting along thick straight lines.**
- **Provide success for children with emerging bilateral coordination.**
- **In Nursery Summer, some children may *begin to explore* child-safe scissors (no spring), but spring-loaded scissors remain the main tool.**

Reception Year

Scissor type: ***Soft-Touch Scissors (No spring)***

Reception Autumn

Scissor type: Soft-Touch Child-Safe Scissors (No spring)

(Spring-loaded scissors still available for children who need them)

Key Features

- **No spring mechanism — children must open and close independently.**
- **Soft-touch, rubberised handles for comfort and improved grip.**
- **Slightly longer blades (still blunt-tip and child-safe).**
- **Designed for cutting simple shapes, longer lines, and more controlled movements.**

Why they are used in Reception Autumn

- **Children now have the developing hand strength to open and close scissors without support.**
- **They are ready to learn proper scissor technique, including:**
    - **turning the paper, not the scissors**
    - **slowing down for corners**
    - **cutting around large, simple shapes**
- **Soft-touch handles help maintain a correct grip for longer periods.**
- **Support the shift from early snipping to purposeful, outcome-driven cutting.**

Reception Spring

Scissor type: Soft-Touch Scissors (No spring)

(continued, with increasing control)

Key Features

- **Same soft-touch, no-spring design, now used with greater accuracy.**
- **Children can manage smaller shapes and more precise outlines.**
- **Improved coordination allows smoother cutting movements.**

Why they are used in Reception Spring

- **Children show increasing control, enabling them to cut:**
    - **around large shapes with more accuracy**
    - **along curved lines**
    - **around simple outlines**
- **They begin to adjust grip, pressure and direction independently.**
- **Cutting becomes part of multi-step tasks (e.g. crafts, models, writing activities).**

Reception Summer

Scissor type: Soft-Touch Scissors (No spring)

(used confidently and independently)

Key Features

- **Same child-safe, no-spring scissors, now used with smooth, coordinated movements.**
- **Suitable for cutting more detailed shapes and finer outlines.**
- **Children maintain grip and control for longer periods.**

Why they are used in Reception Summer

- **Children can now cut:**
    - **more detailed shapes (animals, curved outlines, simple motifs)**
    - **longer, thinner lines with accuracy**
    - **multi-step pieces for creative or construction tasks**
- **They show independence in:**
    - **choosing scissors**

      positioning the paper
    - **adjusting technique**
- **This stage prepares children for Year 1, where cutting is used across subjects with higher expectations for precision.**