

The OTTO CLUB Evaluation School Information Sheet

The OTTO Club is partnering with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to evaluate The OTTO Club. Designed by occupational therapists, this programme aims improve Year 1 pupils by improving teaching approaches to handwriting. The trial will assess the impact of The OTTO Club on Year 1 pupils handwriting attainment. This is an exciting opportunity to support the handwriting of pupils in your primary school!

Summary

- We invite primary schools to take part in a trial of a programme aiming to improve handwriting for Year 1 pupils in primary schools by improving teaching approaches in handwriting.
- The OTTO Club involves teachers attending an online training session delivered by an occupational therapist, where they will be introduced to The OTTO Club manual and relevant materials required to teach the programme. They will then be required to teach a weekly OTTO Club lesson for 10 weeks to Year 1 pupils. In addition, they will teach a 10-15 minute daily follow up during this period.
- This evaluation will run between Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026 and will involve one Year 1 class per school.
- Only schools randomly assigned to *The OTTO Club* group will receive training and resources and be required to implement The OTTO Club lessons. Schools randomly assigned to the *Teaching As Usual* group will deliver their usual handwriting lessons, but will be asked to participate in all evaluation activities.

What?

- The OTTO Club programme was developed by a team of occupational therapists.
- It is intended to be delivered to a whole class to improve pupils' handwriting and strengthen the underlying skills contributing to handwriting development, particularly fine motor skills and core stability.
- It is a 10-week programme which is delivered by the class teacher and/or teaching assistant.
- Sessions are delivered as part of the literacy lesson (45 minutes – 1 hour) and are followed by daily activities (10-15 minutes) which reinforce that week's lesson.
- The OTTO Club involves one initial online training session for teachers (or teaching assistants) and monthly online support sessions.
- The programme also offers schools the option to repeat the programme to smaller targeted groups of pupils who are still struggling with handwriting.

How does this trial work?

The purpose of the trial is to evaluate the effectiveness of The OTTO Club on Year 1 pupils handwriting skills. To do this, schools will be randomly allocated to either the Teaching as Usual (TAU) group or intervention group. The TAU group will not receive the programme and will continue with their normal practice. If allocated to this group, schools will be given £535 as a thank you for completing the evaluation activities. This is broken down as follows:

- £250 in October 2025 and £250 in March 2026, on completion of the evaluation activities
- At the end of the school year (July 2026), the school will receive an additional £35 'thank you' payment for completion of a final evaluation activity.

The intervention group will receive The OTTO Club programme. All Year 1 teachers in the school can participate in the training and deliver the programme. Only one class and teacher will participate in the evaluation activities. This is to be decided by the school. Training and follow up sessions will prioritise the teacher in the evaluation class but still be offered to the other classes. Similarly, all classes can share The OTTO Club resources, but priority should be given to the evaluation class. Schools in the intervention group will be required to contribute £200 towards the cost of training and access to resources, as well as self-funding any additional equipment required to deliver the programme (approximately £200). However, they will receive £235 for completion of evaluation activities. This is broken down as follows:

- £100 in October 2025 and £100 in March 2026, on completion of the evaluation activities
- At the end of the school year (July 2026), the school will receive an additional £35 'thank you' payment for completion of a final evaluation activity.

How will the programme be evaluated?

In order to evaluate the impact of The OTTO Club programme, evaluation activities will take place with pupils and teachers in both groups. Parent/carer consent will be obtained for pupils' participation using an opt-out approach, in line with the lawful basis for collecting data of 'legitimate interests' under UK GDPR. Pupils will be fully informed of the nature of their involvement and their right to withdraw.

Pupils

All pupils with parental consent in the selected Year 1 classes (*The OTTO Club* and *Teaching As Usual*) will complete an assessment at the beginning and end of the intervention, where they are assessed on their handwriting, fine motor skills, postural control, and attitudes towards handwriting (October 2025 and January/February 2026). Assessments will be carried out by trained external assessors, who will come into the school to conduct a 1:1 assessment with each pupil. These will take no longer than 20 minutes per pupil. A member of school staff should be present during all pupil assessments.

Teachers will also be asked to share participating pupils' end-of-year writing attainment scores with the evaluation team to assess the impact of The OTTO Club on writing more broadly.

Teachers

All teachers involved in the evaluation (both *The OTTO Club* and *Teaching As Usual* groups) will complete the following activities:

- Weekly delivery logs of handwriting lessons (Year 1 class teacher: November 2025 – January 2026)
- A survey at the end of the intervention (Year 1 class teacher: February 2026)

Teachers in The OTTO Club group who choose to deliver the targeted follow-up will be asked to complete an additional survey at the end of the targeted intervention (Year 1 class teacher/TA: April 2026)

Some schools will also be invited to participate in case studies (both *The OTTO Club* and *Teaching As Usual*), which will involve:

- An interview with a researcher from NatCen (Year 1 class teacher and Literacy Lead, - November 2025 – January 2026)

- One handwriting lesson observation (November 2025 – January 2026)

When?

The evaluation will run from September 2025 – July 2026.

How much time will be required?

Activity	Time taken
Programme delivery (The OTTO Club schools)	
Attending online training session	1.5-2hrs
Deliver weekly The OTTO Club programme for 10 weeks	1 x 45min- 1 hour session plus daily 10-15min follow-ups for 10 weeks
Optional: Deliver the targeted follow up for 10 weeks to small groups	1 x 45min- 1 hour session plus daily 10-15min follow-ups for 10 weeks
Evaluation activities (all schools)	
Teacher surveys (endline - online)	15 mins
Pupil assessments (baseline and endline – in person)	20 mins per pupil at each time
Sharing pupil information for participating pupils using NatCen template	Up to 30 mins
Completing weekly log of handwriting lesson delivery for 10 weeks using NatCen template (duration/focus of lessons)	5-10 mins per week for 10 weeks
Sharing end-of-year writing attainment scores for participating pupils using NatCen template	15 mins
Optional follow up: Intervention teacher survey	15 mins
Evaluation activities (Case Study Schools)	
Year 1 teacher interview (in person)	45 mins
Literacy Lead interview (in person)	30 mins
Handwriting lesson observation (in person)	Up to 1 hour (agreed with teacher)

How will data sharing work?

Participating schools will:

- Send an information sheet in September 2025 to parents/carers of Year 1 pupils in the selected class for the evaluation.
- Share the following information for pupils who have not been opted out of the evaluation activities through a secure template provided by NatCen:
 - first name and surname, date of birth, Unique Pupil Number (UPN), free school meal status, pupil's class, and pupil's teacher.
 - End-of-year writing attainment scores for pupils who have not been opted out of the evaluation.

All pupil information collected as part of the study will be treated with the strictest confidence by the project team in line with the requirements of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. You can find further information in the NatCen Privacy Notice. natcen.ac.uk/otto-evaluation/privacy-notice

Project team

This is a major study and several different organisations are collaborating on it. They are:

- **The National Centre for Social Research ([NatCen](#))** - *Responsible for evaluating the programme.* NatCen is Britain's largest and oldest social research organisation. They have delivered several school-based studies for charities and the government about what works in education, and are experts at research that involves pupils, young people and teachers.
 - NatCen will oversee the recruitment and training of the external testers who will collect baseline and endline data from pupils. Testers will be trained in the assessments by NatCen's academic advisor and provided with guidance from NatCen on data security measures.
- **The OTTO Club** – *Responsible for developing the intervention, recruitment for the evaluation, and delivery of the training.* The OTTO Club programme is a 10-week Occupational Therapy intervention focusing on three crucial areas of development: core stability and gross motor skills; fine motor skills and handwriting skills. This comprehensive programme addresses essential developmental needs for young children, helping them build vital skills in a structured and engaging environment. Skills are reinforced on a daily basis in a fun and motivating way.
- **Education Endowment Foundation ([EEF](#))** - *Funding the study.* The EEF is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. They commission evaluations to test the effectiveness of education programmes to improve outcomes for children across the UK.

Key dates/timeline

Month	Activity
Jan – June 2025	Schools sign up to the project
July 2025	NatCen conducts randomisation and all schools are informed to which group they have been assigned (<i>The OTTO Club</i> or <i>Teaching As Usual</i>)
Sept 2025	All schools send the information sheet to parents/carers and submit pupil data of eligible pupils to NatCen
Oct 2025	Intervention group Year 1 teachers attend the initial online training (with priority given to the teacher taking part in the evaluation)

Oct 2025	NatCen to inform consenting intervention schools if they have been selected to be a case study school
Oct 2025	Baseline data collection in all schools (pupil assessments)
Nov 2025 – Jan 2026	Weekly delivery logs in all schools
Nov 2025 – Jan 2026	Data collection from Case Study Schools (teacher interviews, Literacy Lead interviews, and lesson observations)
Jan/Feb 2026	Endline data collection in all schools (pupil assessments and teacher surveys)
April 2026	Optional follow up: Intervention teachers complete survey
July 2026	All schools send pupils' end-of-year writing attainment data to NatCen
Autumn 2026 – Winter 2026	Report drafted and published

Next steps

Visit [The OTTO Club EEF webpage](#) to register your interest.

Contact [The OTTO Club](#) with further questions.