

# The OTTO Club Evaluation

## Summary of Key Dates and Responsibilities: June 2025 – July 2026

Dates	Task	Responsibility
June/July 2025	All schools share handwriting logs with NatCen	All schools
July 2025	NatCen randomly allocates schools to the <b>intervention</b> or <b>teaching-as-usual</b> group	NatCen
September 2025	All schools share pupil lists with NatCen	All schools
October 2025	Schools allocated to the intervention group attend an online training session	Half of schools
October 2025	All schools will receive visits from trained assessors to assess pupils	All schools
October/November 2025	10 schools will be invited to take part in case study research	Some schools
January/February 2026	All schools will receive visits from trained assessors to assess pupils, as well as an online teacher survey to fill out	All schools
April 2026	Schools allocated to the intervention group who choose to take part in the targeted intervention will receive an online teacher survey to fill out	Some schools
July 2026	All schools will share pupils' end-of-year writing attainment scores with NatCen	All schools

# The OTTO Club Evaluation

## FAQs

### 1. Taking part in The OTTO Club study

#### 1.1 What is the difference between taking part in The OTTO Club, and the evaluation?

The OTTO Club is a research study involving an intervention group of teachers/TAs and a 'teaching-as-usual' group. Both groups of teachers need to take part in some core evaluation activities, like uploading pupil lists and a handwriting log. Teachers/TAs in the intervention group additionally take part in online training run by The OTTO Club. After this, they teach 10 weekly lessons and brief daily follow-up activities of The OTTO Club programme to their Year 1 class between November 2025 and February 2026. Teachers/TAs who choose to take part in the targeted intervention will deliver the programme again in the following term to a smaller group of pupils they have selected who continue to require support with their handwriting.

#### 1.2 How will it be decided which schools take part?

- Researchers at NatCen will randomly assign schools to either the intervention or teaching-as-usual group in June/July 2025. NatCen will inform schools of their assignment in July 2025.

### 2. Parent/carer opt out and pupils' right to withdraw

#### 2.1 Do I need to tell the pupils' parents or carers about the study?

- Yes. Parents/carers will have the opportunity to opt their child out from taking part in evaluation activities, such as the individual assessments. In September 2025, NatCen will share an information sheet, a privacy notice, and parent/carer opt-out letters for schools to distribute to parents/carers of their Year 1 class. Once you have shared these, please allow parents/carers a few weeks to read the information and return any opt-out slips to you.

#### 2.2 What do I do if a parent/carer does not want their child to take part?

- Ultimately, it is the parents/carers' decision. We recommend that you encourage them to take part by reminding them that this is an opportunity to be involved in an exciting study to see whether we can assist future generations of pupils to experience better teaching of handwriting. Also, reassure them that their child's data will be stored securely, following all legal requirements, and that their child and their child's school will be anonymous in all reports resulting from this study.
- If a parent/carer opts out their child, their child may still be taught using The OTTO Club resources and activities, but they will **not** take part in any of the evaluation assessments, and their information will **not** be shared with the evaluation team or used in the study results. Please be aware that if your school participates in a lesson observation as part of a case study, the child will not be opted out of this lesson. However, the focus of the observations is on the delivery of the lesson and not individual children, so children will not be individually identified.
- When we ask you to upload pupil lists in September, please **do not** include the details of pupils whose parents/carers opted them out of taking part. When uploading the pupil lists, it is your responsibility to keep track of which pupils are not taking part.

#### 2.3 How do parents/carers withdraw their child after the evaluation has started?

- After you upload the pupil list to NatCen, parents/carers can email you to withdraw their child's participation. Then, you can call the research team at 0808 178 3298 to withdraw pupils from participating. Please do **not** send us this information via email, as this is not a secure way to share this information.

- Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their child until the publication of the evaluation report in 2027.

## 2.4 Can pupils choose not to participate in evaluation activities?

- Pupils who are participating in the evaluation will be given opportunities by the trained assessors to decide not to take part in any or all of the outcome assessments.

## 3. Handwriting log

### 3.1 Why do I need to fill out a handwriting log?

- The handwriting log will capture how much handwriting practice your current Year 1 class completes on average per week. This will help us to understand the amount of variation between the schools taking part.

### 3.2 How do I fill out the handwriting log?

- In the email you have received, we have included a link to our website where you can access the Excel template. Please download and familiarise yourself with it.
- Please fill in your OTTO evaluation ID in the corresponding box at the top of the log. You will find this ID in your welcome email.
- You should also capture your school and class name at the top of the template, along with the week you have captured this information for, e.g. W/C 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.
- Please aim to complete the handwriting log in **June** as academic education may be disrupted in July by non-academic educational activities.
- Please fill out this Excel template to capture the amount of handwriting taking place in one of your current Year 1 classes.
- Use the drop-down lists for each lesson and day of the week to log how many minutes your class spent on handwriting in any lesson. There is a separate column where you should indicate which lesson this handwriting practice took place in e.g. Literacy, Science, Maths, and so on.
- Do **not** modify any part of the Excel sheet other than cells indicated in blue.
- Do **not** include your name, or the names of any teachers or pupils in the log, as this would require us to log an information security incident.

### 3.3 How do I share the handwriting log with you?

- Once you have filled out the handwriting log, all you need to do is email it back to us at [ottoevaluation@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:ottoevaluation@natcen.ac.uk).

## 4. Pupil lists

### 4.1 Why do I need to share information about my pupils?

- It is not possible for us to carry out the necessary analyses to determine the efficacy of The OTTO Club programme if we do not have access to some information about the pupils. For example, one of our research questions is to understand whether the impact of The OTTO Club differs for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, as measured by Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility status. To do this, we need to collect students' FSM status in the pupil uploads.

### 4.2 If I am allocated to the teaching-as-usual group, do I still need to complete and upload pupil lists?

- Yes. It is imperative that **all** teachers complete this key evaluation task regardless of their allocation in the trial. The impact evaluation analyses will compare the assessment scores of pupils in the intervention group compared with those in the teaching-as-usual group. Receiving pupil lists from all teachers is therefore very important to us.

#### **4.3 How do I share pupil information with you?**

- You will populate an Excel template and upload it onto our secure website. You will receive step-by-step instructions on how to do this nearer the time. Please do **not** email us your pupil list as this is not a secure way of sharing this information.

#### **4.4 Is the secure website safe for sharing personal data?**

- Yes, it is completely safe. The Excel file is uploaded onto a secure drive that is only accessible to named individuals in the NatCen evaluation team.
- NatCen regularly conducts randomised controlled trials, and this is a tried and tested way of sharing participant confidential information. It will not lead to an information security incident if you follow the step-by-step instructions and use the platform.
- You **must not** share the pupil list by email. Email is not a secure way of sharing this data.

### **5. Other research activities with staff and pupils**

#### **5.1 What other research activities will be taking place, and when?**

- Trained assessors will arrange to visit your school to carry out short individual assessments with each Year 1 pupil in October 2025 and again in January/February 2026. Assessments will include tasks related to pupil handwriting and postural control. We will provide assessors with full training. Each assessor will also undergo strict vetting procedures and an enhanced DBS check.
- We will carry out case studies in November 2025 through February 2026. These will include interviews with teachers and Literacy Leads, as well as lesson observations.
- We will send out an online survey link to all participating teachers/TAs in January/February 2026.
- We will also send an additional online survey link to teachers/TAs taking part in the targeted intervention follow up in April 2026.
- We will be in touch with more information about these activities closer to the time.

#### **5.2 Who will take part in the additional research activities?**

- The individual pupil assessments will involve all pupils who you submitted to us in the pupil list, except those whose parents have opted them out of the research.
- Case studies will involve teachers and pupils in 10 schools. Half of the case studies will be in intervention schools, and the other half in teaching-as-usual schools.
- The online survey link will be sent to **all** teachers/TAs, regardless of their allocation.
- The additional online survey link will be sent to all teachers/TAs who choose to go on to deliver the targeted intervention.

### **6. Pupils' end-of-year writing attainment results**

#### **6.1 When and how do we send these?**

- In July 2026, all schools, both intervention and teaching-as-usual, will securely share pupils' end-of-year writing attainment results by filling out a spreadsheet that we provide and uploading it to a secure website, just like the pupil lists. We will be in touch with more information about this closer to the time.

#### **6.2 Whose results will you need?**

- We will need the results of all pupils whose details were submitted to NatCen in September 2025, except those whose parents opted them out after the pupil list was uploaded.