

Handwriting at Yerbury

Children should leave primary school able to “maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed”. At Yerbury, the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed is recognised. With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school.

To ensure a consistent approach, the school follows the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

Teaching and learning

In order for children to achieve a high standard of handwriting, they need to be explicitly taught the skills that are needed. At Yerbury we use and teach the Nelson style, letter formations and joins in handwriting to ensure consistency across the school. We have high expectations in handwriting lessons and make sure that children are expected to apply the same standards in other writing as well.

Handwriting practice takes place in 2x each week and has a clear focus, with key teaching points demonstrated to the class. Each session provides allocated time for children to practise the specific handwriting skill. Extension activities allow for further practice, development and challenge.

Teachers make sure that children are concentrating on ‘the 3 ‘P’s’ during handwriting sessions. These are:

- Paper: the paper children write on should be angled slightly away from the writing hand.
- Posture: sitting up straight, both feet on the floor, adequate desk space.
- Pencil grip: tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil (held lightly between thumb and forefinger, about 3cm from the point with the middle finger providing additional support).

In the EYFS, children are taught to use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds, as well as being able to write some harder to read and spell words with irregular spellings. Planned opportunities are provided for children to develop their writing of simple sentences, which can be read by themselves and others. Children develop the use of effective pencil grip throughout their time in reception.

In KS1, handwriting practice focuses on ensuring that children form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. It develops use of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and promotes understanding of which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. Children also develop accuracy in writing capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and in writing lower-case letters, using spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. Children are taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Throughout KS2, emphasis is placed on children’s development of writing legibly, fluently and with increasing speed. Children are taught to choose which shape of a letter to use when given choices and are able to decide whether or not to join specific letters.