

Handwriting at Spa Camberwell

“Learning to write is one of the hardest challenges pupils face at school but it is vitally important”.

“High quality teaching that responds to the challenges individual pupils face in learning to write is essential for giving all of them the best chance to be proficient” DFE The Writing Framework 2025

The Writing Framework was introduced in 2025 for primary students. We recognise that our students are working at levels which differ from their chronological age and that our secondary students need ongoing support to develop their writing skills as set out in the primary curriculum.

Teaching Handwriting

Pupils at Spa Camberwell have a diagnosis of autism and may have developmental delays in fine motor skills. This can impact their ability to form and write letters correctly and consistently. Bespoke programmes are used to support pupils to progress in their writing skills throughout their education at Spa Camberwell.

Primary Handwriting

To gain letter formation and handwriting skills, pupils must first be able to form 9 pre-writing shapes that support emerging formation of different letters. Additionally, the most functional writing skill a pupil needs to gain, is how to write their name then forming other letters of the alphabet.

The Spa Primary handwriting framework has been specifically designed to support pre-writing skills, name writing and letter formation, as well as developing seated posture and fine motor skills. Resources are based on Little Wandle letter formation, which are used parallel to daily phonics sessions in Reading.

Sensory approaches may be incorporated to support pupil engagement in handwriting sessions, with an overall aim of progressing to using writing materials as fine motor skills emerge and develop for each pupil.

Pupils work on different shapes and are not limited to 1 shape before moving on to the next. They can also work on tracing the initial letter of their name in capital form at the same time. Pupils should aim to complete all of the pre-writing shapes before moving on to forming the rest of the letters of the alphabet. However, progress and next steps are agreed based on individual need and profile.

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, this is completed daily. In Key Stage 2, this is completed 3-4 times per week.

Assessment are added to Earwig and are finalised at the end of each half term. Pupils are assessed as to whether they can trace, copy and then form each letter correctly and consistently.

Secondary Handwriting

Students across secondary follow the Write Well Programme. This programme follows all stages of handwriting from shape formation, letter formation by groups and joined writing. Once students have completed these stages there are also the options to extend to fluency and stamina for longer pieces of writing for students where this level is appropriate.

Students are assessed using the Secondary Handwriting Framework on Earwig which includes all steps of each level of the Write Well programme to determine which level they start at. Students are taught each stage of handwriting development. Students move through the programme once they have been assessed at completing each stage consistently and independently. The Write Well programme is complementary to the work that primary students complete and has opportunities to revise key skills as well as extended them. Students access one taught handwriting session within an English lesson each week. They can then revise the new skills within morning work.

Students with higher levels of support needs who are still developing their early writing skills will have access to sensory approaches alongside fine motor skill development activities. Teachers plan these sessions using the Write Well scheme but students access the skills through sensory approaches.

Each teacher has a full pack of the Write Well resources and creates individual resources from these.

A selection of work samples from each stage are kept in a folder for each student to show progress.

Students are assessed on the Spa Secondary Handwriting framework on Earwig half termly.

Teaching Spelling

Pupils in primary begin by learning to spell their name through matching letters, using a range of practical resources, such as tactile letters and TEACCH resources, and begin to write their name through tracing and copying. Spelling is taught as part of the Spa Little Wandle phonics approach. Spelling begins at Phase 2 and links to sounds that have been taught and learnt so far in the scheme. Spellings are also taught through key vocabulary in curriculum subject areas, as well as being practiced in English lessons.

Pupils in secondary continue to learn spellings through the Bug Club phonics scheme, with known, familiar sounds being used to aid the teaching of spellings. Additionally, spellings of functional words are taught throughout the curriculum subject areas, and pupils' practice and consolidate their spelling skills through English lessons.