



The Mill Academy

Approach to teaching of Spelling and Handwriting



Spelling

At The Mill Academy, every class focuses on the development of spelling skills, beginning in the Early Years and building progressively throughout the school. In EYFS, children begin with daily phonics sessions using the *Read Write Inc* scheme. They are taught to read and spell words through phoneme–grapheme correspondence, developing their awareness of sounds and the letters that represent them.

As pupils move into Key Stage 1, they continue to build upon their phonics knowledge and are introduced to *Spelling Shed*, which supports the sequencing and teaching of spelling in class and encourages practice at home. High frequency words are prioritised, and children are taught how to decode and break down words to support both their reading and their spelling. Weekly spelling rules and patterns are introduced, and these are reinforced through practice in daily English lessons.

In Lower Key Stage 2, children consolidate their phonic awareness, embedding rules and patterns through weekly spelling lessons supported by *Spelling Shed*. The weekly spelling lists are integrated into English lessons, helping pupils not only to spell accurately but also to understand the meaning of words and apply this knowledge in context.

By Upper Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to use high frequency words and the Year 3/4 spelling list words accurately within their writing. Teachers model the correct spelling of ambitious vocabulary, and errors are addressed through marking, with the expectation that children will practise and correct their work. Pupils are also introduced to the Year 5/6 spelling rules and patterns, and writing lessons place an increasing emphasis on ambitious vocabulary and precision.

Where children require additional support, targeted interventions or personalised spelling lists are provided. These ensure that gaps are addressed quickly and that pupils are supported in moving from phonics-based strategies to mastering more complex spelling patterns.

Handwriting

At The Mill Academy, handwriting is taught systematically and consistently across all year groups, based on the Martin Harvey handwriting approach. This approach emphasises consistency, fluency, and legibility, while supporting pupils in developing pride and confidence in their written work.

In the Early Years, handwriting begins with daily opportunities for mark-making, name writing, and activities designed to develop gross and fine motor skills. Children are taught the importance of an appropriate pencil grip, moving from early grasping techniques towards a secure tripod grip. Pencil grips are provided where necessary to support this development.

In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught to form printed letters accurately, always beginning on the line and ensuring clear differentiation between upper and lower case. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to write legibly with correct spacing between words and to apply capital letters appropriately when writing names or beginning sentences.

As children move into Key Stage 2, they begin to transition into a fully cursive, joined script, in line with the Martin Harvey approach. Daily practice ensures that handwriting becomes fluent and automatic, and pupils are expected to apply these skills consistently across all subjects. Emphasis is placed on developing a firm yet relaxed pencil grasp which allows for both fluency and accuracy in their writing.

Throughout the school, the key principles of the Martin Harvey approach are embedded. Letter formation is consistent across all classes, handwriting practice is part of the daily routine, and there is a clear progression from print to fully cursive writing by the end of Year 2. Ongoing attention is given to presentation, pride in written work, and linking handwriting to spelling so that pupils develop fluency and accuracy while reducing errors. Handwriting is assessed regularly, and pupils who need further support receive targeted guidance to develop fluency and legibility.