



16 Oct 2026

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Headteacher's insight

This week, I would like to focus on something that plays an important role in every child's learning journey – handwriting. In a world where technology is increasingly part of our everyday lives, the ability to write fluently, neatly and confidently remains an essential skill.

Good handwriting is about much more than presentation. When children can form letters automatically, they are able to concentrate on the content of their writing rather than the physical process of getting words onto the page. This frees up their thinking for vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and expressing their wonderful ideas. Handwriting also supports fine motor development, coordination and confidence.

Getting a grip!

One of the foundations of successful handwriting is how children hold their pencil. There are several different pencil grips, and you may notice your child using one of these:

Fisted grip: The pencil is held in the whole fist, common in very young children.

Digital pronate grip: The pencil is held with the fingers, but the wrist is turned downwards.

Four-finger grip: The pencil is supported by the thumb and three fingers.

Tripod grip: The pencil rests on the middle finger and is controlled by the thumb and index finger.

At school, we encourage children towards a comfortable, dynamic tripod grip, where the thumb and index finger guide the pencil while it rests on the middle finger. This allows for small, controlled movements and helps children write with greater ease and stamina. However, some children develop alternative functional grips that work equally well, and our priority is always comfort, control and avoiding unnecessary strain.

Our approach to handwriting

Across our schools, we follow the Letter-join handwriting programme, which provides a consistent approach to letter formation, positioning, sizing and joining. Children begin by developing the movements and control needed to form letters correctly, progressing towards a fluent, joined cursive style as they become ready.

Like reading, handwriting is a skill that improves through regular, purposeful practice. Little and often is far more effective than a long session once a week. Just five minutes of focused practice can make a real difference over time.



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How can you help at home?

There are lots of simple, enjoyable ways to support handwriting development:

Write for a purpose: Encourage your child to write shopping lists, birthday cards, thank-you notes, invitations or messages to family members.

Practise letter formation: Spend a few minutes forming letters carefully, paying attention to where each letter starts and the direction of movement.

Make it fun: Try writing letters in sand, flour, shaving foam or with chalk outdoors.

Build finger strength: Activities such as threading beads, using tweezers, playing with dough, colouring and cutting all help develop the muscles needed for writing.

Write together: Let your child see you writing by hand and talk about how you form your letters.

Celebrate progress: Praise careful formation, effort and improvement rather than expecting perfect handwriting every time.

It is also worth checking that your child is sitting comfortably, with their feet supported, their paper positioned appropriately and their non-writing hand helping to steady the page.

Most importantly, we must remember that handwriting is a journey, not a race. Children develop their fine motor control at different rates, and confidence is just as important as accuracy. We want every child to see themselves as a capable writer, able to communicate their thoughts and ideas with pride.

Thank you, as always, for supporting your child's learning at home. Those small moments of practice really do add up!



Mrs Thompson

Mrs Emily Thompson
Executive Headteacher



Every bauble sold helps raise funds for our school's trim trail!



A little creativity, a lot of Christmas cheer!

CHRISTMAS BAUBLE FUNDRAISER

Let your child get creative this Christmas by
decorating their own bauble at school.

Each bauble makes a lovely festive keepsake or a
thoughtful Christmas gift for family and friends.



You can buy multiple baubles.

Payment deadline: Thursday 19 November

Children whose baubles have been purchased will
decorate them during an art lesson at school.

Collect your child's decorated bauble from our collection stall at the
Christmas Fair on 3 December.



PTFA self - guided Halloween Trail



Buy your trail map!

Maps cost **£2.00** per child



Buy maps at the school main entrance on:

Mon 19th:	drop off (am)
Tues 20th:	drop off (am)
Wed 21st:	drop off (am)
Thurs 22nd:	drop off (am)
Fri 23rd:	drop off (am) pick up (pm)

**TRICK
OR
TREAT**



When to complete the trail:

24th - 31st October

10 prizes to be won!

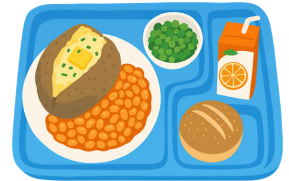
Submit your answers online
using the QR code on the
map for your chance to win





Lunchtimes – Taking Time to Enjoy Lunch

We know how important lunchtime is for our children, both as an opportunity to enjoy a nutritious meal and to spend time playing with friends. We would like to reassure parents that our lunchtime routines allow children sufficient time to eat their food without being rushed by staff. However, we do notice that some children, particularly our older pupils, are very keen to get outside and play with their friends, sometimes choosing to rush their lunch or leave food uneaten to maximise their playtime!



We will continue to encourage all children to slow down, enjoy their food and take the time they need to eat properly before heading outside. Our staff will be reinforcing these gentle reminders, and we would welcome parents supporting this message at home too. We want every child to enjoy both parts of their lunchtime – eating well and having fun with friends!

Parent and Child Phonics Workshop Reception and Year 1– Monday 19th October

Come and learn phonics together!

We warmly invite parents and carers to join their children for a short, fun and interactive phonics workshop on **Monday 19th October**, starting at 3:15pm.

In just 15–20 minutes, you'll have the opportunity to explore how we teach phonics in school, practise some of the techniques your child uses in lessons and pick up practical tips for supporting reading and phonics at home.

We really encourage you to come along! It will be a fantastic opportunity to learn alongside your child, build their confidence and strengthen the connection between learning at school and at home.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Parent/Carer Information Sessions – We Want Your Views!

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We are keen to offer a range of useful and informative sessions for our parents and carers, focusing on topics that matter most to you and your family. To help us plan these sessions, we would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions. Please take a few moments to complete our Parent/Carer Information Sessions Microsoft Form using the link below. Your feedback will help us shape sessions that are relevant, practical and supportive of our whole school community.

Parent/Carer Information Sessions – Fill in form

Christmas Cards / Artwork

If you would like to order your child's artwork on Christmas Cards or the other products offered this year please remember to pay online, check the box indicating you have paid and return the artwork to class before **Friday 23 October**. Artwork received after this date will not be sent off for printing.





Learner reviews

You can now log into your MCAS (My Child At School) account and book a 10 minute meeting with your child's teacher to discuss their progress. If you have any issues logging into your account please [email the office](#).

Monday 9 Nov	Badgers Year 6, 08:30-11:30 Ladybirds Year 1 , 08:30-16:00
Tuesday 10 Nov	Hedgehogs Year 4, 08:30-11:30 Owls Year 5, 08:30-16:00 Squirrels Year 3, 08:30-11:30
Wednesday 11 Nov	Squirrels Year 3, 13:00-16:00
Thursday 12 Nov	Caterpillars Nursery, 08:30-12:00 Dragonflies Year 2, 08:30-16:00
Friday 13 Nov	Butterflies Reception, 08:30-16:00

Class Assembly Dates

Take a note of your child's class assembly, it will start at **9am** so please come to the entrance by the office after drop-off to ensure a timely start.

Badgers	Wednesday 11 November
Owls	Wednesday 18 November
Hedgehogs	Wednesday 25 November
Squirrels	Wednesday 2 December





Lost property: Please claim any lost property before the half term, unclaimed items will be disposed of.

New Choir Club

Bookings are open for a new choir club held at Marleigh on **Thursday mornings** before school (07:45 - 08:30) from **5 November**. Spaces are free to children in receipt of Pupil Premium and £15 to everyone else. If you're not sure, you can check the cost of the club in your app or email the office.



Catch up on the latest news...



TAKE 10 TO READ: CELEBRATING THE JOY OF READING AT MARLEIGH!



CELEBRATING HARVEST: A TIME FOR GRATITUDE, KINDNESS AND COMMUNITY



SCIENCE SPOTLIGHT: CURIOUS MINDS AT WORK!



Caterpillar Class



We have had a busy and exciting week in Nursery, with lots of opportunities for exploring, creating and developing new skills.

The children have been using a variety of tools for mark making, including scissors, paintbrushes and sponges. They have enjoyed experimenting with different ways of making marks and exploring the effects each tool can create.

We also enjoyed a visit to the library, where we explored books and shared stories together.

We have been developing our physical skills through creating obstacle courses and taking part in ball games. The children have been practising their balancing, coordination, throwing, catching and moving in different ways.

The light box has continued to be a favourite, providing opportunities for the children to investigate light, colour and shapes. Our small world space tray has also been very popular, encouraging imaginative play, storytelling and language development. It has been lovely to see the children learning through their curiosity, creativity and play. Well done Caterpillars, on another fantastic week!





Butterflies Class

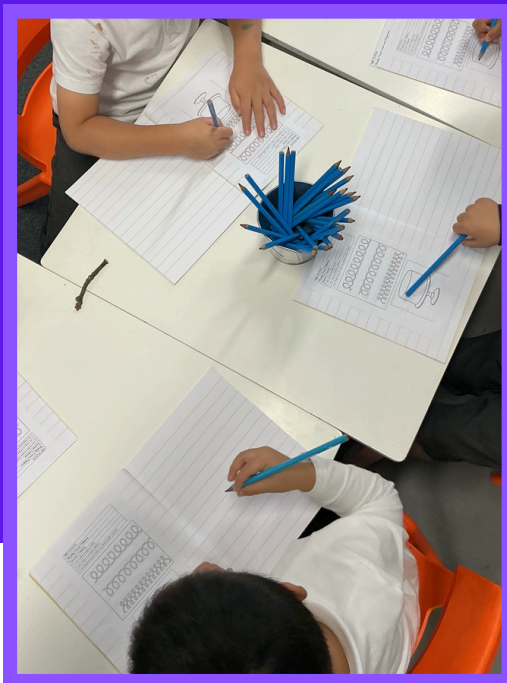


What a wonderful week we've had in Butterflies!

In art, we have been exploring observational drawings, looking at the differences between realistic and unrealistic drawings. The children have done a fantastic job practising their artistic skills and creating their own observational drawings of plants. We have been experimenting with shading and a range of artistic techniques to add detail and bring our drawings to life. We are so proud of the creativity and effort everyone has shown!

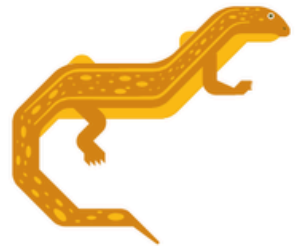
We have also been learning all about ourselves and how we grow and change. The children have loved looking at their baby photographs and comparing how they looked then to how they look now. One of our favourite activities has been using towers to make real-life comparisons, representing our past selves as babies and our present selves as children. This has been a brilliant, hands-on way to explore just how much we have grown, while developing our understanding of the language of past and present.

Finally, Butterflies have been working hard on their handwriting this week! We have been exploring different patterns and challenging ourselves to practise new ones. It has been lovely to see the children building their confidence, developing their fine motor skills and taking such pride in their work.





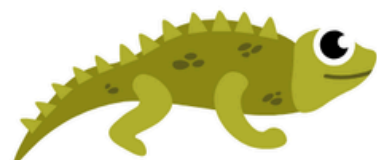
**Come along and meet
the animals**



Tuesday 20th October at 3-5pm

Marleigh Community Centre

All welcome - free entry



Key dates 2026-27

Mon, 19 Oct	Parent and Child Workshop Reception and Year 1 - Phonics 3:15-3:45pm
Half term (26 - 30 Oct)	Halloween Trail
Mon, 2 Nov	INSET Day - School closed for children Book Advent Calendar Raffle tickets go on sale
Tue, 3 Nov	Tea towel order deadline for parents and carers
Mon 9 - Fri 13	Learner Review meetings for each pupil and parent/carer from Nursery to Year 6. Each family will make a 10 minute appointment and attend in person or online to review their child's learning with the class teacher.
Wed, 11 Nov	Year 6 Badgers Class assembly to parents and carers 9:00am
Fri, 13 Nov	Non uniform day - donations welcomed to support the Christmas Fair
Mon, 16 Nov	Flu vaccination, 12:30-3pm
Wed, 18 Nov	Year 5 Owls Class assembly to parents and carers 9:00am
Wed, 25 Nov	Year 4 Hedgehogs Class assembly to parents and carers 9:00am
Sun, 29 Nov	Deadline for Book Advent Calendar Raffle tickets
Mon, 30 Nov	Winners of Book Advent Calendar Raffle announced and prizes given
Wed, 2 Dec	Year 3 Squirrels Class assembly to parents and carers 9:00am

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Thurs, 3 Dec	Christmas fair, 3:15-4:30pm Second session flu vaccination, 10:30 -12pm
Wed, 9 Dec	Parent & Child Workshop Y3&4. Times Tables 3:15-3:45pm Christmas Dinner
Fri, 11 Dec	Reception (Butterflies) Christmas performance to parents and carers - 9:15am Christmas Jumper Day
Mon, 14 Dec	KS2 (Squirrels, Hedgehogs, Owls and Badgers) Church service - parents and carers welcome - 2pm
Tues, 15 Dec	KS1 (Ladybirds and Dragonflies) Christmas performance to parents and carers - 2:30pm
Wed, 16 Dec	Nursery Christmas Celebration with Parents and Carers 2:30-3pm
Thur, 17 Dec	Last Day of Term - School closes for Christmas



Elevating Expectations



Reception Open Day 2027

We invite you to visit **Marleigh Primary Academy**, register today for a group tour.

Group Tour Dates & Times

Monday, 5 Oct, 2pm - 2:45pm

Monday, 12 Oct, 11am - 11:45

Monday, 9 Nov, 2pm - 2:45pm

Monday, 16 Nov, 11am - 11:45am

Monday, 23 Nov, 4pm - 4:45pm



REGISTER NOW



If your child was born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 you need to apply for Reception for September 2027.

Deadline for applications is 15th January 2027