

Sacred Heart Hindsford R.C. Primary School

Writing Policy



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‘With Christ as our guide, we inspire and thrive’.

"All I need is a sheet of paper and something to write with, and then I can turn the world upside down." — Friedrich Nietzsche

At Sacred Heart Primary School, we are passionate about developing competent, confident writers who are inspired to express themselves and make their voices heard. Our approach to English is built around the Pathways to Write programme, which follows a Mastery model to support children in acquiring, embedding, and applying writing skills.

Each unit of work is based on high-quality texts and offers a wide range of engaging and purposeful writing opportunities. Skills are developed through structured repetition and practice, allowing children to build their confidence and fluency as writers. A strong emphasis is placed on broadening vocabulary, with deliberate and consistent opportunities for children to encounter, explore and use ambitious language—building on our school's wider commitment to developing a rich and varied vocabulary.

We believe writing should not be confined to English lessons. Therefore, we embed writing opportunities across the curriculum, encouraging children to apply their writing skills in subjects such as Humanities and Science. Teachers plan for a diverse range of genres, purposes, and audiences, helping children to adapt their writing appropriately and creatively.

To cater for all learning styles and to inspire creativity, we use a wide variety of resources and experiences—including video clips, audio recordings, drama, images, educational visits, visiting speakers, and Talk for Writing strategies. These are all used to bring writing to life and ensure that pupils write for meaningful, real-life purposes whenever possible.

Children are taught to discuss, plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing through effective teacher modelling and collaborative peer support, helping them to understand the full writing process and take pride in crafting their work.

Our reading curriculum is driven by Pathways to Read, which aligns seamlessly with Pathways to Write. This ensures consistency and coherence across English and wider curriculum subjects, enabling children to make meaningful connections between their reading and writing.

At Sacred Heart, we believe that with the right tools, every child can turn their ideas into powerful, purposeful writing—and in doing so, turn their world upside down.

Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our Reception Class, we nurture early writing skills through Drawing Club, a creative and engaging approach that combines storytelling, drawing, and writing. Children participate in daily Drawing Club sessions led by the teacher, where they explore high-quality stories and respond through drawing and simple written captions. As the week progresses, children are encouraged to create independent drawings and captions, building their confidence and early writing fluency.

To ensure a smooth transition from the EYFS to the National Curriculum, Drawing Club continues into Year One during the Autumn Term. This continuity helps support children as they move from the Early Learning Goals into the expectations of Key Stage One.

Emergent writing is fostered in the EYFS through a wide variety of engaging and accessible resources. Children are encouraged to write using felt-tipped pens, crayons, chalk, sand, magnetic letters, paintbrushes, water, paint, and digital tools. Writing is meaningfully embedded across all areas of learning, with opportunities to create postcards, menus, invitations, labels, and more, making writing a purposeful and enjoyable part of everyday play and learning.

In addition, children engage in activities that develop the gross and fine motor skills essential for writing. These include physical play, mark-making, and targeted interventions. Daily phonics lessons support children's growing understanding of phonic patterns and spelling, helping them to sound out words and spell high-frequency words with increasing accuracy and independence.

Through this rich and purposeful approach, we lay strong foundations for children to develop as confident, motivated writers from the very beginning of their learning journey.

Writing in Years 1–6

From Years 1 to 6, writing is taught through the Pathways to Write scheme of work, which is built around high-quality texts and the explicit teaching of 'mastery keys'. These keys support children in developing the ability to infer meaning, understand and apply ambitious vocabulary, and use a range of punctuation and grammatical structures effectively. Each text is carefully selected to promote a love of reading, engagement with literature, and high-quality written outcomes.

We ensure that every year group is explicitly taught the grammar, punctuation, and spelling objectives outlined in the National Curriculum. Writing is celebrated throughout the school, with high-quality displays showcasing children's work and regular celebration assemblies recognising individual and group achievements.

In addition to discrete English lessons, teachers create opportunities for children to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, embedding learning through cross-curricular links. Writing is modelled daily through shared and modelled writing sessions, where teachers demonstrate key strategies, including the application of phonics and spelling knowledge. Guided writing sessions are also used to target the specific needs of individuals or small groups, ensuring all children receive the support they need to make progress.

Children are given regular opportunities to write independently and at length, particularly at the end of each unit, where they apply their taught skills in extended, unaided writing tasks. These final pieces serve as key assessment points and demonstrate how well children can transfer their learning to independent contexts.

Each year group follows a 'Progression in Skills' document, which outlines the key genres and statutory requirements for writing at each stage. These documents ensure clear progression across year groups and provide teachers with a structured framework to adapt and tailor their planning to meet the needs of their class.

Through this structured, consistent, and creative approach, we aim to develop children who are confident, skilled, and passionate writers—able to write with purpose, accuracy, and flair across a range of forms and contexts.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

At Sacred Heart, the teaching of grammar, punctuation, and spelling is embedded within our Pathways to Write programme, ensuring that these essential elements of writing are taught in a meaningful and context-rich way. A strong understanding of spelling supports children in organising their thinking around language, enabling them to write with confidence and accuracy. We believe that knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising key vocabulary is empowering for all learners.

To support the teaching of spelling, we follow the Pathways to Spell programme from Years 2 to 6. This is delivered through daily spelling sessions, which systematically build children's knowledge of spelling rules, patterns, and word structures. In Key Stage 1, the focus is on developing fluency with high-frequency and common exception words, which provide the foundation for confident writing.

Spelling is further reinforced through meaningful corrections in children's English books, supported by teacher marking and feedback. In addition, children use spelling journals to record new words, spelling patterns, and notes from their lessons, helping them to build a personalised resource for independent learning.

In Key Stage 2, spelling sessions extend to include the study of etymology, dictionary skills, spelling pattern investigations, consolidation of high-frequency words, and focused work on the statutory word lists outlined in the National Curriculum. This structured approach supports children in developing a deeper understanding of word origins, structure, and usage.

Children across the school are actively encouraged and taught to proofread their writing for spelling and grammatical errors, fostering independence and pride in their work.

Through our consistent, engaging approach to grammar, punctuation and spelling, we aim to equip all children with the tools they need to become accurate, thoughtful, and confident writers.

Weekly Home Learning Activities

At Sacred Heart, we value strong partnerships with parents and carers and recognise the important role they play in supporting their child's learning journey. Throughout the year, we work collaboratively to help every child reach their full potential, and we actively encourage parental involvement in home learning to reinforce and consolidate classroom teaching.

Each week, children are set an English home learning activity via Google Classroom. These tasks are carefully chosen to support and extend the skills taught in class. Activities may take the form of interactive quizzes, educational games, or written exercises that can be completed at home.

This approach allows children to revisit key concepts in a fun and accessible way, while also giving families the opportunity to engage in their child's progress and learning experiences.

Handwriting

At Sacred Heart, we place great value on children taking pride and care in the presentation of their work, and handwriting is a key element of this. From the earliest stages, we emphasise the development of both fine and gross motor skills, which are essential for confident and fluent handwriting. A variety of resources and activities are used in the Early Years to build these foundational skills through purposeful play and guided practice.

Across the school, we follow the ISHA Handwriting Scheme, which provides a consistent and structured approach to handwriting development. We encourage children to begin joining their handwriting as soon as they are forming letters correctly, promoting fluency and cohesion in their writing.

Where needed, additional handwriting support groups are provided to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop a legible and consistent handwriting style. These groups are led by class teachers and tailored to meet individual or small group needs.

To promote high standards of presentation, we celebrate and reward effort and achievement in handwriting through our weekly 'Handwriting Hero' award, given to one child in each class every Friday. This recognition helps to instil a sense of pride and motivation in children to always do their best.

Our approach to handwriting reflects our wider commitment to excellence in written communication, supporting children to become confident, capable writers who take pride in their work.

Assessment and Monitoring

At Sacred Heart, assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. We use a combination of short-term and termly assessments to inform planning, monitor progress, and ensure that every child is supported and challenged appropriately.

Short-term assessments are used regularly to evaluate pupils' understanding and to help teachers adapt daily lessons. These assessments are closely aligned with the teaching objectives from the Pathways to Write programme, ensuring consistency and clarity in both delivery and evaluation.

Termly assessments allow us to measure progress against key objectives, identify gaps in learning, and plan for the next unit of work. This helps to ensure that all children continue to make progress and that teaching remains targeted and effective.

A range of tools and strategies are used to assess writing across the school:

- Quality marking and feedback in line with school policy
- Phonic tracking sheets to monitor early reading and spelling development
- NFER tests in Years 1–5 to assess grammar, punctuation, and spelling knowledge
- EYFS assessment grids to track early writing development and progress against the Early Learning Goals
- Teacher Assessment Frameworks for Years 2 and 6, in line with statutory assessment requirements

These tools support teachers in making accurate, evidence-based judgements about pupils' attainment and progress, and help ensure that our writing curriculum remains robust, responsive, and inclusive.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

At Sacred Heart, we are committed to providing an inclusive English curriculum that meets the needs of all learners, regardless of background, ability, or learning style. We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to succeed and thrive in their language development.

In planning and delivering English lessons, teachers aim to:

- Provide a broad and balanced range of language activities that engage and support all pupils
- Ensure continuity and progression in learning experiences across all year groups
- Set appropriate and challenging learning objectives tailored to the needs of individuals and small groups
- Respond effectively to the diverse learning needs within the classroom
- Liaise closely with the SENDCO to ensure that targeted support and provision are in place for children with SEND
- Link learning activities for SEND pupils to their individual targets and personalised learning plans
- Identify and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment for all children
- Monitor the progress of vulnerable groups and provide timely and appropriate intervention to support them in reaching their potential

Through this inclusive approach, we strive to ensure that every child has access to high-quality English teaching and is given the support they need to make meaningful progress in reading, writing, and communication.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of English at Sacred Heart is led by the English subject leader, who is responsible for ensuring high standards in both teaching and learning across the school.

To support this, the subject leader is allocated weekly management time to:

- Review children's written work across year groups
- Conduct lesson observations to evaluate the quality of English teaching
- Provide feedback and support to staff as part of ongoing professional development
- Ensure consistency and progression in the delivery of the English curriculum

Monitoring activities are carried out in line with the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle, ensuring a systematic and comprehensive approach. This includes book looks, learning walks, pupil voice activities, and data analysis.

The English subject leader also meets regularly with the designated English Governor to share findings, discuss progress and areas for development, and ensure effective governance and accountability in the subject.

Through this structured approach, we maintain a clear focus on continuous improvement and ensure that all children receive high-quality English teaching that supports strong outcomes in reading and writing.

Role of the Subject Leader

The role of the English subject leadership team is carried out in accordance with the school's policies and aims. Subject leaders actively participate in professional development through twilight sessions and Professional Development Meetings, where they share new ideas, resources, and examples of good practice from within the school.

The English subject leader is responsible for:

- Monitoring the standards of pupils' work and the quality of teaching across the school
- Providing support and guidance to colleagues in the teaching of English
- Keeping up to date with current developments and research in English education
- Offering strategic leadership and direction for the subject, ensuring it aligns with the school's vision and priorities
- Organising and managing resources to effectively support the school's English policy
- Coordinating the purchase, organisation, and distribution of teaching materials and resources
- Arranging and facilitating in-service training and support for staff
- Liaising with outside agencies, partner schools, and local colleges to enhance provision and share best practice

Through these responsibilities, the English subject leader plays a vital role in ensuring the ongoing development and success of English teaching and learning at Sacred Heart.

Parental Involvement

At Sacred Heart, we believe that parents play a fundamental role in supporting their children's learning and development. We are committed to keeping parents well informed about what and how their children are learning and how they can be involved in this process.

We support parental involvement by:

- Holding parents' evenings to discuss children's progress and set targets
- Sending reading books and home/school record books to facilitate communication and monitor progress at home and at school
- Offering Study Support Sessions in each class to guide parents in supporting their child's learning at home
- Hosting drop-in sessions where parents can work alongside their children in school
- Providing an annual report that clearly explains each child's progress and offers guidance on how to further develop their learning
- Regularly explaining to parents how they can support their children with home learning activities

Through these initiatives, we foster a strong partnership between home and school, helping to ensure that every child receives consistent encouragement and support in their learning journey.

Conclusion

This policy is designed to work in harmony with other school policies to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach to teaching and learning. It should therefore be read in conjunction with the following related school documents:

- Reading Policy
- Responding to Pupils' Work / Feedback / Marking Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Computing Policy
- Equality Statement
- Handwriting Progression Document
- Writing Progression Document
- Appendix – SEND Provision in English.

Together, these policies and documents support our commitment to providing high-quality, inclusive English education that meets the needs of all our pupils.