



St Faith's

Church of England
Infant and Nursery School

Writing Policy

“Our inclusive St Faith’s family strives to enable all to achieve their full potential and inspire a community of hope and friendship.

We seek excellence by ensuring a safe, respectful and flourishing learning community, where differences are celebrated and our genuine love and high expectations make a difference to all.”

Oscar Romero “Aspire not to have more, but to be more.”

Introduction

As a Church School, the distinctive Christian values of respect, compassion, trust, justice, friendship and community are promoted through the experiences we offer to all our pupils, to give pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding that they require to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. We promote the teaching and understanding of fundamental British values in order to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. We positively teach the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. Teaching the fundamental British values helps the children to become informed, active and responsible citizens.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of **writing** in our school. It reflects the consensus of all members of staff. It is based on current practice and has the full agreement of the governing body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Head teacher, teaching staff and support staff. It is our collective responsibility to raise awareness and that all policies are known, understood, and used in an appropriate way.

The teaching of English embraces all aspects of language. In the literate society in which we live, the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in the written word, and to read a wide range of different text types, is essential for children to achieve their full potential. Writing is part of one of the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Our aim is for children to enjoy writing and to express themselves creatively and intellectually through words. Spelling, handwriting, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation are developed, all of which contribute to fluent written transcription skills.

Introduction

At St Faith’s Church of England Infant and Nursery School, we believe that every child has the right to succeed in writing, regardless of ability, background and needs. Our aim is to facilitate creative, fluent writers who write for a purpose. A child’s ability to communicate in writing affects performance in most other areas of the curriculum and can also influence individual self-esteem. Ultimately, we want children to enjoy the writing process and to include all the different elements naturally.

Foundational Knowledge

We recognise that Early Writing is a major component of Foundational Knowledge.

At St Faith’s the teaching and learning of Foundational Knowledge is paramount in all that we do. We aim for all children to leave our school with the key foundations for learning in place as they progress further along their learning journey.

The research report ‘Strong foundations in the first years of school’ published by Ofsted (October 2024) emphasised how children need to secure strong Foundational Knowledge across Reception and KS1 to give them the best chance of

educational success. Our aims and objectives for all areas of foundational knowledge are set out clearly in our Foundational Knowledge policy.

Aims

We aim for all children to develop a life-long love of language and literacy. Through the teaching of English, our children develop the essential skills needed to prepare them for life. The skills taught in all areas of English ensure that the children can successfully access all other areas of the curriculum with growing independence and confidence to equip them for their future. We know that future success is linked directly to a broad vocabulary, love of reading and ability to communicate effectively through writing. We aim for our children to:

- enjoy writing for a range of purposes.
- be able to write independently, applying the skills that have been taught.
- develop and use a wide range vocabulary and use within their writing through opportunities to learn, practise and apply new words.
- secure a good understanding in the basic skills of transcription, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and composition.
- confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas, and emotions through their writing.
- develop clear and coherent handwriting where all letters are formed correctly and appropriately sized.

Throughout the EYFS and Key Stage One, our children have many opportunities to develop and apply their writing. The development of language, reading and physical development play an integral role in a child's writing journey.

Early Writing

The teaching of writing will be closely linked to a child's reading and phonics ability to ensure maximise progress and achievement. We understand the importance of developing a child's transcription skills first, enabling them to become effective writers.

Here is a breakdown of what constitutes "Strong Foundations" for writing in the Early Years (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1). Our writing is taught through Drawing Club in the EYFS and Talk for Writing in Years 1 and 2.

1. Physicality: The Motor Foundation

Ofsted emphasises that children cannot write effectively if they are struggling with the physical act of mark-making. Strong foundations begin with:

Gross Motor Skills: Developing core strength, shoulder stability, and elbow joints through climbing, crawling, and large-scale movements.

Fine Motor Skills: Developing the "intrinsic muscles" of the hand through activities like playdough, threading, and using tweezers.

Tripod Grip: A focus on moving from a palmar supinate grasp (whole hand) to a functional tripod grip to allow for fluid writing.

2. Transcription: Spelling and Handwriting

Transcription is priority. For writing to become "fluent," the mechanics must become automatic. Ofsted highlight that if a child has to think too hard about how to form a letter or spell words, they are less able to think about what they are writing and those who struggle with spelling will often write less and produce lower quality writing:

Phonics is Key: Writing is the "encoding" side of phonics. Children need a rock-solid grasp of Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) to spell words accurately. Children hear the spoken word 'dog', say dog- /d/o/g/ and then write the three corresponding graphemes 'd', 'o', 'g' to spell the word 'dog'.

Letter Formation: Schools with strong foundations teach letter formation explicitly and early. This prevents "bad habits" (like starting letters from the bottom) that slow down writing speed later in KS1.

Dictation: By telling the child exactly what to write, you free up 100% of their working memory to focus purely on transcription. Dictation allows children to practise spelling and punctuation without the added burden of having to compose their own sentences at the same time.

3. **Composition:** From Talk to Text - A strong foundation in writing is built upon the core principle that robust oral language skills must precede and underpin all successful written composition:

Oral Rehearsal: Encouraging children to speak their sentences aloud multiple times before putting pen to paper.

Vocabulary Wealth: Exposure to high-quality stories and non-fiction to build a "bank" of words and phrases.

Foundational Sentences: In KS1, the focus is on the "simple sentence" — understanding where a capital letter goes and why a full stop is necessary before moving on to more complex sentences.

Early writing is encouraged through mark making opportunities in our Nursery, alongside the development of language in all aspects of the curriculum. We acknowledge and celebrate that behind every squiggle is a meaning or a story. This continues into Reception where we continue to enthuse children to write for a range of purposes and use a range of language in their composition. The Drawing Club stimulus are carefully chosen to support writing development, alongside our high expectations and the belief that every child is a writer. This is mirrored in our consistent and engaging whole school approach.

Talk for Writing begins in Key Stage 1 where key focus texts are used to further develop language and their writing skills. We know that learning must become part of a child's long-term memory for it to be effective, consequently we know that intelligent repetition and skilled teaching is the key. We rarely teach skills in isolation, such as grammar, and punctuation – we include them in a well thought out unit of work that enables children to make links, apply taught skills in a context and see a purpose to their work. This is supported by opportunities to write across the curriculum, ensuring that the writing has a purpose and is relevant to their own experiences. Furthermore, we have high expectations and aspirations for all children and to ensure that all learners make good progress in their writing from their starting point, striving to achieve their full potential.

Drawing Club in the Early Years – our approach

In Reception, our approach to the teaching of writing is through Drawing Club. This concept was created by Greg Bottrill. This is an adventure into stories and writing and uses a range of different stimuli to create enthusiasm for writing and develop language. Through the use of drawing, the imagination is brought to life as transcriptional writing skills are taught and practised. It focusses on making conversations, linking to developing vocabulary, and making marks leading into writing. The sessions consist of a carpet time when the story is shared, discussed and drawing and writing are modelled. During this part, pace is critical. The children then work in mixed ability groups to share and record their own ideas.

Alongside this, transcriptional skills are prioritised. This includes daily phonic lessons and a range of gross motor, fine motor and handwriting activities for the children to complete.

Talk for Writing – our approach

This builds upon the Drawing Club approach taught in Reception.

Talk for Writing is an innovative approach to teaching writing, developed by the literacy specialist and writer Pie Corbett. It uses high quality model texts to introduce the children to different story/text types, which they then learn off by heart and scrutinise with a writer's critical eye. Talk for Writing is powerful because it enables children to imitate the language, they need for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. It follows three stages: imitation, innovation, and invention.

During the first stage, the children are introduced to a high-quality text model that they learn to retell through words and actions. These are reflected on and adjusted to suit the needs of the current cohort. Children will internalise the pattern of the language and use this when recalling the story. They then translate the actions into pictures and create a story map of the text. Once the language is internalised, they can begin to piece together the key ingredients that help to make it work. This may include a range of reading as-a-reader and as-

a-writer activities. To help retell the story we have actions for specific words that we use. These are displayed in classrooms from Nursery to Year 2, to prompt the children when they are recalling the story.

Once the children have internalised the text, they are ready to start innovating on the pattern of the text. In this stage the original text is adapted by the children. This could start with a change of character, setting or a change in the plot. Changes are made to the original story map and children then start learning to retell their new versions. This is then translated onto paper and children write out their innovated story in manageable sections. Each writing session has a spelling and grammar focus and children are encouraged to reflect over their writing as they go along and to regularly read their work aloud, to check it makes sense.

In the final stage, the teachers assess the children's work and they adapt their planning in light of what the children can actually do, and to cater for next steps. The children use all the skills they have learned to write an independent piece of writing. They will also edit and improve their writing from the innovation stage.

Reading is the foundation of writing and children are unable to become great writers if they are not regularly exposed to a broad vocabulary, range of genres, exciting story plots and interesting characters. Children who read for pleasure are also more likely to succeed as writers because of the way reading develops language development.

Developing Composition

Our Talk for Writing topics begin with a creative hook. These focus on real life experiences and prepares everyone for a new focus text in an enthusiastic and engaging way.

We use a range of strategies and techniques for the teaching of composition, and these include:

- Text mapping and oral rehearsal of texts.
- Exploring and learning new vocabulary to enhance composition.
- Whole class and group storytelling to apply language learnt.
- 'Reading as a reader' and 'reading as a writer' activities for children to develop their range of language, understanding of different text types and grammatical skills. We encourage all children to be adventurous and selective with the vocabulary they choose to use.
- Exploring different sentence patterns and text features
- Short burst writing activities, to develop and rehearse ideas before writing and applying it to the focus text.
- Modelled and shared writing - It is vital that children see their teachers write and know that effective writing takes time and effort. By teaching this way, we can scaffold and support our children's composition allowing them to both share and magpie ideas.
- Guided writing – developing skills of composition and accuracy as a group.
- Innovation – once the children have developed relevant skills and internalising focus texts, we change them together and then the children have opportunities to innovate their own.
- The key characteristics of different types of writing are taught and developed in extended writing sessions and through cross-curricular contexts. Children are given as many 'real' reasons for writing as possible to make it purposeful and meaningful. They write for a range of audiences and explore a range of text types, having opportunities to empathise, explore different viewpoints, characters and perspectives.

Developing Early Transcription

Early transcription is a major part of our teaching and learning within writing. In the Early Years and through Key Stage One as children begin their writing journey, it is vital that they develop the relevant knowledge and skills to enable them to become independent and effective writers.

We use a range of strategies and techniques for the teaching of transcription, and these include:

- Our approach to phonics – We use Little Wandle and further details and our Phonics policy can be found on our school website.
- Punctuation and grammar are taught both discretely and in context of the focus high quality text.
- Short burst writing activities, to develop and practise skills before applying it to the focus text.
- Modelled and shared writing - It is vital that children see their teachers write and know that effective writing takes time and effort. We frequently model our writing and editing process, in a range of ways as identified by Alex Quigley in Closing the Writing Gap. By teaching this way, we can scaffold and support our children's writing supporting transcription.
- Use of dictation and remembering sentences for our children.
- Providing scaffolding to support learning and reduce the demand on working memory. This includes tricky word mats, phonic mats, capital letter strips and model and text mapping during composition.
- Adult support within the children's writing will be in blue ink and marking and feedback will be in pink ink.
- Children are taught and encouraged to edit their writing to improve accuracy. This will be completed using a purple pen.
- Handwriting is also taught as a discrete session, rigorously following the Penpals Handwriting Programme. In the EYFS this also involves the development of both gross and fine motor skills and children are encouraged to develop a comfortable and effective pencil grip.

Marking and feedback will be live as much as possible to ensure that this moves learning forwards for both individuals and groups of children. Editing and improving work together aims for the best possible outcomes and supports wellbeing for all.

Writing Outcomes

The outcomes for our children are clear: progress, sustained learning, and transferrable skills. Our high expectations and enthusiasm promote a love of writing with our St Faith's Family. Both summative and formative assessments are used to carefully plan next steps for groups and individuals. In writing:

- Children will enjoy writing across a range of genres, for different purposes and with increasing independence.
- Children of all abilities and starting points will be able to succeed in all writing lessons. This is because of appropriate scaffolding, personalised activities and building on their previous learning. Children are also given the opportunity to edit and improve their own work.
- Children will have a wide vocabulary that they use within their writing through opportunities to learn, practise and apply new words.
- Children will leave our school being able to effectively apply spelling rules and patterns they have been taught.
- All children will have a good understanding in the basic skills of transcription, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and composition.
- We aim for everyone to be able to confidently communicate their knowledge, ideas and emotions through their writing.

- Children are taught to recognise their attainment and the progress they have made through quality marking and feedback.
- Parents and carers will have a good understanding of how they can support at home, and how writing is taught across our school.
- We strive for the percentage of children working at the expected level and beyond within each year group will be at least in line with national averages.
- We aim for there to be no significant gaps in the progress of different groups of pupils (e.g. disadvantaged vs non-disadvantaged).

We strive for all children to reach their full potential and ensure that they are fully prepared for the next stage of their writing journey.

Our approach to Handwriting

Handwriting is a fine motor skill, and it is a vital element to the writing journey. We aim for all children to develop an automaticity in their handwriting and all children achieving a legible style of handwriting with a good standard of presentation. There are many factors that contribute to the assessment of writing, however, to become a comprehensive writer, children must demonstrate a good standard of handwriting and presentation. A child's ability to write comfortably and legibly contributes to the performance in all other curriculum areas and can affect an individual's self-esteem. Therefore, our school places great emphasis on the teaching of an appropriate handwriting style so that children will not be at a disadvantage when their writing is assessed.

We follow the Little Wandle handwriting scheme to develop a consistent and fluent handwriting style. This is taught in line with our phonics teaching. Children are shown how to hold a pencil comfortably and are encouraged to adopt a correct posture when writing. They are entitled to good quality, well maintained writing tools. All staff are mindful that their handwriting should reflect the high expectations we expect of our children, using our chosen script. They ensure that they model the handwriting scheme when writing with the children. All children's handwriting skills are valued and built upon. If progress begins to slow, children are given targeted fine motor support or handwriting support. This could be using a specific writing tool, extra muscle strengthening activities or targeted letter formation. Any differing needs of left-handed children are taken into consideration. Letters are displayed in all classrooms to support the children when writing and handwriting incentives, such as handwriting heroes and handwriting pencils, are used to encourage and celebrate successes.

Children are taught handwriting in both incidental and discrete sessions throughout the week. In these sessions, the children are taught and reminded about pencil grip, posture for writing and letter formation and orientation. The children are then expected to apply the skills learned in these sessions to all other areas of writing. Any letter reversals or incorrect formation is addressed in class through verbal or written marking and feedback.

Our Year 1 children use handwriting lined books for both Talk for Writing and handwriting, to promote accurate sizing and the positioning of letters. This is also modelled by the teacher during shared writing.

Our approach to Phonics and Spelling

Phonics and Reading are given a high priority at our school, as a gateway to all learning. We follow the Little Wandle Phonics scheme, throughout Reception and Year 1. It is taught daily and consistently across our classes and scaffolding is in place to allow children to apply their phonics into their writing.

Children need support and encouragement to develop as confident, competent spellers. The ability to spell most words correctly is often closely associated with good self-esteem and affects performance in many other areas of the curriculum. All children are taught to spell tricky words in line with the phonic teaching. Where possible,

children will be encouraged to identify their own spelling errors. They will be given opportunities for presenting written work for display so that they will understand the need for correct spelling, handwriting and presentation.

Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar is the way in which sentences are used in spoken language, reading and in writing. Sentences are the construct which help give words their sense. The purpose of grammar teaching is for pupils to become conscious of patterns of language in words, phrases and sentences, which they can apply in their own work to enhance meaning. The purpose of punctuation is to clarify the meaning of texts. Readers use punctuation to help make sense of written texts, while writers use punctuation to help communicate intended meaning to the reader. Exposing children to an ambitious and wide range of vocabulary is crucial in developing spoken and written language. Vocabulary is taught through reading and writing sessions, with key vocabulary always available to the children. The teaching of vocabulary, alongside speaking and listening skills, are detailed in our Oracy Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the responsibility of all teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. An agreed governor will meet with the Writing leader at least termly to discuss best practice and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Writing Leader and Senior Management Team will carry out termly monitoring of writing as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. This will include looking at books, spending time in lessons, pupil and parent questionnaires, meetings with staff, providing training, pupil progress meetings and completing resources audits. Writing is assessed formally at data collection points. This is also explored during pupil progress meetings. Staff will take part in internal and external moderation each year.

Parental Partnerships

We understand the positive impact parental engagement can have on a child's learning. We strive to build productive and valuable home school partnerships. Children's writing is shared with parents and carers at termly Progress Meetings and adults are invited into the classroom to look at their children's work at different points of the year.

We hold information meetings for parents throughout the year, including Talk for Writing for Key Stage 1, Early Reading and Phonics meetings, (for the Early Years and for Year One), and a Year Two Reading and SATs talk. The link between reading and writing is explained. If adults are unable to attend, handouts are given out and follow up discussions with class teachers are available. We celebrate writing as much as possible by sharing it with adults, head teacher awards, and with team points and shooting stars. The writing celebrated may be from an English lesson or where the skills have been applied to writing in other areas of our curriculum.

Safeguarding procedures

At St Faith's we have a positive culture of safeguarding, with effective policies and procedures in place. Our safeguarding procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on our website <https://stfaithscofe.secure-primariesite.net/safeguarding-information-and-policies/>.

Approved by the governing body on:	July 2026
Signed (Subject Leader):	L Kingston
Review Date:	July 2027

APPENDIX A - Our Writing Journey across the school

Nursery

In Nursery, we provide an environment that supports the learning of vocabulary, fine motor skills and emergent writing, which stimulates a child's enjoyment and confidence in learning. Early reading and writing skills are interlinked and children are exposed to familiar print and the recognition of different sounds which is then followed by meaningful mark making and attempts to recreate them. Mark making is encouraged in all areas of the nursery and in all areas of the curriculum as the children record information in their play. There is a writing table in the environment with exciting and engaging resources to encourage children to mark make and write purposefully. Other learning areas include fine motor activities to strengthen muscles in preparation for writing.

Reception

Independent writing is encouraged in Reception and is developed through child-initiated play and adult led activities. The balance of adult activities with writing in their play allows for skills to be taught and then for the children to practise these in their independent learning. These are predominantly taught through Drawing Club sessions. Daily opportunities for writing are provided, challenges in the writing area linking to a familiar story, in the role play area and across all areas of the curriculum both indoors and outdoors. Children also practise letter formation in regular handwriting sessions and write daily in our phonics sessions too. This combination of writing opportunities seeks to develop a love of writing and a good understanding of our early transcription in writing as they move into Key Stage 1.

Key Stage One

Key Stage One children have daily Talk for Writing lessons. Some lessons have a grammar, spelling or vocabulary focus and handwriting is expected to be consistent across all writing activities and tasks. Grammar, where possible, is taught in context rather than discretely. A selection of poetry, fiction and non-fiction genres and texts are explored [across the year](#) to ensure children receive a varied and rich literary diet. Writing sessions link to a particular book or text, following the Talk for Writing approach. These are carefully chosen to ensure they model ambitious grammar and vocabulary that children can interpret and adapt to include in their own writing. Each text provides a clear focus for that unit of work, developing key knowledge of composition and transcriptional skills, in a range of different text types. Progress is closely monitored through the units of work, using cold and hot tasks to carefully assess the needs of individual learners and next steps. This feeds into the planning of each unit of learning. Where gaps in learning may appear, especially with regards to early transcription skills effectively and timely intervention and additional support is put into place.

It is also important to provide writing opportunities for other areas of the curriculum, for children to apply their skills in a range of contexts. Clear expectations are given in each session, so children have a good understanding of what is expected and writing prompts and cards are available where appropriate. Learning is built upon throughout the week or weeks with opportunities for extended and independent pieces of writing. Adults work with different groups of children in each session, tailoring the outcomes for different learners and abilities.