St Hugh's School

Writing Policy

INTRODUCTION

**1.1   What is the place of this subject?
         What is the purpose of this document?**

Rationale

At St Hugh's we are committed to developing the writing skills of our students through high quality teaching and learning, exploration, sensory and tactile experiences. Developing our student's skills in writing is a core priority for our school. We understand that writing is a means of expression, both for personal cognitive purposes and for communicating meaning with others. It can be interpreted as 'any activity that communicates and record events, experiences, information, thoughts and feelings' (QCA: 2001). Therefore, as a school, we work together to promote the philosophy that 'Every teacher is a teacher of Literacy'. Writing is an important life-long skill that supports independence in modern society and the wider world.

We work together to -
> Nurture the student's sense of themselves as writers
> Develop confident, independent writers who can use writing as a means of expressing their thoughts and ideas
> Encourage students' to become enthusiastic and reflective writers

**1.2   How and by whom was this document compiled?
When was the policy agreed by the governing body?**

This document was compiled by the English Co-ordinator, the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant professionals, including the Complex Needs Co-ordinator and Speech and Language Therapist in order to ensure the diverse needs of our students are met. A 'multi-professional' approach is employed to source appropriate resources and expertise to create personal learning programmes that challenge our students at an appropriate level.

1.3   Who has the responsibility to implement this document?

Our whole school community is responsible for the successful implementation of this document. We have a clear vision that advocates high expectations of all students. We recommend that students continue their learning at home, setting an expectation that a minimum of one piece of home study should be completed for all core subjects on a weekly basis. Additional activities requiring the application of writing skills linked to other curriculum topic areas will also be provided by other subject teachers.

2.   THE NATURE OF (SUBJECT / CURRICULUM AREA)

2.1   What is this area of learning about?

Writing is a medium of communication that represents language through the inscription of signs and symbols. Writing is a means of recording ideas, creative thinking and spoken language. Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures as speech, such as vocabulary, grammar and semantics. The initial teaching of the alphabet and phonic system provide the foundation for students developing universally recognised symbols and words to form sentences.

We recognise that the teaching of the writing process is inextricably linked to the teaching of Reading and Speaking and Listening. Consequently, teachers use a variety of teaching methods and emphasis in the teaching of writing which reflects this. Furthermore, we recognise students as individualised learners, and as such, plan lessons to include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches where appropriate which best suit the needs of the students.

2.2   What are the main contributions of this area to the development of individual students and the life of the school.

The teaching of Literacy develops skills through which our students can give critical responses to social, moral, spiritual and cultural questions they meet in their environment and also in the wider world. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literary heritage and texts from other cultures. The structure of teaching sequences allows staff to incorporate strands of ECM -Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Stay Safe, Be Healthy, and Prepare for Life Outside School into their lessons and students are given opportunities to work together, explore issues through drama techniques such as role-play, conscience alley, hot-seating, freeze-frame and thought-tracking which then lead into the writing process.

Speaking and listening, role play and subject specific vocabulary activities are used widely to develop our student's knowledge and understanding of vocabulary in order to inform their writing ideas. Talk for writing and collaborative learning strategies are used effectively to meet the diverse range of learning needs. Talk partners and small group collaboration encourages students to explain, evaluate and develop their creative thinking to support the planning, writing and editing process.

In our everyday professional practice, we understand the importance of modelling Standard English, using clear and effective communication systems (verbal, non-verbal and visual cues) that expose our students to a varied and rich vocabulary to exemplify meanings.

Our aims and objectives are-
> To learn to write with confidence, enjoyment and fluency showing creativity, understanding and an awareness of the reader.
> To be exposed to a literary rich environment that supports the development of our own communication systems
> To develop mark making and emergent writing skills
> To develop handwriting and word processing skills
> To develop an understanding of phonics, spelling patterns and rules to spell accurately
> To write with a degree of independence using phonics for writing strategies including the practise page, sound buttons and phoneme fingers.
> To develop a growing vocabulary and literary devices to enrich writing.
> To orally rehearse and discuss our writing ideas
> To effectively express my ideas in a range of fiction and non-fiction genres.
> Use planning and drafting techniques as an integral part of the writing process
> To evaluate our own work identifying strengths and suggesting improvements

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3.   ENTITLEMENT.

3.1   What are the statutory requirements for all the children in this school?

All students have access to the National Curriculum as a statutory requirement. Adaptations are made to the curriculum objectives in order to differentiate for and accommodate the needs of our students.

3.2   Is there anything additional to the statutory requirements which the school feels needs to be given an emphasis?

- ➤ Guidance from the QCA on Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties 2001.
- ➤ Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (2013: DFE)
- ➤ Developing Writing in the Early years Foundation Stage (2012: Islington Gov)

4.   IMPLEMENTATION.

4.1   A simple explanation of how the entitlement is to be introduced.

Whole staff training is delivered on a regular basis as part of our training schedule to ensure our staff are up-to-date with school policies and procedures. Training sessions focus on the importance of providing students with an extensive range of different writing experiences and opportunities as well as strategies to support independent writing that are essential to promote effective teaching and learning for all abilities and needs.

4.2   Statements reflecting the school's approach to the teaching and learning of this curriculum area, including areas from the Statutory Orders which the school feels needs to be given emphasis. How will the special emphasis be given?

Through the delivery of the English curriculum, students are exposed to a variety of learning experiences in order to motivate and inspire them. Whole-class shared reading and writing activities, whole class focused word or sentence work, guided reading and writing activities, independent activities, Speaking and Listening and Drama activities all serve to underpin the acquisition of writing skills at all stages.

Students have opportunities to write in speaking and listening and writing areas, where there are a range of different writing frames e.g. postcards, menus, invitations, booklets, labels, story writing papers etc. Wherever possible, writing is made meaningful by being planned for a specific purpose or in response to a particular experience.

Lessons include the modelling of writing by the teacher and the use of 'scaffolding' and text maps. Scaffolded writing frames, either on paper or screen, act as a transition between shared or guided writing and individual writing. This may include copy writing and overwriting to develop early writing skills. Writing and displays around the classroom include key vocabulary on Magpie trees, writing prompts, tricky words and stimuli along with celebrations of student's writing.

Independent writing is encouraged through students own exploratory mark marking and emergent writing. They have access to different materials such as: various types of paper, felt tipped pens, small white boards, chalks, magnetic letters and boards, `sand, big brushes and

paint or water, as well as computers to encourage writing in a range of situations. Alongside this they take part in activities to encourage physical development that will build fine and gross motor skills necessary to develop a comfortable, legible script. As they obtain more phonic knowledge and confidence, students are encouraged to use this in their writing; at first by representing initial sounds, then progressing to include final sounds. Evidence of the phonic and teaching input into a students' independent writing can be seen through the students' practise pages alongside their writing. Where possible all students are expected to write with a degree of independence and reliance on copy-writing or over-writing is limited to those with a range of complex needs.

Students are exposed to a wide range of quality texts and use a range of resources such as alphabet cards, word cards, VCOP pyramids and prompts, dictionaries, thesauruses to support their work. Purposes, audiences and appropriate forms are identified and, through shared and guided writing, the pupils have opportunities to plan, develop and review their writing both on paper and on screen.

Fictional story writing is promoted based on known and new texts, focusing on particular elements, e.g. building character profiles, ascribing appropriate dialogue to particular characters, creating recognisable settings. Poetry, rhyme and language play provide models for the pupils' own writing through adaptation, mimicry or substitution. Some organisational and linguistic features of non-fiction texts are evident in the students'' own writing of recounts, reports, instructions and explanations.

We advocate the use of -
> Personalised learning targets
> Students taking charge and leading their own learning
> Everyone sharing in the modelling the writing process
> Close links to speaking and listening, drama and role play activities
> Rhymes, songs and chants involving actions (e.g. Jolly phonics)
> Meaningful links between reading and writing activities, to develop powers of imagination, creativity, inventiveness and critical awareness
> ICT hardware and software to support and enhance teaching and learning
> The teacher/teaching assistant use Assessment for Learning to observe, identify and records strategies the students are using to support the next steps in their learning journey
> Progress in tracked using the Literacy Profile and B Squared tracking systems.
> The use of text maps to ensure familiarity with a text or writing experience.
> The use of phonics for writing strategies to support independent writing for example the practise page, sound buttons, Magpie trees and displayed tricky words.

4.3 Specific issues relating to the teaching of this curriculum area in a subject specific or cross curricular way.

Writing skills are taught within timetabled English lessons while the development and application of literacy skills is promoted across the curriculum at every available opportunity. Writing for a variety of purposes and contexts is actively encouraged through the use of themes and topics as a vehicle for learning.

4.4 Specific issues related to the use of commercial schemes.

Phonics and sound work is taught through the Letter and Sounds scheme as recommended by the DfES. There is a strong emphasis on learning the high frequency word lists in unison with phonics phases teaching as documented in the St Hugh's Literacy Profile tracking document. For those students who are working beyond Letters and Sounds knowledge of KS2 spelling patterns is developed through the use of the St. Hugh's Extended Literacy Profile. ICT support resources and targeted interventions are used for students who would benefit from additional teaching in phases 2-5 of Letters and Sounds to help to 'close the gap'.

We draw on other commercially published programmes to provide targeted intervention in specific areas. For example, 'The Write from the Start' programme is used to support emerging writing progression and initial letter formation. The Twinkl Phonics App, Phonics Play and Phonics Bug are also used within phonics intervention sessions to support spelling development.

4.5 Specific issues related to the setting / grouping of students.

As St Hugh's is a special school, we are acutely aware of the importance of developing our literacy community through promoting enrichment experiences for our students.

We promote-

- Sharing literacy experiences on a regular basis with visitors, our school governors and our local community
- Enriching our students reading experiences by holding celebratory events in school inviting guest speakers like our local Mayor, Community Police and Scunthorpe United
- Establishing strong links with community experts – for example the library services and Museum to provide a range unique and interesting experiences to inform our writing
- Establishing links with high-quality theatre production companies who offer enrichment performances of classic literature, pantomime productions and workshops involving GCSE texts at a level appropriate to the needs of our students.

4.6 Specific issues related to specialist teachers / teaching.

The English Co-ordinator works to continually evaluate and develop teaching and learning in relation to language, communication, reading, writing and spoken language. Frequent meetings with all English teachers are held to evaluate and share best practice. Focus groups have been established to drive new initiatives across the whole school and support staff in developing their resources and practice in relation to our more able GCSE group.

- A specialist teacher for Dyslexia is employed to carry out screening and provide focused intervention. The Dyslexia programme follows a prescriptive set of lessons that target building memory skills, sequencing, developing letter and sound recognition and word and sentence building.
- Speech and Language therapists are employed by St Hugh's to assess student's needs and abilities in order to create personal programmes that are reviewed on a regular basis. SALT targets are also incorporated into EHCP and PAP outcomes to ensure consistency and rigour in our assessments systems.

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- ➤ English intervention is planned through frequent data analysis to identify students who require additional support and bespoke programmes of intervention are planned and implemented.
- ➤ A teacher and two teaching assistants are trained in the use of Precision Teaching to offer personalised interventions for specific students where needed.

4.7 Specific issues related to the teaching of the under 5's

Not applicable

4.8 Specific issues related to Special Educational Needs.

St Hugh's is a Special School providing personalised programmes of study to meet each individual student's needs.

4.9 Specific issues related to ICT.

Students use ICT in English lessons to enhance their learning and understanding of spelling patterns, word and sentence level work and to develop their ability to draft their work and use multimedia to study and explore how words and images are combined to convey meaning. Students also have opportunities to use and apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

St Hugh's Access Library offers a full range of communication devices to support and encourage interaction and linguistic understanding. We have a variety of products that record audio and visual messages like Big Mack's, Switches, Tech speak, Recording mats, Speech bubbles, Go Talk, Talking photo albums and Sequence cards.

Various interactive websites and software are used to develop writing skills and support teaching and learning. Choose it, 2Create, 2Create Story Maker, Clicker 6, Twinkl Phonics and Inclusive Resources software programs are available to support writing development. Teaching staff embed ICT in their teaching of writing, drawing on useful websites like the National Literacy Trust, Communication 4 all, Phonics Play, Twinkl Phonics and Espresso. Most recently the Bug Club system is used throughout the school to provide further phonics input in addition to Grammar and Spelling resources to aid the development of spelling and writing.

4.10 Specific issues related to Equal Opportunities.

Bilingual texts are used to support our students and their families with English as an additional language. A variety of texts celebrating diversity are available in the library and used across the curriculum. 'Talking Stories' software is available for students with EAL to listen to and respond to writing in a variety of different languages.

4.11 Specific issues related to the cross curricular themes.

At St Hugh's teachers are encouraged to develop links across the curriculum to provide a holistic and meaningful experience for students. Texts are used as vehicles to inspire students learning and introduce students to wider issues and events.

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4.12   Specific issues related to Health & Safety

Not applicable

4.13   Specific issues related to parental involvement.

English home study is provided on a weekly basis to support the learning taking place in school. Parents use the home-school journal to check for homework return dates and any additional information from the teacher.

Parents and students are encouraged to use the VLE to engage in home-school projects and visit the school website to keep up to date on useful websites and advice on how to support their child's development. Online interactive activities can be set by the teacher for completion at home on Bug Club and Grammar and Spelling Bug.

Parental involvement in supporting writing is also encouraged through parent events, workshops and guidance within the journal such as sound mat and speed sounds charts.

4.14   Specific issues related to resources.

As a school we are fully committed to inclusive practice, therefore order to cater for the wide spectrum of our student's needs, we use a variety of sensory resources.

➢ Makaton signs and symbols are used to support our students understanding of print and texts. Specialist software, Communicate in Print is used to translate text into symbol form to support the development of early reading and writing skills.

5.   ASSESSMENT.

5.1   Assessment procedures specific to this area of the curriculum which are not set down in the assessment policy.

The BSquared tracking system is used to assess students against the National Curriculum criteria and P scales. Individual student Literacy Profiles and Extended Literacy Profiles are used as a running record to inform teaching and learning sequences, planning for progression and support intervention programmes where required.

5.2   Specific areas of this curriculum area which are assessed differently.

'The Engagement Profile' and 'Routes for Learning' are used to assess and record the achievements of our students with profound, multiple and complex needs.

5.3   Evidence of a child's achievement which needs to be retained.

Literacy Profile tracking documents provide a continuous record of achievements in writing graphemes and frequency words. Evidence of students' achievements are kept in a variety of forms including photographical, digital video, digital recordings and written work. Online Apps to record progress are used by individual teachers, particularly where activities are practical in nature. 2Build a Profile is used widely by teachers across the curriculum.

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6.   BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION.

6.1   Documents consulted in drawing up this particular policy.

- ➢ The National Curriculum
- ➢ Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (2013: DFE)
- ➢ Developing Writing in the Early years Foundation Stage (2012: Islington Gov)
- ➢ Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with Learning difficulties (QCA Guidance: 2001)

7.   REVIEW.

7.1   Policy originally written by Jessica Wood - October 2013 and updated by Rachel Brunt – October 2016.
         This policy will be reviewed and presented to the governing body by the English Co-ordinator.