

## **Shape the Future Leaders Coalition 2025-26 Case Study**

**School:** Thames Christian School, London

**Project Leader:** Madeleine Champagnie, Head of English | Innovation

**Research Strand:** AI & Digital Pedagogy

**Research Question:** Can the use of an LLM help to improve pupils' writing in a more precise way, alongside traditional teacher marking?

**Timeline:** October 2025 - March 2026

**Participants:** Years 9 and 11 English classes

### **Key Data Collection:**

- Writing grades (AO5 & AO6) recorded at multiple checkpoints
- Student target tracking in exercise books
- Teacher and pupil end-of-project surveys
- Qualitative observations

### **The Challenge**

Thames Christian School is a small, dyslexia-friendly independent school in central London serving mixed-ability classes across the full range of student needs. After running exploratory workshops in July 2024 where students experimented with AI for creative writing, Head of English Madeleine Champagnie observed a critical insight: while students quickly grasped that AI couldn't replicate the depth and layering of human creativity, there remained an unexplored question about AI's role in developing technical precision. Could AI serve as a targeted tool for improving the mechanical aspects of writing - spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary - without displacing the essential human work of composition and critical thinking? For a school with high numbers of dyslexic students, this question carries particular weight: might AI provide the kind of individualized technical feedback that transforms students' relationship with written accuracy?

### **The Action Research Approach**

Working with Year 9 and Year 11 English classes, Madeleine is implementing a structured workflow where students use Securly Chat (their school's filtered LLM built on Gemini) to receive detailed technical feedback on extended writing pieces. Rather than using AI for generation, students submit their own writing to the AI along with marking criteria, then engage in guided dialogue to identify one specific personal target - perhaps comma usage, a recurring spelling pattern, or vocabulary enhancement. The research follows a plan-act-observe-reflect cycle: students set their target in October/November, teachers hold them accountable through various methods (stickers, reminders, dialogic marking), and progress is tracked through multiple assessment points - December Year 11 mocks, January Animal Farm writing for Year 9, March Shakespeare character writing, and final Year 11 mocks. Critically, this

isn't about replacing teacher feedback - it's about increasing precision through a layer of AI-supported self-assessment that helps students take genuine ownership of their technical development.

### **The Broader Significance**

This project tackles a question central to the Coalition's work: where should AI sit in the pedagogical toolkit? Madeleine's initial experiment revealed what AI cannot do (replace the layered complexity of human creativity), but this follow-up explores what it might do effectively - provide the kind of granular, immediate, personalized feedback on technical accuracy that few teachers have time to deliver consistently. For dyslexia-friendly schools and inclusive settings, the implications are profound: if AI can successfully support students in developing technical precision without creating dependency, it could genuinely level the playing field. The research design also models responsible innovation - building on exploratory findings, using school-controlled filtered AI, embedding teacher judgment throughout, and committing to rigorous evaluation before claiming success. Most importantly, it tests whether AI can enhance rather than replace the student-teacher relationship by enabling students to arrive at teacher feedback already equipped with self-knowledge about their specific technical needs.