



Marking and Feedback Policy

July 2023



*"We all need people who will give us feedback.
That's how we improve."*

Bill Gates



Introduction

Synergy Schools Federation recognises the importance of feedback as part of the teaching & learning cycle, we aim to maximise the effectiveness of its use in practice. We are mindful also of the workload implications of written marking, and of the research surrounding effective feedback. Our policy is underpinned by the evidence of best practice from the Education Endowment Foundation and other expert organisations. The Education Endowment Foundation research shows that effective feedback should:

- redirect or refocus either the teacher's or the learner's actions to achieve a goal
- be specific, accurate and clear
- encourage and support further effort
- be given sparingly so that it is meaningful
- provide specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell students when they are wrong

Notably, the Department for Education's research into teacher workload has highlighted written marking as a key contributing factor to workload. Synergy schools understand that the most important activity for teachers is the teaching itself, supported by the design and preparation of lessons.

Key Principles

"The improvement of understanding is for two ends: first, our own increase of knowledge; secondly, to enable us to deliver that knowledge to others."

– John Locke

Our policy on feedback has at its core, a number of principles:

- the sole focus of feedback and marking should be to further children's learning;
- evidence of feedback and marking is incidental to the process; we do not provide additional evidence for external verification;
- written comments should only be used where they are accessible to students according to age and ability;
- We understand that feedback delivered closest to the point of action is most effective, and as such feedback delivered in lessons is more effective than comments provided at a later date;
- feedback is provided both to teachers and pupils as part of assessment processes in the classroom, and takes many forms other than written comments;
- feedback is a part of the school's wider assessment processes which aim to provide an appropriate level of challenge to pupils in lessons, allowing them to make good progress;

All pupils' work should be reviewed by teachers at the earliest appropriate opportunity so that it might impact on future learning. When work is reviewed, it should be acknowledged in books.

Our aim is to ensure that children are provided with timely and purposeful feedback that furthers their learning, and that teachers are able to gather feedback and assessments that enable them to adjust their teaching both within and across a sequence of lessons.

Feedback and marking in practice

“Communication – the human connection – is the key to personal success.”
 – Paul J. Meyer

It is vital that teachers evaluate the work that children undertake in lessons, and use information obtained from this to allow them to adjust their teaching. Feedback occurs at one of three common stages in the learning process:

1. Immediate feedback (human connection) – at the point of teaching
2. Summary feedback – at the end of a lesson/task
3. Review feedback – away from the point of teaching (including written comments)

The stages are deliberately numbered in order of priority, noting that feedback closest to the point of teaching and learning is likely to be most effective in driving further improvement and learning, especially for younger pupils. As a school, we place considerable emphasis on the provision of immediate feedback. Where feedback is based on review of work completed, the focus will often be on providing feedback for the teacher to further adapt teaching.

Type	What it Looks Like	Evidence (for observers)
Rapid Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes teacher gathering feedback from teaching, including mini-whiteboards, book work, etc • Takes place in lessons with individuals or small groups often given verbally to pupils for immediate action • May involve use of a teaching assistant to provide support or further challenging • May re-direct the focus of teaching or the task • May include highlighting/annotations according to the marking code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observations/learning walks • Some evidence of annotations or use of marking code – if relevant.
Reflect to progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place at the end of a lesson or activity - Often involves whole groups or classes • Provides an opportunity for evaluation of learning in the lesson • May take form of self- or peer- assessment against an agreed set of criteria • In some cases, may guide a teacher’s further use of review feedback, focusing on areas for development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observations/learning walks • Some evidence of self- and peer assessment • May be reflected in selected focus review feedback (marking)
Review and Retrieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place away from the point of teaching • May involve written comments/annotations for pupils to read/respond to • Provides teachers with opportunities for assessment of understanding • Leads to adaptation of future lessons through planning, grouping or adaptation of tasks • May lead to targets being set for pupils’ future attention, or immediate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of work completed • Written comments and appropriate responses/action • Adaptations to teaching sequences tasks when compared to planning • Use of annotations to indicate future groupings

All work will be acknowledged in some form by class teachers. This may be through simple symbols such as ticks, more detailed comments or verbally during lessons (VF in books). Written comments by staff will model presentation expectations – for example handwriting, use of ruler, and will always be in green pen.

In Foundation Stage

This is shared verbally with the child, with parents and carers and other adults working with them. This information is shared through Tapestry, home school diaries, reports and parents evening. EYFS teams will discuss targets and children's next steps regularly and will ensure the provision responds the children's needs.

In Key Stage 1

Review and retrieval marking will only lead to written comments for those pupils who are able to read and respond independently, this is at the teachers discretion. However, all pieces of work will be responded to in some way, in order to show pupils that we value their efforts. In some cases, the marking code may be used where this is understood by pupils (see end of policy for marking code & symbols). Where pupils are unable to read/understand such comments, these are shared verbally with children at the next appropriate opportunity (VF used).

In Key Stage 2

Written marking and comments should only be used where meaningful guidance can be offered which it has not been possible to provide during the classroom session. In the case of groups of pupils having a common need, it may be appropriate for teachers to adjust planning or grouping rather than providing a written comment. Where a child has achieved the intended outcome and is well-prepared for the next stage in learning, this need not be annotated.

In most cases, written comments will be focussed on extended pieces of written work, or extended tasks. For example, in English a longer and more detailed written comment may form part of planning/modelling task, rather than the final, polished piece of work. These will allow children's achievements to be recognised and provide further guidance for future, independent learning. Worksheets will be kept to a necessary minimum and will be cut to size and stuck in with glue. Where possible children will glue the sheets in themselves. All pieces of work will be dated and have an appropriate title linked to the learning objective.

Next Steps

'Next Steps' will be given as the teacher sees fit. This will happen at different times within the teaching and feedback cycle, and depending on the subject. The frequency of next steps is not set in stone, however where a next step is given, it is expected that time is set aside for the pupil to revisit their work in order to complete the next step. If children continue to get the same next steps it is expected that they have more taught sessions/support in order to progress.

Class feedback book

Teachers/HLTAs use Feedback Record books to inform planning and cut down on comments in books. Teachers are able to look at children's books in order to create a plan for the following day (children who need the same extra input may form a focus group, children ready for a challenge may work together on a mental oral starter, some children may have met the lessons learning intention and are therefore ready to progress to the next session - no action is needed). Teaching Assistants in those classes will use Marking and Feedback Record sheets when they work with groups of children and return the completed






sheets to the class teacher. Class teachers will help train teaching assistants on their use – these can be stapled into the feedback book.

“In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening. So rather than thinking, oh, I’m going to reveal my weaknesses, you say, wow, here’s a chance to grow.”

– Carol Dweck

Document status	
Date of Policy Creation	July 2023
Date of next review	July 2025

Appendix 1

Feedback Codes	
	In KS1 (Key Stage 1), staff write a green dot above the incorrect spelling / omission to direct the pupil to correct a mistake. In KS2 (Key stage 2), a green dot is written in the margin to direct the pupil to re-read that line and find the error themselves.
	Staff and pupils may tick when appropriate
Purple pen	Children correct their work and make improvements and changes in purple.
P	Presentation – teachers and TAs to highlight where presentation needs to improve. A conversation to explain what and how will support this feedback.
	VF in a circle to show children have had verbal feedback
	S in a circle to show children have support
	Next step. If children continue to get the same next steps it is expected that they have more taught sessions/support in order make progress.

