



Written feedback policy

Introduction

This policy applies to the whole school.

Feedback is an important means of developing and improving pupils' progress and learning. Written feedback, or teachers' marking, is one of several ways in which feedback is provided to pupils. Newcastle School for Boys' approach to providing written feedback is based on understanding of what is most effective in supporting pupils' learning and progress according to recent research evidence¹.

The School's approach to providing written feedback aims to be effective, sustainable and time-efficient for both pupils and teachers.

Written feedback is a powerful aspect amongst a number of influences that allow pupils to make progress. For written feedback to be effective, it needs to be clear and specific. Written feedback is the form of feedback most commonly seen by parents. Written feedback remains in pupils' hands permanently and should help to inspire trust and confidence in the learning process for pupils and their parents.

Written feedback should benefit pupils as well as guiding the teacher in respect of his/her planning for future learning. It supplements and informs teaching and learning, filling the gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood. Feedback is generated by assessment - formal or otherwise. It happens following the stimulus of teaching and pupils' responses to that teaching, i.e. learning.

1. Task-setting

Tasks should have clear success criteria as these lead to higher performance. Success criteria may be drawn from earlier written feedback as an effective way of achieving progress over more than one piece of work. Research evidence shows that short-term targets are more effective than long-term targets and that pupils respond best to a small number of targets that seek to secure immediate improvement.

¹ *A marked improvement? A review of the evidence on written marking* - Education Endowment Foundation (2016)

Marking in Perspective: Selective, Formative, Effective, Reflective - Headguruteacher (2012)

The Power of Feedback - Hattie and Timperley (2011)

Marking and Feedback - Findlater (2016)

Focusing on Feedback - theconfidentteacher.com (2016)

2. Grades

Research evidence shows that the award of a grade only with no formative teacher comment in response to a pupil's piece of work does not significantly support the pupil's progress. This is particularly true for boys. Although there are occasions when it is appropriate for a teacher to award a grade and make a formative comment, research shows that the appearance of a grade is likely to reduce the impact of the teacher's formative comments. **The most effective aspect of a teacher's marking is the formative comment that should inform a pupil what specifically needs improving and how.**

3. Specificity and pupil response

It is important that pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Specificity is essential. **All types of feedback need to be explicit and clear.** Imprecise feedback is unhelpful and can be frustrating for pupils. Feedback should identify clear **strengths** in a pupil's learning as well as indicating clearly the **actions** to be taken by the pupil to improve, develop or extend further their learning. **It is essential that teachers' written feedback is acted on by pupils.**

All written feedback is to be carried out in green pen. Pupils' responses to written feedback should be made in purple so that it is clear where they have been completed.

4. Corrections

To impact on the learning process most effectively, pupils should have to do some work to correct their own work. In their marking, teachers make distinctions between **mistakes** (something a pupil can normally do) and **misunderstandings or lack of knowledge**.

In the case of mistakes, these will be marked incorrect but with no answer or correction provided by the teacher. These are for the pupil to make.

Misunderstandings or lack of knowledge will be corrected by prompts such as reminders, hints and questions.

In some parts of the School coded feedback such as symbols and abbreviations may be used. Pupils must understand the exact meaning of any coded feedback.

All teachers, regardless of subject, should provide pupils with feedback on literacy indicating mistakes, misunderstandings, lack of knowledge as above. See **Appendix** for common symbols and abbreviations to be used.

5. Thoroughness

Occasionally, teachers may mark limited sections of a pupil's piece of work rather than the full piece. This is to allow a specific focus to written comments and feedback. There is little or no evidence to suggest that simple acknowledgement

and right or wrong marking aids pupils' progress. Research shows that feedback is most effective in the early stages of an extended piece of work by pupils.

6. Frequency and speed

It is not always possible for teachers to provide written feedback by the next lesson following pupils' completion of a task, although the quicker the feedback the more effective it is in supporting pupils' progress and learning. There is a balance to be struck between the frequency and speed of providing written feedback compared with precision and depth of that feedback. Teachers are required to be regular and sometimes selective in their marking to achieve an appropriate and effective balance.

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Appendix

Common literacy written feedback symbols and abbreviations

sp	Spelling mistake - pupil should check to find the correct spelling and correct their work
CL or letter circled	Capital letter
FS	Full stop
P	Punctuation
NP or //	Start a new paragraph

Other common abbreviations

S	Strengths - what was good about this piece of work?
AN	Action Now - what you need to do to improve your work.
PA	Peer assessed by another pupil
SA	Self-assessed
VF	Verbal feedback - discussed with a teacher and/or an assistant
TS/TAS	Learning undertaken with direct support from a teacher and/or an assistant
IL	Independent learning/work