



Otterburn Primary School and Nursery Marking and Feedback Policy

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Marking and Feedback Policy

At Otterburn Primary School, we never put a ceiling on what pupils can achieve; we stretch them so that each pupil can reach their full potential. We adapt our curriculum to suit the needs of all our learners. Our adaptations allow equality of opportunity for every child; no pupil is left behind. Our Marking and Feedback Policy is designed to encourage pupils and teachers to consider why and how improvements can be made to learning and written work, in ways that are meaningful, manageable and motivating.

This Marking and Feedback Policy supports the delivery of a high-quality curriculum by ensuring that feedback helps pupils to know more and remember more over time. Feedback is used purposefully to address misconceptions, deepen understanding and support pupils to make progress through the curriculum. Teachers use their professional judgement to apply assessment and feedback in ways that inform teaching, adapt lessons and secure learning, rather than to generate unnecessary written evidence. This approach reflects the principles of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, where impact on learning, curriculum progression and retention is prioritised over the volume or format of marking.

Teachers' Standards

- Give students regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage students to respond to the feedback (MPS)
- Model best practice in giving feedback to deepen learning, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage students to respond to the feedback (UPS)

Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking

Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (March 2016)

- Marking varies by age group, subject, and what works best for the pupil and teacher in relation to any particular piece of work. Teachers are encouraged to adjust their approach as necessary and are trusted to incorporate the outcomes into subsequent planning and teaching.
- Marking should serve a single purpose - to advance pupil progress and outcomes. Teachers should be clear about what they are trying to achieve and the best way of achieving it. Crucially, the most important person in deciding what is appropriate is the teacher. Oral feedback, working with pupils in class and reading their work all help teachers understand what pupils can do and understand. Every teacher will know whether they are getting useful information from their marking and whether pupils are progressing.
- Consistency across a department or the school is important, but this should come from consistent high standards rather than unvarying practice. Shared expectations of marking help everyone to be clear about what is required, but each subject and phase determines how these principles are applied, responding to differing workload demands and drawing on teacher professionalism to create meaningful and manageable approaches.
- Marking practice should be judged against the actual time spent on marking. Adjustments should be made where marking is disproportionate or does not have sufficient impact. Marking must remain manageable, considering the frequency and complexity of written feedback and its effectiveness in relation to overall teacher workload.

- The time taken to mark does not always correlate with successful pupil outcomes and can lead to wasted teacher time. Disproportionate practice may include extensive written comments which pupils, particularly in EYFS and KS1, are unable to read or respond to meaningfully, or written dialogue where a conversation would be more effective. If teachers are spending significantly more time marking than pupils are spending completing work, the balance should be reviewed.
- Senior leaders and governors are responsible for the effective deployment of resources and should consider the impact of marking expectations on staff workload and wellbeing.
- Schools should regularly review marking practices to ensure expectations support pupil progress without creating unnecessary workload. Teachers are best able to exercise professional judgement about the nature and length of tasks when marking expectations are proportionate and sustainable.
- Feedback may take the form of spoken or written marking, peer assessment or self-assessment. If the time spent does not have a commensurate impact on pupil progress, the approach should be adapted.

Purpose

Marking should serve a single purpose – to advance pupil progress and outcomes. Teachers are trusted to decide what form of feedback is most appropriate for the task, the pupil and the learning context.

Consistency

Consistency across the school comes from shared principles and high expectations, not identical marking practices. This approach supports high-quality teaching, effective feedback and staff wellbeing.

Key questions underpinning high-quality marking and feedback

- Where am I with my learning?
- Where am I aiming to get to with my learning?
- How do I get there?

Manageable, Meaningful and Motivating Marking

Manageable:

Marking practice is proportionate and considers the frequency and complexity of written feedback, as well as time effectiveness in relation to planning and teaching.

Meaningful:

Marking varies by age group, subject and pupil need. Teachers adapt approaches using professional judgement and use feedback to inform future planning and teaching.

Motivating:

Marking should motivate pupils to make progress. This does not always mean detailed written comments. Short, focused feedback or verbal feedback is often more effective. Where teachers are doing more work than pupils, responsibility for learning can be reduced.

An important element of marking is acknowledging effort, achievement and progress. Excessive feedback can remove challenge, reduce independence and impact negatively on long-term learning and resilience.

Pupils are taught and encouraged to check their own work against success criteria, presented in an age-appropriate way, so they take responsibility for improving the quality of their work.

Marking

Highlighters are used to indicate what pupils have done well (green) and what they should work on or improve (pink).

Constructive teacher feedback may be written at the end of selected pieces of work in green pen. Editing and improvement by pupils is completed in pink pen.

Teaching assistants write TA in green and indicate the level of support provided. This information is used by teachers to inform assessment, planning and next steps.

Commonly used marking symbols:

- sp – spelling error (where appropriate and developmentally suitable, pupils may practise the correct spelling)
- // – new paragraph needed
- VF – verbal feedback given

Maths

Correct work is ticked and incorrect responses are indicated with a dot. Teachers mark in green and pupils respond or edit in pink where appropriate.

Verbal Feedback/Practical Subjects

In practical subjects such as Art, DT, Music and PE, verbal feedback is a primary method of feedback and plays a significant role in supporting progress and attainment. Subject leaders ensure that systems for verbal feedback are effective and appropriately monitored.

EYFS

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, feedback is predominantly verbal, immediate and responsive, in line with *Development Matters*. Adults support learning through high-quality interactions, modelling language, questioning and next steps within play and structured activities. Written marking is minimal and age-appropriate, focusing on celebrating effort and progress rather than recording attainment. Feedback supports the Characteristics of Effective Learning and helps children to develop confidence, independence and positive attitudes to learning.

Homework

Where appropriate, pupils are supported to review and self-check their own homework to encourage independence and reflection. Teachers acknowledge homework through the use of a stamp or sticker to confirm that work has been seen. Where necessary, teachers will address misconceptions through discussion, whole-class feedback or targeted follow-up, rather than routine written marking.

Peer and self-assessment

Peer and self-assessment are encouraged as they deepen pupils' understanding of learning objectives and success criteria. Teachers model effective feedback and ensure expectations are shared in pupil-friendly language. Feedback focuses on the work rather than the individual and is specific, kind and helpful.

Presentation of Work

Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work. The following are minimum expectations for written work. These expectations are applied flexibly and reasonably, taking account of pupils' age, SEND, fine motor development and stage of learning:

- Titles underlined with a ruler
- Full date written in all subjects except Maths, where an abbreviated date is used
- No incomplete work or unnecessary gaps in books
- Missed work is caught up where appropriate
- Use of sharp pencil or handwriting pen
- Diagrams and tables drawn using pencil and ruler
- Use all available space appropriately; work should be free from doodles or graffiti
- Pupils are encouraged to produce their best standard of work

Monitoring

This policy is compliant with Department for Education guidance on reducing teacher workload and reflects the principles of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (2016). It aligns with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework by prioritising the impact of feedback on pupil learning, curriculum progression and retention rather than prescribing specific marking formats. Governors monitor the effectiveness of this policy through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils, focusing on learning outcomes, consistency of principles and staff wellbeing rather than the quantity of written marking.