



St Thomas à Becket Primary School

Roots to grow, wings to fly.

"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing is impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20



Friendship | Respect | Truth | Forgiveness | Thankfulness | Perseverance

You only have one life, one childhood, one opportunity. School is one of the most important experiences you will ever have. At St Thomas à Becket we will stop at nothing to ensure that you are given every chance to succeed. Through our faith and wisdom, we will give you strong roots to grow into resilient, respectful and ambitious citizens. We will open doors so that you can imagine endless possibilities and a life without limits. We will give you wings to fly.

Feedback and Marking Policy

Statutory	
Policy agreed	January 2025
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Next review date	September 2027
Approved by	Headteacher
Linked documents	Teaching and Learning Handbook EQUA Mead Essentials

Rationale

At St Thomas à Becket School, we recognise the importance of feedback as part of the teaching & learning cycle, and aim to maximise the effectiveness of its use in practice. Marking and feedback are an integral part of assessment for learning and our focus is on making sure children understand what is expected of them, know how they are progressing and helping children to learn how to improve and develop their work. A policy of appreciating children's work is necessary to ensure there is continuity throughout the school in the way adults interact with children about their work.

We are mindful also of the workload implications of written marking (as highlighted by the Department for Education's research into teacher workload) and of the research surrounding effective feedback. Marking should be: **meaningful, manageable and motivating.**

We mark children's work and offer feedback in order to:

- Motivate the child
 - By showing that we value their work and encourage them to do the same
 - By boosting self-esteem and aspirations through use of praise and encouragement and sharing of work
- Move learning on by:
 - Address a misunderstanding
 - Reinforce a skill or key piece of information, thus ensuring knowledge is retained
 - Giving a clear picture of the next steps they need to take in order to continue to make progress
 - Extend a child's understanding or ability to do something

This approach aligns with EQUA Mead Essential 6 'Assessment and Feedback', which emphasises the importance of checking for understanding, responding to misconceptions in real time and ensuring feedback enables pupils to know how to improve.

Types of feedback

Learning in school is varied and so is feedback; sometimes lots of children would benefit from a next step comment, other times no-one will. Talking and listening to pupils about their work is at least as effective as writing extended comments (and often more so) especially when younger children are involved. This may be on a 1:1 basis, in a small group or as a whole class depending on the circumstance. Oral feedback and discussion gives pupils a voice and encourages them to use their metacognitive skills. We recognise that effective feedback is not limited to written marking, but includes in-lesson strategies such as questioning, active observation and immediate response to pupils' learning. Teachers use questioning strategically to probe understanding, deepen thinking and improve the quality of pupils' responses.

At St Thomas à Becket Primary School, we encourage and trust teachers to use their professional judgement to decide when is the right time to provide verbal feedback, to surface mark, when a motivating comment is required or when a next step comment is the right approach. This includes ongoing checks for understanding using a range of strategies to ensure all pupils are engaged and misconceptions are quickly identified.

This judgement is based on what will most positively impact that child's progress. Teachers use a balanced approach in their communications with pupils including probing questioning and challenge along with written comments that are focused on assessment objectives, are short and appropriate to the children. This may include the use of repeated practice, for example if a spelling is incorrect or a letter is formed incorrectly.

There may be times when children need to be made more aware that they are not fulfilling their potential and that their work is not up to the standard expected for them. Such situations will be dealt with sensitively by adults and will consider the needs of the individual child. It should be explained to the child how much they are capable of and that all significant adults want them to do well. It should be made clear to the child which particular learning area and targets they need to concentrate on. The child must be clear that they are valued and supported in their work.

All adults will follow the approach detailed in the Behaviour and Relationships Curriculum; seeking to teach the child how to improve rather than highlighting perceived 'failures.'

Key Principles

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

- The main 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
- 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 – for example, mini-plenaries, whole class feedback, flexible grouping, providing scaffolds.
- 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 is used to inform future learning. When work is reviewed, it should be acknowledged in books through the ticking of the learning objective.
- Teachers recognise common errors and respond by modelling corrections and improvements during lessons
- Feedback ensures pupils understand what is incorrect and how to improve
- Feedback (verbal or written) is specific and clearly focused on next steps

Within these principles, 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

Teachers evaluate the work that children undertake in lessons, and use the information obtained from this to allow them to provide constructive feedback and adapt future teaching as a result. This may be in the form of instant intervention, for example pausing the class for additional practice, small group intervention, for example a later session to recap for some children or adaptations for the whole class. Although our curriculum is clearly defined, teachers are empowered to adapt the sequence of learning where their assessment identifies that children's knowledge is not secure. Teachers actively check for understanding throughout lessons and adapt teaching in response, including addressing errors immediately and providing clear models of successful work. Where misconceptions are identified, teachers break learning down into smaller steps to secure understanding before moving on.

Children may evaluate and assess their completed work and their progress or work may be assessed by peers. Self and peer assessment are important aspects of assessment for learning practice; assessing their own work or the work of others can help pupils develop their understanding of learning objectives and success criteria. Research has shown that pupils make more progress when they are actively involved in their own learning and assessment.

Feedback occurs at one of three common stages in the learning process (in order of priority):

1. Immediate feedback – at the point of teaching (1:1 or group as mini-plenary))
2. Summary feedback – at the end of a lesson/task (group or whole class)
3. Review feedback – away from the point of teaching (including written comments)

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. Immediate feedback is prioritised, as responding at the point of teaching has the greatest impact on pupils' progress. Where feedback is based on review of work completed, the focus will often be on providing feedback for the teacher to further adapt teaching. Work may be marked either by the teacher, another adult, or a child as self-assessment or by a peer. In line with effective assessment practice, feedback ensures that pupils understand why errors occur and what steps they need to take to correct and improve their work.

At St Thomas à Becket School, these practices can be seen in the following practices:

Type	What it looks like
Immediate	• Takes place in lessons with individuals or small groups • Often given verbally to pupils for immediate action • Includes teacher gathering feedback from teaching, including mini-whiteboards, book work, etc. • May involve use of a teaching assistant to provide support or further challenge • May re-direct the focus of teaching or the task • May include highlighting/annotations according to the marking code.
Summary	• 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 of need
Review	• 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

Marking Approaches

All work will be acknowledged in some form by class teachers. This may be through simple symbols such as ticks or highlighting of learning objectives or through verbal feedback. Teaching assistants may mark children's work if they have worked individually or in a small group with them, however it is still expected that the teacher will acknowledge the work by ticking the learning objective.

Comments made about children's work should always be supportive, constructive and unambiguous. They should never undermine the child or their work. Wherever possible, marking and feedback should involve the child directly.

In Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1, review marking will only lead to written comments for those pupils who are able to read and respond independently. 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 closest appropriate opportunity.

In Key Stage 2, written marking and comments should be used where meaningful guidance can be offered which it has not been possible to provide during the classroom session. All comments should be constructive in order to move the learning forward. 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.

In most cases, written comments will be focussed on extended pieces of written work, or extended tasks. These will allow children's achievements to be recognised and provide further guidance for future learning. All written feedback should provide clear guidance that pupils can act upon, ensuring it results in improvement rather than simply acknowledgement.

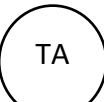
At the beginning of a lesson pupils are frequently given the opportunity to reflect on the previous work and to reflect on marking and time will be given to complete actions.

Equal Opportunities

We believe that all children should have equal access to the curriculum. When marking children's work, careful consideration should be given to the cultural and linguistic needs of the children. The particular achievements of children with Special Educational Needs should be recognised and highlighted.

Marking Codes

Where written marking or annotations are appropriate, the intention is that minimum teacher time should lead to maximum outcomes. One way in which we achieve this is through the use of our marking code as set out below. Our marking emphasis is on independent self-editing and peer marking. Teachers will always mark work in green or black pen.

Annotation	Meaning
Ticks	• Ticks where correct or to acknowledge teacher has read work • A cross where mistakes are made and work will not be marked again • A circle where the pupil needs to correct an answer which can then be ticked to show work was revised
Purple 'polishing' pen	Any editing or self-marking
Pink pen	Peer marking
	An action point indicating something the child needs to do
'Steps' image	To bring the child's attention to a target they need to work on
 or 	Work was heavily supported by the teacher or TA
	Work was independent
✓ or ✓✓ or ✓✓✓	After the learning objective indicates to the pupil how well they have achieved the learning objective or intention
SP (in margin or bottom or writing)	Spelling error in the line for child to correct or copy out
^	Missing word here

Monitoring

Marking and feedback will be monitored by the Head Teacher and subject leaders through taking in samples of books, learning walks, and interviewing children. Monitoring will consider how the policy is implemented to ensure teachers are compliant and consistent and also the impact of the feedback strategies in use. The effectiveness of feedback is judged by its impact—specifically how pupils respond, improve and deepen their understanding over time.

At St Thomas à Becket School, we recognise that the effectiveness of feedback is not measured by how much is given, but by the difference it makes to pupils' learning. As Dylan Wiliam highlights, feedback is only effective if it results in pupils thinking, responding and improving their work. Our focus, therefore, is on ensuring that feedback is acted upon so that all pupils develop their understanding, build confidence and make sustained progress.