

Marking is for a purpose.

The purpose of marking and providing feedback is to further the learning of every child.

The purpose of this policy is to make explicit how teachers mark children's work and provide feedback. All members of staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and to apply it consistently.

It is important to provide constructive and specific feedback to children, focusing on success and areas for improvement against learning intentions. This enables children to become reflective learners whilst being given advice on how to close the gap between their current achievement and the next steps in their learning.

Effective marking aims to help children learn; its aim should not be to find fault, but to guide a child forward in his/her learning. Marking allows the teacher to show that a child's work is valued and that there has been an audience for the work. Children should know that it is acceptable to make mistakes – making mistakes is one of the ways we learn. Mistakes should be corrected where appropriate, but not erased. It is rarely appropriate for children to be made to repeat, or copy out large quantities of work.

Principles that guide Skelton Primary School's approach to marking

Marking and feedback should:

- be specific and **relate to the learning intention** and comment on previous attainment within the context of the learning intention;
- be linked to the success criteria specified and agreed upon by teacher and pupils;
- be used as Assessment for Learning;
- give recognition and praise for achievement and clear strategies for improvement;
- be manageable for teachers and accessible to children;
- allow specific time for children to read, reflect and respond to marking;
- relate to personalised learning and respond to individual learning needs, marking face to face with some;
- inform future planning and group target setting;
- use consistent codes across school;
- ultimately be seen by children as a positive approach to improve their learning.

How marking affects attainment

Research has shown that consistent and effective marking as documented in this policy has a significant impact on raising achievement.

Many studies show that improved formative assessment helps the (so-called) low achievers more than the rest, and so reduces the spread of attainment whilst also raising overall attainment.

Fuchs and Fuchs, 1986 Effects of Task Focused Goals on Low Achieving Students With and Without Learning Disabilities.

How we mark children's work

Children's work needs to be marked in a colour that can be clearly seen. At Skelton Primary School teachers should mark in red pen or a contrasting colour from the children's work. Marking should be neat and ticks should be placed above/near elements which reflect success criteria and learning intentions. Ticks should be appropriately sized so as not to obliterate children's work.

The school uses the following forms of marking and feedback:

Oral Feedback

It is important for all children (especially younger children and those with special educational needs) to have oral feedback from the adult working with them. The adult should initially talk to the child about how he/she has met the learning intention and then question the child about a specific part of the work. This may be to correct a child's understanding or to extend the child's learning.

Summative Marking/Feedback

This usually consists of ticks, crosses (limit number), underlining or circles and is associated with closed tasks or questions where the answer is either right or wrong. This can also be marked by the children (depending on age), as a class or in groups.

Formative Marking/Feedback

Not all pieces of work can be marked in great detail. Teachers need to decide which pieces of work will be given detailed attention. However, acknowledgement should always relate to the learning intention and success criteria.

It is our school policy to 'quality mark' children's writing and use this as Assessment for Learning. In this, teachers focus first and foremost on the learning intention and success criteria of the task. Marking highlights achievement and points for development against

the success criteria agreed upon at the beginning of the task. Teachers should highlight approximately three specific examples where the child has met the learning intention. One area of improvement should be highlighted. An asterisk can be used to do this. The teacher will provide a focused comment linked to this asterisk which should help the child to improve his/her work.

With younger children and in Key Stage 1 the use of 'Two Stars and a Wish' is used to highlight achievement and a target.

Children need to be given time to respond to this marking and this should be reflected in the planning of the subsequent lesson. In order for the marking to be formative, teacher comments must be used and acted upon by the children. Such improvements need to be acknowledged. A tick and the teacher's initials or a brief comment are sufficient.

All children should have a comment. More able children and G and T children should be given a comment which will extend their thinking. SEN children should be given comments which act as scaffolding prompts; for example, 'What was Goldilocks doing?'/ 'How do you know she was scared?'

N.B. Teacher comments should be specific. Teachers should also be aware of limiting written feedback so it is accessible to the children.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning (AfL) has been around as formative assessment for some time. AfL means using evidence (children's work) and dialogue to identify where pupils are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. It provides a clear link between pupil learning and lesson planning.

Formative assessment can be a powerful tool if it is communicated in the right way. Whilst it can help all pupils, it gives particularly good results with low achievers where it concentrates on specific problems within a piece of work, and provides a clear understanding of what is wrong and achievable targets for putting it right. Pupils can accept and work with such messages, provided they are not clouded by overtones about ability, competition and comparison with others.

*Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment
Paul Black and Dylan William
King's College London School of Education*

Personalised Learning

The success of personalised learning depends on knowing the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils. A key means of doing this is AfL and the use of evidence and dialogue to identify every pupil's learning needs.

Literacy links across the curriculum

Where appropriate, links should be made in other areas of the curriculum to reinforce and consolidate skills taught in the Literacy Hour. Marking should be appropriate for the learning intention/success criteria of the lesson.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Spelling, punctuation and grammar should not be marked in every piece of writing. Children cannot effectively focus on too many things in any one piece of work. However, appropriate elements and those which have been taught should be highlighted; for example, if the children have been focusing on verbs in the past tense in word level work, and a mistake is made in independent writing, then this should be pointed out to the child. In Lower School misspelled high frequency words are highlighted for the children.

An effective use of the plenary is to focus in on specified elements from the success criteria which the children can check at the end of a task. Specific time should be allocated to this rather than merely 'trying to find time' at the end of a session. Children do not learn how to spell from adults correcting their errors. Children can be asked to correct a certain number of spellings (using a dictionary, not guessing) if the teacher has indicated where mistakes have been made.

Children should only be given feedback about the elements that the teacher has asked them to pay attention to. This means that some aspects of a piece of work may be uncorrected, but all aspects will be addressed over time through specific learning intentions.

Specific Marking Code

- Absence or inappropriate use of capital letters should be circled.
- Absence or incorrectly used punctuation should, when appropriate, be indicated with a circle.
- Corrected work should be indicated with a 'c' and a tick. When work contains numerous errors, the teacher should select appropriate ones for correction.
- Double oblique lines // or an arrow → should be used to indicate where a new paragraph should go.
- With spelling errors the teacher should indicate the letter/s which is/are incorrect to facilitate the child looking the word up in a dictionary; for example, gose / suprise.
- Missing words are indicated by an inverted arrow ↑ showing where to insert.

Other Marking

- A tick and an initial can be used when there has been a large amount of adult input in the lesson or where oral feedback is given.
- Self-marking is sometimes encouraged with the older children to self-evaluate and identify success and a point for improvement. This is particularly successful when the plenary is used in a focused manner. This can also be a paired activity.
N.B. This activity should only be used against the learning intention.

Maths

Incorrect work should be indicated by a cross. When work clearly shows a lack of understanding, the use of multiple crosses should be avoided. Instead, a comment should be written. Children should not be allowed to rub out errors and repeat the work correctly. This practice gives a false indication of children's understanding.

The acronym WALT is used to clarify the learning intention to the children. (We Are Learning To...) Self-evaluation with an appropriate 'face' ☺ by the children indicates how well the children feel they have understood the learning intention of the lesson. Teachers should avoid using 'sad faces' themselves when marking children's work as this can be demoralising for a child. In Lower School the use of the traffic light signal – green and red lights with a thumbs up is used to indicate understanding by the children.

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher and the Deputy Head Teacher will monitor books and marking.

Kinga Pusztai
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Staff Consultation 5th September 2006