

Checking for Understanding Policy

2025-26

Rationale

'Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement'
(Hattie and Timperley)

'Feedback plays a central role on securing student's learning, supporting them how to deepen their knowledge and understanding or improve their performance' (Teaching Walkthrus
Tom Sherington and Oliver Caviglioli)

'Effective marking is an essential part of the education process. At its heart, it is an interaction between teacher and pupil: a way of acknowledging pupils' work, checking the outcomes and making decisions about what teachers and pupils need to do next, with the primary aim of driving pupil progress.'
(Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group)

Belong, Believe, Learn and Achieve

Vision

Checking for understanding is based on effective feedback. Feedback is a powerful tool in the 'assessment for learning' and the 'assessment of learning'. It is an essential part of teaching and learning and supports all staff in achieving the best for all of the children.

Introduction

This policy seeks to establish the agreed minimum standards, practices and procedures for assessing pupil learning. All forms of feedback are crucial to the success of children. It is to close the gap between what they know and what they do not know or to fill the gap between where they are and where they are going. Feedback in the moment is a vital form of communication between child and teacher/teaching assistant. It enables children to become reflective learners and helps them to close the gap between what they can currently do and what we would like them to be able to do. It is part of the assessment process in that it gives both the teacher and pupil an opportunity to identify strengths and areas to develop. This policy is a working document which generates and informs good practice in school. It aims to ensure a consistent approach whilst recognising that there will inevitably be differences in the feedback and marking process to reflect the needs of different age groups and curriculum areas.

Policy Principles and Aims



An effective policy must be manageable and include all members of staff who work within school. Our Checking for Understanding Policy is based on the principles that:

- *Effective feedback informs the teaching staff of the individual needs of the pupil and the next steps for their learning*
- *Effective feedback ensures the child is clear as to the progress they have made and leaves them in no doubt what steps they need to take in order to move their learning on*
- *Effective feedback informs the parents/carers of their child's understanding of their learning, how to improve it and how to become a better learner*
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For feedback to be effective John Hattie argues that it needs to be:

- *clear, purposeful, meaningful and compatible with pupils' prior knowledge, and to provide logical connections.*
- *directed at the right level, so it can assist students to comprehend, engage, or develop effective strategies to process the information intended to be learnt."*
- *combined with effective instruction in classrooms, and focus on what is being learnt (learning intention) and how students should go about it (success criteria)*
- *occur as the pupils are doing the learning*
- *provide information on how and why the pupil has or has not met the criteria*
- *provide strategies to help the pupil to improve*

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) states that:

	Feedback more likely to move learning forward			Less likely
	Task 	Subject 	Self-regulation strategies 	Personal 
	Feedback focused on improving a specific piece of work or specific type of task. It can comment on whether an answer is correct or incorrect, can give a grade, and will offer specific advice on how to improve learning.	Feedback targets the underlying processes in a task, which are used across a subject. The feedback can, therefore, be applied in other subject tasks.	Feedback is focused on the learner's own self-regulation. It is usually provided as prompts and cues—and aims to improve the learner's own ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning.	About the person. It may imply that pupils have an innate ability (or lack of) and is often very general and lacking in information.
KS1 examples	In maths, pupils have been asked to order objects from lightest to heaviest. The teacher explains to one child: 'You're nearly there, but two of these are the wrong way around. Can you use the balance scales again and see which object is really the heaviest?'	In English, a pupil is struggling with letter formation. The teacher discusses this with them: 'Let's just look at how you are writing your 'd's. Can you see you have started at the top and gone down and done a loop? Remember we start writing a 'd' by doing a letter 'c' shape. Let's try that again.'	In art, pupils are painting self-portraits. The teacher is helping children to practice completing activities in a given time. He explains: 'At the end of today I'm going to put the portraits up for our exhibition, so we need to think about finishing in the next 15 minutes—do you think you'll be able to finish? If you haven't started on your eyes, make a start now.'	'Great work—you're brilliant at maths!'
KS2 examples	In science, a class is identifying the components of a circuit. The teacher notes that they are missing some key features. 'Many of you are identifying the bulbs and wires in this circuit. Can you also label the switches and cells?'	In history, pupils are having a class debate on whether Boudica was a hero. The teacher notes that not enough historical terminology is being used and explains: 'Historians use appropriate historical terminology. In every point you each make, I want you to use a specialist term we've learned, such as "rebellion" or "Celtic tribe".'	In maths, pupils have been set a problem to solve. One child does not know where to start. The teacher prompts them to review and plan: 'Look at our display of strategies that we've used to solve problems we've tackled in the past. I think one of those could help you to solve this problem.'	'This is ok, but you are better than this!'

To embed this research, we will ensure that staff give feedback which is directed towards the task, subject, and/or self-regulation. We understand that feedback is less likely to be effective if it provides a general comment about the pupil's characteristics. We know that the method of delivery (written or verbal) is less important than the content so aim to ensure our feedback is as precise as possible.

Guidance for feedback by teaching staff

Teacher feedback is most effective when:

- It happens in the presence of the children
- It relates directly to the learning objective and **steps to success**
- The children have a clear understanding of the symbols and codes used for feedback.
- It informs both the child and the teacher of what has been achieved and what needs to happen next
- The child has an opportunity to read and respond to the feedback
- It is informing the teacher of learning needs which can be incorporated into future planning

Feedback by teachers should take some of the following forms, as appropriate to the work

- Feedback should be related directly to the learning objective/**steps to success**
- Agreed useful symbols to be used and shared with the children, along with being present in their books
- The use of green pen to promote positive aspects and draw attention to errors or areas for development within a piece of work
- A correct example given by teacher
- A request to do some corrections
- Verbal feedback to be acknowledged in books
- Use of continuous oral feedback
- Use of the pictures/photographs and mini-plenaries to model and share good examples
- Asking children to check their work again referring to **steps to success** (with time given to do so)
- Drawing attention to how children have moved on

Other expectations:

- Teachers' handwriting needs to be legible as a model for the child using cursive script.
- Not every incorrect spelling needs to be corrected by the teacher.
- Teachers will identify words learnt in previous years and the children's current spelling curriculum which are spelt incorrectly and use the 'Sp' symbol in the margin on the same line as the spelling error for children to identify the mistake and correct in purple pen.
- For children who are continuing to embed their phonic knowledge, teachers will identify any spelling mistakes from where phonic knowledge from previous and current learning has not been applied. An 'S' will be placed in the margin and that spelling will be corrected.

Guidance for peer/self-assessment

Peer and self-assessment have a key role to play in marking and feedback. They empower children to take control of their learning.

In line with AfL strategies, within most lessons children should have opportunities to assess their progress (or that of others) against agreed steps to success.

Children need to be trained in how to peer and self-assess meaningfully and to benefit the learning. They need to be confident using the appropriate subject-related symbol. A green pen should be used by the children to ensure visibility and distinction between pupil and teacher comments (teachers mark in blue).

Expectations

1. Knowledge based learning objectives will be shared and understood in all lessons
2. Through teaching the small steps to achieve the knowledge-based learning objective all children will be able to explain the steps to success in achieving the LO (I need to)
3. Enquiry questions will be shared and understood for learning in the wider curriculum
4. Through teaching the small steps to answer the enquiry question, all children will be able to explain the knowledge they have gained to answer the question (I know that)
5. The learning objective is displayed in the classroom for every lesson and recorded in books
6. For every piece of learning in books the children will tick or dot against the learning objective in the margin indicating their self-assessment. Teachers then tick or dot reflecting their thoughts about the learning at the end of the LO.
7. All marking needs to be completed in green pen
8. Apart from the outcomes recorded in jotters, all pieces of work in books should be acknowledged in line with the approaches listed above: i.e. either through teacher marking, peer marking or self-assessment.

Detailed marking

- For English and Maths, there should be a fair balance of teacher and child marking (appropriate to the age of the child), however the teacher must always maintain the strategic overview.
- Teachers should also be conscious of checking the quality of peer and self-assessments made by children.
- For foundation subjects there should be evidence in books of teacher, peer and self- assessment. Written feedback will not be given on every piece of work, but will be given on a cumulative piece of built-up work. Comments written in the books by the teacher or pupils should reflect how children were successful in meeting elements of the **steps to success**, or achieving the learning objective, using the

appropriate marking codes. Children should be given opportunities to feed back their comments about other children's work in the books throughout the year.

- *Cover/ Supply teachers need to mark and initial all work.*

Agreed generic symbols for marking and feedback

'Yippy Yellow' - Yellow highlighter for highlighting achieved against the learning objective. Highlight the title for the whole learning objective or against the specific word/phrase for the learning objective.

'Green for growth' - highlight a question in maths to focus on for the same day intervention or highlight for a focus on what we want the children to focus

We want to get the balance so that there are more yellow than green.

G – For a guided activity with an initial for who has helped for example the key question

I - You did this on your own without any help (for early years).

√ - You have done this right or something we like

x - Incorrect where green for growth is not

Λ - You missed one or more words out.

// - You need to start new paragraph.

TT – teacher talk to share that more support is needed and children need to work additionally with an adult.

Scaffolding progression

Year 2 and 3 by where needed, year 4 and 5 on the line, year 6 end of the paragraph

P - Your punctuation is not quite right.

Gr- Your grammar is not quite right.

T- Your tense is not quite right.

Sp - A spelling mistake.

Follow up to feedback

Follow up is essential after marking. Teaching staff will utilise a variety of approaches to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to respond to marking and feedback.

Pupils will be given time to:

- *Reflect upon distance marked learning*
- *Respond to comments with time to edit and improve*
- *Discuss the feedback with teaching staff*

Parents

It is vital that parents are aware of how marking and feedback works at Travis St Lawrence CE Primary School. Parents can find the policy on the school website and view their children's work during showcase events.

Monitoring

Feedback will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team:

- *Book Scrutiny*
- *Planning Scrutiny*
- *Lesson Observations*

- *Pupil Progress Meetings*
- *External reviews including OFSTED*