Feedback Policy

*"Learning happens when you have to **think hard**."*

Coe, 2013 – Improving Education: A triumph of hope over experience

Policy statement

Our policies have been written with care to ensure that the reasoning behind the policies can be understood by all practitioners. We have an expectation that all staff adhere to school policy in all their work, and therefore the expectations set out in this policy should be demonstrated in practice within the classroom. However, we also acknowledge that our staff our professionals and that no policy can account for every possible scenario or variable, therefore we operate an approach which can be summarised as "Faithful adoption, Intelligent enhancement". What this means is that everything which is outlined in this policy should be faithfully adopted into classroom practice; no element can be removed. However, when the practice can be enhanced by adding to it or supporting access to it, our staff have the approval to do so. To illustrate this, the policy may ask for a certain symbol to be used, but a child with limited understanding might be detrimented if this alone were used, therefore our staff could record this symbol along with one appropriate to the child; this then faithfully adopts the policy, with an intelligent enhancement.

Key Principles

Our policy is underpinned by the evidence of best practice from the Education Endowment Foundation toolkit and other expert organisations. The EEF research shows that effective feedback should:

- Redirect or refocus either the adults' or learner's actions to achieve a goal
- Be specific, accurate and clear
- Encourage and support further effort
- Be given sparingly so that it is meaningful
- Provide specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell learners when they are wrong.

In essence, it should be **manageable**, **meaningful** and **motivating**.

It's notable that none of this requires written marking. Therefore, upon this evidence is built our outline of the key principles that underpin the policy:

- The sole focus of feedback or marking should be to further children's learning
- The outcome of feedback should always be that children have to **think hard**
- Written comments should only be used where they are accessible to learner's ability
- Feedback delivered closest to the point of learning is most effective and as such, feedback delivered in lessons is more effective than comments provided at a later date.
- Feedback is 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.

Key Structural Elements in Books

This policy recognises that we expect certain elements to be present in children's work and this policy supplements their use. These elements are present because they already support the child in knowing how well they are doing and structuring their learning and so it is highly likely that feedback, verbal or written, will reference these elements.

In maths books these are:

- The WALT and Learning Objective
- The White Rose Maths Hub tasks, stuck in
- The 4 Ops structure

In literacy books in (excluding reading tasks) these are:

- The WALT and Learning Objective

- The success criteria, stuck in
- The children's colour coding of the success criteria
- The corroborating colour underlining of evidence within the work.

In foundation subject books including art/DT, these are:

- The WALT and Learning Objective
- The success criteria, stuck in
- The children's colour coding of the success criteria
- The corroborating colour underlining of evidence within the work.

What Form Should Feedback Take?
Effective learning has a rhythm. When anyone is learning something new, they learn best by having what they need to learn modelled to them and then having the opportunity to try it themselves while being explicitly told how to improve; this trying then becomes rehearsal, initially closely supervised by the 'expert', before gradually taking on more of the responsibility to perfect the skill. Eventually, this skill becomes embedded and requires less conscious 'thinking' to complete the skill.

At some point in this development journey, the learner benefits less from having any mistakes pointed out explicitly, but benefits more from being prompted to review their own work. When learning multiple new skills at the same time, some will be at the point of independent rehearsal while some still need explicit feedback. Meeting these needs is the core concern of this policy.

The school has two mechanisms to provide this feedback. The first is for when the learner is tackling new skills and needs explicit feedback and coaching in how to effectively do the skill. The school calls this 'Developmental Feedback'. The second mechanism is a graded process of helping the learner take ownership of a skill they are mastering, moving from tackling it consciously, to unconsciously. The school calls this 'Basic Skills Marking'.

Developmental Feedback
Most developmental feedback should be given to children at the precise point they need it. This is most effectively achieved through a verbal discussion with the child, asking questions, having the child justify their choices, or prompting children to rethink a certain element of their work. The important part of this feedback is for the learner to adapt what they were previously doing in light of the feedback provided. This can take one of three forms – feedback for immediate change, feedback for ongoing improvement and feedback given after the lesson. The detail of each is explained below.

Developmental Feedback for immediate change
When an adult is working with children, there is often a time where errors have been made which require an immediate change, for example in column addition, a child may not have fully understood the need to carry digits into the next column. The adult would explain where and how the child has gone wrong, and the child would then correct the problem using the appropriate method.

When an adult gives Developmental Feedback for immediate change they write the code 'DF' in the book at the point at which the feedback is given. The child should then immediately complete the task which contains the error, including any question number and highlight their response in orange.
The possibilities requiring the change are endless and can be complex, so capturing the specifics of the feedback through a series of codes or written recording would not add anything to the child's understanding and therefore is not expected.

From Developmental Feedback for immediate change, progress will be visible in the child's work immediately after the code of 'DF' with the correct completion of a task, comparing to the related previous work.

Developmental Feedback for ongoing improvement
This is more likely to be seen in literacy and enquiry work. Some development needs to be demonstrated over a period – the child simply cannot act on it immediately as it needs to be applied in the course of an activity. In this case, the adult again uses the code 'DF' at the point in the book where the adult is giving the feedback. As a prompt, the adult can also record very simple notes for what feedback was given. This can be a single word or short sentence,

e.g. 'Commas', or 'vary sentence structure'. For older children, they should record the key feedback themselves by jotting.

Developmental Feedback given after the learning
Although we recognise that feedback given at the point of learning is the most powerful, there may be lessons in which feedback has to be given at a later time, which requires the learner to re-engage with the learning which has taken place.
The phrasing of the feedback must still require action on the part of the learner and still requires the learner to have to *think hard*. There are a variety of styles of feedback which can be used depending on the context of the learning.

It is worth noting that **as this is Developmental Feedback, this should be linked to the learning objective and related success criteria,** not picking up a 'flaw' in the work. Therefore, feedback given should either move the child towards meeting an unmet success criterion or deepening a child's understanding or application of a skill they have demonstrated they have met within the lesson.

Where written feedback relates to an unmet success criterion, staff should write 'T' in the box matching the success criteria that the written feedback relates to. If the child's response to the feedback demonstrates the child now meets that success criteria, the success criteria should then be ticked next to the 'T', demonstrating that the child's work now meets the standard.

Simple prompt – particularly relevant for maths
- Try number 1 of problem solving
- Go back and correct question 3
- You have a made 2 mistakes on this page. Find them and correct them.

Reminder: Most suitable for high achievers.
- What else could you say about the weather?
- Think of a more descriptive word than bad.
- Say more about…
- Explain your thinking…

Scaffold: Most suitable for children needing a little more support - provide examples of what they need to do.
- What was the monster doing?
- What kind of monster was he?
- An unfinished sentence – The dog was angry so he…

Example prompt: Suitable for all, especially lower abilities.
- Give children a choice of words or phrase e.g., which of these words describes the taste more powerfully….
- Give exact sentences, words or processes to copy.
- Choose one of these words instead of bad: Ferocious, terrifying, evil.

Modelled Example: a correct example modelled by an adult with a further one for the child to try.
Open Question: pose an open question specifically related to the WALT to think about next steps.
Greater Depth/Explanation: use to extend a child's learning by asking them to explain their learning or reflect on the process or strategies they have used.

For Developmental Feedback given after the learning, progress will be visible in the child's work in the response to the adult's prompt. This should move the child beyond where they were in the lesson.

How often should developmental feedback be given?
In any lesson, it is expected that most pupils would receive either feedback for immediate change or feedback for ongoing improvement.

In a lesson, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have been identified as significantly behind their end of year target should be seen first; this will aim to ensure that the achievement gap between them and their peers is being diminished. After this, adults should aim to give immediate developmental feedback to as many pupils as possible

There are times when feedback will be given in a group – either as a planned guided group, or an impromptu gathering of children with similar needs. This also needs capturing, but how this happens is dependent on the method the adult is using and may not always look the same. Broadly speaking, when working with children at a

table, with books, it would be simple to use the above feedback styles as you work with each child. This therefore shouldn't involve any special consideration. Where impromptu groups are called to the adult (e.g. small group practicing practical maths, additional work on whiteboards etc.), it is enough to ask children to record 'DF group' in their books when they go back to their places. This then demonstrates that additional support has been given, without needing to elaborate further. The fact that children should be able to complete the next tasks is evidence enough of the impact of the group work with the adult.

What do children do with the feedback?
When children receive developmental feedback, they should respond to it straight away using their normal pencil. They also need to underline it in orange highlighter to make it very evident that they have responded to the feedback. This needs to be acknowledged by the adult, normally by ticking, to show it is correct, or by addressing it with the child if still incorrect.

If a pupil has not received feedback at the point of learning in a lesson, the adult needs to ensure that they are a focus for it in the next lesson for that subject.

Basic Skills Marking
To reiterate: the school sees the purpose of Basic Skills Marking as a vehicle to support children in rehearsing and consolidating acquired skills over time. This is a graded process, with ever more emphasis placed on children taking ownership of their work until the skills become unconsciously applied in their work. This process is not about catching children out or 'spoon-feeding' improvements to the children, it is about prompting children to **think hard** about their work.

The core components of Basic Skills Marking are located in the school's marking code (see appendix 1). This is applied – using the adult's professional judgement of each child – in one of a number of ways.

Stage 1: The adult uses the marking code to explicitly show the child where in their work errors have been made.
Stage 2: The adult uses the marking code to show how many of a certain error are on a line, by writing in the margin.
Stage 3: The adult uses the marking code to show how many of a certain error are in the whole piece/section, by writing at the bottom of the text.
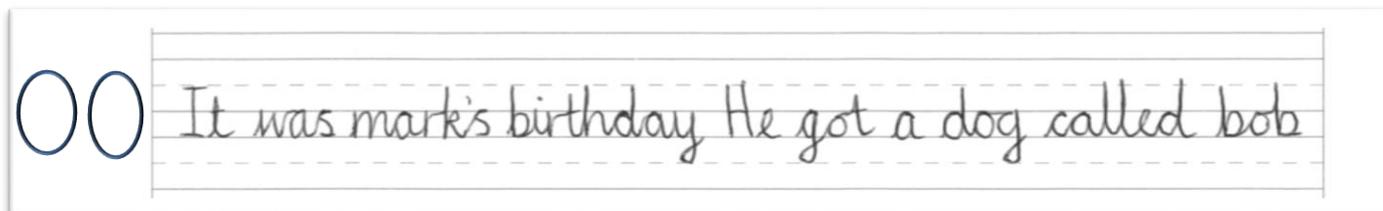Stage 3 can be adapted to provide additional challenge by not using the marking codes but simply informing the child of the broad area of work to be reviewed independently by the child.
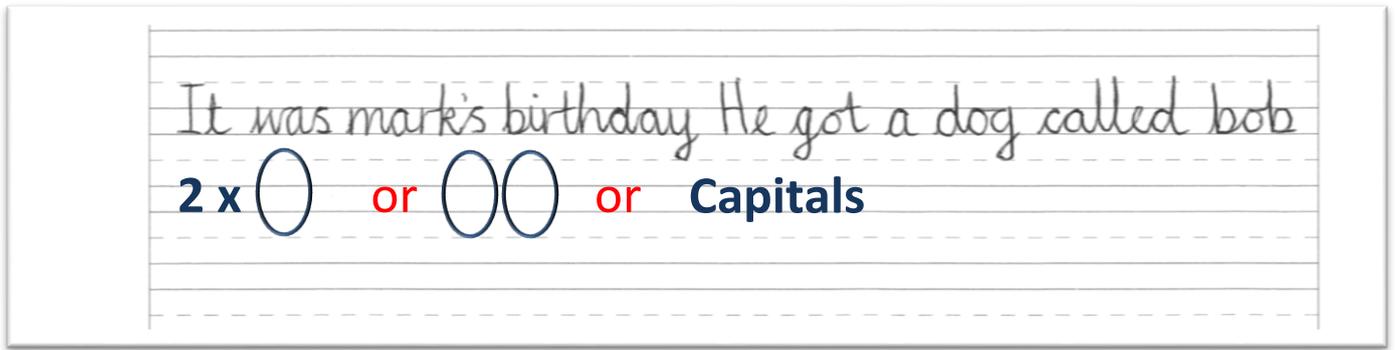
Illustrations of these three levels are below.

Stage 1:

Stage 2:

Stage 3:

It was mark's birthday He got a dog called bob

2 x ◯   or   ◯◯   or   **Capitals**
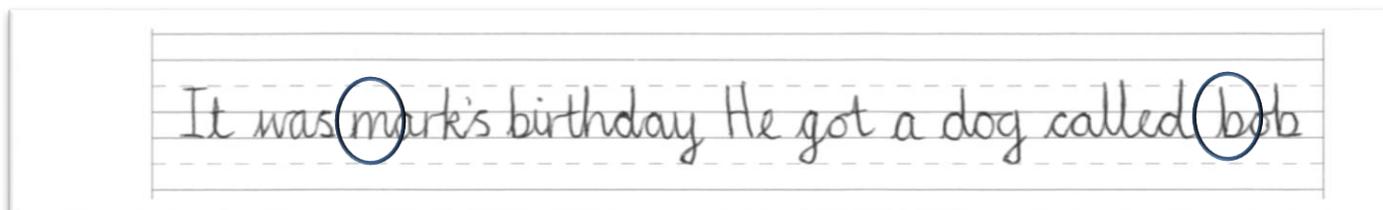
As the purpose of the Basic Skills Marking is to scaffold the child's awareness just enough so that they can correct their work themselves, each of the examples above should lead to the child successfully correcting the missing capital letters.

Applying Basic Skills Marking in the Classroom

It is highly likely that children will not require the same level of prompting for different skills. The Basic Skills Marking can therefore be mixed-and-matched to provide the scaffolding each child needs whilst also expecting children to work as independently as possible.

In the final example, the adult knows the child should be able to capitalise both names in the text, and should be able to remember to put a full stop at the end of the sentence, however the child is currently struggling to demarcate sentences which fall mid-way along the line.

PP   It was mark's birthday **P** He got a dog called bob
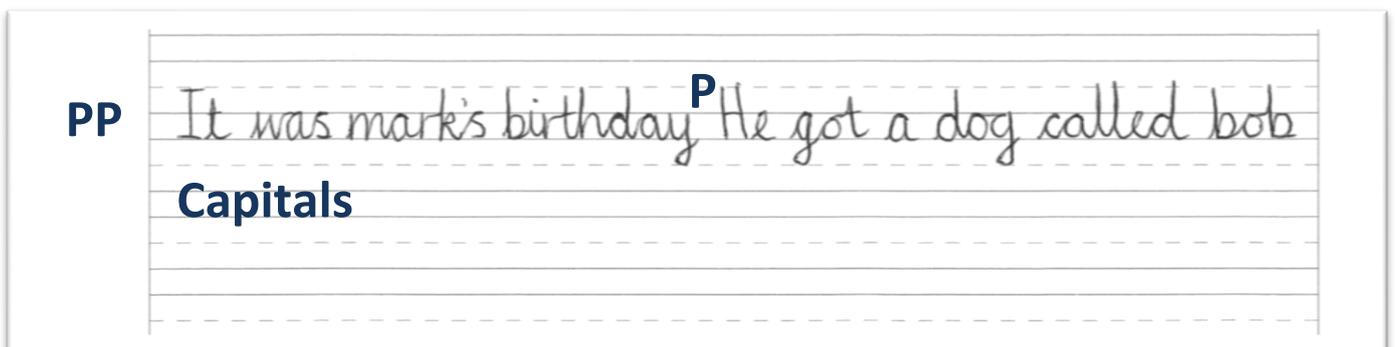
Capitals

Progress will be visible due to children being able to self-correct the errors in their work, as well as the stage of Basic Skills Marking changing over time. For example, if a child is being shown explicitly where the missing capital letters are one month, the next month it might be flagged up in the margin, and the following month prompts will be at the bottom of the text.

There is an expectation that adults are giving **Basic Skills Marking on a daily basis** to children. This can be completed during the session with the child marking a particular section of the learning, or it could be completed while the adult is reviewing the child's learning after the session. Adults need to also recognise where children have responded correctly by ticking improvements because of Basic Skills Marking; this provides valuable feedback in itself to the child.

Other Structures Requiring Adult Recognition

Coloured Success Criteria

In all sessions, both a broad Learning Objective and specific Success Criteria (in foundation subjects and literacy) should be shared with the children. In most instances this should be shared at the start of the lesson so that children know what they should be focusing their energies into improving and demonstrating at a high standard. The school

has a system of colour coding success criteria which focuses children on their learning and supports adults' assessment of children's learning.

The school chose to move beyond children simply self-assessing with a traffic light system against the success criteria as, at times, pupils were not able to talk about how and where they had demonstrated meeting the criteria. This approach was devised so that children had to not only be able to demonstrate the expectations of the success criteria in their work, but also be able to identify it to the adult by underlining precisely where the evidence of meeting the success criteria was.

There are a number of benefits to this approach for the adult and child:

- By focusing on ensuring that there is evidence against each success criteria, each child must manage their work and can actively try to demonstrate their understanding *as* they are working.
- By underlining evidence of the success criteria, the adult can be drawn to the pertinent parts of the work to assure themselves that the child has achieved within the session.
- If children underline parts of the work which do not support the success criteria it demonstrates that although the child believes they understand and can meet the criteria, they do not, and require additional teaching.
- If a child does not underline evidence against a criterion, but has demonstrated evidence in their work, they may be able to use the skill/knowledge, but are not aware. The staff member therefore needs to raise the child's awareness of the evidence and check their understanding although it is likely no additional teaching will be required.

The success criteria box and corresponding underlining can be completed in any colour crayon, as long as they match. This removes the need to wait for appropriate colours. Pupils should colour code their work at points throughout the lesson; it should not be a task that is done quickly at the end. By doing this, adults will know better how well pupils are understanding and applying the success criteria for the lesson.

Staff should review the children's colour coding as part of their assessment of learning in the lesson. Staff should tick the Success Criteria in books if they believe the children have met the success criteria. This can be completed whether or not the child has colour coded the success criteria themselves. Where written feedback is given against an unmet success criterion, the code 'T' should be used in the box, which should then be ticked once the staff member has reviewed the child's response.

Progress will be visible through the colour coded success criteria as the evidence of success against a target. Staff corroboration of the judgement through ticking the success criteria will also evidence progress.

Positive Acknowledgement of Good Work

Our staff give genuine praise to children as much as possible in the classroom verbally and although positive comments on work are nice for children to receive, we judge that there is little or no benefit in writing positive 'stock' words and phrases on work, such as 'Excellent work' or 'Well done'.

To ensure that pupils are aware of positive aspects of their work, staff will **underline words or phrases in blue pen** in children's work. Children will know that underlined work always equals positive recognition from adults, however this will not always be explained in writing by the adult, although they may choose to. For the most part, children will have to reflect on the underlined elements in their work and identify for themselves why those elements have been picked out for praise.

Progress will be visible when reviewing underlining, as the quality of work underlined as a positive will rise over a period of time, demonstrating our high expectations for the quality of work produced.