Where Learning Blossoms

Thorney Close Primary School

Marking Policy

Policy Author(s)	Mrs C. Jones
Position of Author(s)	Headteacher
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1. Introduction

At Thorney Close Primary School, we recognise the importance of feedback as an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle, and aim to maximise the effectiveness of its use in practice.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines so that there is a consistent approach to feedback and marking throughout our school.

All members of staff should have high, but realistic expectations of the work that each individual can achieve and ensure that the quality, quantity and presentation of work meets the standards required.

2. Rationale

In devising this policy, we are mindful of the research surrounding effective feedback and the workload implications of written marking, as well as research from cognitive science regarding the fragility of new learning.

Our policy is underpinned by the evidence of best practice from the Education Endowment Foundation and other expert organisations.

The Education Endowment Foundation research shows that effective feedback should:

- Redirect or refocus either the teacher's or the 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
- Put the onus on students to correct their own mistakes, rather than providing correct answers for them
- Alert the teacher to misconceptions, so that the teacher can address these in subsequent lessons.

Notably, the Department for Education's research into teacher workload has highlighted written marking as a key contributing factor to workload.

As such, we have investigated alternatives to written marking which can provide effective feedback in line with the EEF's recommendations, and those of the DfE's expert group which emphasises that marking should be:

Meaningful, Manageable and Motivating

We have also taken note of the advice provided by the NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics) that the most important activity for teachers is the teaching itself, supported by the design and preparation of lessons.

3. Key Principles

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

- The sole focus of feedback should be to further children's learning
- Evidence of feedback is incidental to the process; we do not provide additional evidence for external verification
- Feedback should empower children to take responsibility for improving their own work; it should not take away from this responsibility by adults doing the hard thinking work for the pupil.

- Written comments should only be used as a last resort for the very few children who otherwise are unable to locate their own errors, even after guided modelling by the teacher.
- Children should receive feedback either within the lesson itself or it in the next appropriate lesson.
- The 'next step' is usually the next lesson.
- 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. New learning is fragile and usually forgotten unless explicit steps are taken over time to revisit and refresh learning. Teachers should be wary of assuming that children have securely learnt material based on evidence drawn close to the point of teaching it. Therefore, teachers will need to get feedback at some distance from the original teaching input when assessing if learning is now secure.

Within these principles it is necessary 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 to adjust their teaching both within and across a sequence of lessons.

As such, strategies can include marking, but will mainly be verbal feedback during the lesson.

4. Why do we give good feedback during the lesson?

- To assess and discuss with children what they are learning
- To intervene in a timely way if children have not understood work and to further challenge them if they have
- To motivate further by praising current achievements
- To inform the next step in learning so that children know what they need to do in order to improve.
- To provide ourselves with feedback on how well pupils have understood the current work so that we can plan the next stage of teaching and learning.
- To enable teachers to make judgments about pupil attainment, particularly in regard to assessment levels to support ascertaining standards

By giving timely feedback, teachers demonstrate to children that their efforts are valued; this gives additional purpose to pupils' work. If children are not given constructive, specific feedback, they will not know whether their work is good/poor/indifferent, and may lose interest or not produce work of such quality in future.

5. Feedback and Marking in practice

It is vital that teachers evaluate the work that children undertake in lessons, and use information obtained from this to allow them to adjust their teaching. Feedback occurs at one of four common stages in the learning process:

1. Immediate feedback – at the point of teaching
2. Summary feedback - at the end of a lesson/task
3. Next lesson feedforward – further teaching enabling the children to identify and improve for themselves areas for development identified by the teacher upon review of work after a previous lesson had finished
4. Summative feedback – tasks planned to give teachers definitive feedback about whether a child has securely mastered the material under study

Type	What it looks like	Evidence (for observers)
Immediate	• Includes teacher gathering feedback from teaching within the course of the lesson, including mini-whiteboards, bookwork, etc. • Takes place in lessons with individuals or small groups. • Often given verbally to pupils for immediate action. • May involve use of a teaching assistant to provide support of further challenge. • May re-direct the focus of teaching or the task.	• Lesson observations • Learning walks
Summary	• Takes place at the end of a lesson of 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. • May take the form of a quiz, test or score on a game. • In some cases, may guide a teacher's further use of review feedback, focusing on areas of need.	• Lesson observations • Learning walks • Some evidence of self and peer-assessment • Quiz and test results may be recorded in books or logged separately by the teacher
Feedforward 'the next step is the next lesson'	• For writing in particular, often a large part of the next lesson will be spent giving feedback to the class about strengths and areas for development, and giving time for development areas to be worked on and improved through proof of reading and editing their work. • Do now's are analysed daily and errors and misconceptions addressed in subsequent lessons, in particular maths meetings	• Lesson observations • Learning walks • Evidence of pupils editing and redrafting their work in green pen
Summative	• 'Check it' activities • End of unit or term tests or quizzes	• Check it activities in books • Quiz and test results

Effective feedback makes pupils think about their learning. It also helps them to see that learning is incremental rather than fixed.

To support learning, areas for improvement are often more effective if they are expressed as questions. Teachers should not be providing pupils with the answer, but expecting them to think and refine their work as a result.

1. How could you use verbs to change the effect of this sentence?
2. How might you avoid starting each sentence with 'I' or 'The'?
3. Can you find a way of rewriting these sentences without 'and' or 'but'?
4. How could you vary your sentence structure here?
5. How else could you connect this paragraph?
6. What vocabulary could you use here instead? Suggest three other examples…

6. When do we feedback or mark?

- Ideally whilst the work is in progress
- At least at the completion of a piece of work
- As soon after the completion of the work as is possible

Practice will involve a "write, reflect, mark" sequence during lessons where the emphasis is on 'live marking' i.e. adults giving pupils formative, verbal feedback – a live nudge (supported by written prompts if necessary) to focus their attention on what they need to do (or amend) to achieve the objective at the point of learning.

As the feedback is in the context of the lesson, (VF to be written in the margin at the point at which verbal feedback is given), there is an expectation that the pupil will respond to the feedback immediately.

Written feedback will only be given by staff if they have worked with that child in the lesson and they do so there and then to evaluate the impact of feedback.

7. The Book Look

After the lesson, the teacher looks through the pupils' books to evaluate learning based on what went well (WWW) and what still needs work (EBI). Teachers sort the books into 3 piles:

- children who didn't grasp the objective or underperformed
- those who showed solid understanding
- those who did particularly well or exceeded the objective

Teachers tick each piece of work to show it has been checked, are free to add a brief comment on the work of pupils they fed-back to, and should 'star' any parts of work that are worth sharing as good examples as 'polaroid moments'.

8. DIRT – Direct Improvement & Reflection Time: Proof reading and editing in lessons

Once feedback has been posed, pupils need time to respond to be able to reflect critically on how to craft and improve their work, and to develop new techniques to put their feedback into practice. For ease of reference and the sake of consistency, we label this time and space within lessons DIRT – Direct Improvement & Reflection Time.

Most writing lessons will be followed up with a 'DIRT' session where children receive whole class feedback about strengths and areas for development and direct teaching about to help them identify and address their own weaknesses.

Teachers will have looked at pupils' work soon after the previous lesson and identified strengths and weaknesses, looking at both the technical accuracy of the writing; spelling errors, punctuation omissions, and other transcription mishaps as well as things to do with the sophistication of the writing; the actual content.

Where individual children have done particularly well or poorly at something, s/he will make a note and use these in the lesson as a teaching point.

The feedback/DIRT session will be divided into two sections:

1. proof-reading - changing punctuation, spelling, handwriting and grammar mistakes.
2. editing - improving their work to improve the composition.

The proof-reading section will usually be short: about 10 minutes or so, whereas the editing element may take the rest of the lesson.

There are many different tasks that pupils can do doing DIRT. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

- Redrafting a whole piece of work
- Redrafting of a section of the work
- Re-doing something e.g. a graph
- Answering a question/questions
- General Editing
- Fix its

The teacher will share extracts from pupils' work, using either the visualiser or by typing out a couple of lines and displaying them on the interactive whiteboard, at first showing good examples of work. WAGOLL

For example, within the proof reading section, the teacher might showcase someone whose letter heights have the ascenders and descenders just right, then asking pupils to look at their work and rewrite one sentence from it, really making sure they are paying attention to letter heights.

Then s/he might share a section of text with poor punctuation (usually anonymously) and reteach the class the various punctuation rules.

They might then point out some spelling errors that several children are making, and remind children of the correct spelling and how to remember it.

Children will then have a short period of time to proof read their work, checking for similar errors and putting them right. Children sit in mixed ability pairs and support each other in the identification and correction of mistakes.

Within the editing section of the lesson, for example, the teacher might show a different couple of pieces of work where children have described a character very well, pointing out what it is that has made the description so vivid. The teacher might then share a less good example which might be from an anonymous or fictional piece. The children would then suggest together how this might be improved. Then in their pairs they read together each other's work, and suggest improvements, alterations and refinements which the author of the piece then adds – in purple pen to help the teacher see what changes the child has made.

9. Intervening when children find editing hard

A few children will need more support than this in order to be successful at improving their own work. Younger children in KS1 in particular may need more support as they learn to become more independent, although many young children are quite able to edit and proof read independently after teacher modelling.

As with all intervention, teachers should always seek to use the minimal level possible, only escalating to the next level if the child still needs further support.

Some children may need a gentle prompt to narrow down their focus when looking for mistakes, for example a written comment alerting them that there are some missing full stops, without telling them how many or where. Or a simple pointer – 'description' perhaps or 'ambiguous pronouns' or 'figurative language' or 'and then' with a red cross through it. This

would be in addition to, and not instead of, the teacher modelling editing for these before the independent section of the lesson.

Others might need even more support and need to be provided with clues to help them. For example, the teacher might need to draw a box around a section of text to narrow down the search area for the pupil, alongside the comment that there are speech marks missing or tenses jumped or the same sentence structure over-used. Or they might need to write a comment at the end saying there are 8 run-on sentences or 5 instances of non-standard English.

Other strategies: In KS1 and for some Reception children, premade stampers are available to prompt children to look for certain mistakes. A 'Crimes Against Writing' prompt sheets can be used with KS2 classes until these basic skills are securely in place for most of the class. Certain individuals may need to carry on referring to these longer until the checklist is thoroughly internalised.

Where mistakes are deeply entrenched, or the children are very young and lack confidence, the teacher may need to do some direct work modelling how to overcome these: for example, to clear up the confusion with apostrophe use. The teacher might set a group of children an editing challenge based not on their own work but on a fictional piece of work with only one, recurrent error.

An adult might then support the group in identifying where apostrophes do and do not belong. They might do this instead of editing their own work or as a prelude to it, depending upon their learning needs. But what the teacher is not doing is using a marking code that does all the error identification for the pupil as this takes away any responsibility from the pupil at thinking hard about how to improve.

10. Spellings

Spellings and how to mark them can create difficulties. As a general rule, teachers should underline the incorrect spelling for the child to write the correct version. In work where there are many incorrect spellings, careful professional judgment is required in determining how many to identify so as not to demotivate the child.

11. Challenging the More-Able

Sometimes it is children who find writing easy who do not challenge themselves to improve their writing through editing, settling too readily for their first attempt. These children may initially need specific clues about what an ever better piece of writing might look like.

- Set group or individual challenges, "before you've finished editing, you need to have...
- Use their work in modelling and then expect them to do the same.

12. Peer Assessment

Peer improvement happens when children work with their learning partner to edit and develop a piece of work. It is not when partners swap books and individually 'check' and assess the other's work. To be collaborative, both children read and discuss one of their pieces together, decide the best bits (which may not be the same) giving reasons why, then together talk about the improvements that could be made – which the 'owner' of the work makes, using their purple editing pen.

Work that have been collaboratively / peer improved needs to be clear that this is the case. It will usually take the form of PI written below the work, with the initials of the pupils involved.

13. Feedback in Maths

Teachers gain valuable feedback about how much maths teaching is being retained in the longer term from, for example, 'Check Its' given at least 2 weeks after teaching a unit, as well as end of unit tests, which also provide vital feedback to the teacher about areas that might need more teaching for certain individuals either in class or through an intervention.

In terms of day to day maths learning, in KS2, teachers should have the answers to problems available, and after doing 4 or 5 calculations, children should check their answers themselves. That way, if they have got the wrong end of the stick and misunderstood something, they can alert the teacher immediately.

Another benefit is that less confident children might want to start at the easiest level of work provided, but with instant feedback available, after getting their first few calculations correct, they feel confident to move to the next level.

Another strategy teachers' can use is to get children to compare answers in a group and where answers do not agree, challenge each other and try and find where the other person has gone wrong.

The onus is always on the learner checking their work and if they've got an answer wrong, trying to identify their own errors.

14. Modelling how to check for errors in Maths

Children need to be taught how to do this purposely; otherwise they think it just means scanning quickly through their work, reading but not really thinking. So as an alternative to providing the answers, teachers should sometimes use the visualiser to model ways of checking and then expect children to do the same, in effect 'proof reading' maths.

So for example, children might repeat a calculation in a different coloured pen and check they've got the same answer. For addition calculations involving more than two numbers, adding the numbers in a different order is an even better way of checking. Teachers should also model how children can use the inverse operation to go and check they get back to where they started.

With 2 or 3 part word problems, a classic error is to give the answer as the first part of the problem and forget about following through to the second (or third) part of the question. Often, word problems are written with each instruction on a different line, a bit like success criteria. Again, using the IWB to model, teachers should show children how to check work as they go, returning to the question and ticking off each line – writing each answer alongside, being really clear that they are answering the final question, having done all of the previous steps.

15. Prompt Sheets

Where children have made mistakes, and are finding it hard to identify where they have gone wrong, a prompt sheet, shared with the class at the start of the lesson, can help. In effect, this is just a process success criteria, but recasting it as a checklist to be used to identify errors means children use it thoughtfully and only when needed.

It is important that the children move towards internalising what they are doing (over the course of several lessons) so that they no longer need a written checklist because they have

their own mental checklist stored in their long-term memory, which they are able to retrieve at will.

Giving children work to 'mark' from fictitious other children, which includes all the common misconceptions, is a really good way of helping them develop this.

16. RAG Rating

In Numeracy, teachers also 'check' work by acknowledging and 'coding' children's work after the lesson using a 'RAG' colour coding system.

As part of this checking, teachers dot highlight the learning objective to show their evaluation of the child's understanding (as evidenced in their written work). Teachers use this coding to support their planning for the following session e.g. grouping together children who have a 'red objective' in order to plan targeted support or planning challenge or next steps for children who have achieved 'green' in their work.

17. Feedback and Marking in the Foundation Subjects

Acknowledgement Marking - Due to time constraints and manageability, foundation subjects are 'light marked' with a courtesy tick to acknowledge that the work has been seen by the teacher, and/or a positive WWW comment, and EBI if necessary.

Find my mistake (column addition)

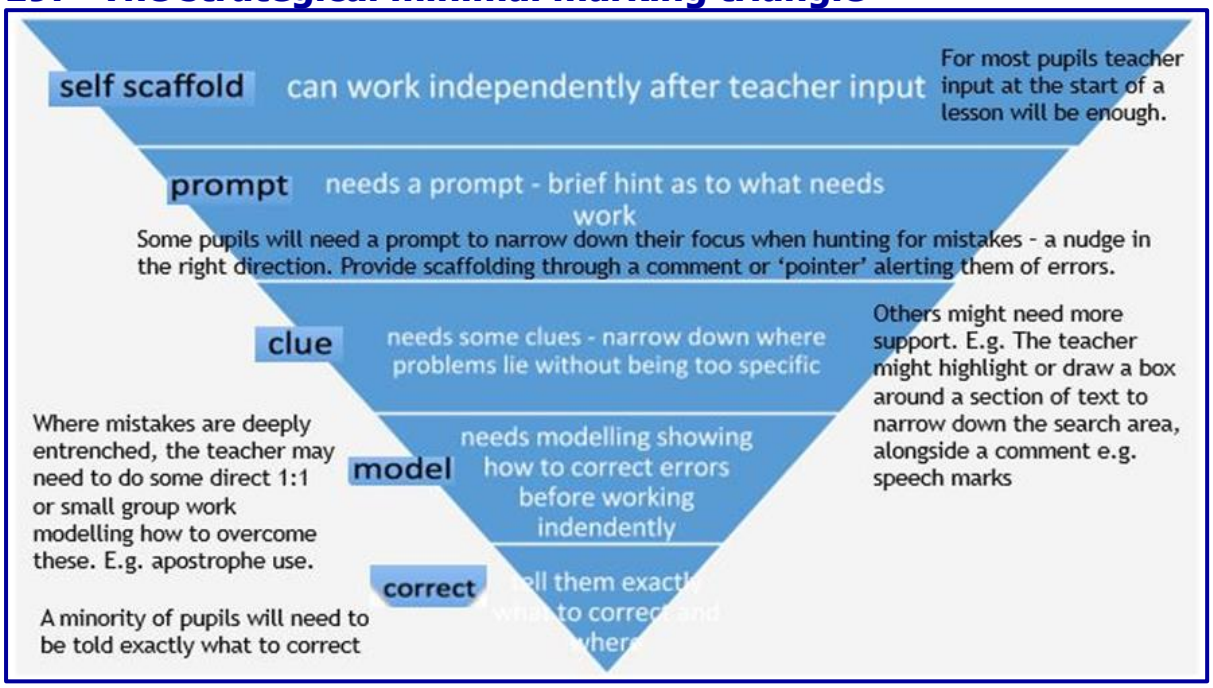
- Did I put each numeral in the right place value column? Check each one.
- Did I forget to regroup?
- Did I forget to add the regrouped ten (or hundred)?
- Did I make a silly error with my adding?
- If you can't find your mistake, ask your partner to go through this checklist with you and see if they can help
- If you are still stuck, is there another child who looks like they are confident with this you could ask?
- If none of this works, ask an adult for help.

18. The role of other adults

Marking and feedback is responsibility of the teacher. However, at Thorney Close Primary School, Teaching Assistants are trained to mark and provide feedback on children's work under the direction of the class teacher.

Teaching Assistants work closely with the teacher and share the outcomes from any marking and feedback to ensure that planning is informed according to the children's needs.

19. The strategical minimal marking triangle



Other…

- Errors in Maths should not be rubbed out – the correct answer should be written by the side
- Crosses should not be used – a dot by an error is preferred
- All work should be 'completed'
- Pupils use purple pen when editing writing, or self and peer marking
- Staff mark in pink pen

20. Standard symbols used to assist in the monitoring of pupils' progress

- Guided Work G
- Supported Work S
- Independent Work I
- Checked by an adult -
- Whole Class feedback WC
- Verbal Feedback given VF
- Supply Teacher ST
- Adult Led (EYFS) AL
- Child Initiated (EYFS) CI
- Peer Improved PI

21. Links to other school policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with other related policies, procedures and guidance documents in school; including:

- Maths Policy
- English Policy
- Assessment Policy
- SEN Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

22. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2025.