

Research suggests that providing feedback is one of the most effective ways of improving students' learning. The studies of feedback reviewed by the EEF¹, found on average the provision of high-quality feedback leads to significant progress over the course of a year. Too often the notion of feedback is wholly mistaken for just written marking, but that is only one facet of great feedback. Changing our assessment policy into 'Feedback Guidance' is important; it will reflect a rethinking and a re-education for students, parents and teachers about what makes for meaningful feedback. In the recent pupil questionnaire 20% of Years 9, 11 and 13 disagreed with the statement 'feedback and marking help me to improve'.

But what is feedback and what type of feedback works?

Hattie and Timperley (2011)² Distilled their thoughts into three practical questions that must be answered by the student:

- 'Where am I going?'
- 'How am I going?'
- 'Where to next?'

Dylan Wiliam argues we should focus on what our students are thinking and doing. Wiliam advocates "sharing criteria with learners and student self-assessment" to help our students be clear where they need to go and to help them in "monitoring their own progress towards that goal". Perhaps most surprisingly, Wiliam also gives a stark warning about the dangers of giving feedback. He cites that in "two out of every five carefully-controlled scientific studies, giving people feedback on their performance made their performance worse than if they were given no feedback on their performance at all!"

Feedback can take many forms; peer, self, group, teacher marking, or verbal and **different forms of feedback are crucial**. Peer feedback and self-feedback are both valuable learning tools. Evidence around peer tutoring, reciprocal learning, would indicate that well structured, clearly scaffolded peer feedback can prove effective. We know the teacher cannot, in most cases, give one-to-one feedback all the time. Well supported peer feedback can best supplement this essential work of the teacher. Self-feedback shades into the area of metacognition and self-regulation that also figures highly on the EEF toolkit graph of what works. We know, ultimately, that learning in school is a long and winding road from dependence on the teacher to more independent learning in readiness for life without a teacher. Self-feedback, well designed and supported, leads to crucial opportunities for deep thinking and learning; *learning to learn*, and *learning to think*.

A key principle should be that oral feedback, peer and self feedback, are to be privileged and balanced against teacher written feedback in a meaningful way. If we are going to spend our precious time and effort giving feedback, then students need a good amount of time to respond to that feedback. DIRT – dedicated improvement and reflection time – is just as important as the giving of feedback. One simple truth about feedback is that students need to be working as hard, if not harder, than the teacher in this process.

Great feedback will look different in each and every subject discipline. It does not make sense to ask a Maths teacher to conduct feedback in exactly the same way as a History, PE or Music teacher. We should lean on our subject specific expertise and supplement our Whole School Feedback Guidance with department specific policies – each on a side of A4. This adds complexity to the issue for parents, but we should recognise that learning is complex, messy and sometimes ugly. There are some challenges such as training students to execute and value peer and self assessment. But the benefits for our students are clear: better outcomes. The benefits for our teachers are just as important: a more balanced workload and the promise of better quality teaching.

This shift of focus on feedback rather than marking is crucial. The Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (2016)³ noted that quantity is being blurred with quality when it comes to marking. It highlighted that professional judgement is integral in achieving effective feedback that is meaningful, manageable and motivating. Professional judgement should be at the heart of our new Feedback Policy. This is not an argument for the removal of all marking, or

¹ A marked improvement? Education Endowment Foundation. A review of the evidence on written marking (April 2016)

² The Power of Feedback Hattie and Timperley (2011)

³ Reducing teacher workload: Marking Policy Review Group report: Report about eliminating unnecessary workload for teachers regarding marking, including principles and recommendations

to ignore the importance of students receiving written feedback, more that we should consider a slower, 'less is more' solution at a departmental level in order to make our feedback more efficient and impactful.

CHANNING SCHOOL FEEDBACK GUIDANCE

Departments should use this to write their own departmental specific feedback policy.

What is feedback?

Feedback is a central part of a teacher's role and can be integral to progress and attainment. Research suggests that providing feedback is one of the most effective ways of improving students' learning. The studies of feedback reviewed by the EEF⁴, found on average the provision of high-quality feedback leads to significant progress over the course of a year.

Feedback can take different forms: peer, self, group, teacher marking, or verbal. Great teachers use a combination of these, choosing the best form as appropriate to the learning. The best feedback, whether it is written or verbal, will give students a clear sense of how they can improve, with students responding and making progress as a result.

1. Aims of Feedback

- a. To help students make progress;
- b. To provide strategies for students to improve;
- c. To give students dedicated time to reflect upon their learning and put in effort to make improvements;
- d. To inform our planning and structure the next phase of learning;
- e. To facilitate effective and realistic target setting for student and/or the teacher;
- f. To encourage a dialogue to develop between student and teacher;
- g. To encourage students to have a sense of pride in their presentation of work;
- h. To correct mistakes, with a focus on Literacy/Vocabulary skills.

2. Principles

Channing School's feedback policy aims to promote consistent and high standards of feedback. This policy sets down the general principles which subjects must use to draw up their own specific policies to suit their curriculum needs. This should act as a working document that outlines what feedback should look like in specific departments in terms of type and frequency, and to support the delivery of high impact feedback. There must be a commonality of approach to ensure that in all subjects, across all attainment ranges, students are given the same opportunities to maximise their learning and achievement. The general principles are:

- a. Feedback should be timely and respond to the needs of the individual student so that they can actively engage with the feedback;
- b. A dialogue, both verbal and written, should be created between teacher and student. When work is returned to students it is essential to allow time (DIRT: Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) for students to read the comments and engage with the feedback;
- c. Feedback is a part of the school's wider assessment processes which aims to provide an appropriate level of challenge to students in lessons, allowing them to make good progress;
- d. Where appropriate students should be encouraged to assess their own work against the learning objectives and success criteria;
- e. Peer, group and self-feedback is a valuable tool for learning that should occur regularly, but it needs to be well structured by the teacher;
- f. Eliminating unnecessary workload will be at the forefront of any decisions related to marking and feedback.

3. Type and frequency of verbal feedback

- a. This is the most frequent form of feedback;
- b. It has immediacy and relevance as it leads to direct student action;
- c. Verbal feedback may well be directed to individuals or groups of students; these may or may not be formally planned;
- d. School based pupil interviews conducted in March 2019 showed that verbal feedback was highly valued by students;

4. Type and frequency of written feedback

- a. There are two types of written feedback: detailed and maintenance;

⁴ A marked improvement? Education Endowment Foundation. A review of the evidence on written marking April 2016

- b. The frequency of each type of written feedback will vary between subjects and key stages; agreed minimums should be clear in the marking policies of each subject area;
 - c. Some subjects that are more practical may well not have detailed written feedback;
 - d. Detailed feedback will clearly identify the strengths and strategies for improvement that students will then act upon (this may be in the form of 'Stars and wishes'; 'Targets, WWW/EBI Goals and assists' etc.);
 - e. Maintenance marking may identify specific issues such as key words, literacy/vocabulary and presentation issues; students should act upon these;
 - f. When taking work in, it may be appropriate for teachers to make comments about the work as a whole and to give that 'whole class feedback' the following lesson. When delivering whole class feedback staff are encouraged to make notes about common errors in order to address these potential pitfalls when the topic is delivered in the future.
5. Type and frequency of peer feedback
- a. This is shown by research to be one of the most effective modes of feedback. Effective peer feedback is rigorously structured and modelled by the teacher;
 - b. Written peer feedback should be clearly titled and underlined as 'Peer Feedback';
 - c. Students need to be well trained over time to effectively peer assess one another. This process will be clearly led by the subject teacher.
6. Type and frequency of self feedback
- a. Akin to peer feedback, students need an explicit and clear structure to identify their learning needs;
 - b. Teachers should share success and/or assessment criteria where appropriate.
7. Type and frequency of group feedback
- a. Group feedback, if delivered well, can be used to help students to reflect on their learning. Using clear guidelines, led by the teacher, students can self-assess their work.
 - b. Group feedback, can significantly reduce teacher workload and if used well and appropriately be used as Dedicated Reflection and Improvement Time.
8. Literacy and numeracy feedback
- a. If the literacy standards of our students are going to improve we must all give appropriate and targeted feedback. For students to take pride in their work they must realise that spelling, grammar and punctuation are not just important in English lessons but are essential for successful communication everywhere. It should be monitored in both detailed and maintenance written feedback;
 - b. We all have a duty to be vigilant about standards of our students' numeracy where appropriate. For example, concepts such as graphs, ratio, proportions etc. should be monitored accurately across the curriculum.
9. Monitoring and Evaluation
- a. HoDs must ensure their departmental feedback policy supports the school policy. This policy should clearly identify the ***type and frequency*** of feedback in subjects;
 - b. HoDs undertake quality assurance to ensure feedback is allowing students to progress their learning. The Work Looks and Department Learning Review Days are part of this process
 - c. HoDs will check departmental feedback as part of quality assurance process. Line Managers will regularly discuss and evaluate the quality of feedback as part of the Academic Review meeting process.

Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking - a Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (2016)

Summary of the findings:

1. 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. This can often be achieved without extensive written dialogue or comments.
2. Marking – providing written feedback on pupils' work – has become disproportionately valued by schools and has become unnecessarily burdensome for teachers.
3. The quantity of feedback should not be confused with the quality. The quality of the feedback, however given, will be seen in how a pupil is able to tackle subsequent work.

4. Marking is a vital element of teaching, but when it is ineffective it can be demoralising and a waste of time for teachers and pupils alike. In particular, they found that it has become common practice for teachers to provide extensive written comments on every piece of work when there is very little evidence that this improves pupil outcomes in the long te
6. The report talks of a cultural challenge. In many cases the view is that you must spend hours marking to be a good teacher; that writing pages of feedback makes you more effective; and that there is a link between the quantity of marking and pupil progress. These are myths that need to be debunked.
7. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. A balance needs to be struck between a core and consistent approach and trusting teachers to focus on what is best for their pupils and circumstances.
8. In summary, the group recommended that all marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating.

Meaningful: marking varies by age group, subject, and what works best for the pupil and teacher in relation to any particular piece of work. Teachers are encouraged to adjust their approach as necessary and trusted to incorporate the outcomes into subsequent planning and teaching.

Manageable: marking practice is proportionate and considers the frequency and complexity of written feedback, as well as the cost and time-effectiveness of marking in relation to the overall workload of teachers.

Motivating: Marking should help to motivate pupils to progress. This does not mean always writing in-depth comments or being universally positive: sometimes short, challenging comments or oral feedback are more effective. If the teacher is doing more work than their pupils, this can become a disincentive for pupils to accept challenges and take responsibility for improving their work.

A marked improvement - Education Endowment Fund (2016)

The original purpose of this review was to find evidence that would inform teachers' decision-making about marking. The time available for marking is not infinite, so the central question was: What is the best way to spend it? However, the review found a striking disparity between the enormous amount of effort invested in marking books, and the very small number of robust studies that have been completed to date. While the evidence contains useful findings, it is simply not possible to provide definitive answers to all the questions teachers are rightly asking.

Some findings do, however, emerge from the evidence that could aid school leaders and teachers aiming to create an effective, sustainable and time-efficient marking policy. These include that:

- Careless mistakes should be marked differently to errors resulting from misunderstanding. The latter may be best addressed by providing hints or questions which lead pupils to underlying principles; the former by simply marking the mistake as incorrect, without giving the right answer
- Awarding grades for every piece of work may reduce the impact of marking, particularly if pupils become preoccupied with grades at the expense of a consideration of teachers' formative comments
- The use of targets to make marking as specific and actionable as possible is likely to increase pupil progress
- Pupils are unlikely to benefit from marking unless some time is set aside to enable pupils to consider and respond to marking
- Some forms of marking, including acknowledgement marking, are unlikely to enhance pupil progress. A mantra might be that schools should mark less in terms of the number of pieces of work marked, but mark better.