

Educational research is unequivocal about the importance of high-quality feedback from teachers. It allows pupils to understand what is going well and what they need to do to improve their knowledge and understanding. However, whilst feedback is ‘one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement’, we recognise that ‘this impact can be positive or negative’ (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). For this reason, schools within The Education Alliance use a wide variety of evidence-informed techniques to provide effective and timely feedback, underpinned by an ongoing programme of continued professional development.

Teacher feedback can take many forms. However, the most impactful and evidence-based strategies are outlined overleaf. Our subject-specific guidance highlights where these strategies will be relevant to different subject areas.

Over time, unhelpful practices have evolved so that some of what a teacher does is not having the impact intended. The 2016 report of the ***Independent Teacher Workload Review Group*** noted that written marking had become unnecessarily burdensome for teachers and recommended that all marking should be driven by professional judgement and be “meaningful, manageable and motivating”. Recruitment and retention in schools is becoming increasingly challenging with recent national surveys citing burdensome marking policies as the main reason teachers leave the profession. Our approach is, therefore, based on the following three key principles:

- Improving pupils’ performance
- Based on evidence of what works
- Manageable and reasonable in terms of workload so that we continue to recruit and retain the best teachers in our schools for our pupils

As a result, we may mark less in terms of number of pieces of work but with greater impact (with no acknowledgement marking). Frequency and types of feedback will depend on many factors, such as the subject and unit of work being studied, the year group receiving feedback and whether formal assessments (such as mocks and unit tests) are taking place. Key pieces of work will be identified (within curriculum plans) for detailed feedback, with subject-specific approaches developed by subject experts.

What makes effective feedback?

The following overarching features of effective feedback have been agreed by subject specialists across the organisation:

- Feedback will be clear and easy for pupils to understand
- Feedback will focus on improving the pupil’s knowledge/skills, not an individual piece of work in isolation
- Feedback is received and applied by pupils
- We use our feedback to show pupils that their work (in lessons and in homework) is valued

In subjects where there is extended writing, the following codes are used when marking for literacy.

sp	Spelling error
©	Capital letter error
P	Incorrect or missing punctuation
Λ	Missing word/phrase
//	New paragraph needed