

Written feedback



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Providing feedback through marking pupil work is a core task for teachers. A written response is a clear method of providing feedback, and a method of supporting progress and attainment. However, a [2016 report by the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group](#) noted that written marking was a key component of large teacher workloads, and recommended that marking should be driven by professional judgement and be “meaningful, manageable and motivating” (p. 9).

Meaningful

Marking varies by age group, subject, and what works best for the pupil and teacher in relation to any 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. This is written into any assessment policy.

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.

Making written feedback more effective

The EEF report '[A Marked Improvement](#)' highlighted some key research findings about how to make written feedback more effective for pupils:

- 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 (e.g. ticks or VF to indicate verbal feedback), 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.

The research around written feedback is explored in more detail within the stretch content for this module.



Over to you!

Reflect on your answers to the following questions and record your thoughts in the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook).

1. To what extent do you feel your marking is meaningful, manageable and motivating to pupils?
2. Are you regularly setting time aside for pupils to consider and respond to your marking?