FLIXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

MARKING POLICY

September 2014

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Introduction

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance with regard the rationale, principles, strategies and expectations of effective marking and feedback at Flixton Primary School.

Rationale

Flixton Primary School is committed to providing relevant and timely feedback to pupils, both verbally and in writing. Marking intends to serve the purposes of valuing pupils' learning, helping to diagnose areas for development or next steps, and evaluating how well the learning task has been understood. Marking should be a process of creating a dialogue with the learner, through which feedback can be exchanged and questions asked; the learner is actively involved in the process. Research shows that marking is an important factor in pupil learning, so this policy is crucial for securing outstanding learning at Flixton Primary School. Marking and feedback will be judged to be outstanding at Flixton Primary School if all children know what they have done well and know what they need to do to improve further.

Principles of Good Practice in Marking

Good practice in marking means:
- looking for progress and success before areas to develop. Effective marking and feedback is supportive and positive for pupils;
- linking marking to the learning objective and success criteria. Refer to these when giving written and verbal feedback;
- linking marking to targets for improvement, either new targets or reference to previous targets set;
- giving positive public feedback for high achievement, as an illustration of completion of the learning objective and success criteria;
- looking for persistent errors and patterns of errors, rather than every error made: be selective and sensitive in marking. i.e. not every incorrect spelling will be highlighted, only words that an individual pupil should be reasonably expected to know;
- ensuring work is marked regularly and promptly after completion, to allow effective and timely feedback to be given.

Individual teachers will make the professional decision about which form of feedback and marking will be most effective for each piece of work. The following procedures will be used to mark, assess and give feedback:

Verbal Feedback

It is important for all pupils to have verbal feedback from the adult working with them. This may be to correct a pupil's understanding or to extend the pupil's learning. The teacher or pupil should indicate where verbal feedback has been given if related to written work. Through the use of systematic, focussed and recorded verbal feedback, there will be recognition of the impact of a crucial element of teacher marking, This feedback may, at times, be more suited to whole class/group discussion and may allow for work to be marked by the pupils, as a class or in groups. For example, weekly spellings can be marked by the pupils, but must be checked by the teacher.

Summative Feedback/Marking

It is neither practical nor effective for all pieces of pupils' work to be marked in depth, but all marking should acknowledge that work has been considered in relation to the pupil's attainment of the learning objective, through the use of one tick, two tick, three tick system and a short comment for improvement (if needed).

As with any marking only a reasonable number of the most obvious mistakes should be corrected. For example: words that have been misspelt or calculations incorrectly completed, punctuation errors; grammatical mistakes and inconsistencies. Marking should be used in these instances to enable pupils to correct errors and edit their work at a surface level, focusing on basic skills. Good practice is to develop children's independence in identifying errors and corrections, through the support of the feedback they receive, so that over time, children take responsibility for self-correcting their work.

Formative Feedback/Marking

There is a need for regular and focussed 'deep' marking which will extend pupils' learning and challenge them to improve and progress. This deep marking will occur at least once a week where it is appropriate. Deeper marking must not be confused with the production of longer marking comments. It is not about more marking, it is about sharply focused and effective marking.

Some examples of these include: in English, particular genres of writing or comprehension work; in Maths, investigative work or work at the beginning or end of a sequence of learning; in Foundation subjects, work with particular skills which are crucial to be effective within that subject, such as enquiry skills in History, or refining techniques in Art.

Where this deeper marking occurs, the crucial element of it is that it provides a clear next step of progress for pupils that they can respond to and use as an improvement target. The point of deeper, formative marking is that it deepens learning and understanding. It is not focussed on error correction. Targets need to be focussed on the work in hand, and are therefore hopefully achievable in a short time frame, ie. by the end of the Big Picture.

Targets help to demonstrate the impact of marking on the quality of the finished piece of work – they provide a narrative of how feedback has helped improve the work of the child over time. The time frame is short and focussed – targets are not long term, because that makes them unmanageable, impractical and slow to achieve, suggesting a lack of progress.

Targets need to be from a range of features needed for success within a subject. For example, targets in writing should not just be about grammar, punctuation and spelling, but also about purpose, organisation, style and flow to develop broader writing skills beyond the basic skills. Once set, targets need to be referred to when achieved within a future piece of work, or built on if necessary, as evidence of improvement and progress as a result of focussed marking and feedback.

Targets will be clearly identifiable through the target symbol and followed up in later marking and comments. Pupils will be encouraged to comment on their targets.

If at the end of the bigger picture a target set has not been met, then this now becomes a teacher directed question that must be responded to by the child. It does NOT become a target that will be recovered in six weeks time when that element of work is next covered – that is not practical, nor effective.

For example,

A child misses a target about an effective opening paragraph in the final written piece of work. The teacher's response is to ask within the marking – What should your opening paragraph have included?, and the child then responds.

If the child doesn't achieve the target and it is a basic skills target, (focussed on grammar, punctuation, spelling or handwriting (for example)), then the response is the same – a teacher directed question or task at the end of the unit of work. If the child continues to not achieve the target (eg, constantly failing to punctuate sentences) then it is the responsibility to ensure adequate provision, through homework or Learning Assistant focus, to enable progress to be made.

Marking in Maths: Effective Feedback and the Planning Cycle

In line with the school's policies regarding planning, Maths lessons are in and of themselves responses to children's work. As Maths is planned formatively throughout all units of work, teachers adapt the learning in light of the work that children produce during lessons. This means that the learning that the child attempts in the next lesson is a direct response to their attainment in the previous lesson. This means that targets are less necessary, because the whole teaching and learning experience is directly targeted at what children need to do in order to make progress.

Targets may, therefore, not be explicitly noticed from teachers' marking, as they will have already guided the focus of learning for groups of children the following lesson, and to write them into children's books from planning would be unnecessarily bureaucratic, with no impact on learning.

Pupil Response to Marking:

To be effective, summative and formative marking needs to be a call for action from a pupil otherwise it is unlikely to be effective at bringing about sustained improvements in work. Phrases like 'Remember to' must be avoided, as they provide no impetus for improvement. Pupils must have to respond to the marking in some way, whether it be correcting errors or deepening the learning.

Pupils should be taught what marking symbols mean and their role and responsibility within the marking system to act upon the advice given and demonstrate their response to the marking. If they do not understand a comment, they need to be encouraged to seek clarification so that they are clear about how to improve their work.

Upon completion of a task where a teacher feels a child would benefit from additional questions to either support and correct, or challenge and extend learning, a Self Improvement Time (SIT) activity will be offered for the child to complete.

It must be obvious that pupils have responded, for example through answering a question asked, or commenting at the end of the next piece of work about how they have included what was suggested.

Teachers must then respond to these comments, using a tick or short comment.

Summary

Marking should be time efficient, with teachers making professional decisions about how to mark pieces of work.

Marking should be focussed on the learning objective of the lesson, and when deep marking (roughly once a week) on the wider aspects of skills needed within a subject area.

Marking should set pupils targets for improvement, whether it is improvement of a single piece of work, or longer term improvement, and it should contain a call for action that allows pupils to demonstrate their response to the marking.

Marking should be progressive – and that progress should be obvious through future work and future comments.

Marking should involve the pupil in a dialogue focussed on improvement, and the pupil should respond to it in an obvious and meaningful way.

Marking should identify where progress has been made in relation to previously set targets or where progress still needs to be made.

Consistent Marking Symbols

Marking Symbol	Meaning
VF	**Verbal Feedback given by teacher/LA** (Children to write in margin of work, if a teacher has spoken to them to help them improve their work.)
✓	Learning Challenge not achieved
✓✓	Learning Challenge achieved
✓✓✓	Learning Challenge exceeded
Sp	Spelling error
P	Punctuation error
?	Check this makes sense
~	Choose a better word
Ⓣ	Target for improvement
Ⓣ (ticked) 14.6.14	On the current piece of work: Target achieved and the date when the target was set (Original Ⓣ also double ticked)
Ⓣ (three ticked) 16.5.14	Target exceeded (Original Ⓣ also three ticked)
Ⓣ 5.10.14	Missed the target (date is when the target was set)
?	At the end of a unit of work/Bigger Picture, if the target was missed, the teacher must give a question/task to enable proof of learning and progress