



# Pensby High School

## Marking Policy

### Rationale

Marking should serve a single purpose – to advance pupil progress and outcomes.

The quality of marking can have a significant impact on attitudes to learning, self esteem, confidence and attainment by stimulating and challenging students to work hard. Quality marking also encourages teachers to focus on how to improve the learning of individual students and feed into lesson planning and curriculum development.

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.

Marking should be **meaningful, manageable and motivating**. An important element of marking is to acknowledge the work that a pupil has done, to value their efforts and achievement, and to celebrate progress. But there are many ways to do this without extensive marking. There is little robust evidence to support the practice of extensive written comments and so the policy proposes an approach based on professional judgement. The Teachers' Standards state that teachers should 'give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback'. This is not a requirement for pupils to provide a written response to feedback: it could simply be that pupils act on the feedback in subsequent work.

Consistency across a department and the school is important, but this can come from consistent high standards, rather than unvarying practice. Marking should be led by students' needs rather than a mechanistic timetable.

### Aims of the policy

- To provide clear guidelines on a whole school approach to marking and written feedback.
- To provide a system which is clear to students, staff, parents and carers.

## Principles

- Work should only be marked for a purpose (different work will be marked with different degrees of intensity).
- There's virtually no evidence to suggest that acknowledgement marking (the 'tick-and-flick' approach) has any impact on student progress so the focus will instead be on marking work which truly tests students' understanding.
- Feedback can take the form of spoken or written marking, peer marking and self-assessment. If the hours spent do not have the commensurate impact on pupil progress, **stop it**. When verbal feedback is given this should be indicated and students should record what they need to do improve their work.
- Careless mistakes don't need to be corrected – mark the error but don't worry about correcting it. Instead focus on areas where students show an underlying misunderstanding.
- Comments written on the work should relate to the objectives of the lessons/scheme of learning, and reflect AFL marking, eg, teachers could use the WWW (what went well) to recognise achievement and EBI (even better if) to set targets.
- Plenty of justified praise should be given.
- The student response to the AFL comments is crucial; **this may be in terms of how they attempt subsequent task** or they may be given time to respond to comments and correct work (**Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time - DIRT**).
- Students will also be expected to participate in the assessment of their own work and this will lead on occasions to both marks and/or comments being written themselves or by their peers.

## The quality of the student work generated by the teacher over time

Students' work should show:

- Lack of graffiti
- Good presentation
- Evidence of a variety of learning activities
- Evidence of challenging work, in relation to the targets of the students, which is based on high expectations
- Evidence of "deep learning" having taken place
- Evidence of students producing extended pieces of writing
- Evidence of high standards of literacy
- Evidence of progress in learning over time as shown by the improving quality of work

## Whole School Policy

- Departments should agree at what points in a scheme of learning all department members will put in AFL comments, relative to the scheme of assessment and as per the departmental assessment plan. In between these, marking will be based on specific comments and marking for literacy.
- Written feedback should be specific to the student.
- Written feedback should include at least one strength about the subject content and an area for improvement. However, it is expected that support with literacy will be on-going.
- When a student receives written feedback there is an expectation that they will reflect and act on the feedback either through improvements in subsequent pieces of work or through correcting work during **Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)**.
- Not all classwork will be marked by the teacher. Students can expect to receive a variety of written and verbal feedback. Self and peer assessment is acceptable provided the accuracy of marking is checked and acknowledged by the teacher afterwards. When verbal feedback is given this should be indicated and students should record what they need to do improve their work.
- As part of written feedback teachers should make clear reference to how the piece of work relates to the student's target grade.
- All teachers should use the literacy policy marking codes and check for good English.
- All teachers should ensure that work produced by students is of an acceptable standard, and if not students should repeat the work.

## Curriculum Area Marking Policies

- Follow the practices outlined in the Whole School Marking Policy.
- Formulate and monitor a Curriculum Area marking policy which reflects the needs of the individual subject area(s) but which does not conflict with the whole school policy.
- Identify key pieces of work to be marked in detail by every member of staff in the department.
- Link into schemes of learning and schemes of assessment so that department marking reflects future learning and the information provided to parents.
- Curriculum Policies should be agreed by the SLT line manager.
- **DIRT** time should be built into lesson planning where appropriate, linked to schemes of learning and future learning.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Class Teachers**

- Mark in line with the Curriculum Area Marking Policy.
- Share the Marking Policy with students.
- Encourage students to record verbal feedback, if appropriate.
- Plan opportunities for peer and self-assessment, if appropriate
- Encourage students to have a sense of pride in their work and to challenge incomplete or untidy work.
- To ensure that excellent effort and attainment is rewarded through the school rewards system.

### **Subject leaders**

- Ensure an appropriate Curriculum Area Marking Policy is in place which reflects and meets the needs of the department scheme of assessment and is in harmony with the whole school policy.
- Monitor the application of the Marking Policy to ensure it is consistently applied by carrying out a planned programme of work scrutiny on a half termly basis.
- Provide feedback to staff on the monitoring process through the departmental QA process.
- Provide SLT line manager with feedback on the strengths and areas for development in relation to the application of the Marking Policy.
- Ensure that less effective marking is identified and necessary support is provided to ensure improvement.

### **SLT**

- Ensure Curriculum Area marking policies are in place and adhere to the school's Marking Policy.
- Ensure monitoring takes place via a planned programme of whole school work scrutiny.
- Monitor the quality of marking within each Curriculum Area through effective line management meetings.

## Marking for Literacy Policy

The Literacy policy is underpinned by a desire to:

- give feedback to students that will help them improve their literacy in all subjects;
- provide a responsive audience for language-based tasks;
- motivate students to communicate their subject knowledge and understanding more effectively;
- monitor student progress in their use of language.

Marking for literacy includes:

- Demarcating and constructing simple and complex sentences; fluency of expression; using varied vocabulary; spelling, punctuation and grammar and paragraphing for effect.
- Literacy errors should be corrected regularly and students encouraged to re-draft marked work to see their own improvement and progress.
- Students should be encouraged, in all subjects, to write with fluency and with confidence and staff should pick up misconceptions where appropriate.
- Spelling errors should be indicated with an 'S' through the word and the correct spelling indicated. Limit spelling corrections to subject specific vocabulary or those words which the student should know; maybe limited to 5 or 6 words per piece.

## Reduce workload and increase impact

The March 2016 review of teacher workload and marking raised some key questions, i.e. how can teachers

- Reduce their workload?
- Maximise student engagement with marking?
- Get students to understand their own work?
- Have meaningful dialogue with students about their progress?
- See patterns over time to set targets?

Many of the strategies traditionally used in marking are more work for teachers without getting the buy in from students and without obvious impact. Consideration needs to be given to the need to mark 'smartly' so that we are not doing all the work for the students.

A Feed Forward approach to marking using 'Universal Symbols' can be used in the classroom for instant feedback or when marking a set of books outside of the classroom. The key difference between this and the usual comment marking teachers do is that feed forward marking uses only symbols and then students have to identify why the symbols have been given and explain their own thinking behind what they have done. Students develop the ability to analyse their own work and feed forward into future work

[In trials done on this, many students said that they suddenly realised their work didn't make sense but had previously not even checked it before handing it in. Other students were able to explain what they had tried to do so that the teacher could see what they were thinking and correct misunderstandings.]

### How it works in the classroom

- Teacher marks the work in 1 minute using symbols
- Students comment on reasons for symbols
- Teachers mark the student's reflective comments
- Students can identify their own areas of weakness
- Teachers can identify patterns

### Suggested Symbols

Symbols may be slightly different in each subject but whatever you change them to, the definition needs to be clear for the students and teachers.

★ Star

There is something that has been done very well or has been clearly understood. It means it could be model work. It is at a high standard/they have made progress from a previous piece of work.

? Question mark

There is something that needs explaining more fully. The thinking/working out behind the answer may need explaining.

! Exclamation mark

There is something that does not make sense, is a problem or needs re-writing or re-calculating. There may be something here that is wrong and needs correcting.

■ Full Stop

There is a spelling, punctuation or grammar error and it needs identifying and fixing

Students can be given sentence starters to help them shape their responses to the symbols. They are important in helping guide them away from vague comments about 'trying harder next time' etc. These can be very subject specific if each department wrote their own. This also works much better if the lesson has had a success criteria – students are much more able to comment on their work when they compare it to something else.

## ★ Star

I am pleased with this because...  
You were pleased with this work because I...  
I have included...  
I have thought about...  
I met the following points on the success criteria...  
My writing was...  
I tried hard to...  
I listened to my feedback last time and decided to...  
This is some of my best work because...  
I have made progress since my last piece of work because...

## « Sentence Starters

## ? Question mark

I have tried to...  
My intention was...  
I was experimenting with...  
I thought I would..  
I wasn't sure about...  
I was working on my...

## ! Exclamation mark

I didn't really understand...  
I need to re-think...  
I need to re-calculate...  
It needs re-drafting because...  
The problem is...  
This needs improving because...  
I would like you to help me with...  
I haven't grasped ... yet  
I think it would help if I...  
I think it would help if you could...

## ■ Full Stop


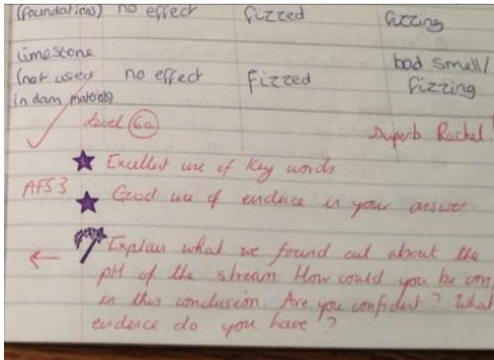

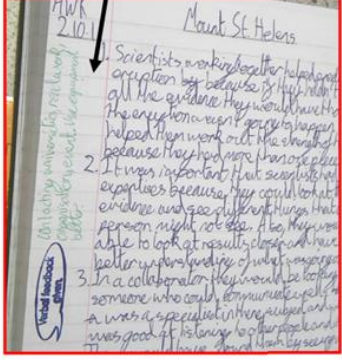
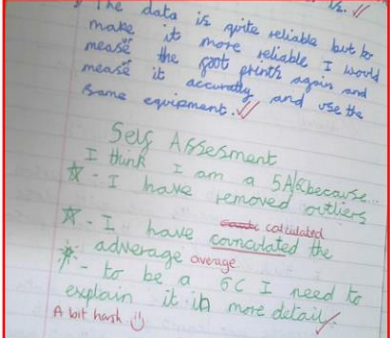
The following spellings are incorrect...  
I haven't included...  
My sentence structure is...  
My presentation is...  
I have missed...  
Quotation marks are...  
I forgot to...

## Further strategies to reduce marking workload

Instead of...	The teacher	The student
Writing annotations in the body of the work and giving an overall comment	Only writes annotations in the body of the work	Writes an overall review highlighting at least one strength and one area for improvement
Writing extensive comments	Only gives one strength and one possible improvement; <b>WWW</b> <b>EBI</b>	Works to “Close the Gap” on the one issue identified.
Writing “well done you have...” next to the good aspects of the work	Puts a double tick next to the best parts of a students work	Adds the reason for the double ticks
Marking every question in detail	Only marks the highlighted questions in detail. There is no expectation to mark all work. Mark tasks where your marking will have an IMPACT!	Marks (or peer marks) the work before it is submitted, highlighting the two areas where they would most like help
Writing the same explanation on every piece of work when the same mistake is made by many students	Goes over the question in class	Writes their own correct answer
Writing out a full solution when a student gets a wrong question	Writes a hint or prompt for the next step	Completes the correction
Correcting work when a student makes a little mistake	Writes WWWWW? (What’s wrong with this?) or RTQ (Read the question)	Completes the correction
Marking only extended pieces of work	Reviews in class students’ initial plans for this work prior to the marking the extended piece of work	Does not hand in poor quality work
Giving back work and moving straight on... Give students time to close the gap to make all that marking time worth it	Ask student to put a tick next to their comment if they know how to improve and a ? if they don’t. This can be the first step to engagement. Paired work to resolve some of the ? prior to asking for guidance is good practice and reduces workload	Students read and start to engage with marking before working on the “Close the Gap” task the teacher has identified

*Further time saving marking tips and strategies can be found in the ‘Marking & Feedback Strategies’ Booklet (available on Google Drive).*



Type of marking	Description	Possible time saving tools	What it looks like
<p>Written feedback</p> <p><b>* See further examples of good and poor practice</b></p>	<p>This is detailed feedback which relates to how well students have met the learning objectives, in classwork or homework. It will include strengths and areas for improvement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">             WWW            EBI         </p>	
<p>Verbal feedback</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to record what they need to do to improve their work.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  </p>	
<p>Self and peer assessment</p>	<p>Students should be given opportunities to peer and self-assess. This should be done with support from the teacher and marking criteria. Students should follow the same format as teachers by highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.</p>		 <p style="font-size: small;">Example 1: Science linked to APP criteria in lesson (Year 7)</p>

## **Examples of good practice**

Feedback should comprise of at least 2 elements. What the learner has done well and a brief indication of how improvement can be made. You may want to include prompts or further questions to extend the students thinking.

*“You’ve used adjectives correctly. Your work would be even better if you had a wider variety of vocabulary”*

*“You have made your points well, however to improve your work you must always include examples”*

Staff may want to adopt the 2 stars and a wish approach, even better if (EBI) or what went well (WWW).

Remember, however, if there are too many improvements on a piece of work, the feedback can become less productive.

## **Use of prompts**

The best kind of prompt gives students just enough information to point them in the right direction but not too much that the next step is too easy. Examples could be:

*“Your solutions are all correct but a bit brief”*

*“Explain why you think x, y or z”*

### **If students need more help than useful prompts:**

*“Re-do this problem/exercise. You might want to try...”*

*“Give more detail about the importance of ...”*

### **Prompts can be given in the form of specific examples or questions:**

*“Your description of John’s personality is detailed but what did he look like and how could this help us with the question?”*

*“Read through my worked example then use it to help you answer the following question...”*

Give students time to read your comments and prompts during **DIRT**. You may even wish for them to sign your comment to say they have read it.

## **Examples of poor practice**

9/10 good effort

6/10 not bad

4/10 you can do better

Statements like the ones above are too vague. It is essential to be specific about what exactly is good or not so good about the work when providing feedback. What can be done to make the work even better?