

Feedback Policy – Addendum in response to COVID Outbreak

September 2020

Review Date: January 2021

Dissemination of policy: All staff



“The mistake I made was seeing feedback as something teachers provided to students. I discovered that feedback is most powerful when it is from the student to the teacher. What they know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are not engaged – then teaching and learning can be synchronized and powerful. Feedback to teachers makes learning visible.” (Hattie, 2012)

What is feedback?

Feedback is an essential part of teaching and learning. It helps children to maximise their potential, raise their awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, and identify actions to be taken to improve performance. Indeed, without feedback children may feel that there are no areas for improvement and this can give a false picture of their own strengths or achievements.

Feedback is a central part of a teacher’s role and is integral to progress and attainment. Research suggests that providing feedback is one of the most effective and cost-effective ways of improving students’ learning. The studies of feedback reviewed by the EEF, found that, 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 teaching uses a combination of these, choosing the best form as appropriate to the learning. The best feedback, whether it is verbal or written, will give students a clear sense of how they can improve, with students responding and making progress as a result.

With the advancement of technology, there are different methods we can use which provide effective and purposeful feedback to children in a more timely way. Although the key principles of effective feedback remain the same, the purpose of this revision is to provide specific additional guidance during the coronavirus pandemic.

This guidance still allows teachers to collect exercise books in for marking; however, in light of the need to safeguard staff and children by preventing the excessive handling of resources, we encourage staff to use this policy and additional resources / Continuous Professional Development (CPD), such as on the use of visualisers and class iPads as a teaching tool, to consider how they might change their practice to avoid unnecessary sharing whilst still providing meaningful feedback to support children’s learning and progress.

What are the aims of feedback?

“It is not sufficient simply to tell a student where they have gone wrong – misconceptions need to be explained and improvements for future work suggested.” (Hattie, 2012 p. 147).

Effective feedback is integral to excellent teaching and learning and empowers children to be actively involved in how they are making progress. At the Whiteoak Academies, we recognise that great teachers and great teaching will use a combination of feedback strategies, choosing the best form as appropriate to the learning. The best feedback, whether it is verbal or written, will give children a clear sense of how they can improve, with children responding and making progress as a result.

At the Whiteoak Academies, we aim to use feedback to:

- Help all children understand and be clear about their successes.
- Provide clear next steps and strategies to help children improve and make progress.
- Give children dedicated time to reflect upon their learning and put in effort to make improvements.
- Inform teachers' planning and assessment in order to effectively structure the next phase of learning.
- Encourage dialogue between teachers and peers.
- Encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and their work.
- Enable children's self-discipline and encourage perseverance.
- Encourage children to have a sense of pride in their work.
- Help children to correct mistakes, with a focus on English skills.

Ensuring high-quality feedback during the coronavirus pandemic

During the coronavirus pandemic, all children will continue to receive regular and clear feedback. This feedback will be as immediate as possible and respond to the needs of individual children so that they can actively engage with their feedback and respond as necessary.

All feedback will continue to be appropriate to the task and children's development. This may be in the following ways:

Verbal Feedback

Verbal feedback is the most frequent form of feedback used at the Whiteoak Academies. We recognise the importance of verbal feedback as it has immediacy and can lead to direct action and improvement. Verbal feedback will often be planned but will also occur, as necessary, in response to individual or groups of children's work and understanding within a lesson. As it takes place during a lesson, immediate verbal feedback allows teachers to adapt their teaching and give feedback at the point of teaching. Furthermore, verbal feedback may also occur as the end of a lesson or shortly after, as part of a summary or plenary. It may also involve some form of self or peer assessment.

At the Whiteoak Academies, there is no requirement to evidence verbal feedback by any code or through a stamp.

Mini-plenaries during lessons

Teachers will ask questions from the front of the class to ascertain and check understanding, or ask children to share progress in their work. Peer to peer verbal feedback is also encouraged.

Sharing plenaries at the beginning / end of lessons

Using visualisers or class iPads, children in the class should be asked to share part or all of their work while remaining at their table. This will enable their teacher and classmates to provide verbal feedback, identifying achievements in relation to the learning objective and success criteria, and any next steps for improvement. Teachers should ensure that every child is asked to share their work in maths and writing at least once every fortnight.

The most effective way to do this particularly for maths and writing is by using the class visualiser / iPad.

Group feedback

Group feedback can be used to help children reflect on their learning. Using clear guidelines, led by the teacher, children can self-assess their work. Group feedback, if appropriate, can be used as Dedicated Reflection and Improvement Time.

Whole class marking and editing carried out by the children

As appropriate, written answers can be marked as a class during the same lesson so that children can evaluate their own work. This will be particularly appropriate for Maths and reading comprehension activities.

Children should be encouraged to edit and improve each piece of writing as normal during the same or next lesson. When using self-feedback, children need an explicit and clear structure to identify their learning needs. Teachers should share success and/or assessment criteria where appropriate.

Writing assessment at the end of a lesson / week / teaching sequence with next steps recorded

At the end of a lesson, week or teaching sequence, teachers should ask all children to leave a book open on the table. The teacher will then be able to move around the class after children have left and look at the work, identifying any follow-up steps to be taken and use the assessment information gathered to inform future planning and teaching. As a result of the assessment information gathered, class, group or individual feedback can be provided as necessary. Years 2- 6 pupils will be given some time to act on their next step feedback as appropriate. Year 1 and R feedback will share next steps verbally, but children will not be expected to edit pieces of writing they completed several days before.

Although this policy aims to reduce the amount of written comments made, there is a clear expectation that teachers spend time reading children's work regularly and carefully in order to know each child's strengths and areas for development. We also recognise that misconceptions and careless errors are separate things and should be fed back using different strategies, with key mistakes marked as incorrect and sometimes without the correct answer given, dependent on the individual needs and age of the child.

Where written comments are used, they will be focused on the learning objective or key question, the children's efforts and achievements, key English skills (such as presentation, spelling and punctuation), and / or as a means of celebrating progress. We aim to deliver effective marking that helps to scaffold learning and encourages children to think and engage with their feedback.

When providing feedback on key pieces of work, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary should be addressed.

Teachers should not take books home for marking at this time. Teachers are able to mark work while sitting with individual children or move around the class to provide regular feedback. However, all appropriate social distancing measures must be taken in line with the school's risk assessment.

The Learning Environment

At the Whiteoak Academies, we recognise that our learning environment plays a vital role in providing feedback to our children. It is at the heart of what we do and reflects and affirms the values and ethos of our family of schools. We aim to use our environment to:

- Encourage children to have pride and confidence in their work and achievements by demonstrating that we value their work and learning.
- Create an environment that stimulates interest and discussion and helps to inform, guide and shape learning.
- Celebrate and recognise a child's best efforts.