



OUR LADY AND ST BENEDICT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL MARKING POLICY

Introduction

At Our Lady and St Benedict's, we take a professional approach to the tasks of marking work and giving feedback on it. There will naturally be some differences in the marking subject to the age of the children concerned. However, all children are entitled to regular and comprehensive feedback on their learning, which will enable them to establish their next steps in learning. Therefore, all teachers mark work and give feedback as an essential part of the assessment process.

Aims and objectives

We mark children's work and offer feedback in order to:

- show that we value the children's work, and encourage them to value it too;
- boost the pupils' self-esteem, and raise aspirations, through use of praise and encouragement. The main objective of marking and feedback is not to find fault, but to help children learn.
- promote self-assessment, whereby the children are able to recognise the areas for development in their work, and are encouraged to accept guidance from peers and adults;
- share expectations;
- enable children to have a clear picture of how far they have come in their learning, and how they can improve their work in the future;
- offer the children specific information on the extent to which they have met the lesson objective, and/or the individual targets set for them;
- gauge the children's understanding, and identify any misconceptions;
- provide a basis both for summative and for formative assessment;
- provide the ongoing assessment that should inform our future lesson-planning.

Principles of marking and feedback

We believe that the following principles should underpin all marking and feedback:

- The process of marking and offering feedback should be a positive one, with pride of place given to recognition of the efforts made by the child.
- Marking and feedback is the dialogue that takes place between teacher and pupil, ideally while the task is still being completed.
- Marking should always relate to the lesson objective and, increasingly, the child's own personal learning targets.
- Marking and feedback should be appropriate to the age and ability of the child, and may vary across year groups and key stages.
- Marking will focus on only one or two key areas for improvement at any one time. We use pink highlighter pens to show recognition of good parts of work with which we are 'tickled pink'. Usually teachers or children will highlight three good points in any given piece of work. We use green highlighters to show points for development within a piece of work and which demonstrate 'green for growth' areas of learning.
- The child must be able to read and respond to the comments made, and be given time to do so. Where the child is not able to read and respond in the usual way, verbal communication should be made with annotations

representing the dialogue. A closing the gap comment should be highlighted for future planning.

- Teachers should aim to promote children's self-assessment by linking marking and feedback into the wider process of engaging the child in his or her own learning. This includes sharing the learning objectives and the key expectations for the task right from the outset. These can be found on the working walls in each classroom.
- Whenever possible, marking and feedback should involve the child directly. The younger the child, the more important it is that the feedback is oral and immediate.
- For one-to-one feedback (teacher to pupil) to be effective, sufficient mutual trust must be established.
- Feedback may also be given by a teaching assistant, or through peer review.
- Group feedback is provided through plenaries, and in group sessions.
- Feedback will help a child to identify their key priorities for improvement.
- Teachers will note errors that are made by many children and use them to inform future planning.
- Marking and feedback should always be carried out promptly and as close to the time of learning as possible. Children should be given time to discuss their feedback before the start of the next session.

Implementing the marking policy

The school has explicit rules that apply to all pieces of work i.e. each piece of work must be dated and titled. In Literacy the date should be written and in Numeracy the date should be noted numerically. Worked should be annotated to indicate in what form the work was undertaken i.e. independently, shared, in a group or in a pair. Absence should also be noted.

The extent of the teacher's response to a piece of work is determined not by the number of errors found in it, but by the teacher's professional judgement on how learning can be moved on best. Teachers will highlight three good points and one or two areas for growth, specific to the particular child.

In order to encourage a positive response, improvement points will be made where appropriate in a constructive statement which reminds, scaffolds, is an example prompt or an extension to move learning on.

Written comments detailing next steps are more valuable than marks or grades. We do not normally give marks or grades on pieces of written work.

Ticks are normal where work is correct and a dot where errors have been made. Other symbols may be used once their meaning has been explained, e.g. an S through a spelling mistake.

Wherever possible, teachers should establish direct links between oral or written praise and the class or school rewards systems. At the same time, teachers should remember that stickers and stars in themselves do nothing to close gaps in understanding, or to bring about improvements.

Where pupils interact in the marking process, they will be all the more engaged and receptive to correction. In fact, pupils should be encouraged to set some of the questions.

When appropriate, children may mark their own or another child's work, but the teacher must always review this marking. Marking their own work is usually preferable, because when the teacher makes a point, the children need to be able to relate it to their own efforts.

Children should be encouraged to assess their work ahead of final marking, using prompts from success ladders. These can remind children of their learning targets, or suggest common checks to perform (e.g. capital letters). This helps the children to self-reflect at each step of the learning process.

In addition, the children could indicate where they think a particular target has been achieved. Their learning partners might also check on their behalf, before the work is handed in, that a particular target has been met.

Occasional personal tutorials offer a valuable opportunity to review and evaluate the progress a child is making, by highlighting successes and identifying the next learning points.

Teachers will comment on spelling and grammar only in the following cases:

- if spellings and grammar were part of the lesson focus;
- if it is a spelling that all pupils should know;
- if it is something related to the child's target.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to monitor and update the school's marking and feedback policy on a regular basis, so that we can take account of improvements made in our practice or new research findings. We will therefore review this policy in two years, or earlier if necessary.