PROSPECT HOUSE

SCHOOL

Rationale and Research for the Marking & Feedback Policy
(introduced to the Upper School in September 2021)

Terminology

For the purposes of this document, 'feedback' encompasses either written or verbal modes of communicating with the children we teach on aspects of their work.

Why is the Marking Policy being updated?

The new Marking and Feedback Policy recognises the fundamental importance of continuing to build coherency in

- the **quantity** of feedback within and between subjects
- the **quality** of feedback within and between subjects
- the **frequency** of feedback within and between subjects

and recognises also that feedback is only truly effective if our children are provided with opportunities to engage meaningfully with it, whether the feedback takes a written or verbal form.

It is also recognised that

- some subjects have traditionally embraced burdensome marking practices which need to be examined
- traditional marking practices (for example, providing written feedback for every child) comes with a significant opportunity cost: for example, an hour invested in providing feedback in this manner to children might be better invested in enhancing one's own subject knowledge
- traditional approaches to marking, such as providing comment-based written feedback are not supported by evidence and, as such, the provision of such feedback needs to be reviewed. *Please see the accompanying 'Rationale and Research' document.*

In addressing these issues, the policy encourages teachers to provide feedback that follows these principles

1. it is **timely** - in that it is given **at the point of need,** usually **during the lesson**
2. it is **easy to understand, record** and **react to** by the child
3. it is **specific** and relates to the key objectives and concepts of the lesson
4. it can be **acted upon** by the child because **time has been made for meaningful response**
5. it is more child-led: feedback should encourage the child to **think for themselves**.

What does the research say about traditional marking and feedback practices?

The Education Endowment Foundation reported in 2016:
> *The quality of existing evidence focused specifically on written marking is low. This is surprising and concerning bearing in mind the importance of feedback to pupils' progress and the time in a teacher's day taken up by marking. Few large-scale, robust studies, such as randomised controlled trials, have looked at marking. Most studies that have been conducted are small in scale and/or based in the fields of higher education or English as a foreign language (EFL), meaning that it is often challenging to translate findings into a primary or secondary school context or to other subjects.*[1]

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[1] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Presentations/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf, p.5

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

A move away from written marking, as there is no evidence to suggest that it is a better investment of a teacher's time, than, for example, developing better resources or enhancing one's own subject knowledge, or providing directed and timely verbal feedback.

While simple 'acknowledgement marking', or the provision of a short comment such as 'good effort' may have been commonplace in the past, it is likely that these forms of marking could be reduced without any negative effect on student progress [...] moving to a form of selective marking could substantially reduce marking workloads.[2]

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Marking & Feedback Policy?

- A move away from acknowledgement ('tick and flick' or generic laudatory comments) marking
- A move towards creating specific conditions for providing written feedback, such as for assessments in English (see English Marking & Feedback Policy).

The table below summarises the various approaches to feedback as examined by the EEF in their 2016 report[3], which can be separated into seven different sections. The extracts highlighted in bold are particularly pertinent.

Aspect of feedback	What the research says Colour indicates the strength of research evidence: green = strong, orange = moderate, black = absence of evidence
Grading	· Awarding grades alongside comments has a positive long-term effect on girls but a negative long-term effect on boys (probably as girls underestimate their capabilities so the grade has a motivating effect). · Both high- and low-attaining pupils are less likely to act on feedback if grades were awarded alongside comments.
Correctness	· **Providing the correct answer to mistakes (something a student can do, and does normally do correctly, but has not on this occasion) is no more effective than not marking at all.** · Where errors (something a student has not mastered or has misunderstood) are made students should be reminded of the rule or given a hint or question which can lead them to correct answer. · There is no difference between the effectiveness of coded or uncoded feedback, providing the pupils understand what codes mean.
Thoroughness	· **There is no evidence that acknowledgment marking (tick and flick), generic praise or praise not seen to be genuine has any impact on progress.** · Offering information on how pupils should improve their work is more beneficial than simply marking work as right or wrong. · 'Selective' marking (where all types of errors within a limited section of work are marked) has a positive effect, whilst minimising teacher workload.

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[2] Ibid, p.14

[3] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Presentations/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf

Pupil responses	· Pupils do not engage with and find it hard to act upon feedback given, and pupils value the opportunity to respond to feedback. However, how this time is used is crucial to its effectiveness. · Pupils who receive mid-project written feedback are more likely to act on it and view it as helpful.
Creating a dialogue	· The use of teacher questions in feedback helps to clarify understanding and stretch pupils. Engaging in a dialogue also leads pupils to become more reflective about their work and helps those who do not understand the feedback they have been given. · **There is no evidence that written dialogue is preferable to verbal dialogue.** · **There is no evidence that acknowledgement steps in either dialogic or triple impact marking will promote learning.**
Targets	· Specificity of feedback is a key determinant of its impact on performance. · Short term targets are more effective than longer-term goals. · Targets are more effective when pupils are working towards a small number of targets at any given time. · Teachers tend to overestimate the degree to which pupils understand targets and success criteria, which may act as a barrier to improvement.
Frequency and speed	· Next lesson feedback has a positive impact on students' progress compared with slower feedback (but effect of positive impact has not been measured).

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

- A move away from acknowledgement ('tick and flick' or generic laudatory comments) marking
- A move away from any type of dialogic marking
- A move towards providing types of selective feedback which focus on a small part of the child's work
- A move towards providing mid-project feedback - in class, for example
- A move towards creating specific conditions for providing specific written feedback, such as for assessments in English (see English Feedback Policy)
- A move towards providing opportunities for children to engage with the key questions of a lesson sequence either at the end of that lesson sequence, or at the start of the subsequent lesson sequence (a view also shared by Rosenshine - see below).

A Government report of 2016 - Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking - stated:

The time taken to mark does not always correlate with successful pupil outcomes and leads to wasted teacher time. Examples of disproportionate marking practice include: extensive comments which children in an early years' class are unable to read, or a written dialogue instead of a conversation. If teachers are spending more time on marking than the children are on a piece of work then the proportion is wrong and should be changed.[4]

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

- A move away from written marking as there is no evidence to suggest that it enhances outcomes
- A move towards making sure that the provision of feedback is always more work for the child than the teacher.

and

[...] marking – providing written feedback on pupils' work – has become disproportionately valued by schools and has become unnecessarily burdensome for teachers. There are a number of reasons for this, including the impact of

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[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/511256/Eliminating-unnecessary-workload-around-marking.pdf, pp.8-9

Government policy, what has been promoted by Ofsted, and decisions taken by school leaders and teachers. This is not to say that all marking should be eliminated, but that it must be proportionate.[5]

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

- A move towards recalibrating how we assess teacher quality (which is often done by reviewing how much written feedback they have provided)
- A move towards removing the need teachers feel to provide extensive written feedback for audit audiences such as parents and leadership.

Barack Rosenshine stated in his 2012 Principles of Instruction[6]

Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning: Daily review can strengthen previous learning and can lead to fluent recall.

Research findings

Daily review is an important component of instruction. Review can help us strengthen the connections among the material we have learned. The review of previous learning can help us recall words, concepts, and procedures effortlessly and automatically when we need this material to solve problems or to understand new material. The development of expertise requires thousands of hours of practice, and daily review is one component of this practice.

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

- A move towards providing opportunities for children to engage with the key questions of a preceding lesson sequence, in response to teacher feedback. This requires the teacher to have checked the work produced by the children.

What is being done and said by leading practitioners in other schools and institutions?

Joe Kirby stated in 2015

Written marking takes up huge amounts of teachers' time. If the average teacher marks for just over 5 hours a week, that's 200 hours of marking a year. In a secondary school of 100 teachers, that's 20,000 hours of marking. Written marking is non-renewable: it's a one-off. Each written comment I put in a pupil's book only impacts once on that one pupil. What else could we do with that 20,000 hours, that would impact more positively on future pupils and other teachers? Marking has a very low ratio of impact-to-effort, and a very high opportunity cost.[7]

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

A movement away from providing written feedback (expressed either as a symbol or in a comment), except in very specific circumstances (for example, when marking assessments in English) because

- it is single-use: it can only be given to one child
- it is time consuming if it is repeated for every child
- written feedback is often given **after the point of need** (i.e in the classroom as the work is being done).
- There may be better uses of the time one would spend given written feedback (for example, developing better lessons resources; enhancing one's own subject knowledge).

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[5] Ibid, p.5

[6] https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Rosenshine.pdf

[7] https://pragmaticreform.wordpress.com/2015/10/31/marking-is-a-hornet/

Adam Boxer stated in a 2020 blog, when reflecting upon his own departmental policy[8]

- *Teachers are expected to monitor and check their students' work in class as they practice.*
  [the implication here being that children receive 'on the spot' feedback].
- *Teachers are expected to sample student responses in whole class review once students have finished their work.*
  [the implication here being that teachers circulate during lesson, and provide feedback using student exemplars either during the lesson or in a subsequent lesson].

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

- A move towards providing more mid-project feedback - in class, for example, and at the point of need
- A move towards providing opportunities for children to engage with the key questions of a preceding lesson sequence, in response to teacher feedback. This requires the teacher to have checked the work produced by the children.

and in a 2018 Governors' report

> *In terms of marking specifically, there is very limited direct evidence. A recent EEF report (2016) concluded that, "The quality of existing evidence focused specifically on written marking is low".[9]*

and

> *There is no alternative conclusion but to therefore assert that any marking policy is based on no evidence at all [...] we have no way to know if it promotes or hinders learning.[10]*

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

A move away from written marking as there is no evidence to suggest that it

- enhances outcomes
- is a better investment of a teacher's time, then, say, developing better resources or enhancing one's own subject knowledge, or providing directed and timely verbal feedback.

and that, when considering the commonly used proxies schools apply when evaluating teacher quality

> *Marking has become one such proxy. The student's book has become a proxy for their learning and the marking in it has become a proxy for the teacher's quality. Because of the lack of evidence surrounding marking as a useful proxy of anything (other than compliance with school policy), the Government workload document [2016] states:*
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> *"[marking] is serving a different purpose such as demonstrating teacher performance or to satisfy the requirements of other, mainly adult, audiences. Too often, it is the marking itself which is being monitored and commented on by leaders rather than pupil outcomes and progress as a result of quality feedback.[11]*

What does this finding mean for the Prospect House Feedback Policy?

A move towards

- Recalibrating how we assess teacher quality (which is often done by reviewing how much written feedback they have provided)

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[8] https://hwrkmagazine.co.uk/archives/3514

[9] https://achemicalorthodoxy.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/marking-review-for-sharing.pdf, p.3

[10] Ibid

[11] https://achemicalorthodoxy.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/marking-review-for-sharing.pdf, p.8

- Removing the need teachers feel to provide extensive written feedback for audit audiences such as parents and leadership.

The table below - showing Rosenshine's Principles in action - indicates where opportunities for feedback can be introduced within the context of a lesson or a sequence of lessons.

Step-by-Step Planning Template: What do these Principles look like in a lesson?

Lesson Order/Structure	Content/Examples	Purpose
Start of Lesson **Retrieval Practice (Starter)** 1. Daily review	Prior knowledge question/activity.	• Retrieval Practice • Memory/Recall • Information provided to teacher – where are the current gaps in understanding? What have they **forgotten**?
Teaching 2. Present new materials in small steps 3. Asking a lot of questions 4. Provide models 5. Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks	Step-by-step approach using worked examples and live teacher modelling 'thinking aloud' in front of pupils. Success Criteria constructed with pupils. Lots of **questions** for understanding of tasks. Teacher talk to ensure **direct and clear instructions**.	• Eases cognitive load/**information overload** • Checks understanding • Aids successful task completion • High expectations and levels of **'challenge for all'** • Opens greater breadth and depth of knowledge
Students engaging in deliberate practice 6. Guide student practice 7. Independent practice	Pupils use success criteria, information and learning from examples and modelling to **practice**. Use of peer explanations. Using silence to aid 'thinking hard'.	• Practicing for maximum future success and mastery of topic – aiming for full understanding and fluency
Feedback (Whole Class) 8. Checking for student understanding **End of Lesson**	Checking understanding through teacher circulation. Correcting and engaging with **misconceptions**. **Reteaching** where necessary. Peer and self evaluation. Plenary.	• Checking all pupils for mastery and clear understanding of task
Regular retrieval practice 9. Daily review Throughout a SoW 10. Monthly review 11. Obtain a high success rate	Frequent **low-stakes** quizzes and testing of knowledge across short, medium- and long-term planning.	• Embeds material into long term memory • Checks for understanding – what gaps **still exist** in their knowledge?

Note how
- each lesson begins with recall
- it is critical that the teacher circulate in order to address misconceptions.

Links
https://readingallthebooks.com/2016/03/19/giving-feedback-the-michaela-way/