



Covingham Park Primary School

Marking and Feedback Policy

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1. Statement of Intent

Marking and feedback are among the most powerful tools a teacher has to move learning forward. At Covingham Park Primary School, we believe that feedback should be purposeful, proportionate and rooted firmly in what the evidence tells us actually works – not driven by the need to produce a visible paper trail for its own sake.

This policy sets out our shared, whole-school approach to marking and feedback. It exists to give pupils a consistent experience of feedback as they move through the school, to give staff clarity and confidence in their day-to-day practice, and to protect teacher workload and wellbeing by ensuring that time spent on feedback is time that genuinely improves outcomes for children.

This policy should be read alongside the appendix (the Marking and Feedback Quick Guide), which translates the principles below into specific, subject-by-subject expectations for what feedback looks, sounds and feels like across the curriculum.

2. Aims of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- ensure feedback consistently moves learning forward for every pupil, regardless of subject, class or key stage;
- ensure our practice reflects the best available evidence, and moves away from low-value, high-workload habits that research does not support;
- give pupils a shared understanding of how they will receive feedback and what is expected of them in response;
- provide staff, governors, parents and carers with clarity about our whole-school approach to marking and feedback;
- protect teacher time, ensuring the volume and method of feedback is proportionate to its likely impact on learning;
- support consistency of expectation for pupils who move between classes, key stages, or who receive input from more than one adult, including teaching assistants and supply staff.

3. The Evidence Base: What the Research Tells Us

This policy is informed principally by the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) guidance report *Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning* (Collin & Quigley, 2021), the best available synthesis of international research evidence on feedback, alongside the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit and the wider formative assessment research associated with Dylan Wiliam and colleagues.

The headline findings that shape our approach are:

- Feedback is one of the most powerful levers available to teachers. Where it is well designed, the evidence suggests it can be worth several months of additional progress across a year. However, poorly designed feedback can be neutral, or even harmful, to pupil progress and confidence.

- Feedback is not free. Every hour spent writing extended comments in books is an hour not spent planning, developing subject knowledge, or preparing high-quality explanations – the EEF describes this as an important ‘opportunity cost’ that school leaders must weigh up.
- The method of delivery (written or verbal) matters far less than the underlying principles of the feedback itself. Schools that fixate on a particular marking method – for example, a rule that every piece of work must receive a written comment – are focusing on the wrong variable.

The EEF guidance sets out three core principles that underpin effective feedback, and these form the backbone of our approach at Covingham Park:

Principle 1 – Lay the foundations for effective feedback through high-quality initial teaching and careful formative assessment, so that feedback has less ‘work’ to do in the first place.

Principle 2 – Deliver appropriately timed feedback that focuses on moving learning forward, rather than simply confirming what is right or wrong.

Principle 3 – Plan for how pupils will receive and use feedback, building in the time and structures for pupils to actually act on it.

The EEF is explicit that a school's feedback policy should promote and exemplify these principles, while leaving decisions about the precise method and timing of feedback to teachers' professional judgement, responding to the needs of the pupils in front of them. This policy is written in that spirit: it sets clear expectations and non-negotiables, but it deliberately avoids prescribing a rigid, one-size-fits-all marking formula.

4. Our Principles of Effective Feedback

Translating the evidence above into practice, four principles underpin every act of marking and feedback at Covingham Park Primary School.

Principle 1: Feedback follows strong teaching

Before adding written comments to a pupil's work, teachers first ask whether misconceptions could have been prevented or addressed through clearer explanation, modelling, or checks for understanding during the lesson itself. High-quality first teaching, live questioning and responsive adaptation in the moment reduce the amount of work that feedback needs to do after the fact.

Principle 2: Feedback is timely and specific

Feedback is most powerful when it is close to the point of learning. Wherever possible, feedback is given live, in the lesson, while pupils can still act on it. Where written feedback is used, it focuses on a small number of the most important next steps – not an attempt to comment on everything a pupil could improve.

Principle 3: Feedback is only valuable if pupils act on it

Feedback that is written but never read, or read but never acted upon, has no impact on learning. Teachers build dedicated time into lessons for pupils to read, reflect on and respond to feedback – editing, correcting or redrafting their work using a green pen (see Section 6).

Principle 4: Feedback is proportionate

The method chosen – verbal, live, written or whole-class – is selected because it will have the most impact for that piece of learning, not because of a fixed expectation for how many written comments should appear on a page. Written comments are used sparingly and purposefully, protecting teacher time for planning and preparation.

5. Forms of Feedback at Covingham Park

Staff draw on four main forms of feedback, choosing the form that will have the greatest impact for the learning taking place. These are described generically below; subject-specific application is set out in the appendix.

5.1 Immediate / Verbal Feedback

Feedback given in conversation with an individual, group or the whole class as work is happening. This is often the most powerful and time-efficient form of feedback, particularly for correcting misconceptions in the moment. It does not require a written record unless a specific follow-up action needs to be flagged for a teacher, teaching assistant or the pupil themselves.

5.2 Live Feedback

Feedback given and briefly recorded in the moment during the lesson – for example, a tick, a dot, a highlighted word or phrase, or a short verbal prompt noted down – while pupils are still producing the work. This allows for immediate correction or redrafting, rather than a delayed response the following day.

5.3 Summary / Written Feedback

A small number of written comments added after the lesson. This is used selectively, when it will add value beyond what has already been addressed through live or verbal feedback – for example, identifying a pattern across the class's work, or setting an individual next step for a piece of extended writing. Written feedback is not applied as a blanket expectation for every piece of work in every subject.

5.4 Whole-Class Feedback

Where the same misconception, error or strength is evident across a set of books, teachers use a single whole-class feedback sheet or slide rather than repeating an identical comment thirty times. Pupils respond directly to this feedback in their books, typically in green pen, which is then checked by the teacher.

6. Pupil Response to Feedback

In line with Principle 3, pupils are given explicit time and expectation to engage with feedback, not simply receive it.

- Pupils respond to feedback, corrections and next steps in green pen, so that their own editing is clearly visible against the original work.
- Dedicated response time is built into lessons – typically at the start of the next relevant lesson – for pupils to read and act on feedback received.
- Teachers check that feedback has been understood and acted upon, rather than simply that it has been written.

- Where a pupil cannot yet act independently on feedback, an adult supports them to do so; this is not treated as a failure of the pupil, but as information for the teacher about the pitch of the original task or explanation.

7. Marking Conventions and Symbols

To give pupils a consistent visual language for feedback as they move through the school, all staff use the following shared conventions. Subject-specific variations are set out in the appendix.

Convention	What it means
Pink highlighter	Used to highlight words, phrases or sentences where a pupil has successfully met the learning objective or a specific success criterion.
Tick	Indicates a correct response, or that a specific element of work meets the expected standard.
Dot	Indicates that an error is present nearby; pupils are expected to find and correct it themselves wherever possible, rather than being told the answer.
Green pen	Used exclusively by pupils to show their own edits, corrections and responses to feedback – never by the marking adult.
Margin comment / arrow	A brief, targeted prompt or next step, used sparingly (see Section 5.3) – for example “→ Check place value”.
Maximum 3 items	Where spellings, key words or presentation points are flagged for correction, no more than three are marked at any one time, to keep the task achievable and the workload proportionate.

8. Subject-Specific Application

The principles set out above apply across the whole curriculum, but what “good feedback” looks, sounds and feels like reasonably differs between, for example, a piece of extended writing and a PE lesson. The appendix to this policy – the Marking and Feedback Quick Guide – sets out, subject by subject, the specific KS1 and KS2 feedback expectations and the associated teacher marking expectations, agreed with subject leaders.

These subject-specific expectations are treated as non-negotiables: they represent the agreed, evidence-informed application of this policy in each curriculum area, and should be clearly evident during learning walks, book looks and subject leader monitoring.

9. Adaptations for SEND and Vulnerable Learners

Feedback is only effective if it is accessible to the pupil receiving it. Teachers adapt the form and delivery of feedback to ensure it remains meaningful for every learner, including:

- prioritising verbal and live feedback for pupils who find it difficult to access written comments independently;
- using adapted symbols, visual prompts or personalised systems agreed with the SENCo where appropriate, in place of, or alongside, whole-class conventions;
- aligning feedback explicitly with a pupil's individual targets, for example those set out in an EHCP or individual provision map;

- for pupils learning English as an additional language, focusing feedback on vocabulary and communication alongside subject content, so that language demands do not obscure genuine subject understanding;
- ensuring that feedback protects pupil confidence and self-esteem, particularly for pupils who already find a subject or aspect of learning challenging.

10. The Role of Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to feedback, particularly through immediate and live feedback during small-group and individual support. Teaching assistants:

- use the same whole-school marking conventions as the class teacher, so that feedback is consistent regardless of which adult a pupil is working with;
- feed back key misconceptions, successes and next steps to the class teacher, so that this information can inform future planning and formative assessment;
- are briefed by the class teacher on the specific focus for feedback during any intervention or support session, ensuring feedback remains tightly linked to the learning objective.

11. Frequency and Workload Considerations

Covingham Park does not operate a blanket expectation that every piece of work, in every subject, receives written marking every day. The evidence set out in Section 3 does not support this approach, and it carries a significant, unproductive cost to teacher workload and wellbeing.

Instead, the frequency and form of feedback in each subject is guided by the subject-specific expectations in the appendix, agreed by subject leaders as the approach most likely to move learning forward for that curriculum area. Leaders will not expect, request or reward extensive written dialogue or decorative marking outside of directed time.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The impact of this policy is monitored through a combination of:

- book looks, undertaken collaboratively with staff rather than punitively, focused on the impact of feedback on subsequent learning rather than the volume of marking present;
- learning walks, where live and verbal feedback – much of which leaves no written trace – can be observed directly;
- pupil voice, to check that pupils understand the feedback they receive and know how to act on it;
- subject leader moderation of the subject-specific expectations set out in the appendix.

Findings from monitoring feed directly into the Quality First Teaching strand of the School Development Plan, and inform future CPD priorities.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Senior Leadership Team	Ensure this policy reflects current evidence; monitor implementation proportionately; provide CPD and protect time for feedback to be delivered well.
Subject Leaders	Maintain and periodically review the subject-specific expectations in the appendix; moderate samples of work across their subject.
Class Teachers	Apply the principles of this policy; adapt feedback to the needs of pupils in their class; ensure dedicated time for pupils to respond to feedback.
Teaching Assistants	Deliver consistent verbal and live feedback aligned with the class teacher's conventions; communicate findings back to the class teacher.
Pupils	Engage actively with feedback received; use green pen and dedicated response time to act on next steps.
Governors	Hold the school to account for the impact of feedback on outcomes and workload, rather than the volume of marking produced.

14. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- the Teaching and Learning Policy;
- the Assessment Policy;
- the SEND Policy;
- the Curriculum Policy.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if new evidence, curriculum changes, or findings from monitoring indicate that revision is required.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Next review: July 2027

Appendix: Marking and Feedback Quick Guide

The table below sets out subject-by-subject feedback expectations for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, alongside the associated teacher marking expectations, as referenced in Section 8. This guide is the practical, day-to-day reference for staff and should be used alongside the full policy above.

Subject	KS1 Feedback Expectations	KS2 Feedback Expectations	Teacher Marking Expectations
English (Writing)	Verbal feedback during writing. Highlight successes linked to the learning objective (pink highlighter). Simple next-step prompts for the next piece of writing.	Live feedback during lessons. Identify one key improvement point linked to composition, grammar or audience. Dedicated editing opportunities.	Teachers circulate constantly, read over shoulders, stop pupils briefly for group/individual feedback, and gather examples to share. Emphasis is on intervention while writing is happening. In books: pink highlighted words/phrases where success is achieved; ticks; occasional annotations; evidence of pupil editing (green pen); crossing out/added words; max 3 spellings in the margin to practise. Example: “Strong opening – can you use a powerful adverb to show how the character entered?”
Maths	Immediate correction. Misconceptions addressed during the lesson. Teacher or TA checks key calculations.	Live marking and intervention. Pupils correct errors independently where possible. Misconceptions challenged quickly through precise formative assessment.	Teachers tick and dot work on the move, spot misconceptions, bring groups together for guidance, and adapt teaching to respond. Prompts used: “Talk me through this method” / “Convince me this is correct” / “Can you show this a different way?” In books: learning objective highlighted in pink when the intended outcome is achieved; ticks, dots and corrections in pink pen, completed by pupils in green; occasional brief comments, e.g. “→ Check place value” or “→ Is this always, sometimes or never true?”
English (Reading)	Immediate verbal feedback during guided reading and phonics. Discussion-based correction.	Verbal feedback during whole-class reading. Focus on comprehension and vocabulary discussion.	Mark retrieval/comprehension tasks for misconceptions. Use whole-class feedback sheets where appropriate, with evidence of pupil response in green pen.
Science	Verbal feedback during investigations. Focus on vocabulary and observation skills.	Feedback on scientific thinking, predictions and conclusions. Discussion around misconceptions noted in pupil books to signpost that this has been addressed.	Mark against scientific understanding rather than literacy – typically through the learning intention. Use whole-class feedback where common misconceptions occur during mid-unit investigations, captured on digital planning through Think Backs.
History	Verbal feedback focused on historical vocabulary and chronology.	Feedback on interpretation, evidence and explanation.	Whole-class feedback required once a unit. Correct key misconceptions.
Geography	Discussion-based feedback. Use questioning to deepen understanding.	Feedback on geographical reasoning, map skills and fieldwork analysis.	Whole-class feedback required once a unit. Correct key misconceptions.
RE	Verbal discussion and questioning.	Feedback focused on reasoning, reflection and use of evidence.	Floor books used and feedback given verbally to the class.

Subject	KS1 Feedback Expectations	KS2 Feedback Expectations	Teacher Marking Expectations
	Encourage explanation of ideas.		
Computing	Immediate support and verbal feedback during tasks.	Live feedback during coding/problem-solving; encouraged to debug independently.	As above – live, verbal feedback during coding and problem-solving tasks, encouraging independent debugging.
Art	Verbal coaching throughout the process. Celebrate effort and creativity.	Critique and peer feedback linked to artistic techniques.	No written marking. Focus on verbal dialogue, pupil reflection and celebration of success.
DT	Ongoing verbal feedback during designing and making.	Feedback on design decisions, evaluation and technical skills.	Assess against design criteria. Use pupil evaluations.
Music	Instant verbal feedback during performance.	Feedback on performance, composition and listening skills.	Observation-based assessment.
PE	Immediate coaching feedback. Peer assessment and modelling.	Self and peer evaluation against success criteria.	Observation records rather than written marking.
MFL	–	Immediate correction of pronunciation and vocabulary. Feedback on communication, vocabulary recall and grammar patterns.	Correct key misconceptions. No written marking.
PSHE / RSE	Verbal feedback and discussion. Sensitive handling of misconceptions.	Reflective discussion and self-assessment.	Floor books used and feedback given verbally to the class.
Spelling / Handwriting / Presentation	Praise correct formation and effort. Immediate correction.	Feedback on consistency, fluency and presentation standards.	Spot-check and address standards when necessary across learning outcomes. May include children prompted to correct common exception words in green pen – no more than 3 words per outcome.