



Feedback Policy

Aim

This policy is designed to ensure that children make rapid and sustained progress in the short, medium and long-term. We aim to assess effectively, so that we identify next steps in learning, communicate these clearly to the children and plan powerful activities to move learning forward. The purpose of feedback is primarily to facilitate and strengthen this process. Feedback of any sort should be given in a respectful and constructive manner.

Rationale

At Royston St John Church of England Primary School, we recognise the central role in education played by effective feedback, and we are committed to maximising its impact.

We engage with recent research and current pedagogical thinking, including reports published by the Education Endowment Foundation, and we use them to inform our practice to improve outcomes for our children.

Senior leaders at our school were aware of some of the cutting-edge work which was being done on verbal feedback. Numerous other reflective practitioners in the UK and beyond have been exploring innovative ways to maximise impact, and we have implemented a system based on these latest strategies.

This policy was written in consultation with staff, Governors and pupils (School Council). It sets out how we assess children's strengths and weaknesses every single day, and how we use that information effectively to maximise learning.

Frequency

We expect teachers to actively read each child's work, in all subjects, during or after every lesson. By "actively", we mean using professional judgement and skills to identify areas of strength and weakness in the learning. Where children's work is not presented in written form, teachers will assess continuously, through observation and questioning.

Written Marking

Our policy is based on incisive, direct verbal feedback and well-planned, responsive teaching and learning. Teachers are not expected to write feedback in children's books. They can use professional judgement to make occasional short written comments, if they consider this to be the best means of communicating a message in specific circumstances. Extensive or regular written marking isn't used at Royston St John, because the time will be used instead to give more effective feedback and plan responsive learning. The children need to get used to our approach too, and we want to give clear messages about what sort of feedback is most important.

Where teachers know that children are not capable of acting on verbal feedback alone, they might use visual symbols to guide actions. An example might be a symbol to remind children in Year 1 to use finger spaces. Teachers are also welcome to make judicious use of symbols and other shorthand, if they wish, to guide them in their verbal feedback and to aid in moderation and summative assessment further down the line. In particular, work which has been heavily supported will often be marked with "s". Extensive use of a wide range of symbols on children's work should be avoided, as it can clutter and confuse.

Live Feedback

Teachers and teaching assistants are expected to give high-quality, immediate feedback to learners during lessons. This is most likely to be verbal, enabling children to improve their work on the spot. This live feedback will sometimes be to the whole class, sometimes to groups, and sometimes to individuals. To achieve maximum efficiency, feedback will often be given to all the pupils who might benefit from it at the same time, but this also has to be balanced with the need for flow in a lesson. Pupils will also be provided with answers to questions, for example in Maths, so that they can check their own work as they go along, or after completing a certain number of tasks. Learners are normally expected to fix any errors at that point, before moving on – with the support of teachers as necessary.

Peer Feedback

Children are trained to give constructive feedback to each other, and this should always be offered in a positive and developmental manner. Peer feedback is a valuable reflective tool, but the main source of feedback in a learning sequence will always be the teacher.

Feedback Grids

All teachers use a feedback grid during or after every Reading, Writing, Science, Geography and History lesson, on which they record details of children's learning. For Year 1 to Year 6, the grid is broken down into the following areas:

- Work to praise and share
- Need further support
- Presentation
- Basic skills errors
- Misconceptions and next lesson notes

This is a very important document, because it drives the feedback and learning cycle. It consists of notes and jottings, children's initials and perhaps abbreviations – it is a tool for the teacher, and does not need to be presented neatly or formally. Teaching assistants can also make effective use of these grids. In some cases, TAs will make notes separately which are then stuck or stapled on. Not every child will be identified by name on every grid after every lesson, because their needs may sometimes be addressed alongside those of others as common misconceptions or errors. However, leaders will monitor the extent to which all learners are benefiting individually from this approach.

Feedback for other subjects will be recorded during or after each lesson according to the same principles but in less detail.

Reception use a modified assessment grid, broken down into similar areas as follows:

- work to praise and share
- basic skills errors
- needs further support
- next steps.

Verbal Feedback at the start of the next lesson

While actively reading all of the children's work from the previous session, teachers will have made notes on their feedback grid. One of the most important functions of this is to guide verbal feedback which will fix errors and build on successes. The expectation is that a feedback session of at least 5 minutes will normally be given to children at or before the start of the next lesson in that subject. In some cases, the whole of the next lesson will be based around the feedback.

There will always be good work to praise. Teachers may select one or more piece(s) or extract(s) to display, read out or simply mention. This should be done during a learning sequence, even if a task is not yet complete. The key question here is why? Where appropriate, children should be encouraged to explain why this work has been selected as a good example.

It is very likely that the teacher will have identified some common errors or misconceptions. These should be addressed. Although these may not always be causing a problem for every single child, if a significant number of pupils are making the same mistake, it may well be appropriate to signal this to the whole class at the same time – those who are not making the error can have their good habits confirmed and reinforced, and they might be able to do the teaching and explaining, thereby developing higher-order thinking skills. If the errors or misconceptions are common to a smaller group, rather than the whole class, it might be more appropriate to draw those children together for some feedback while the others engage in a different activity. However, it depends on the teaching point – overlearning is a valid pedagogical technique.

The teacher should have skilfully planned some activities which then enable the children to:

- fix any misconceptions or errors they have previously made
- edit and improve their own work after benefiting from the direct verbal feedback
- practise or build on their successes from the previous lesson

Activities responding to feedback will depend on the area of learning, the age and ability of the children. In many cases, they will include editing and improving children's own work, using the feedback as a focus.

Meanwhile, the teacher (and teaching assistant) will circulate and provide specific verbal feedback to some individual children, to guide their next steps. Sometimes, small-group and individual feedback will be given and acted upon in improvement groups, which might run at any point during the day, and activities to address misconceptions and next steps in learning will often be built into continuous provision.

In reviewing children's work, and in the process of editing and improving, not every error should always be identified or fixed. For example, some spelling errors may remain on a finished piece of writing – this is because teachers use professional judgement to target and prioritise specific aspects of teaching and learning. Each piece of work – and therefore each cycle of feedback – is part of a much bigger, long-term developmental process.

Following up on Feedback – monitoring the impact

We expect the impact of feedback to be evident in the children's work. Persistent errors should be swiftly identified and dealt with; where this proves impossible through Quality First Teaching, additional provision must be planned and delivered. It is the class teacher's responsibility to reflect on the impact of their own feedback, and regularly check from their feedback grids that issues identified earlier in the term have now been addressed. Subject leaders and senior leaders will monitor this closely, and it will be an important focus of work scrutiny. Governors will oversee this policy and its implementation.

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