RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

MARK LESS, MARK BETTER!
A HOW-TO GUIDE TO LIVE MARKING

Southwark
Teaching School Alliance

National Teaching School
designed by

National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Mark Less, Mark Better!

How-To Guide to Live Marking for Primary Teachers

Contents

1 Introduction

In April 2016, the Charles Dickens Primary School Journal Club met to discuss the EEF's review into the evidence on written marking: *A Marked improvement.*

Some common themes emerged from the discussion. Informed by the review, teaching staff almost unanimously felt that:

- **Detailed written marking was not having an impact on pupil outcomes in any way proportionate to the time and effort it took.**

- **They were often going through the motions to satisfy the perceived demands of a third party, be that Senior Leaders or Ofsted.**

- **The most powerful feedback they could give to pupils was that given at the point of the work being done.**

- **A sense of frustration that this just wasn't possible, given the pressures of time and demands on the curriculum.**

We considered what marking and feedback would look like in an ideal world and arrived at the following conclusions:

- **Feedback would be given to pupils as close as possible to the point at which the work was done.**

- **We would transfer much of the responsibility for assessment away from the teachers to the pupils themselves.**

- **The timing of feedback would be moved away from the distance marking completed in the evening, and into the school day.**

We then started to think about how we could make those shifts in time and responsibility happen, in order to achieve a positive impact on both teachers' workload and on pupil outcomes.

The Workload Challenge Research Project enabled us to explore some of these possibilities. It also threw up other challenges. What follows in this short booklet is an outline of the practical strategies used by teachers, and how these changed over the course of the study.

Jemima Rhys-Evans and Sarah Field.

2 Background and Context

In March 2016, the Department for Education published *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Around Marking*, a report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group. In the report, the chair of the Review Group Dawn Copping argued that three principles should underpin effective marking. It should be:

- **Meaningful:** *Marking varies by age group, subject, and what works best for the pupil and teacher in relation to any particular piece of work. Teachers are encouraged to adjust their approach as necessary and trusted to incorporate the outcomes into subsequent planning and teaching.*

- **Manageable:** *Marking practice is proportionate and considers the frequency and complexity of written feedback, as well as the cost and time-effectiveness of marking in relation to the overall workload of teachers. This is written into any assessment policy.*

- **Motivating:** *Marking should help to motivate pupils to progress. This does not mean always writing in-depth comments or being universally positive: sometimes short, challenging comments or oral feedback are more effective. If the teacher is doing more work than their pupils, this can become a disincentive for pupils to accept challenges and take responsibility for improving their work.*

> *'One message was very clear: marking practice that does not have the desired impact on pupil outcomes is a time-wasting burden for teachers that has to stop.'*
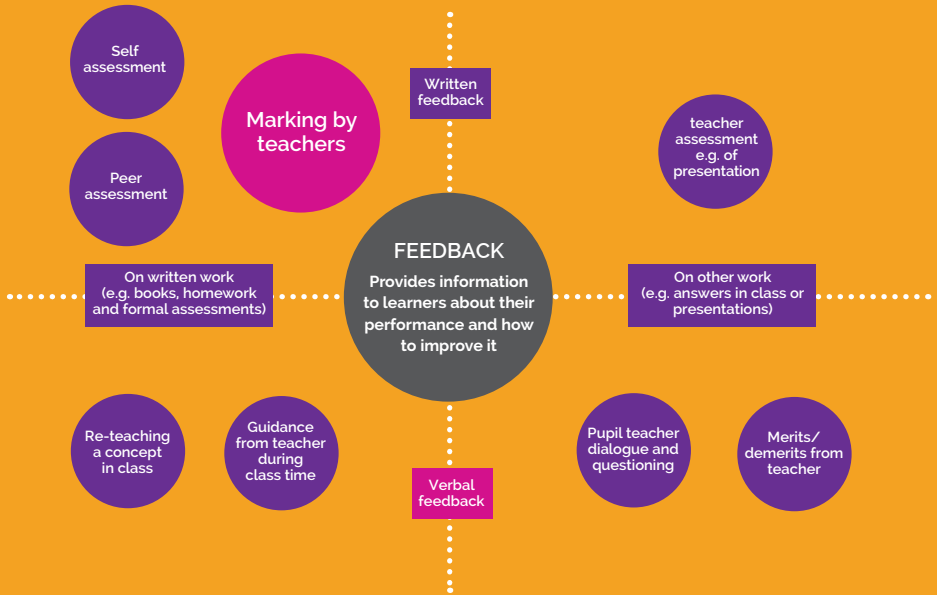
Examples of different forms of feedback from *A Marked Improvement*

Hot on its heels, in April 2016, the EEF published *A Marked Improvement: A Review of the Evidence on Written Marking*.

In this report, a range of feedback models and strategies was explored, looking at the evidence base for each.

Despite finding that *'The quality of existing evidence focused specifically on written marking is low'*, the review was able to draw some conclusions:

- *Careless mistakes should be marked differently to errors resulting from misunderstanding.* Our feeling was that we should better train pupils to check their work and spot these careless mistakes before a teacher looked at it.

- *The use of targets to make marking as specific and actionable as possible is likely to increase pupil progress.*

- *Pupils are unlikely to benefit from marking unless some time is set aside to enable them to consider and respond to it.*

- *Some forms of marking, including acknowledgement marking, are unlikely to enhance pupil progress. A mantra might be that schools should **mark less** in terms of the number of pieces of work marked, but **mark better**.*

'The review found a striking disparity between the enormous amount of effort invested in marking books, and the very small number of robust studies that have been completed to date'

3 The Research Project

In September 2016, the National College of Teaching and Leadership invited schools and groups of schools to apply for funding to conduct research into effective marking practices. Southwark Teaching School Alliance was successful in its application and from January to June 2017, eight teachers in five schools across the borough participated in a project exploring the impact - on both teacher workload and pupil outcomes - of moving away from written marking towards verbal feedback.

The study explored how to reduce the burden of written marking, through:

- *Increased and more effective use of self -and peer-assessment. Pubils were explicitly taught how to assess their own and others work effectively and how to give effective feedback (see section on p. 10)*

- *Conferencing and verbal feedback instead of written marking. Teachers were asked not to write in pupils' books at all during the study. All feedback was given verbally, either to the whole class, in small groups or one-to-one.*

The aim was not only to reduce teacher workload, but to make it more purposeful. Time previously spent on marking books after school could be used to plan lessons and interventions for the next day in response to pupils' work.

At the time of writing this booklet, we do not yet have the finished evaluation, which will assess the impact of the intervention on both teacher workload and pupil outcomes through questionnaires and pupil progress data. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in three of the five schools, teachers reported a significant reduction in workload and did not feel that pupil outcomes had been compromised.

However, two key challenges arose:

- **Teachers reported frustration at not being able to write in pupils' books within a lesson, when they ordinarily would have corrected spelling mistakes, illustrated a point with a written example, highlighted sections for improvements, etc.**

- **Finding time to discuss work with pupils was difficult, especially in classes without additional adults.**

Strategies to address these follow in subsequent sections of this booklet, which sets out the 'how-to' of **marking less but marking better,** with references to the published research underpinning the practice.

4 How to Mark Less #1: Live Marking

Classroom Practice

One of the main outcomes of the study was that many teachers were frustrated by no marking at all. Teachers felt that while they were having conversations with the pupils about their work, it would be useful to write in the pupil's books any changes or comments made in conjunction with the pupils. They wanted to be able to correct small errors in grammar or spelling; to write out an example for pupils to use as a model or simply to highlight an area for improvement.

Following the end of the project, many teachers therefore adapted their practice and incorporated *Live Marking* into their range of strategies: marking within the lesson in order to give pupils immediate feedback.

Advantages of Live Marking included:

- **Assessment for Learning:** Teachers reported feeling far more confident about knowing how the pupils and groups of pupils were doing: how much re-teaching was necessary, how much consolidation and who was ready to move on.

- **Time management:** Since the marking was completed within in the lesson, time was available at the end of the day to plan lessons in response to the pupils' work.

- **Clarity of feedback:** Since the pupils and adults had spoken to each other, everyone was clear about exactly what the feedback meant and what they needed to do next. This is in contrast to the distance marking model, where pupils often reported not really understanding what the teacher meant and, in more cases than we care to believe, not being able to decipher the teacher's handwriting!

Potential pitfalls (and how to avoid them)

- **Wasted learning time:** There is a risk here that we end up with pupils lined up at the teacher's desk, waiting for their books to be marked, losing learning time and getting bored in the process. This was not the case at all. Instead, most teachers described how their role during lessons changed as they spent more time bouncing around the classroom reviewing learning and giving instant feedback rather than working with one group.

- **Superficial feedback:** There is also a risk that in an attempt to 'bounce' around as many pupils as possible, the feedback that each child receives is superficial and focuses on corrections, rather than deeper understanding or improvements. This highlights the importance of using *Live Marking* as one of several feedback strategies, alongside more in-depth conferencing, distance marking (see below) and self- and peer-assessment.

- **Loss of time for guided groups:** This is not to say that there is no place for focused, guided group work. In lessons where this is needed, strategies other than *Live Marking* need to be used. Distance marking – the process of giving a pupil written feedback when they are not there – will still be appropriate for specific tasks, for example in-depth, precision marking of a piece of extended writing. However, it is important to remember that it is just one of a range of tools.

What the research says

There is little research evidence to suggest that post-task distance marking is successful, despite it being the dominant marking practice in the UK (Elliot et al, 2016). It does not engage pupils in the feedback process, does not allow for misconceptions to be addressed and can lead to problems of miscommunication (Carless, 2006). The EEF review lends cautious support to the idea that more immediate feedback is effective: *"The suggestion that faster feedback is more valuable is consistent with studies of verbal feedback that indicate that learners find it easier to improve if their mistakes are corrected quickly".*

Example of using Live Marking to give a written model

Example of using Live Marking to scaffold understanding

Example of using Live Marking to check for understanding

5 How to Mark Less #2: Get the pupils to do it

Self- and Peer-Assessment

One of the strategies to support a reduction in written marking was to enable pupils to self- and peer-assess their own work more effectively. This was important for reasons aligned to the principles outlined in *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Around Marking,* which stated that marking should be:

- **Meaningful:** If pupils were able to spot and iron out minor slips and errors in advance of the teachers seeing their work, teacher feedback could be more tightly focused on how to improve their work (in Writing) or addressing genuine misconceptions (in Maths).

- **Motivating:** Peer and self-marking within a lesson enabled pupils to receive immediate feedback on how they had done.

- **Manageable:** The marking burden on teachers was reduced.

Although most of us in the project already used peer- and self-marking strategies, none of us were confident that we were using them in ways that were either meaningful or motivating.

How does self- and peer-assessment impact on teacher workload?

Much written marking, especially in Maths, involves simply checking whether an answer is correct or not. If we can develop pupils' skills to self-mark accurately, honestly and - for peer-marking - kindly, that could have a huge impact on teacher workload. For example, if it takes a teacher two minutes to mark each of thirty books, that's one of those precious hours at the end of the day already gone. But if the pupils can do it, even in double the time, that's still only four minutes at the end of a lesson. That then leaves the teacher with time at the end of the day to check who has understood (or not) - and then plan a meaningful follow-on task as well.

What other benefits could it have?

- **Peer- and self-marking gives pupils immediate feedback.** They know to what degree they have met the Learning Objective. If it happens nearer the mid-point of the lesson ('Let's check to see how we're getting on…') that also gives the teacher an opportunity to intervene where necessary. We have all had the same demoralising experience of opening a pupil's book at the end of the day and finding several pages of incorrect calculations.

- **Peer- and self-marking requires pupils to check their own work first.** Let's give the pupils a bit more responsibility here. In *Eliminating Unnecessary Workload Around Marking,* a key finding was that *'Accepting work that pupils have not checked sufficiently and then providing extensive feedback detracts from pupils' responsibility for their own learning'.*

- **Peer- and self-marking allows pupils to reflect on what they need to do next.** Metacognitive interventions have a positive impact on pupil progress, according to the EEF toolkit. Asking pupils to reflect on how they could do better, and to do it, helps to develop those metacognitive skills.

Research on peer marking

Black and Wiliam (1998) state that feedback including peer to peer, teacher and self-motivated feedback have significant positive effects on learning across all areas.

How does it work?

Models: What a good one looks like

Pupils were given concrete examples of what a successful completed piece of work should look like so that they were clear about their end goal. This example should be analysed so that pupils understand not just the whole but also the constituent parts.

Editing pens or highlighters

During the intervention, we designed rules for all pupils to abide by when giving and receiving feedback to and from their peers. The pupils used editing pens or highlighters to identify where they had met their learning objective and to show the changes they had made to their work. Throughout the research period we ensured that the pupils who had written the work had 'the power of the pen' to ensure that they were happy with the changes that were being made to it.

Self- and peer-assessment in Maths

In Maths, pupils were given the answers to problems towards the end of the lesson, either as sheets on a table, at a marking station elsewhere in the classroom, or displayed on a board. Some used the answer sheets earlier on in the lesson to check that they were on the right lines before continuing. Where they had not grasped the concept being taught, they were able to receive adult or peer support immediately. If they had made minor slips in calculations, they could correct these. If they had got the majority of the work correct, they could continue and then move on to an extension activity. Self- and peer-marking of more open-ended problem-solving was trickier as there was often no single correct answer. Different teachers found different ways of resolving this: by building in time at the end of a lesson for groups of pupils to compare their answers and pick apart differences, or by asking pupils to give a short presentation at the end of the lesson on their findings and then receiving verbal feedback from the teacher and other pupils.

Self- and peer-marking in Maths during the lesson meant that at the end of the day it was the work of a matter of minutes for a teacher to see exactly what each pupil in the class needed to do next.

Self- and peer-assessment in writing

A similar approach was possible for writing exercises where the task was fairly closed, such as teaching a specific writing skill. For more open writing tasks, individual targets and scaffolded success criteria enabled pupils to self- and peer-assess their own work. In the six weeks before the intervention began, pupils were taught explicitly how to use these to assess the effectiveness of a piece of writing. This required a lot of modelling.

It also became clear that many pupils did not like other pupils writing in their books. Once the study was over, teachers decided that when were peer-assessing, pupils would give their feedback verbally, and the recipient of the feedback would record it in their books (eg My friend said that I should remember to use a comma after a fronted adverbial).

Some pupils also struggled to generate meaningful feedback for themselves and their peers, even with reference to the success criteria. To help them with this, they were initially given a choice of three options. For example, in a Year 1 class these might be:

· 'Next time, I will remember finger spaces.'

· 'Next time, I will use capital letters for names.'

· 'Next time, I will use a noun phrase.'

Furthermore, these reflections and next steps were provided on a choice of pre-printed labels ('Next time, I will...') so that pupils only needed to identify their next step, not write out the entire sentence. Older pupils were able to assess their own work effectively, once routines had become embedded:

Example of self-assessment in writing using success criteria

Tuesday 13th June self marked
L.I I can use intresting vocabulary to improve basic sentences.

Success order criteria:
- I have included adverbs.
- I have used alliteration.
- I have used correct puntuation.

1. The man angrily snatched the drink off the tall table like an evil eagle.

2. The cute, fluffy dog ~~was~~ Swiftly ran along the bumpy, rough road.

3. The ~~slow~~ wriggly worm slided slowly along the ~~path~~ unstable path.

4. The starving woman stuffed her mouth with fruit and greens greedily.

5. The ~~curios~~ curious man quickly searched the ~~small shop~~ small sweet shop.

Example of reflective self-assessment in Writing

then he shunned my game well this going one long holiday.

S⟹ I proof read my work and I have met the Success criteria by writing in the past tense

To make my writing even better next time I will use more descriptive language in my work.

I am proud of the I present my work like this: "I noticed Leonox had differences from me like he was barefoot when I wore shoes."

What are the necessary preconditions?

Of course none of this will really work unless a culture of error has been established - that getting things wrong is fine and helps us to learn. If pupils are hiding their errors when self-marking, the teacher is not receiving the information they need about how to help them progress. Pupils need to be taught that making mistakes provides an opportunity to learn and to be open about this. This can be particularly true for pupils who have been identified - and who identify themselves - as clever. For some of these pupils, maintaining this image, both to themselves and to others, is more important than the learning itself. Likewise pupils who often see others achieve more success than them can decide that 'I can't do it' and automatically mark all of their work incorrect.

It is important to spend some time developing classroom cultures and pupils' abilities to assess their own and others' work honestly, openly, accurately and kindly. The following resources and ideas can help:

- Carol Dweck's *Mindset: Changing the Way You Think to Fulfil Your Potential* is the go-to text for encouraging a more positive Growth Mindset.

- Picture books such as *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae and *Stuck* by Oliver Jeffers both reinforce ideas of effort and the possibility of change.

- *Austin's Butterfly* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqh1MRWZjms) which celebrates the power of precise feedback and perseverance.

- Setting pupils an impossible task and recording their responses to it. Will they give up? Will they encourage others?

- Displays celebrating errors and how pupils have addressed and overcome them ('At first I couldn't do this, but then...) and using key Growth Mindset vocabulary. Many examples of these can be found on the internet.

6 How to Mark Better: Verbal feedback and Conferencing

The starting point for the intervention came as a result of teachers feeling that feedback that they could sit down and discuss with pupils was much more powerful than that given through distance marking. Pupils understood their goals or objectives, understood how to make progress towards them and were more motivated to do so.

Most teachers identified small-group or one to one conferencing as having the single biggest impact on pupil progress. It enabled pupils to fully understand what to do next, whether that involved revisiting previous learning to ensure solid foundations, giving pupils opportunities to consolidate their understanding through increased practice, or moving them on to a new challenge.

Small group and one-to-one Conferencing

We also (post-intervention) drew a distinction between the shallower Live Marking where the teacher tried to check in with as many pupils as possible and the more in- depth conferencing. This would come about in response to the teacher reading a pupil's work at the end of the day and working out carefully what the pupil needed to do next.

Then, as soon as possible, the teacher would meet with the pupil (or groups of pupils where there were common next steps or misconceptions) and spend time giving more detailed feedback. These conferencing sessions should happen at least once a week per pupil.

Whole class feedback

Where common misconceptions arose, the most effective way to address them can be through whole class feedback, often at the start of the next lesson. If marking policies have been adapted to free up teachers' time at the end of the day, this provides opportunities for more responsive teaching, tailored to the needs of an individual class.

Types of feedback

However, they also were aware that the quality of verbal feedback was important. Much of this was dependent on teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to identify the next step for a pupil or to unpick a misconception.

Hattie and Yates (2013) identify three types of feedback, depending on the developmental level of the pupil:

·   **When learners are first receiving feedback they will need more corrective feedback, information and guidance on what is wrong and how to put it right. They will also need assurance that they are doing the right thing.**

·   **As learners become more competent when responding to feedback they will continue to need assurance, but will also need to be challenged with suggestions for how to improve things or do things differently.**

·   **When learners are highly competent, it is the role of the person delivering feedback to support the learners' self- regulation and encourage learners to extend their learning and apply it in different ways.**

We therefore needed to consider not only the type of feedback, but how it was delivered.

Meaningful praise

Building on the work in developing pupils' positive attitudes to errors and Growth Mindset inclinations, teachers ensured that feedback was motivational yet related directly and specifically to the learning.

For example, instead of using what Black describes as a "bland and unhelpful comment" (2003,p.44-45) such as "Well done!", We should say, "Well done! You are beginning to use capital letters correctly." During the intervention, teachers used these examples of praise identified by Clarke (2014, pp. 22):

·   **Well done! You're learning to...**

·   **Good! It's making you think.**

·   **Your brain is growing.**

·   **You're good at this because you spend time doing it.**

·   **If you could already do it or it was easy then you wouldn't be learning anything.**

·   **Your skills have really improved. Do you remember how hard it was last week?**

·   **You kept going!**

·   **You mean you can't do it yet!"**

Changing "I can't do it" into "I can't do it *yet*", reinforces that the learning process takes time, effort and practice (Clarke, 2014).

Research on praise:

Harks et al (2013) suggests that teachers should always deliver feedback from a motivational point of view. However Clarke (2003) suggests that teachers should be careful about using praise too often. Clarke (2003) suggests that praise can often leave the less able pupils feeling demoralised while the more able students can get complacent.

7 Record-keeping and evidence

How will anyone know that I am doing my job properly without detailed written marking?

For some teachers and for most of us at some time, extensive written marking is a way of showing that we are doing our job properly. It may not have an impact, it may take hours and hours, but it is clear that we have celebrated successes and identified areas for improvement. And therefore we are good teachers.

Without written marking in pupils' books, the evidence of the teacher's impact should come from the progress in books. For example, if a pupil could not successfully do two-digit by one-digit multiplication on Monday, but then could do it on Tuesday, there is evidence of progress. Something must have happened – an intervention group, some one-to-one conferencing at the start of the next lesson – to help that pupil to make progress. Alternatively, it might be that on Tuesday, the teacher has decided that the pupil was not ready for two-digit by one-digit multiplication and planned for the pupil to practise one-digit by one-digit using repeated addition on a number line. What there should not be is repeated failure for the pupil.

To support this, it is necessary for the teacher to keep records of each pupils attainment in the lesson. Who got it? Who 'sort of' got it but could do with some more practice to consolidate? Who is ready to move on? The record keeping serves to support the teacher's assessment and their planning of the next steps in the learning journey for individual pupils and groups of pupils.

Use of assessment for learning and the regular monitoring of books was key to ensuring that all learning activities were pitched so that they would be challenging for all pupils.

Examples of monitoring/assessment books documenting pupils' progress towards their learning objective:

X LO met

\ LO partially met

**- LO not met**

It also serves as a record of who has had verbal feedback from the teacher. Is there a pupil who is consistently OK-ish and is therefore slipping under the radar?

There also needs to be some record in pupils books of when they have conferenced with a teacher. This helps a teacher to see if there is a pupil with whom they have not conferenced. It also reminds the pupil (and teacher) what the specific feedback was. We've all been in the position of giving the same piece of feedback to a pupil over and over again (Please check your capital letters and full stops) without it having any impact at all. If a teacher finds themselves repeating the feedback, might it be that the pupil needs some re-teaching? In which case, the teacher will need to plan an extra piece for work for that pupil or, more likely, group of pupils/whole class. It is also important to differentiate between whether feedback was given by a teacher or a pupil, to monitor the quality of feedback. Stickers can be helpful for this.
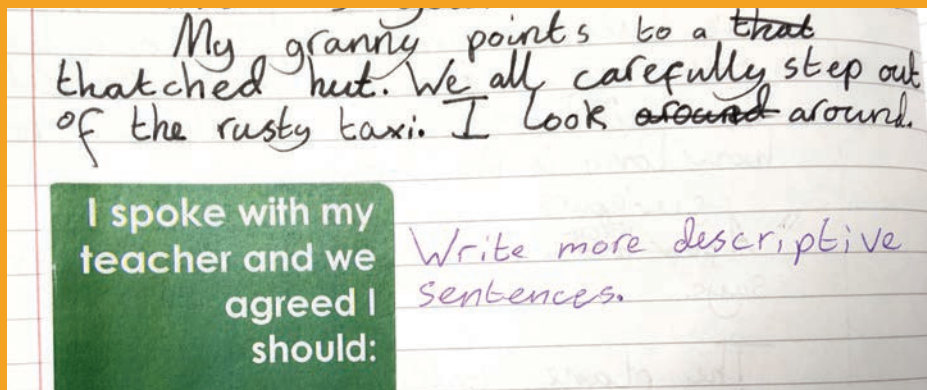
Example of stickers to record feedback
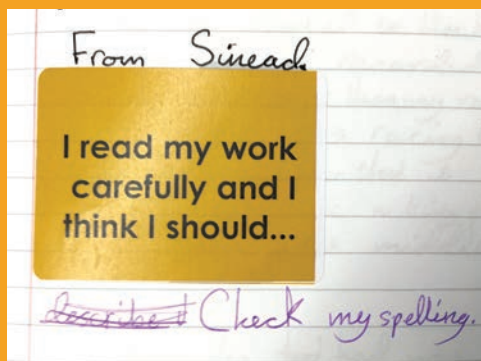
Example of self-assessment sticker

It is important to emphasise that these stickers were not designed to satisfy the demands of third party observers of pupils' books, but genuinely to support pupils and teachers by recording the content of the feedback.

8 Implications: be prepared for everything to change!

None of the elements of this approach is new. However, using them successfully to reduce teacher workload and increase the impact of feedback on pupil outcomes is rather more complicated. The more we thought about it, the greater the implications for everything else going on in the classroom: planning, lesson structure, monitoring and accountability.

How can I find the time to conference with each and every pupil?

One of the greatest challenges for Live Marking and regular conferencing with pupils is finding time in the day. This will be particularly difficult for those teachers without support staff. Being generally resourceful, teachers can identify moments throughout the day to carve out time: a 'soft-start' from 8:45 – 9:05 as pupils arrive for the day but before lessons; assembly time; end-of-the-day story time, with the story being read by a teaching assistant, a parent volunteer or an expressive pupil; handwriting practice after lunch. However, none of these feel hugely satisfactory.

Lesson Structure

The most successful and sustainable way to find time for this conferencing and verbal feedback was to change the structure of each lesson, moving away from the traditional three-parter. Instead, the lesson could start with whole class or small group feedback, moving into new learning and application and then mid-lesson or end-of-lesson review points to address any common misconceptions. In addition, the teacher can circulate throughout the lesson giving constant verbal feedback and written scaffolds where necessary.

And if conferencing can be planned into the weekly sequence of lessons, so much the better. For example, instead of five English lessons per week, four lessons plus one for conferencing, feedback and response supports the model well.

Planning

There are also implications for planning. Learning Objectives and Success Criteria need to be clear, simple and easy to assess. For example "I can use descriptive language" is too vague. Better would be "I can use adjectives, similes and ambitious vocabulary". Planning mid-lesson stops allows pupils to check that they are on the right lines (more relevant in Maths) and that they are incorporating the key elements set out in the Success Criteria (more relevant in Writing).

Success Criteria

For every lesson, where appropriate, teachers created clear Success Criteria which broke down the steps to meet the Learning Objective. Pupils were given the opportunity to review their learning throughout the lesson.

Example of Success Criteria in English:

L.I. I can use a range of punctuation	I think	My partner/teacher thinks
I can use possessive apostrophes correctly		
I can use commas in a list.		
I can use full stops and capital letters correctly		

Example of Success Criteria in Maths:

L.I. I can use column addition	I think	My partner/teacher thinks
Line up the digits carefully		
Starting with the units add up each column		
Carry over any tens/hundreds to the next column		
Check your answer		

Research on Success Criteria

Sadler (1989) suggests that there are certain things that students must know in order to make feedback effective: students must know what a successful end-goal looks like, how their current performance relates to the successful end-goal and what to do to close the gap between their current performance and the end-goal (Nicol and McFarlane-Dick, 2006)

Mid-lesson learning stops/mini plenaries

Mid-lesson learning stops (also known as mini plenaries), allow pupils to review their work during the lesson rather than at the end when there is no time to edit mistakes and make improvements. For mid-lesson learning stops to be effective, the learning objective and success criteria have to be clear and challenging yet achievable. Once the pupils have done some work, they are stopped and asked to review their work with a partner and highlight where they have met the learning objective. They then have the rest of the lesson to make any changes to their work and ensure that they have met the objective. We implemented mid-lesson learning stops to enable pupils to review their learning often, track their progress towards their end goal and make any changes along the way.

Sample: lesson plans with mid-lesson learning stops

LO	Main teaching	Mid lesson learning stop	Plenary
I can use a range of punctuation accurately Success criteria: · **Full Stops** · **Commas** · **Question marks** · **Exclamation marks**	Recap with the pupils that they will be writing to Julie Mallet, head of the Peckham Townscape Initiative, to give their opinion on what she should do to improve Peckham town Centre. Show them the good example that we created as a class and get them to recall, in pairs, the features of a letter. Model to the pupils how to use their plan to write their letter and include the variety of punctuation they are expected to use.	Stop the pupils after 20 minutes of writing. Choose a name from the pot and display the pupils' work on the board. The pupil has power of the pen and you work as partner suggesting changes to work focusing on s/c and picking up on any obvious spelling errors the pupil should know. Along with the pupil identify one strength and one area for development and note it down on their work. All pupils to work with a partner to read though work and follow procedure modelled on the board. Swap partners and repeat and then spend the rest of the lesson (10minutes) addressing the area for development.	Stop the pupils with 5 minutes to spare and ask them what their favourite improvement was. Review their improvements alongside their partner and choose their favourite. Choose names from the pot and get 3 pupils to share their ideas.
	All pupils to write letter to Julie Mallett. Differentiated success criteria (. ! ?) for Z, W, H, A, Ke Word mats for Lo, Ke, Z, W, A, H Ca TA and T to circulate Blue and Green table giving feedback focused on the success criteria.	TA to work with W and Ke supporting the conversation. T to work with Li and Sa extending them to use more complex sentence structures.	

	Starter	LO	Main teaching			Plenary
	Start 26 -5 /3 *4 +8 What number did you end up with?	I can add 4 digit numbers using the column method **SC:** Line the digits accurately Begin with the units column Add each column up Carry any tens to the next column.	Show the pupils a sum on the board 1324 + 1256. Ask the pupils how to find the answer and elicit success criteria. Model lining the digits accurately, begin with the units column, add each column up, carry any tens to the next column. Get the pupils to work on their whiteboards to solve 2332 + 5182= watch the pupils carefully for misconceptions. Send pupils to table to answer 6 questions similar to the ones from the board. All pupils to do 6 sums, no carrying. Direct any additional adults to the pupils who are finding it difficult. After 10 minutes stop the pupils and reveal the answers to the 6 sums, get the pupils to tick the ones they got correct. TA to support any pupils who may find this difficult. Explain to the pupils that they must choose their challenge, if they found it easy they should choose super or supersonic challenge, if they struggled they should stick with challenge. Remind the pupils that real learning takes place when things are difficult.			How can we use what we know about column addition to help us solve this subtraction calculation? 2453-1521
			Challenge: 10 sums adding up 4 digits no borrowing. **SC:** Line the digits accurately Begin with the units column Add each column up	**Super challenge:** 10 sums adding up with borrowing **SC:** Line the digits accurately Begin with the units column Add each column up Carry any tens to the next column.	**Supersonic challenge:** 6 sums adding up with borrowing in all columns. SSSChallenge: What is the highest number you can make using these numbers and signs. 1536, 15633, 3744, 34792, 57494, 56385 + + = (TA to support) **SC:** Line the digits accurately Begin with the units column Add each column up Carry any tens to the next column.	
			After 20 minutes give pupils the answers and get them to tick their work. Get pupils to write their PR and go back and correct any incorrect answers. Pupils have the remainder of the lesson to continue on to the next challenge or seek help if they have misconceptions (T and TA to watch out for pupils to support during this time).			

Research into mid-lesson stops

Clarke (2014) advocates the use of more immediate feedback as she believes it is more effective. She suggests that teachers should conduct a constant review of their learners work through mid-lesson learning stops rather than waiting until the end to avoid learners having to go back and redo their finished piece of work.

Presentation: A word of warning!

Since the research project began, pupils and teachers noticed the presentation in books slipping. To try to combat this, we made sure that pupils know their books will be looked at often by adults and should be presented neatly and to a high standard.

Role of additional adults

Adults can be targeted to work with specific pupils to support them giving and receiving feedback. Smaller groups of pupils have also needed input around developing the growth mindset and being resilient when receiving verbal feedback, which is something support staff have assisted with. During the intervention, teachers found support staff useful to help address any misconceptions with small groups during lessons or early work sessions.

Taking into account the current tightening of budgets, the practice of live feedback has also been carried out effectively in classes without teaching assistants.

Book Monitoring. Implications for leadership teams

If your school has decided to explore the *Live Marking* approach, Senior Leaders should be aware of how different the pupils' books will look when it comes to Book Looks, monitoring and work scrutinies. Senior Leaders will need to be aware that they will see less teacher writing and more self- and peer-assessment. As ever, the focus of monitoring should be the progress that the pupils are making in their books. And if teachers are responding on a daily basis to what the pupils have done, and they have the time to plan meaningful follow-on activities, the progress should be there to see.

CPD

In order to implement any change in feedback policies in schools, a significant amount of CPD time will need to be given over. Teachers and additional adults will need training on several key areas:

- **Developing classroom cultures and growth mindsets.**
- **Effective use of peer- and self-assessment.**
- **How to Live Mark within a lesson.**
- **Effective verbal feedback and conferencing.**
- **Identifying pupils' next steps.**

Parents

It is vital to communicate any change of approach to parents in order to maintain strong, trusting and supportive relationships. Parents can be invited in to see the changes in their children's books and encouraged to talk to them about how they feel about the reduction of written marking.

Ofsted

Sean Harford, Ofsted's National Director, Education, says the following in the Ofsted Myth busters document:

'... inspectors should not report on marking practice, or make judgements on it, other than whether it follows the school's assessment policy. Inspectors will also not seek to attribute the degree of progress that pupils have made to marking that they might consider to be either effective or ineffective.

Finally, inspectors will not make recommendations for improvement that involve marking, other than when the school's marking/assessment policy is not being followed by a substantial proportion of teachers; this will then be an issue for the leadership and management to resolve.'

Mike Sheridan, Ofsted's Regional Director for London offers further clarification here: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU3JQt**

9 Pupil voice

At the end of our project, we canvassed the views of pupils. Detailed feedback is still being collated, but a summary of their feelings around Live Marking follows:

Positives	Negatives
• I like seeing what other pupils in the class are doing, and helping them get better. • I like the stickers. • I like the power of the pen. • I often don't read/understand written marking. • I know what to do when the teacher speaks to me. • I enjoy the conversation with my teacher. • I am better at checking my work. • I can show improvements immediately. • I can change groups according to targets, I'm not always in ….. group.	• I don't like people overhearing what the teacher says to me – I prefer private feedback. • I sometimes find it difficult to think of next steps. • I feel like I am doing less work to make time for marking/editing/reflecting. • I like knowing which group I am in.

In general, the feedback from higher attaining pupils was more negative. They felt that they did less work to make time to edit, they didn't feel challenged and they didn't like receiving their feedback in front of other pupils.

10 Conclusion

In conclusion, our suggestions for how we can all **mark less but mark better** are to use a combination of the following strategies:

- Live marking within a lesson, both written and verbal.

- Self- and peer-assessment within a lesson.

- In depth one-to-one or small group conferencing with each pupil once a week.

- Distance marking, where appropriate.

The key factors influencing were:

- Ensuring that teachers are able to teach responsively and make best use of their time after school in planning meaningful activities for pupils.

- Ensuring that all feedback is focused on helping pupils to make progress and not for the benefit of third party observers.

- Ensuring that teachers use their professional judgement and curriculum knowledge to decide what each pupil needs to do next to make progress.

- Developing pupils as owners of their own learning, with high expectations for themselves and an understanding that errors help them to learn.

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12 Appendix 1

EXAMPLE OF LIVE FEEDBACK POLICY
Feedback – working document

Introduction

'Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement' (Hattie and Timperley 2007, p.81)

Higgins, *et al,* (2011) writing for the Sutton Trust stated that the use of effective feedback was one of the most impactful classroom practices, having the potential for pupils to make up to eight months' additional progress.

However teachers need to ensure that they were sensitive to the context and introduce feedback in a way that is suitable for the age, knowledge level and experiences of the learners (Higgins *et al*, 2011). Hattie and Timperley (2007), suggest that feedback should answer the following questions:

Where am I going? *(The goal)*

How am I going? (*What progress have I made towards the goal? What else do I need to do to achieve my goal?*)

Where to next? (*What are the next steps? How can I challenge myself/the pupil more?*)

This policy sets out how the use of effective marking, feedback and response is consistently utilised across our school to benefit pupils at [Primary School].

Aims

- The amount and detail of marking will vary somewhat according to the age and ability of the pupil.

- Positive feedback and the teacher's assessment of what has been understood are the most important element of marking.

- We need to help pupils see and understand where they can improve.

- It is essential that pupils respond to the marking in their books, so that teachers can monitor the efficacy of the marking and to provide evidence of a dialogue between the pupil and the teacher.

- There should be time during the week to allow pupils to look at the marking, correct or think about mistakes and understand their next target.

Expectation
Writing and numeracy

Each pupil should have one piece of written feedback, one piece of verbal feedback and one piece of peer marking and self-assessment.

Teachers need to 'live mark' as much as possible so that the pupils clearly understand what has gone well and what their next steps are. These 'live marking' changes should be seen in books.

Teacher comments on a pupils' work should be motivational and personal where the teacher marks against the success criteria and pupils' targets, and clearly identify the next steps to improve or to extend learning. Teachers are to mark using signs instead of making corrections so that pupils develop more ownership of their work.

Pupils will be given training in how to self and peer assess using target time to help them plan their next steps.

- **This may include the whole-part-whole approach to teaching.**

- **Editing pens.**

Teachers and teaching assistants are to ensure each pupil has received verbal feedback at least once a week. This could take place during early morning work, story/ reading time or during lessons. When a pupil has received verbal feedback, the letters 'VF' should be made in the pupils' book as a permanent reminder for both pupil and adult.

Diaries or another transparent method should be used to continue to track the progress of the pupils. Verbal feedback must be documented in a 'monitoring book'.

Time should be set aside during the week for the pupils to absorb any comments and improve their work, especially in core subjects. Pupils should respond using purple pens and the responses will be acknowledged by the teacher.

Pupils should be involved in their target setting and should be encouraged to show evidence of targets met as well as identify some they wish to meet. Next steps marking can be verbal for younger pupils and, on occasion, other year groups and will be recorded by the teacher with the letters 'VF'.

All other pieces of work need to be acknowledged in some way. Calculations should be queried or corrected for numeracy and some key spellings queried or corrected for writing. This can be done by anyone working with the pupils.

Foundation subjects

All other pieces of work need to be acknowledged in some way. This can be done by anyone working with the pupils.

How to mark

- **Use one colour pen for the positive comments and another for the target (any colours).**

- **Involve the pupils in deciding how to mark, as well as showing them how to peer mark.**

- **All marking should be relevant to the age and ability of the pupil so that they can respond to it.**

Pupil response

It is essential to give pupils the opportunity to respond to the task and feedback from the teacher.

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CONTACT US

Southwark Teaching School Alliance
Charles Dickens Primary School
Toulmin Street
London SE1 1AF

020 7407 1769
info@southwarktsa.co.uk