



Harrow Way Community School

Specialist School in Maths & Computing

Feedback A guide for parents

Feedback is an important part of the assessment process. It has a significant effect on student learning and has been described as **“the most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement”** (Prof. John Hattie).

Learning for life, success for all.



Feedback is an essential part of teaching and learning. It is so important that students understand what they can do, what they can improve on and how they can address this.

In 2018 – 19 we have vowed, as a school, to become **more evidence based** in our approach to teaching and learning. **In short, we want to focus on the strategies that work and avoid processes that have little impact.**

The Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) is a charity originally dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. It works with many agencies, including the Department for Education to try to support schools in making evidence based decisions that impact positively on teaching and learning. There are currently 22 Research Schools in the country that are run collaboratively with the EEF.

The EEF published a report in 2013 called 'A Marked Improvement' that looked at the research around the impact of marking and feedback. What it found has started a revolution in teachers' practice across the country.

What kind of marking did you get in your books at school?

Some of you might have enjoyed 'good work' comments or, perhaps, 'see me'? The traditional model of marking is that teachers correct spellings and errors, write a long comment and then the student reads this (or not) and moves on to the next lesson. **The evidence from the EEF and other studies shows that this 'traditional marking' has virtually no impact on students' learning.** In addition to this, marking has been the bane of many teachers' lives. You may have heard about the recruitment and retention crisis in teaching in the media. In some areas of the country there is a desperate shortage in teachers and national-wide 23% of teachers who qualified since 2011 have left the profession (official figures quoted in The Guardian). The reasons for this are very complex but, in a 2017 Department for Education survey, the majority (93%) of respondents stated that workload in

their school was at least a fairly serious problem; just over half of those surveyed (52%) cited workload as a very serious problem. After the EEF's report many teachers are asking the question **"Why are we spending hours on marking when it has very little impact on learning?"**

At Harrow Way, we are lucky that we buck this national recruitment and retention trend. We work very hard to recruit the very best teachers and develop and support those teachers so that they stay with us for many years. **We want teachers to focus on their core business – planning fantastic lessons and giving effective feedback.** If any practice or process does not impact positively on teaching and learning then we want to change this as a priority.

Our focus for feedback is now is on getting students to improve their own work so that, incrementally and over time, they make progress independently.

For example, if students are writing sentences that are too simple such as "The housing in Mumbai slums is bad" getting them to improve their own sentences is likely to have much more impact than the teacher doing that for them. It is essential that teachers give students specific guidance and the time to address feedback in the lesson but the EEF says that feedback can potentially have "8 months" more impact on students who receive poor or no feedback (for more details on the EEF and how they conduct their work please see www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)



So, what will you see in your child's book? Feedback at Harrow Way will take four main forms, detailed below:

● **Verbal feedback/ live marking**

Teachers constantly give students verbal feedback in class, particularly in practical subjects such as Performing Arts, Design and Technology, PE and Art. In the past teachers have felt that they needed to 'prove' that this was taking place to outside agencies such as QFSTED. You may have seen 'Verbal feedback stamps' in your child's books in the past. However, at Harrow Way we trust teachers to give expert feedback in whatever form is needed. We regularly talk to students about their learning and they find verbal feedback invaluable in helping them to improve.

Live marking is essentially when teachers circulate the classroom whilst students are working and highlight areas that need improving by making a note on the work. The immediacy of this form of feedback is highly effective as students can use this guidance straight away.

● **Whole Class feedback**

This is a process that has been developed at a number of schools, notably The Michaela School in North London and many of the EEF's Research schools. The teacher reads through a class set of books or folders, making notes as they go so that they can feedback to the class on

what needs to be improved. During the following lesson the teacher will give their expert advice to the class and the students will make those improvements. Feel free to watch this short video that outlines the process:

<https://youtu.be/xOJrI-lBoZU>

● **Coded feedback**

Many departments have developed a code for giving feedback to save time. Students have copies of the code in their books and are, again, asked to make improvements to their work once the teacher has looked through it and added the code.

● **Yellow Box marking**

Feedback is a process where incremental changes over time can lead to big gains in terms of teaching and learning. Yellow box marking focusses on one part of the students' work (by drawing a yellow box around it) and the teacher asks the student to improve that part. A variation of this is where the teacher draws a yellow box under students' work and poses a question and the student has to answer in the box.

We hope that this guide is useful in explaining our feedback policy and the importance that we place on feedback in helping every student to be successful. Please do contact Caroline Lowing (Deputy Headteacher) at Harrow Way if you have any questions or comments.

