



# **CONFERENCING FEEDBACK POLICY**

**2017 – 2019**



# Conferencing Feedback

## Background and Rationale

Pupil Conferencing is a discussion about learning between teacher and pupil.

Shute (2008) and Butler and Winne (1995) have identified that the timing of feedback is central to its effectiveness. Consequently, conferencing will take two forms: immediate and delayed. **Immediate verbal feedback will be delivered during lessons in response to procedural matters** (e.g. correct/incorrect, use of methods, task feedback). **Delayed verbal feedback will take place once per week in a scheduled discussion between teacher and pupil, focusing on conceptual matters** (e.g. depth of understanding, ability to make connections, reasoning about new learning), as well as discussing progress, attainment and next steps.

In order to promote self-regulation, **the pupil is encouraged at all times to take responsibility for the learning conversation** – to discuss what they were successful with, what they found challenging, what they need further help with, how they can further apply their learning, and what their next step is, for example. It is useful to allow pupils some time each week to reflect on their work and prepare for their conference. Younger pupils or pupils with special educational needs can be supported to prepare for their conferences initially through the use of simple question prompts.

Traditional 'marking' in books is not a component of the conferencing process. Self and peer 'marking' of 'correct/incorrect' answers or responses to problem-solving tasks can take place during lessons, if required, as this process in itself opens up opportunities for discussion and formative assessment. **Allowing the majority of marks in exercise books to be made by pupils themselves encourages pupils to take more ownership of their work**, become more aware of how they are doing in that moment (as they are not waiting until the next day to find out what has been marked correct/incorrect), and more focused on what they do/do not understand. Teachers still, however, should review pupils' books each day to inform lesson planning, to build up a picture of each pupil's progress and attainment, and to inform teacher input into each week's conference. **Peer assessment is an integral component of the process: other pupils – rather than adults – will support their peers through the editing and redrafting process.**

Many studies have shown that feedback has a significant influence on learning (e.g. Hattie 2009) and research has also been carried out to determine what it is that makes feedback effective (e.g. Bangert-Drowns *et al* 1991; Hattie & Timperley 2007; Shute 2008). Pajares and Graham's study (1998) found that pupils themselves prefer specific, constructive criticism rather than simple praise and encouragement (such as "good work today" or "you met the learning objective") or descriptive phrases (such as "you used fronted adverbials" or "you didn't check your spelling"). If a pupil has indeed met the objectives, they will already be aware of their success in this; similarly, if they have not been successful, simply stating what is wrong does not necessarily lead to improvement if understanding of the error is lacking. In all cases, a pupil-teacher conference is well-placed to deliver meaningful feedback. Immediate feedback and use of questioning allows a teacher to quickly and decisively pinpoint where the misconception lies in the application of a specific skill and intervene accordingly. **Delayed feedback – pupil conferencing – promotes the development of metacognition, independence and reflective learning.**

## What is Pupil Conferencing?

In its simplest form, **conferencing is a conversation about learning** between teacher and pupil. Instead of waiting until after school to review children's work and then write comments to them, you can give verbal feedback during lessons and throughout the day.

### **Why use Pupil Conferencing instead of written marking?**

There is very little evidence to show that written marking is the most effective form of feedback – especially for primary-aged pupils. Verbal feedback opens up an immediate conversation with the child, allowing you to **pinpoint and address misunderstanding or misconceptions**, or indeed to **challenge** the pupil. You will also find that because you never have the same conversation twice, your feedback becomes more personal and individualised.

Also, because pupil conferencing gets pupils to **think more deeply** about their work and their learning, it helps **develop their independence and motivation** within the context of a 'growth mindset.' Pupils also enjoy the 1:1 time with their teacher as it makes them feel that their work is more valued and they make more rapid progress as they become more aware of what is holding them back and what they need to do to improve.

## How does Pupil Conferencing work?

**Immediate verbal feedback** can be given at any point in a lesson or throughout the day in response to pupil need.

The second element is the **weekly 'chat' or conference** with each pupil. This can be timetabled in any way that works for you. There is no fixed duration- you may spend 5 minutes with one pupil but 10 with another and this may change from week-to-week. This may seem like a short amount of time but you can give much richer, and much more, verbal feedback in 5 minutes than you ever could in written form.

As the year goes on, pupils should take more and more responsibility for the conversation – it is helpful to **give pupils a few minutes to prepare** for their conference and to pick out what they feel they succeeded at and what they need to improve at. Over time, you will find that they start to lead the conversation more and more, and transfer this independence to their learning during lessons.

You may find it useful to **keep a journal** or diary for your pupil conferences; you can use this to keep track of who you have conferenced with in a week, to write reminders for yourself, and to record any agreed targets. Pupils can do the same in their books, if it is helpful. You will still need to look through pupil books at the end of the day to help you plan the following day's work.

## Question Prompts for Pupil Conferencing

### **Using pupil work as a springboard:**

Show me something you are proud of in your book this week. Why are you proud of this piece?

Show me something you struggled with this week. Tell me more about how you got stuck. Do you understand it now? Can you explain how you would do it now? What other help do you need?

If we look at this week's work and compare it with last week's work, what do you think you've improved at? Can you show me examples? What do you need to work on next week?

Last week we talked about you showing target – can you show me where you worked on that this week?

I noticed you found task a bit tricky. Let's figure out what help you need.

### **Using a lesson experience as a springboard:**

Tell me a little bit about what you learned in subject this week. How would you explain what you've learned to someone who wasn't in our lesson?

How does our learning in lesson link to what you already knew before? What do you think is the next step in your learning?

How do you know that you have been successful in your learning in lesson? What would you do if you were stuck?

What questions do you still want to ask about lesson?

### **General learning discussion:**

What do you think are your greatest strengths in subject? Why?

What are your biggest challenges / what do you find trickiest in subject? What help do you need to make this easier?

Can you think of something you used to find really tricky but is now much easier? What helped you?

How does your learning partner help you with subject? Can you give me some examples from lesson?

Do you know what you need to do to get better at subject/topic? Can you explain?