Shropshire Hills Federation

# October 2026

# Marking Policy

## Purpose

The marking of children's work should serve three main purposes. It should:

- Celebrate children's successes and recognize effort.
- Clearly identify their next steps for development in a language which is concise and age/ability appropriate.
- Provide a record for the teacher, and other teachers who may share the class, which can be used for effective future planning as an aid to personalized learning including any interventions.

## Strategies

An effective mixture of adult, self and peer marking should be employed throughout the school. In the Early Years, much of this will be verbal discussion with the child alongside notes taken by adults. As the child progresses, the balance should move more towards self and peer assessment, to well established criteria. The Early Years will assess to EYFSP and in Keystages One and Two, children and adults will assess to modified versions of the 2014 national curriculum expectations for each year group. This will be linked the school's own targets. Whilst most children will be assessed to their chronological age targets, some will work to those from lower year groups and others to more advanced targets. The most important aspect of assessment is that it informs next steps for each individual whether they are working within expectation or not.

Where several drafts of one piece of work are made, with improvements implemented, all drafts should be taken into account for assessment purposes. However, the final draft should not be marked, with the exception of celebration or special awards. This values the effort made by the child to improve and recognizes that it is the best work possible at that point in time.

**Adult Marking**

The most effective adult marking takes place *with* the child whilst work is in progress. This allows for marking, oral feedback and explanation to take place simultaneously, it also provides a model for self and peer marking. All teachers and teaching assistants in the room should be suitably briefed to be able to do this with equal status. A consequence of this strategy may be that all aspects of each child's work may **not** be marked, but with careful daily rotation of adults in the room marking will be more effective over time. Where marking is completed after the session has ended, feedback, **including oral explanation** should be given as soon as is practicable. Children should be given time to read and understand adults' comments and, if necessary, complete further work to consolidate. For best use of adult time, if oral feedback has been given, a written commentary is not required. It is however good practice to mark the child's work with "an oral feedback given" stamp or message purely as evidence of the process.

**Self Marking**
As soon as children are able, they are to be taught and encouraged to mark their own work to specific criteria. They need to be taught strategies for effective marking, including the use of a dictionary, thesaurus, electronic spell checker, own spelling book, calculator and discussion with peers. Self marking should be carefully monitored by adults.

**Peer Marking**
Using similar strategies as when self marking, children should be taught to be constructively critical of the work of their peers. When doing this they should identify themselves as the marker. The marking of others' work often demonstrates a greater understanding of the task than completion of the task itself.

**Methodology**

Although the ways in which we mark throughout the school will differ due to age and experience of the children, it is vital that they show consistency and have clear progression. The following guidance should be clear to all children and staff.

- Incorrect spellings, grammatical errors and factual misunderstandings **are not to be feared.** Children should always be praised for their best attempt and then shown how to improve. Remember, if we are initially teaching children to spell primarily using phonics, we must value phonetically plausible attempts equally to correct spellings. We must however ensure that children understand that phonic attempts are a correct stepping-stone to standard spelling patterns. For instance, a child in Year One may begin a story with: **'wuns apon a tighm.'** Which clearly demonstrates that he/she has listened, understood and applied learning from phonics sessions.

- In adult, self or peer marking it is important to correct only a proportion of 'errors'. Marking everything as wrong is counter-productive and demoralizing. If a child has made their best effort to write independently but has made twenty five spelling 'errors' in a thirty word piece they are unlikely to remember any corrections if all are pointed out, but will have greater success if 15-20% are shown. The actual percentage will be determined by the adult marker dependent upon the child's ability, age and resilience.

**In Summary marking should generally be as follows:**

**1. Pen colours: Children always mark in green, identifying themselves when peer marking. Adults mark in blue. Highlighters are especially effective when a key is also made by the child.**

**2. In a first draft children identify potential errors (for checking later) as they work by underlining in green pen.**

**3. Child checks their own work, using agreed strategies, using green pen or highlighters as appropriate.**

**4. Where applicable peer assessment takes place.**

**5. Teacher or Teaching Assistant marks in blue and adds the appropriate codes for the marking that has taken place (see Marking Codes appendix). This should be either with the child whilst work is in progress, or as soon as possible afterwards with time allowed for feedback. Adults/children may also highlight in pink (think pink) when they wish a child to take another look independently at something which is incorrect or needs improvement.**

**6. Praise and stickers (EYFS and KS1) should be used frequently to recognize effort and progress.**

**7. Where exceptional effort has been put into an individual piece of work, a child should be given the opportunity to share it in other classes and good work assembly. This should then be rewarded with a commendation in line with the rewards policy.**

***8. High quality oral feedback is often the best marking strategy. Mark work with appropriate stamp when this is completed. Child should then, when/if appropriate, be encouraged to bullet point their understanding of what has been discussed, before moving on.***

**Adopted by the Curriculum Committee**

Signature of chair _____Rachel Ellen

Date: 13/10/26

Next review date: October 2028

**Appendix to Marking Policy – Marking Codes**

Each piece of work to have a coloured dot and a letter/pair of letters.

**Dots:**

**Green** If the child has totally understood the concept.

Orange If the child has partially understood the concept, or you feel they would benefit from embedding this further (+ or – may also be used to record greater detail).

Red The child has very little understanding of what has been taught. Care must be taken when using red, as this could negatively impact upon a child's self-confidence. An adult should explain that it means that the child has not understood yet, and that all people will go through this stage in their learning at times.

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|---|---|
| T | The lesson was led throughout by the teacher, and the work was completed as the teacher led the lesson. |
| S | After the input for the lesson*, the teacher or teaching assistant supported the child very closely to complete their work, either 1:1 or in a very small support group. If support is not by the teacher, the adult will initial. |
| FG | After the initial input*, the child has worked in a focus group of varying sizes, with an adult. |
| I | After the taught element of the lesson*, the child has worked independently |
| **In all written work (regardless of subject) adults will indicate in the margin, or on the left hand side of a piece of work, what kind of error, or improvement is required, using the following abbreviations:** | |
| S | Indicates a spelling error. |
| P | Indicates an error or omission of punctuation. |
| G | Indicates a grammatical error, or where an improvement to grammatical construction is required. |
| Think Pink | An adult may use a pink highlighter where the child needs to revisit a piece of work, find errors, improve, or think about an edit for themselves. Care should always be taken to do this neatly, so as not to deface or devalue the child's work. We will never use this strategy on final pieces/best copies of work. |

*Input may have happened a few minutes prior, or in a prior lesson.