



EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK POLICY

Ainslie Wood Primary School 2024

“Learners need endless feedback more than they need endless teaching”

Developed by the Standards and Learning Teams

Introduction

At Ainslie Wood, we fully understand the importance of providing meaningful feedback to our pupils to support their learning and development. We know that when done well, feedback supports pupil progress, builds learning, addresses misunderstandings, and closes the gap between where a pupil is and where the teacher wants them to be. This process is a crucial component of high-quality teaching, which our Adult Development Team constantly works with our teaching staff on building.

However, we are also aware that not all feedback creates positive effects. If done badly, it can even harm confidence, engagement and progress. It can also create undue burden on adults when large amounts of time are spent providing pupils with feedback, perhaps not always productively. Our aim at Ainslie Wood is to find the most effective way to manage all of these requirements so that our pupils and our staff always find the feedback process a useful part of every learning opportunity.

In order to ensure we are meeting all of these aims, we have engaged in school based, action research over a period of three years. Through our work with Whole Education and the EEF, we have accessed some of the most useful and cutting edge tools, reports and facilitators and have utilised these to produce our Effective Feedback Policy.

What is Effective Feedback?

Effective feedback is a purposeful communication, which is designed to encourage the learner's attention and effort on the task while also signposting where and how to improve.

It should help the teacher determine the learner's level of understanding and skill development in order to plan the next steps towards achieving the learning intentions or goals and should let the learner know what, why and how they have done well.

'Too many teachers focus on the purpose of feedback as changing or improving the work, whereas the main purpose of feedback should be to improve the student.' Dylan William

Feedback should always be a dialogue rather than one-way communication. It should clearly link to the learning outcomes and encourage the learner to reflect on their learning. The aim of this constructive dialogue is to enable the learner to take control of their own assessment by making them active participants in the process.

While we are very clear about our requirement for consistent, evidence informed principles to be at the heart of our practice across Ainslie Wood, we also trust in the professional judgement of our teachers to implement the most appropriate methods and timings which respond best to the needs of their learners. Support is always provided where necessary.

How do we do it at Ainslie Wood?

Our teachers are supported by the Adult Development Team to understand effective feedback as a **3 part process**:

1. The Planning Stage	What exactly are you going to assess?
2. The Quality and Timing of the Feedback	However you give the feedback, does it make children think? Is it more focused on developing the learner or the learning?
3. Response to Feedback	What will they do with it? "The only good feedback is that which is acted upon."

1. The Planning Stage

In order to assess learning effectively, teachers need to know **exactly what they will be looking at** in order to assess the progression of learning. This means that at the planning stage, teachers set the lesson objectives by asking themselves the following questions:

- **What do I want pupils to be able to do and know** as a result of this session?
- **What do the pupils need to bridge the gap** between where they are now and where I want them to be by the end of the session?

They identify the level of knowledge and skills needed to achieve the learning through the use of Bloom's Taxonomy (Appendix 1) which classifies the different levels hierarchically from lower order to higher order thinking skills.

Questions and Check Ins

At the planning stage, teachers also plan for **effective questions and quick check ins** to assess learning throughout the session. This enables them to elicit information, which will reveal more about the pupils' thinking. The role of the teacher at this time is not only to see whether they get the correct answers, but also to interpret how the pupils are thinking and what it reveals about their understanding.

Tasks

When **planning the right task** to bridge the gap between where they currently are, and where the teacher would like the pupils to be by the end of the session, **teachers design tasks with feedback in mind**. By doing this, the teacher can be sure that they will be provided with evidence on what and how a pupil is thinking about their learning. Whether pupils are responding to a series of questions or producing an extended piece of writing, whether their task is practical or discussion based, the teacher should ask themselves: 'Will this task reveal what/how the pupil is thinking?' and 'Can I use this to give feedback?'. If the answer is no, the task should be redesigned.

2. The Quality and Timing of the Feedback

Feedback Focus

Effective feedback should always focus on moving learning forward, targeting the **task** (its outcome and advice on how to improve when doing that specific type of task), the **subject** (and the underlying processes within that subject), and **self-regulation** strategies (how they plan, monitor and evaluate their work). Feedback that focuses on a pupil's personal characteristics (e.g. '*You're a natural mathematician!*'), effort (e.g. '*You could have worked harder today!*'), or simple, direct praise (e.g. '*Great work!*'), is less likely to be effective. This is because feedback about a person and their understanding does not provide enough information to close a learning gap and move learning forward. In addition, it could distract the learner away from learning, becoming self-conscious and focusing instead on the impact the feedback has had on their self-esteem. (See Appendix 2 - Feedback Ideas and Activities)

Feedback Timing

When considering the most appropriate time to deliver feedback which will support each individual learner and their learning journey, we believe that there is not one clear answer and **so Ainslie Wood do not mandate a frequency or time period**.

Often, immediate feedback can be effective as it could redirect learning in the moment or prevent misconceptions from forming early on. However, delayed feedback could also be beneficial as it may require pupils to fully re-engage with the work before getting an answer. In turn, this may lead to them working hard to retrieve information they've already learned which, in turn, could help them remember more of the learning. In recognising the crucial role that teacher judgement plays in delivering feedback at the appropriate moment, the teachers at Ainslie Wood are supported to develop their practice in order to consistently make the most pertinent decisions on the timing of feedback.

How Much Feedback and To Whom?

As with the other elements of this policy, at Ainslie Wood, we recognise the complexity of these decisions and that the answers are wholly dependent on factors such as the task, the learning methods, the pupils, their own experiences and confidence levels etc. This means that sometimes feedback could be targeted towards the whole class, groups or individuals and delivered 'live', in the moment, distant or conferenced, etc., and be written, recorded or verbal to name but a few.

Rather than focusing on the method or frequency by which feedback is delivered, here at Ainslie Wood, we are more concerned that the principles of our Effective Feedback Policy are being met and learners are consistently moving forward. The choice of method is the decision of the teacher, the school monitors the progress of pupils in their learning and not the marking in books.

'The important point is that the feedback is focused, is more work for the recipient than the donor and causes thinking rather than an emotional reaction.' Dylan William 2018

When making the decision about which method to employ, teachers should ensure that their chosen method is effective as well as efficient for both themselves and the recipient. It is also crucial to note that verbal feedback is not simply to be viewed as an 'easy' alternative to written feedback. While it may offer a time efficient alternative to some forms of written feedback, careful thought and consideration is always required for both themselves and the recipient.

When to Intervene

Teachers should always seek to use minimal intervention with the learning process, only escalating to the next level if the pupil still needs further support. If our planning fits our pupils appropriately, we should always start with the assumption that all children can work independently (given the right level of instruction, scaffold and/or resources where necessary) following the right prior input. We should only then need to increase the amount of intervention if the pupil really can't get on without it (see Strategic Minimal Marking Triangle – Appendix 3).

The key to any intervention and consequent feedback is **not to give the pupil the answers, but to inspire more thinking.**

3. Response to Feedback

If we have utilised our professional skills, judgement, time and effort to provide the most pertinent feedback, in the most helpful way to our learners, then do not provide the time and space for them to respond to it, we have wasted our time.

Teachers need to carefully consider what this response time will look like for each learner in each learning situation. A variety of pupil-level factors, such as motivation, self confidence, trust in the teacher and capacity to manage information, are all likely to impact the effectiveness of the feedback provided.

'Giving feedback to learners does not 'magically' improve their skills or boost their grades without those learners acting.' Naomi E Winstone, Robert A Nash, Michael Parker and James Rowntree 2017

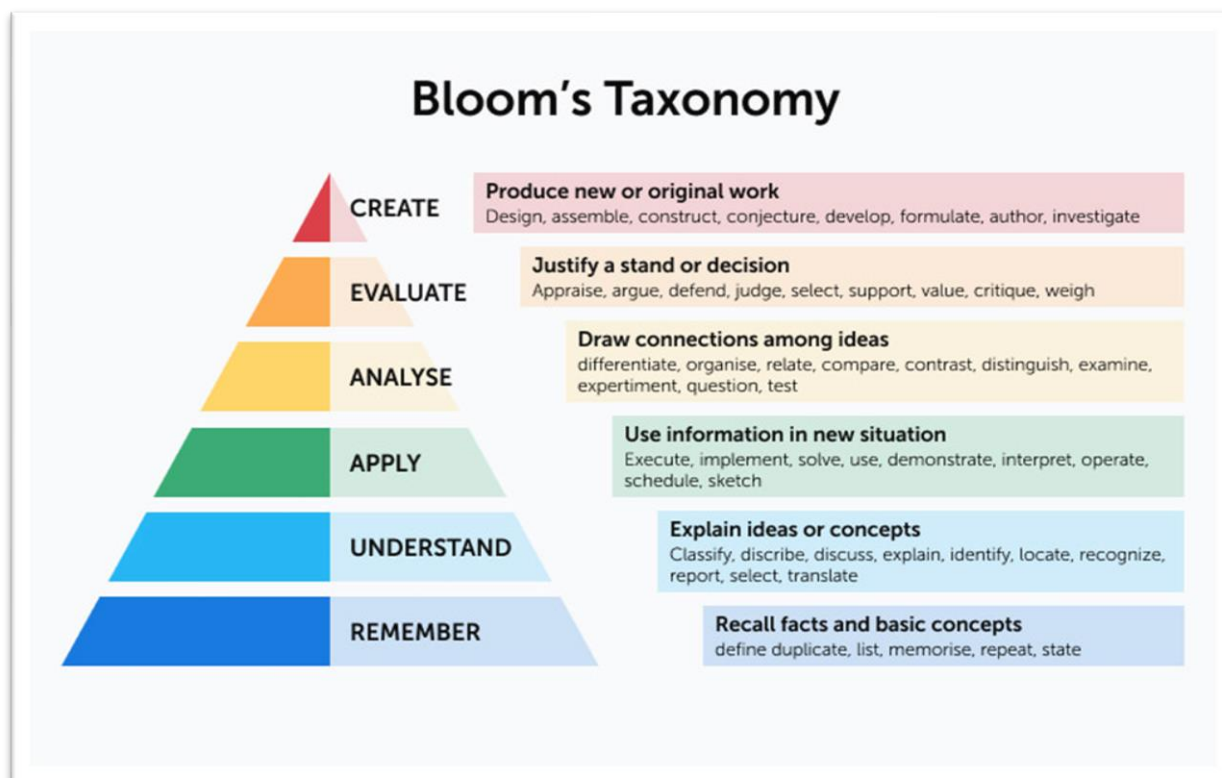
Response time must be written into the structure of all of our learning activities by all of our teachers, however, this again will depend on the time that it was given (in the moment or distance, for example), and the methods. Learners must also recognise the benefit and purpose of feedback and the response time (see Feedback Preparation– Appendix 4)

Purple Pen

At Ainslie Wood, **pupils should always respond to feedback using purple pen**. This enables adults to monitor if their feedback is being used and how effective it is. Teachers can then use this information to either adapt the feedback further or to inform their future planning.

This policy has been developed specifically for Ainslie Wood Primary School following three years of research supported by Whole Education, based on the principles shared in the **EEF Guidance Report: Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning**.

Appendix 1 Blooms Taxonomy



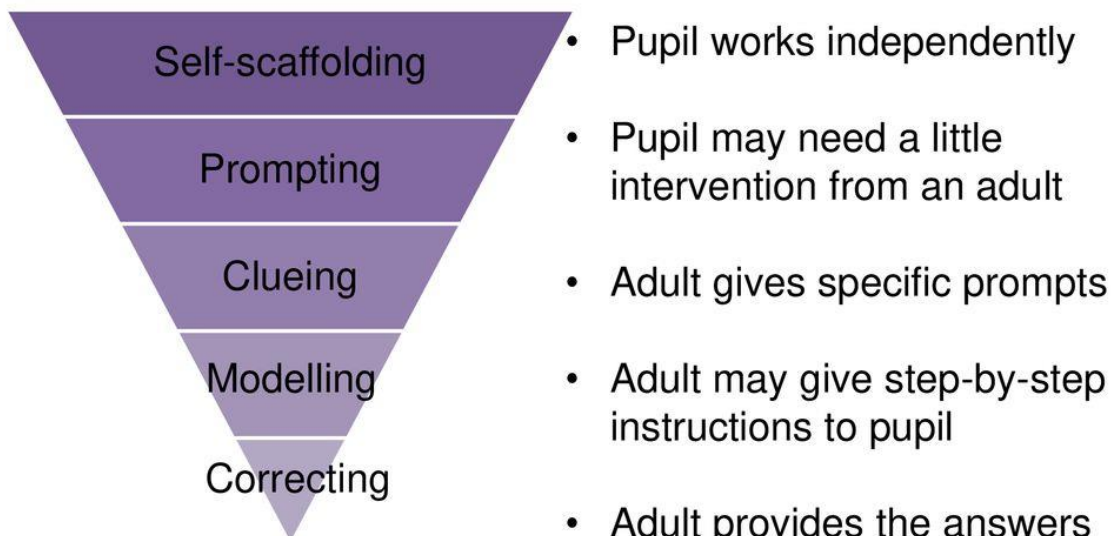
Appendix 2 Feedback Ideas and Activities

- **Detective activities.** A teacher may put dots in the margin where there may be errors and ask pupils to find and correct them (which could be further scaffolded for some students if they replace the dot with codes which identify the type of correction needed, such as 'e' for 'include more evidence'). Another example, which could be more useful for maths or science teachers, is informing pupils that a certain number of their responses are correct but not informing them which ones; they then need to figure this out for themselves. These 'detective' activities require careful planning to ensure that they are tailored to pupils' level of understanding.
- **Class discussion of feedback.** Providing opportunities for the class to collectively discuss the feedback provided may improve pupil use of feedback and their subsequent attainment. Teachers could, therefore, use a class discussion to explore, explain, and clarify feedback before pupils use it in their next activity.
- **'Three questions'.** In this strategy, a teacher poses three focused questions at the end of a written piece of work. The pupils then respond to these. Teachers should ensure that questions are meaningful and focused and they will be different for different students.
- **Correcting errors and editing work.** Teachers may ask pupils to make specific corrections and edits to previous work. A checklist of common errors, with appropriate modelling of use by the teacher, may helpfully steer this approach.

- **Completing similar problems with feedback in mind.** This technique is very compatible with practical subjects such as PE, music, and art where pupils can instantly repeat performances but it can also be used across the curriculum. A maths teacher, for instance, could set a pupil another problem which requires them to use the feedback provided.
- **Redrafting work**
- **Marking Conference**
- **Mini Plenaries**
- **Think, Pair, Share**
- **Exit Ticket**
- **Error Analysis**
- **Traffic Lights**
- **'Become the Teacher'**
- **Etc.**

Appendix 3 Strategic Minimal Marking Triangle

Scaffolding framework



Appendix 4 Preparing Pupils to Receive Feedback

- **Discussing the purpose of feedback.** Conducting discussions with the class, or with particular individuals, on why feedback is being given may support pupil motivation and desire to receive feedback. The key is to emphasise that feedback is provided not to be critical but because the teacher has high standards and fully believes pupils can meet them.

- **Modelling the use of feedback.** Pupils may be more likely to welcome and use feedback if this is modelled to them by their peers. If a peer expresses a willingness to receive feedback and recognises that feedback is not designed to be critical of them but offered to improve their learning, a pupil is more likely to use feedback to improve their own learning. Teachers may, therefore, look to explore ways of modelling the effective use of feedback. For example, could whole-class discussions focus on a learner who has improved their work because of feedback? Additionally, could the effective use of feedback be celebrated when it happens in the classroom?
- **Providing clear, concise, and focused feedback.** Sometimes less is more. Providing clear and concise feedback (which still features task, subject, and/or self-regulation advice) may support teachers in offering feedback that does not 'overload' pupils.
- **Ensuring pupils understand the feedback given.** Of course, careful thought should be given to the language and content used in feedback to ensure that pupils understand what the teacher is saying. If providing written feedback, teacher handwriting also needs to be clear enough for pupils to comprehend.