Marking and Feedback Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed
Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School, we believe:
'Feedback and marking should provide constructive feedback to every child, focusing on success and improvement needs against learning intentions; enabling children to become reflective learners and helping them to close the gap between current and desired performance'.

(Shirley Clarke, 'Unlocking Formative Assessment')

'Feedback should be more work for the student than it is for the teacher'

(Dylan William, 2014)

'The most important activities for the teachers are the designing and teaching of the lesson. Marking and feedback strategies should be efficient, so that they do not steal time that would be better spent on lesson design and preparation. Neither should they result in an excessive workload for teachers.'

(NCETM, 2016)

2. Principles

- Use clear, constructive language to praise, encourage, and guide students toward success.
- Provide timely and actionable feedback that improves learning at every stage—whether work is completed or ongoing.
- Celebrate success by linking achievement directly to shared, procedural learning outcomes.
- Use a range of assessment approaches—formative, summative and diagnostic—to gather insight and adapt teaching accordingly.
- Identify individual learning needs early and precisely to close gaps through focused instruction.
- Support improvement through live modelling, guided practice, and targeted feedback.
- Track progress regularly to inform future lesson design and challenge.
- Maintain consistency in assessment and feedback approaches across the school to ensure coherence.
- Develop pupil independence by embedding routines for self-checking, reflection, and acting on feedback.
- Expect students to take increasing responsibility for their learning as they move through school, building habits of self-regulation and accountability.

3. General Marking/Feedback Strategies

- Learning Outcomes must be purposefully selected to reflect the procedural knowledge being taught. All feedback should relate directly to these, reinforcing clarity and direction in learning.
- Whilst planning a lesson, teachers should consider the type of feedback that would be best suited to the lesson to ensure the maximum progress is made by students.
- Feedback—whether verbal or written—should be timely and responsive, occurring either during the learning process or after completion, depending on what will best support progress.
- Teachers should use professional judgement to ensure feedback is concise, focused and constructive, tailored to the needs of individual learners.
- Where codes or symbols are used in marking, these must be explicitly introduced and reinforced so students can engage meaningfully with feedback.
- Students who are developmentally ready should routinely acknowledge written feedback and begin to act on it, building independence and metacognitive habits over time

Planning for feedback

Why?

To ensure feedback has a meaningful impact on pupil progress, it must be deliberately planned as part of the lesson design process. When teachers identify the when, what, and how of feedback in advance, it becomes more timely, targeted, and sustainable. This proactive approach prevents marking from becoming excessive or tokenistic and allows students time to respond and act on it purposefully.

How?

1. Plan Purposefully

Identify when feedback will have the most impact. Focus on tasks that reveal understanding or misconceptions. Choose the feedback type (verbal, written, peer, self, whole class) based on the learning outcome.

2. Make It Actionable

Build in time for students to respond to feedback (e.g. DIRT). Feedback should lead to improvement, redrafting, or consolidation.

3. Use Varied Methods

Select feedback method that will be most impactful and effective

Adapt your approach based on pupil needs and lesson objectives.

4. Keep It Focused

Feedback should be concise, curriculum-linked, and geared towards progress. Avoid excessive marking and use feedback to inform next steps in teaching.

Written feedback

Why?

- Reinforces clarity of purpose by linking directly to the procedural knowledge taught.
- Helps students understand how effectively they have demonstrated the intended skill or technique.

- Encourages responsive teaching by addressing learning needs in a precise and timely manner.
- Builds ownership and metacognition by prompting students to reflect on and act upon feedback.
- Promotes independence and confidence as students take increasing responsibility for improvement.

How?

- Use feedback that is precise, actionable, and cognitively manageable to support progress.
- Apply marking codes and symbols consistently to streamline feedback and reduce cognitive overload.
- Use the WWW and EBI model to highlight strengths and areas for development in a student-friendly format.
- Provide 1:1 conferencing where appropriate for targeted, personalised feedback that deepens understanding.
- Rotate group marking sessions to manage workload while maintaining high-impact feedback.
- Embed feedback routines that require students to reflect, respond, and take responsibility for acting on next steps.
- Revisit feedback over time to develop students' metacognitive habits and build their independence as learners.

Whole class feedback

Why?

- Whole-Class Feedback replaces individual written marking with structured class-wide reflection to maximise efficiency and impact.
- It reinforces clarity of purpose by focusing on procedural knowledge, shared strengths, and common misconceptions.
- Supports responsive teaching by allowing teachers to address trends quickly and guide improvement for all learners.
- Encourages academic expectations by modelling high-quality responses and guiding students to reflect and improve their work.
- Promotes ownership and metacognition by enabling students to take responsibility for applying feedback and developing independence.

How?

- Set expectations clearly: Explain to students that feedback will be given as a class discussion, and highlight its value.
- Use a Whole-Class Feedback pro forma, Record:

What went well

Common misconceptions or errors

Areas for development

Next steps for improvement

- Deliver feedback interactively: Use model examples and non-examples to reinforce what success looks like.
- Provide DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time):

Students edit work in purple pen

Apply next steps

Ask for clarification if needed

- Promote reflection: Encourage students to take ownership by reviewing their work and engaging with feedback independently.
- Revisit misconceptions: Use the We Do and You Do phases in later lessons to address recurring gaps and secure understanding.

Affirmative checking

Why?

- Affirmative checking is a proactive strategy used during lessons to assess understanding in real time and address misconceptions before they take hold.
- It supports responsive teaching by providing immediate insight into student thinking and enabling just-in-time feedback.
- It reinforces clarity of purpose and maintains high academic expectations throughout the learning process.

How?

- Set expectations clearly: Before students begin, explain the task and what success looks like. Let students know you'll be checking for specific elements of procedural knowledge.
- Circulate strategically: Move with purpose around the classroom, using teacher radar to observe multiple students at once. Ensure all learners feel seen and supported.
- Engage frequently: Check work consistently. Ask targeted questions, push for depth, and offer live feedback to guide students forward.
- Be precise and supportive: Give brief, focused feedback using symbols, colours, or codes that students understand. Keep it actionable and manageable.
- Promote ownership: Encourage students to self-correct where possible and reflect on their work during the lesson.
- Follow up deliberately: Return to students after feedback to check for improvement and ensure learning is progressing.

Peer assessment

Why?

- Peer assessment is a structured, student-led feedback approach that reinforces academic expectations and supports metacognition.
- It encourages students to actively engage with procedural knowledge by analysing peer work against clear criteria.

- Helps students build a critical eye and reflective habits that transfer to their own work.
- Promotes ownership of learning while reducing teacher marking load and enabling immediate feedback loops.

How?

- Set clear expectations: Explain that peer assessment is a learning strategy, not a judgement. Feedback must be kind, specific, and helpful.
- Use structured rubrics or frameworks: Provide clear, specific success criteria linked to the Learning outcome and To Know.
- Model effective critique: Demonstrate how to give constructive feedback using the "Be Kind, Be Specific, Be Helpful" approach.
- Introduce sentence stems: Support peer dialogue using prompts such as:

"One thing I really liked about your work was…"

"To improve this, you could try…"

"Your use of ___ is strong, but you might consider…"

- Encourage peer reflection: After receiving feedback, students should identify one action they will take to improve their work.
- Incorporate regularly: Make peer assessment a routine part of practice, particularly in writing-heavy or analytical subjects.
- Follow up deliberately: Check that students have acted on feedback and revisit common next steps in future lessons.

Self-assessment

Why?

- Self-assessment is a reflective strategy that encourages ownership and metacognition, allowing students to evaluate their own work against procedural outcomes.

- It helps students develop independence, accountability, and a deeper understanding of their own learning journey.
- By identifying strengths and areas for improvement before receiving teacher input, students become active participants in their progress.
- Promotes a growth mindset by normalising reflection, resilience, and self-directed improvement.

How?

- Set clear expectations: Teach students that self-assessment is essential for learning, not just a checklist. Reinforce its value in developing independence.
- Use guiding questions: Structure reflection with prompts such as:

Where am I going? (Clarify the procedural goal)

How am I doing? (Evaluate current progress)

Where to next? (Identify improvements)

How will I get there? (Plan specific next steps)

- Provide success criteria or rubrics: : Provide clear, specific success criteria linked to the Learning outcome and To Know.
- Promote active engagement: Expect students to respond to their reflections by editing work or setting personal goals.
- Foster a growth mindset: Embed prompts and discussion that help students see mistakes as learning opportunities and feedback as a tool for growth.
- Make it routine: Incorporate self-assessment regularly in lessons, especially before or after feedback points.
- Follow up: Check that students have applied their reflections by looking for improvements in subsequent tasks.

5. Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 Writing

In Key Stage 1, written work is marked weekly using the WWW and EBI system, which highlights strengths and next steps in a clear, accessible way.

In the Early Years, feedback is primarily given verbally through affirmative checking. This real-time support helps address misconceptions and correct spelling of high-frequency words in a way that builds early confidence and ownership.

As children's writing becomes more formal in Year 1, written feedback strategies such as colour-coded marking are introduced gradually, where developmentally appropriate. Across all stages, feedback is designed to be timely, manageable, and actionable—encouraging students to reflect, respond, and take responsibility for their learning over time.

6. Inclusion including reference to SENDo, EAL, G&T, Emirati

For students with SEND, marking and feedback should be informed by their Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets and personalised learning goals. Feedback should be precise, supportive, and developmentally appropriate, using strategies such as modelling, affirmative checking, or guided conferencing where needed.

EAL learners should receive feedback that supports both language development and curriculum access, with clear visual prompts or scaffolded sentence frames used where appropriate. For more able and gifted learners, feedback should extend thinking, challenge misconceptions, and promote deeper metacognitive reflection. Emirati students, like all learners, should receive feedback that is academically rigorous and culturally respectful, with opportunities to reflect and respond embedded consistently.

All feedback—whether verbal, written, or through self/peer assessment—should promote clarity of purpose, ownership, and confidence for every learner, in line with TLAG principles.

7. Equal Opportunities

The school values and actively promotes a diverse and inclusive community, recognising the strength that comes from individuals of different backgrounds, skills, and abilities. We are committed to creating a positive school culture—led by the governing body, leadership team, and all staff—where every member of the community feels respected and confident that they will be treated with fairness, dignity, and tolerance. This commitment applies to all aspects of school life and extends to everyone connected to the school, including students, staff, families, and visitors. The school is dedicated to eliminating unlawful discrimination and fostering positive relationships, ensuring that equality and mutual respect underpin our daily practice and long-term vision.

8. Parental involvement

Parents are made aware of the school's Marking and Feedback policy and the signs and symbols used with the children.

9. Resourcing

Teachers are provided with marking pens to enable them to apply the policy.

10. Roles and responsibilities

a. **Teachers -** To adhere to the agreed policy to ensure consistency of approach across school.

b. **Middle Leaders -** To conduct subject or year group specific Book Looks to ensure accurate implementation of the policy across their curriculum area of responsibility. To work with SLT to ensure the policy is effective within their subject, reviewing and suggesting changes where necessary.

c. **AHTs, ASTs and Extended Leaders -** To co-ordinate the termly monitoring of books, ensuring staff are held to account in their adherence of the policy to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

d. **Senior Leadership Team** - To support the Extended Leadership Team and receive their feedback on staff adherence to this Marking and Feedback policy. To monitor the effectiveness of these procedures.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Primary Marking Symbols
Appendix 2 – Secondary Marking Guidance – Secondary
Appendix 3 - GFS Secondary School Marking Frequency

11. Monitoring and review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School, Dubai teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed ..... Date .....11 April 2025.....
Head of Primary

Signed ..... Date .....11 April 2025.....
Head of Secondary

Signed ..... Date .....11 April 2025.....
Whole Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date .....11 April 2025.....
Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date .....11 April 2025.....
Executive Principal/CEO/Vice President of Education

Next policy review date:
August 2025

Commented [JM1]: Hi @Ladylyn Granil for Mr. Matthew's signature. Thank you.

Commented [JM2]: Hi @Mary Catubig signed! Thanks

Appendix 1

Primary Marking and Feedback Guidance

Teachers will use pink and green highlighters to provide clear and purposeful feedback:

- Pink highlighting: Used to indicate where the student has successfully met the Learning Objective (LO) and 'To Know' knowledge.
- Green highlighting: Used to signal areas for improvement or required edits. This may include incorrect answers, misconceptions, or missing punctuation.
- **Green dots in the margin using highlighter**: Placed on the line of a spelling error to prompt correction.
- **Green pen comments**: Written to stretch and challenge students, deepening their understanding.
- **VF**: Written by the teacher in green pen to indicate verbal feedback has been given.
- **Purple pen**: Used by students to respond to all feedback, including written and verbal.

Response to Feedback

Students must respond to all marking and feedback in purple pen. Teachers are expected to allocate dedicated time at the start of the next lesson to allow students to reflect on and respond to their feedback meaningfully.

Verbal Feedback and Affirmative Checking

During affirmative checking, verbal feedback should be given in real time. Teachers will record this by writing “VF” and ensure students respond in purple pen as part of the feedback loop.

Planning for Feedback

Marking and feedback strategies should be discussed during weekly planning meetings. This ensures feedback is timely, manageable, and aligned with the lesson’s purpose, without creating unnecessary workload for teachers.

Appendix 2

GEMS Founders Marking Guidance – Secondary

Learning Outcomes- a measurable statement articulating what every student is expected achieve or demonstrate by the end of a lesson. It is skills based and is interdependent with 'knowledge components.'
To know- emphasises the essential knowledge components students need in order to achieve the learning outcome.

Receiving feedback on your work

WWW: "What went well…" A comment stating successes their piece work, pointing out what you have achieved and giving you some praise. Teachers will use a *pink pen for WWW.*

EBI: "Even better if…" A comment stating how work could be even better. This will suggest ways in which you can improve your work. Teachers will use a *green pen for EBI.*

Read your feedback and, using your purple pen, write a developed response that is linked to the EBI your teacher has written for you.

Student's response

Your teacher may use these symbols for written pieces of work / feedback:

Sp	Spelling correction
P	Incorrect or missing punctuation
Aa	Capital letter used incorrectly
Gr	Sentence does not make sense
VF	Verbal feedback

Appendix 3

GFS Secondary School Marking Frequency

Set out below is the basic expectation for marking frequency. It is understood that different subjects will have differing marking loads due to contact time with students and, as such, it is expected that departments will use their best professional judgement when using these guidelines when marking books.

Key Stage 3
Core Subjects

- One piece of deep marked work per class at least every two weeks
- Double tick acknowledges students
- Feedback should include WWW and actionable next step EBI. SPAG literacy targets should be included in EBIs where appropriate.
- Students will be given follow up lesson time to reflect and respond on their deep mark feedback
- Follow-up affirmative checking to ensure students have responded to feedback effectively.

Non-Core Subjects
(Taught via carousel)

- One piece of deep/thoroughly marked work per class every 3 weeks, or when appropriate
- Feedback should include WWW and actionable next step EBI. SPAG literacy targets should be included in EBIs where appropriate.
- Students will be given follow up lesson time to reflect and respond on their deep mark feedback Follow-up affirmative checking to ensure students have responded to feedback effectively.

Key Stage 4
All Subjects

- One piece of deep marked work per class at least every two weeks
- Feedback should include WWW and actionable next step EBI. SPAG literacy targets should be included in EBIs where appropriate.
- Students will be given follow up lesson time to reflect and respond on their deep mark feedback Follow-up affirmative checking to ensure students have responded to feedback effectively.

Key Stage 5
A Level Subjects

- One piece of deep marked work per class at least every two weeks
- Feedback should include WWW and actionable next step EBI. SPAG literacy targets should be included in EBIs where appropriate.
- Students will be given follow up lesson time to reflect and respond on their deep mark feedback
- Follow-up affirmative checking to ensure students have responded to feedback effectively.

BTEC (Key stage 4 and 5)

- One piece of deep marked work per class every assessment objective within every unit.
- Feedback should include WWW and actionable next step EBI. This should be completed on the Pearson/ Edexcel record sheet. SPAG literacy targets should be included in EBIs where appropriate.
- Students will be given follow up lesson time to reflect and respond on their deep mark feedback. Where appropriate students should be provided the opportunity to resubmit.
- Follow-up affirmative checking to ensure students have responded to feedback effectively. Regular checking of student work for authenticity is common practice.

WWW and EBI feedback should be presented in table format by teachers and students. A ☑ will be used to indicate WWW on the left and ➔ will be used to indicate EBI on the right.

Example

WWW	EBI
☑ Your use of statistics and real-world examples (like rising sea levels and extreme weather) made your argument more convincing	➔ Use more key vocabulary like "carbon footprint," "mitigation," or "climate resilience" to show deeper understanding of the impact of climate change
☑ You have clearly explained the causes of climate change, especially the role of greenhouse gases	➔ Try to include more balanced viewpoints- for example, how different countries and industries are responding to climate change

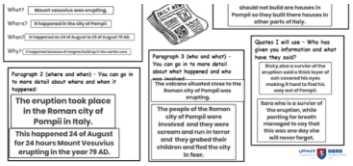
Appendix 4

Primary Marking and Feedback Adaptations for Remote Learning- SeeSaw

Teachers continue to use the primary marking symbols for SeeSaw, using the editing tools provided. The frequency and timing expectations of in-depth marking remains the same.

When giving feedback, there are various acceptable forms which teachers can utilise on SeeSaw:

- Written comments on a piece of submitted work



View Original

Seen by: [redacted] Jun 24, 2020

[redacted] for paragraph three can you add more detail about what actually happened and how people reacted when the eruption happened? Did they scream and run in terror? Did they gasp and cry? Did they grab their children and flee?

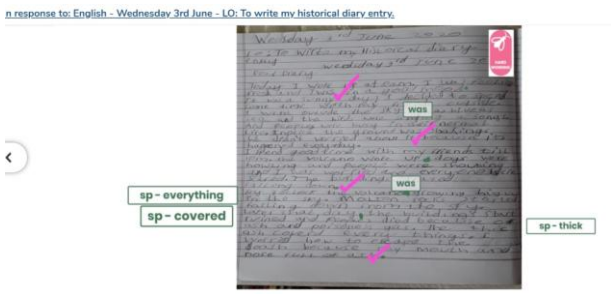
[redacted] No they did not scream and run in terror. Yes they did they grab their children and flee

[redacted] Yes they did scream and run in terror.

- Voice comment on a submitted piece of work

In-depth Feedback

- Editing the piece of work by adding annotations, stickers and the primary marking symbols including the HPL symbols.



- Creating an in-depth feedback video over the piece of work

g the skills tool on SeeSaw to assess against the outcomes: https://help.seesaw.me/hc/en-articles/115004160546